Brothers and Sisters

Getting fraternity collections into the Archives

Wesley W. Wilson
Coordinator of Archives and Special Collections
Midwest Archives Conference
April 30, 2011
Who we are: DePauw University is …

- Private liberal arts
- Founded 1837
- Archives est. 1951
- Joint archives
Vandana Ashby University
Budget Request

Joint Archives Committee

Committee on Finance and Administration (Church)

VP for Academic Affairs/Board of Trustees
The Greek tradition at DePauw
THE VALIANT FOUR

“Our youth, joy and truth, At thine altar’s feet.”

B. L. H. in 1870
A. A. B. in 1871
B. T. L. in 1870
H. F. S. in 1870
THE FOUNDERS

Olive Burnett Clark
Anna Allen Smith
Nellie Gamble Childe
Estelle Leonard
Amy DuBois Rieth
Bertha Deniston Cunningham
Bessie Grooms Keenan
(deceased)
Documenting student life = Collecting student organizations’ records
The Mirror

Published by

The Secret Societies,

IN THE

Indiana Asbury University.

GREENCASTLE, May, 1877.

EVANSVILLE, INDIANA:
Journal Co., Steam Printers, Stationers and Binders.
1877.
Faculty

HILLARY ASBURY GOBIN, A.M., D.D., LL.D.
Vice-President and Meburry-Jeffers Professor of Biblical Science.
A.B., DePauw University, 1870; A.M., DePauw University, 1873; D.D., DePauw University, 1880; Professor of Greek Language and Literature, DePauw University, 1880-1886; President, Baker University, 1886-1890; Dean School of Theology, DePauw University, 1890-1896; President DePauw University, 1893-1913; LL.D., Baker University, 1903; LL., DePauw University, 1909; Vice-President and Professor of Biblical Science, DePauw University, 1909—

“Goodness and wit make a wholesome and attractive combination”.

EDWIN POST, Ph.D.
Dean of the College and George Manners Professor of the Latin Language and Literature. A.B., Dickinson, 1872; A.M., 1875; Ph.D., 1884; Student of Philology in the Universities of Bonn and Berlin, 1886-1888; Instructor in Greek and Latin in Pennington Seminary, 1872-1877; Librarian of DePauw University, 1879-1896; Vice-President of DePauw University, 1893-1903; Professor of Latin, University of Chicago, Summer Session, 1894; Professor of Latin, University of Wisconsin, Summer Session, 1901; George Manners Professor of the Latin Language and Literature, DePauw University, 1879—

“You don’t have to take Latin to appreciate him. Just step into his office any time.”
Want to look up some DePauw history?

Look no further then the DePauw University Archives. Your source for everything about DePauw.

www.depauw.edu/library/archives
Includes The DePauw, Indiana's oldest college newspaper, and the DePauw Magazine, the University's alumni publication. The DePauw has been digitized with full-text searching 1878 to 1970. Full issues are also available from 1971 to 1989 with selected-headline indexing only.
How it all started:

Phi Psi and the Fox bros.
Phi Kappa Psi records

Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism
11 E. Lombe Street
Greencastle, IN
765-658-4406
archives@depauw.edu

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2011-04-05T13:06:0400
Language: Description is in English.

Repository: Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism
Title: Phi Kappa Psi records
Dates: 1865-2010
Quantity: 11.8 Linear feet, 18 containers, 12 volumes
Identification: STO.0025.001

Collection Statement

Minutes, reports, financial records, logbook, scrapbook, guest register, activity records and photographs.

Historical Sketch

Phi Kappa Psi was formed in 1865 by non-fraternity students and dissatisfied members of Beta Theta Pi and Phi Gamma Delta. Thirteen men were voted into membership by the Ohio Alpha Chapter. First known as "Phi Kaps" or Phi Kappas, these thirteen men were initiated into the National Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi on April 5, 1865. For this reason, the first charter was issued on the second day of the fraternity's official birthday.
Competition played a role –

The fraternity collections that followed
Delta Chi
Sigma Nu
(Thibideau)
Sororities, too – sort of
Alpha Gamma Delta
Good, solid deposit agreements are a must.
AGREEMENT
Indiana Alpha Chapter
Phi Kappa Psi
DePauw University
Greencastle, Indiana

