

THE HISTORY OF EPSILON ETA CHAPTER OF SIGMA NU FRATERNITY (1920's)

Written by Albert W. Lewis, III (EH 797)

IN THE BEGINNING

Back in the Spring of 1919, a local fraternity at the University of Tennessee---Phi Beta Sigma--- was organized to petition the national fraternity Phi Delta Theta. In the fall of that year, that same local pledged George Forman, son of Sigma Nu's past Grand Treasurer George Forman, Sr. Mr. Forman, Sr., was also founder of the now dormant Zeta chapter at Central University in Richmond, Kentucky.

Through this connection, Phi Beta Sigma was led to petition Sigma Nu and thus Epsilon Eta (chapter 99) was added to the direct line of descendants of Lambda chapter at Washington and Lee. Although the charter was registered on May 30, 1921, the actual installation of Epsilon Eta did not take place until a week later on June 6.

Inspector Manley Joiner of the 3rd Division assisted by General Secretary Ernest Lee Williams and Inspector William L. Kemp of the 2nd Division performed the installation. Other notables attending the ceremonies included Brother Tom Stephenson on Gamma Delta, Dr. David Lee of Gamma Gamma and professor of Greek at the University of Tennessee. Brothers Charles Miley and Lewis Cook of Beta Omicron, Dr. F. F. Frantz of Beta Lambda and professor of French, and Brother Harvey Hannah of Kappa and Adjutant-General of Tennessee. Also, in attendance were Brothers Broughton (Mu), Hopkins (Kappa), Day and Webster (both of Gamma Alpha).

General Secretary Ernest Williams, more frequently called "Dad" Williams, arrived in Knoxville for the installation proceedings on Saturday, June 5. That night he held a meeting with the twenty-seven members of Phi Beta Sigma local (four of whom were already graduated) in a rented house at 1100 Clinch Avenue.

The house was later described to be inadequate and in poor condition, but at the time of installation, it and a bag of peanuts were the only two things to which the incipient Sigma Nu chapter could claim ownership. Time has since laid claims to both the house and the bag of peanuts.

On Sunday, June 6, a luncheon was held at the house of Brother Tom Stephenson (Gamma Delta) for those brothers and aspiring brothers to be participating in the morrow's installations.

That following Monday morning, pledging ceremonies were held beginning at nine-thirty. At two o'clock that afternoon initiation rites were begun. A second luncheon was held---this one served at the St. James Hotel in honor of the visiting brothers and guests. After the luncheon, the party returned to the fraternity house to complete the initiation proceedings.

At eight o'clock that evening, a banquet was given at Whittle Springs Golf and Country Club with Brother Harvey Hannah serving as toastmaster. Brother Williams first spoke on "The University and the Fraternity." Brother Tom Stephenson followed speaking on "Knoxville Sigma Nus." As unofficial representative of the university at the function, Dr. Lee spoke on "The University of Tennessee." Brother Claude Wilson, Epsilon Eta's first commander, responded with a toast to Epsilon Eta chapter. He

was succeeded by Brother Cooke who proposed a toast to Sewanee on the Mountain. The banquet was concluded with Brother Kemp speaking on "The Ideals of a Sigma Nu and a Gentlemen."

With the conclusion of the banquet, local Phi Beta Sigma---whose colors, oddly enough, were black and gold---took its place as the eighth national fraternity to be installed on the University of Tennessee campus. Howard H. Baker, EH 7 and later Tennessee Congressman, recorded the installation of Epsilon Eta. An interesting note in his report was the administration's expectations of "nearly 2000 students by next year."

Disconsolation was not long in attacking the newly established Sigma Nu chapter, however. On July 4, a month after the installation almost to the day, William Howard Hollomon (EH 19) drowned in the Tennessee River five miles above Knoxville. He buried at Kenton, Tennessee on July 7.

THE COMING OF AGE

From its very inception Sigma Nu showed capacity in the three fields of endeavor: scholarship, sports and campus publications. The Gordon Scholarship Cup for the highest fraternity average on campus was won by Sigma Nu the December following installation. Two brothers were members of the varsity football squad, while two others served as editors on the campus magazine and student newspaper. Brother Howard Baker was made editor-in-chief of the Mugwamp, the local humorous magazine, and Brother William Hamilton served as managing editor of the Orange and White, the weekly newspaper.

