

## HISTORY OF GAMMA CHAPTER

### KAPPA ALPHA THETA

### BUTLER UNIVERSITY

Gamma Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta was founded in 1874. Little is known of the first years of her fraternity life, but material has been gathered from members who were in Butler College about 1879 and '80.

There was no chapter house at that time and initiations were held in one of the lecture rooms in the administration building. For several years Kappa Alpha Theta was the only women's fraternity in Butler. A little later Kappa Kappa Gamma installed a chapter there.

Social functions were not as many or as varied in those days as they are at the present time. The girls never gave dances. In fact, none were given under the auspices of the college. However, once a year at Commencement time, the men's fraternities gave a dance, and the Theta girls attended these given by the Beta Theta PIs and Phi Delta Thetas. These were held at private homes and the music was provided by string orchestras. The waltz, schottish, and square dances were then in vogue.

In the Spring when the flowers were in bloom and the air was balmy the Theta girls gave an annual picnic and invited the men as guests. One of these was held at the home of Miss Hanneman on the National Road. It is described by one of the young men present as follows:

"On a beautiful spring morning the party met at Engleside.

From there we took an old mule car and rode to the end of the line, then we walked the remaining distance to Miss Hanneman's home. It was a fine old-fashioned brick house, sitting far back from the road and surrounded by woodland. The wild flowers were in bloom and we spent the morning wandering thru the woods gathering flowers. As I recall, the girls all wore white dresses which were quite different as to style from those of to-day. The skirts were long and full and high collars and long sleeves were the fashion. The men wore sack coats, long trousers without cuffs, low shoes and red socks. Big, ready made ties that were spread out to cover the whole front of the shirt were worn with angel wing collars, straw hats completed the outfit.

"At noon we all entered the house and there in the big cool dining room with high ceilings, we sat and enjoyed a wonderful feast prepared by the girls,- fried chicken, salads, cakes, home made ice cream and all sorts of delicious food that is unknown to-day. Games, contests and sports occupied the rest of the day and the party abated not its hilarity until night fall when we departed."

Due to a misunderstanding and poor representation at Grand Convention, the charter was withdrawn from Butler in 1886. A black pall here descends upon Gamma activities until the re-establishment of the chapter in 1906.

For several years Pi Beta Phi and Kappa Kappa Gamma were the only girls' fraternities at Butler and great was the rivalry between them.

In 1904 an interesting group of girls encouraged by some enthusiastic Indianapolis Thetas determined to apply for the

return of the charter. At the opening of the school year much pressure was brought to bear on these girls by the Kappas and Pi Phis, but, with one exception, they stood firm in their allegiance to the new organization. Some of them were wept over all night by Kappa sisters and chums, others withstood harrowing forecasts of failure related by Pi Phis, but all came tearful of eye, and somewhat shaken as to nerves to the meeting place the next morning. This place, curiously enough, was "Huder's corner"! Anyone who knows Indianapolis knows Huder's corner. The original intention had been to proceed to some more seemly and dignified spot,- but so great was the excitement and the eagerness for news from one another that it seemed impossible to move on and there was formed the organization known as Sigma Delta Theta.

The alumnae in Indianapolis were anxious to see the new chapter re-established at Butler. Furthermore, they knew many of the girls in the applying group. There were in fact daughters and sisters among them. These Thetas, therefore, immediately took steps toward regaining the Theta charter. Letters were obtained from influential and well known people who were in touch with the College and who knew the girls.

Emma Pearson (Mrs. Robert Fulton), Miss Sarah F. Cotton, and Mrs. Charles Eichrodt especially were active and helpful. Mrs. Eichrodt attended the convention of 1905 and make an impassioned plea on behalf of the girls of Sigma Delta Theta. She was always a loving and loyal friend to the chapter and her memory is enshrined in the hearts of all Gamma Thetas.

The charter was given back to Butler in 1907 and great was the rejoicing in Indianapolis. The initiation was particularly impressive and inspiring. Two members of the Grand Council,

Miss Pearson and Miss Edith Cockins, were present, and Miss Grace Eagleson, the retiring president of Beta District.

At the banquet which followed the initiation the merry making lasted so late that the janitor, lingering wearily on the outskirts, was heard to remark, "I wish they'd finish with that K A T business so's I could clean up around here'."

The history of Gamma chapter would be incomplete without some account of the "cabin". This was a rustic affair built of logs and situated in beautiful "Ellenberger Park" about half a mile from the college campus. For several years this little cabin took the place of a chapter house in many ways. Meetings were held there as well as picnics, house parties and "rushing parties". It seemed the ideal spot for all sorts of informal frolics. It was easier to get acquainted with a "rushee" here than anywhere else. There was a piano, enough mission furniture to make the place comfortable and attractive, and cooking arrangements and equipment adequate for our camping expeditions.

Gamma alumnae of this period will always remember it lovingly as the scene of many delightful festivities.

Since the passing of the "cabin days" and the erection of a real for sure fraternity house across from the campus the life of Gamma Chapter has had its triumphs and its misfortunes, but with all has held the even tenor of its way-ever onward. With the advent of the new house, the enlarged program of Butler College, the possibilities for the future of Gamma are yet greater. The girls of to-day rejoice to look back upon the lengthening chain of bright links of their chapter history and they feel a deep pride and increasing responsibility to uphold the vision of the past and to strive on to greater achievement.