The purpose of this letter is to confirm the circumstances surrounding the donation of records by the Indiana Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi in December of 1988. Perhaps the most important aspect of this letter is the condition that the chapter retains ownership or property rights of the "donated" material. With property rights remaining with us, the chapter would like the DePauw Archives to recognize the following stipulations on the Phi Kappa Psi records:

1. Bound volumes 163 and 236, which span from February 1856 to August 1906; Class of 1966 "Rag Book"; and the Alumni Day Register and Senior Awards from 1959-1985 (DC 1727, Folder 3) are restricted from public use unless the researcher has written permission from the president or vice president of the chapter. This material should remain restricted for a period of 30 years. Note: Volume 163 holds 13 years of chapter minutes. All years recorded in the volume must be at least thirty years old in order for the volume to become unrestricted. Thus, volume 163, which ends in 1969, should become unclassified in 1999. This restriction also applies to volume 263 and the 1959-1985 alumni day register (DC 1727, Folder 3).

2. Any quotation from the Phi Kappa Psi records intended for publication must have permission from the president or vice president of Phi Kappa Psi. The same stipulation applies to all photographs in scrapbooks and photo albums.

3. Any material that is donated in the future should fall under these guidelines:
   a. All minute books, "Ragbooks", and Senior Awards follow the 30-year restriction described in stipulation 1.
   b. Unrestricted class should be given to all scrapbooks, registers, and photo albums that are donated in the future.

4. The Phi Kappa Psi chapter has the right to remove the collection or any part of it from the Archives. A fee may be arranged to cover the costs in processing the collection.

In agreement, the DePauw University Archives recognizes the conditions above pertaining to the collection of records that has been donated by the Indiana Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi.
AGREEMENT
Indiana Alpha Chapter
Phi Kappa Psi
DePauw University
Greencastle, Indiana

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What use are the collections?
Where we are now?
1985: 12 fraternities
10 sororities

2010: 9 fraternities
6 sororities
(in chapter houses)
0 2 4 6 8 10 12
Sororities w/o houses
Sororities
1985 2010
Inventory summaries provide a sneak peek of the collections held in the Archives. Each summary includes a biographical or historical sketch, a collection statement, and a contents list of the materials housed in Archives.
Brothers and Sisters: Getting Fraternity and Sorority Records into the Archives  
Midwest Archives Conference  
April 30, 2011

Who we are: DePauw University is … [highlighting indicates new slide]

A private liberal arts university of 2300 enrollment in Greencastle, a town of 13,000 in West Central Indiana.

- **Founded 1837** by the Methodist Episcopal – now United Methodist – Church: The University came about as a result of a competition among towns in the area sponsored by the church education committee, headed up by Calvin Ruter, an itinerant Methodist minister much interested in education. Despite his scary appearance, he was described by contemporaries as “a portly vigorous man who possessed a strong and clear voice well-adapted to outdoor preaching.” The story goes that a town in the neighboring county to the northwest had secured the highest bid for establishment of the college. Word leaked out, and the citizens of Greencastle topped Rockville’s bid winning the competition and the university. We have in the Archives the pledge document for the citizens of Rockville, but not the winning pledge list from Greencastle.

- **Archives founded in 1951** by alumnus and Methodist minister, **Worth M. Tippy**: He was in his 80s when he convinced the church and university to agree to the founding of the Archives and most remarkably, to fund it.

- We are a **Joint Archives** supported equally by DePauw and UMC: Funding roughly equal, budgeting having to go to our advisory committee, a United Methodist Church finance committee, the library director, vice-president for academic affairs and ultimately the board of trustees.

The Greek tradition

- The Greek tradition started early at DePauw with **Beta Theta Pi’s founding in 1845**, just eight years after the University’s founding. DePauw, or Indiana Asbury University as it was first known – named for the first American Methodist bishop, Francis Asbury – was not unusual for its time. It was founded by Methodists as you just heard, but Earlham was founded by Quakers, Wabash and Hanover by Presbyterians. The Methodists in Indiana at the time believed, not without reason, that Indiana University was controlled by the Presbyterians, too. They sought relief from the state legislature in the form of a
law to require that appointments to the board and faculty of IU include Methodists. It failed. So they had to start their own college.