In January of 1922 Epsilon Eta was represented at its first Grand Chapter. Commander Claude Wilson and Brother Wickliffe Addington attended the twentieth Grand Chapter of Sigma Nu held that year in Philadelphia.

In May of 1922 Epsilon Eta celebrated its first anniversary by breaking into another field of endeavor. Brother Baker was elected president of the Senior Class---thereby becoming Sigma Nu's first advent into politics. William Hamilton was made editor-in-chief of the Orange and White, and Wickliffe Addington became vice-president of the Glee Club. Brother Charles Crump, former president of the Engineering Society, was elected president of the UT Chapter of the Association of Collegiate Engineers. Sports were also maintained at Epsilon Eta with Brothers Howard Johnson on the basketball team and Tom Stephenson on the track team.

Division Inspector Walter M. Noel at Grand Chapter in January 1924 praised the fledging chapter on its rapid progress especially in the area of scholarship. Epsilon Eta of Sigma Nu was coming of age.

Alumni Chapters were established in Nashville and Memphis, freshmen pledges were moved into the house to receive the greatest assistance from upperclassmen, and everyone was pushed into campus activities. By 1924 Epsilon Eta had already won the scholarship cup more times than any other fraternity on campus. The university itself accredited the chapter as having the best financial rating of all the fraternities on the hill.

In the summer of 1924 bursting with both pride and energy, Epsilon Eta of Sigma Nu decided to move from the inadequate house at 718 Cumberland to 720 West Hill, "the biggest and best furnished

fraternity house at the University of Tennessee in the most desirable residential section of Knoxville.” A flower bed was dug in front of the chapter house and flowers planted in black and gold to spell the Greek letters of Sigma Nu. To this day (1968) the Greek letters of Sigma Nu appear every year with the arrival of spring.

Later, on February 6, 1925, Epsilon Eta served as host in the new chapter house to the 3rd Division. Discussions on rushing procedures, scholarship, financing, discipline, and Division publications were held during the convention. Dean James D. Hoskins of UT spoke at the convention while Inspector Noel presided as toastmaster.

By 1926 Epsilon Eta had entered its first of two golden eras of athletics. This era, the smaller of the two, lasted until 1932 and was dominated by Paul Hug (UT Orange and White Hall of Fame) and Bobby Dodd (Georgia Tech football coach).

Hug and Dodd, members of the same pledge class, both participated on the undefeated freshmen football team of 1927. When 1928 arrived, Hug claimed the left-end position on the varsity squad and Dodd that of quarterback. The 1928 football team also went undefeated.

Besides varsity football “Whitney” Hug also had the distinction of being one of two students to serve on the University Athletic Council. His freshmen year, as a member of the freshmen track team, he broke the all-time UT record for the quarter mile. Hug also served on the boxing and wrestling teams.

Dodd, the more distinguished of the two, had the “distinction and signal honor” of serving as captain of both the football and basketball teams during his freshmen year. He likewise served on the track and baseball teams his freshmen year, thereby making him the first freshmen at the University of Tennessee to obtain four letters in sports.

Not only an outstanding figure in athletics, Dodd was a capable personality in campus politics. Elected Treasurer of his sophomore class, he expanded his political prowess by being chosen president of his junior class. His senior year he was recipient of the Torchbearer award.

UPDATES FROM THE DELTA (1920's)

The Delta, October 1921

By Howard H. Baker, Reporter, Epsilon Eta Chapter

On May 30th, the news arrived at West 1100 Clinch Avenue that the petition from Phi Beta Sigma had been approved, and the Epsilon Eta Chapter of Sigma Nu would be installed on June 6th. Preparations were made for the reception of the Sigma Nu officials and Chapter representatives.

Our General Secretary, Ernest Lee Williams, arrived in Knoxville sooner than we expected reaching here early Saturday morning. We had a meeting of the Fraternity on Saturday night, listening to the sage advice of the General Secretary, and to a speech from Brother David R. Lee, professor of Greek at the university.

On Monday morning the pledging ceremonies were performed, beginning at nine-thirty. Brother Manly R. Joiner, our Inspector, and Inspector W. L. Kemp arrived from Talladega, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, respectively. Brothers Milem and Book came up from Beta Omicron to assist in the ceremonies. Brothers Thomas J. Stephenson, Gamma Delta; F. F. Franz; David R. Lee, Gamma which began at two o'clock in the afternoon.

A luncheon was served at the St. James Hotel for the visitors by the pledges. After the luncheon, the entire party returned to the Chapter House, for the initiation ceremonies. The following active members were initiated into Sigma Nu Fraternity: (1) C. Guy Stephenson; (2) Maynard Kirk Walton; (3) Ernest Charles; (4) Claude Cecil Wilson; (5) Charles Orlando Crump; (6) August Oscar Kraehenbuehl; (7) Howard Henry Baker; (8) Charles Morgan Emory, Jr.; (9) William Russell Hamilton, Jr.; (10) Wayne Arthur Parkey; (11) Wickliffe Dale Addington; (12) Merlin Saville Gagle; (13) Royal James Wilmot; (14) Jacob Edmund Stanfill; (15) Lewis Nonaparte Moulton; (16) John Allen Artz; (17) Luke Moser McAmis; (18) Annie Howard Johnson; (19) William Howard Hollomon; (20) James Bradley Mankin; (21) Roy Walton Davis; (22) Charles Henry Paris; (23) John Otto Kraehenhuehl. The following Alumni members were initiated into Sigma Nu; (24) Hale Weiser Holland; (25) George Forman; (26) Charles Enoch Perkins; (27) Lonas John Varnell.

To conclude the events of the day, a banquet was held at the Whittle Springs Golf and Country Club at eight o'clock. The Toastmaster of the occasion was Brother Harvey H. Hannah, Kappa, Adjutant-General of Tennessee, who conducted the program in an admirable manner, bringing down the house with his jokes, and making a wonderful speech on the future of Sigma Nu at the University of Tennessee. Brother Ernest Lee Williams gave a most practical and inspiring address on the "The University and the Fraternity." "Dad" became so enthusiastic over the graceful motions of the young dancing girl that he spread his glass of water all over the floor. Brother T. I. Stephenson spoke on the "Knoxville Sigma Nus;" Brother Lee on "The University of Tennessee," and Brother Claude C. Wilson responded to the toast: Epsilon Eta Chapter." Brother Book responded to the toast, "Sewanee on the Mountain ." Brother Hopkins, Kappa, responded to the "Red-Headed Georgia Cracker," and Brother W. L. Kemp made a very interesting address on the "Ideals of a Sigma Nu and a Gentlemen."

Brother Hannah at the banquet, spoke most eloquently of the great day, June 6th, on which day the two new buildings of the University of Tennessee were dedicated, and Sigma Nu "spread her wings over the University." The two new buildings, just completed at the cost of over a million dollars, were formally presented to the University of Tennessee by the Governor, Alf A. Taylor, on June 6th. At the last session of the legislature, a half-mill tax was levied for the support of the State University. This provides approximately one million dollars annually for its support. The university can now accommodate at least two thousand students, and that number will undoubtedly, be reached within the next two years.

We welcome all Sigma Nus to our home, and it is our sincere desire, that through our efforts, Epsilon Eta Chapter may become and remain a strong part of Sigma Nu Fraternity, of which we are so proud to be a part.

Epsilon Eta's House

The Delta, March 1923

By George B. Shaeffer

As a general thing, all infants for a number of years after their birth have to crawl around and take what is left after the older folks getting through cutting the pie, and are generally told to be seen and not heard; but this is not the case with one of the infants of that Sigma Nu mother of mine. Infant Epsilon Eta stepped right out into the world as soon as it was installed and began to make the University of Tennessee take notice. This chapter has a new home, which is proclaimed by all the most ideal home for fraternity purposes at this institution. It is especially adapted for the work of the Fraternity, being built for the purpose under the direction of the Chapter.

The building was completed this Summer and is beautifully equipped with the most modern fixtures and furniture. The House itself is of brick, having hardwood floors downstairs and is well planned for the purpose of giving the House dances. The reception hall, Chapter room and dining room all open into each other, making one great room.

The House is ideally located half-way between the city and the University. It is constructed of brick with a shingled second store. The outside of the House is not nearly so impressive as the interior.

There are ten rooms in the House and two baths, with showers and a finished sleeping porch in the rear. The House throughout has been planned to fit the requirements of a fraternity house.

The living room runs across the entire front, having an open fireplace at one end and a stairway at the other. A wide archway leads from the living room on the left to the dining room which extends twenty-five feet toward the back. Back of this is the kitchen. Back of the living room to the right is a small centrally located orchestra room. The three large rooms surrounding this room constitute an ideal house dance floor. There are also two bedrooms and a bath downstairs.

In the second story there are five bedrooms for the old men, accommodating two old men each. Across the back of the entire second story there is a large "rat dormitory" accommodating twelve men with their study rooms connecting. The House presents the appearance of being small, but due to the ideal arrangement every foot of space is utilized and it makes a commodious home for twenty-five men. The attic is used for storage of trunks. In the basement there is a beautiful Chapter room and pool room. This room is finished—walls, floor ceiling and all in mahogany red. It is indirect lights and is an ideal meeting room. The furnishings of the House have been chosen with an idea of permanency and the utilization of space rather than the cutting of the expense. Double-deck beds are used throughout the House with the exception of the guest room. The curtains and draperies were designed for the House.

Some of the older Chapters have been very much interested in how we were able to do this. It is a simple answer. We have only twenty-eight Alumni yet every one of them contribute to the House fund. Every active man contributed. We keep our accounts on the Uniform Accounting System and permit no delinquency. Our House is not fully paid for, yet we have had no assessment until yet and are not

contemplating any. We are already planning the erection of a \$50,000 House as soon as we finish payment on this House which will not be long. In other words, we are working for the future, our eyes upon a goal which becomes higher and higher as the succeeding years fade into the past.

New House at Tennessee and Epsilon Eta's Plans

The Delta, October 1924

By Emmett Hoge, Commander

When rushing season opens, we will be there to make a "killing." The Alumni Chapters in Tennessee have entertained rushes for the coming year with dinners, swimming parties, dances, etc., and their surpassed activity is appreciated by the Active Chapters. Rushees are eligible to be pledged, according to our panhellenic rules, as soon as they are matriculated in the university. We have made plans for various entertainments for our prospective pledges.

After pledging freshmen, we request of them that they move into the House so that they may have the advantage of all the assistance possible to give them by the upperclassmen. We select from the various campus activities the branch best suited for each individual, and in this way get him started to work and interested in the university. Of course, the social side of life is one of the secondary purposes we stand for as a Fraternity; it is in a way necessary and we will have our freshmen represented at all of the social functions, too.

For rank in scholarship, you will find Sigma Nu engraved more times on the scholarship cup over at the university than any other Fraternity. Scholarship is, or should be the primary object of any undergraduate, and we always have supervised study hours at night for our freshmen.

When it comes to finances and business management, this is where we excel all the other fraternities at the University of Tennessee; for we have the system, and it works like a machine. All obligations from members are due thirty days in advance. If the account is not paid by the fifteenth of the month a ten percent tax goes on, and, if by the thirtieth of the month the original sum plus the tax still remains unpaid, suspension takes place at once. Collecting obligations from members to the Chapter is the most difficult part of the financial side, and if no one is allowed to become delinquent there should be no trouble.

I think that the Faculty's opinion of us is "good" for when it comes to scholarship and campus activities we are "up there among 'em", and those two points are the strongest that they have to judge us by.

Our Chapter House is by far the best fraternity house at the university. We moved in our new house this summer and have it furnished beautifully. This will aid greatly in rushing and also give us an inspiration to carry out our plans in full detail. We extend a cordial invitation to all Sigma Nus to come visit us.

HOSPITALITY AT EPSILON ETA: Tennessee Alumni Chapter Help in Rushing

By Wyatt C. Wilkinson, Recorder

December 1924

The Alumni Chapters, especially the one at Memphis, Tennessee, have rendered a very great service by giving banquets, dances, and other forms of entertainments for the prospects during the summer, and to these Chapters we are greatly indebted for their untiring efforts to advance the cause of Sigma Nu.

Epsilon Eta is now located in her new house on West Hill Avenue, which is a great dream of the Chapter come true. This house is located in one of the most desirable residential sections of the city and is especially well arranged for a fraternity home. A picture of the House appeared in the October issue of The Delta.

The Chapter is putting on a study campaign which is having great efforts on everyone in the House. By this means we hope to bring our scholarship up beyond the required mark, and to win the scholarship cup we have won this cup three times and last time we were second, our average being only .23 lower than the winning fraternity.

It has been our pleasure to have as our visitors lately the following Brothers: Russell Nixon, Gamma Lambda, Valparaiso, Ind.; Raymond S. Johnson, Gamma Tau, University of Minnesota; Gunder A. Torstenson, Beta Mu; and Mahan Siler Epsilon, Vanderbilt University.

We wish to extend a very cordial invitation to any Brother who happens to be in our territory to visit us and really see for himself what Epsilon Eta is doing.

EPSILON ETA WINS INTER-FRATERNITY: Basketball Trophy at Tennessee

The Delta, May 1925

By Robert R. Dodson, Commander

The annual inter-fraternity basketball tournament at the University of Tennessee was won by the Epsilon Eta Chapter. The colors of Sigma Nu still remained on top after the two hard fought games with Sigma Chi and A.T.O. in the finals. The personnel of the team was: Loraine Carter and Eugene Caruthers, forward; Young, center; Thomas Mahan and Charles Walker, guard. James Callis and Robert Paris were most capable subs.

Captain Loraine Carter proved to be a fine leader last year. Ed Young has been chosen captain of next year's team. Brother Siler served the team as coach and his work was revealed by the play of Epsilon Eta's smooth working quintet.

The large silver loving cup which now reposes on the mantel in the drawing room of the Chapter House will remind the Sigma Nus for years to come of the huge success of Coach Siler's men against the stiffest opposition ever found in fraternity basketball at the University of Tennessee.

UPDATES FROM THE VOLUNTEER (Yearbook)

1924-25 (1925, The Volunteer)

The fifth annual cross-country run, held Thanksgiving Day, was won by Josh Leshner, who covered the difficult mile and one-half course in the remarkable time of nine minutes and fifty-nine seconds. The relay carnival this was much more interesting than those of former years. The Sigma Nu and the Alpha Tau Omega pledges won the fraternity relay cups, while the Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority won the sorority trophy. The inter-fraternity basketball tournament was won by the Sigma Nu basketball team, which went through the entire season without a single loss. They defeated the Alpha Tau Omega by one point in the final game.

Inter-Fraternity Basketball (1926, The Volunteer)

1925-26

Sigma Nu regained the fraternity basketball championship, defeating Sigma Alpha Epsilon in the final game of the tournament 15-9. This is the second consecutive year that they have won the championship. This year the winner of the tournament was decided through eliminations.

As is usual, many of the games were close, while on the other hand there were some that were just the opposite. Beta Alpha Omega beat Alpha Tau Omega 8-7, Delta Tau Delta defeated Sigma Phi Epsilon 9-8, and Sigma Chi beat Phi Gamma Delta 13-11. During the early games of the tournament playing was rather dull. Very few field goals were registered, in fact most games were won on free throws.

Men's Pan-Hellenic Council

1921-22

H. H. Baker

C. C. Wilson

1922-23

G. B. Shaeffer

E. Hoge

1923-24

Emmet Hoge

R. R. Dodson (Treasurer)

1924-25

R. R. Dodson (Treasurer)

	George Oldham
1925-26	George Oldham
	Carmack Wadsworth
1926-27	Ed Young
	Jules Bayer
1927-28	William P. Ridley, Jr.
	Mac H. Hornbeck
1928-29	Mack Hornbeck
	William P. Ridley (President)
<u>Interfraternity Council</u>	
1929-30	Marion Russell (Vice President)
	Byron Hamilton