- The students who first came to DePauw were often not very sophisticated and sometimes downright backwoodsy. Between classes, studies, jobs to pay for their room and board, there wasn’t much free time. When they had free time, entertainment was hard to come by: hikes in the country, exploration of the local cave, visits to Fern Cliff and the Half-Way House and the occasional Snipe Hunt. It was all boys. Athletics were discouraged as ungentlemanly. In this environment, the Literary Societies reigned supreme. Philo, Plato, and others met in rooms supplied by the University for discussion and debate. Good wholesome and serious “fun,” endorsed by the faculty and administration. But, 18 to 22 year-old men are not satisfied with such tame activity. Several of them began to meet after hours in the literary society rooms. Secret societies were opposed by the Methodist Episcopal Church. So when it was finally discovered that Beta Theta Pi was on campus and that some of the literary society members were a part of it, it caused a stir. The Methodist ban on secret societies not with-standing, the fraternity numbers grew and soon two more chapters of national Greek letter organizations were founded at DePauw – Sigma Chi and Phi Gamma Delta. DePauw students, like students at rural colleges elsewhere in Indiana’s early years, needed a livelier outlet for their energy than a debating society and the fraternity provided it.

- Soon the competition was too much for the literary societies and they lost dominance. Literary societies hung on until the early 1900s at DePauw, but well before then, fraternities had begun to dominate the social scene at DePauw.

- Within just a few years of their admittance in 1867, four of the first women students at DePauw formed the first fraternity for ladies, Kappa Alpha Theta, in 1870. With the encouragement of the faculty, the four persevered and the fraternity grew. The founders were: Bettie Locke, Bettie Tipton, Hannah Fitch and Alice Allen.

- Another first occurred when the alpha chapter of Alpha Chi Omega was founded in 1885 by some music students who opened it to all women students.

- By the 1980s, three-fourths of students at DePauw University were members of fraternities and sororities.

Documenting student life = collecting student organizations’ records

- An archives is only documenting half of its history if it only collects administrative and academic archival records (president, vp, departments). Students love to learn what life was like for their predecessors years ago. At our Archives, one of the most popular resources for that are scrapbooks. Students pore over the clippings, letters and personal items pasted onto the big, thick and often brittle pages. They laugh at the way things were then and reflect a little on how similar it is to their lives at the same time.
Fraternity and sorority records are just as important sources of information. Especially on a campus with the high numbers of Greek affiliated students as DePauw.

- **Yearbooks** are a good resource, too, but there are some short-comings. The first is that they are uneven in their representation of the campus. Many early yearbooks lacked photographs and much documentation. The writing was attributed with pseudonyms. Some years later they became actual **documentary sources** naming all faculty and students with athletics, clubs and activities such as theater. After a while, they began to include dances and other social events. Then we **hit a period** starting in the late 1960s when they lacked almost all documentary value. Lots of unidentified photographs and no faculty or staff mentioned. Now yearbooks are disappearing.

- DePauw University does not have a yearbook anymore. (Is there anyone in the audience who has recently had their college yearbook discontinued?) I think it was a combination of cost, participation, and leadership that finally caused the *Mirage* to cease publication. **In the last two years**, the Archives took out ads in hopes of helping the *Mirage’s* revenue stream. We were the only ad in the next to last issue and shared space with the architect, engineer and plumbing contractor for the most recent building project in the last issue.

- **Student newspapers** are still in publication and while not completely reflective of the total campus – they can be heavily influenced by their editorial staffs. Newspapers do provide readers with the highlights of campus events and news, but they seldom look very deeply into what is important to students, like fraternity records or even the yearbooks do. Of course for a good study any researcher should consult a variety of resources and newspapers should be a part of it.

**How it all started**: Phi Psi and the Fox bros.

- So, in order to expand our holdings into documentation of this significant aspect of DePauw University’s history, we began to actively collect Greek letter organization records. It started with a letter to the chapter presidents asking them to consider preservation of their records in the Archives. We got that list from the office of Student Affairs. About the same time, we had **twin brothers** working in the Archives, both members of the same fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi. Phi Kappa Psi is a next door neighbor to the library. The year before the library underwent a renovation, Phi Psi had undergone a renovation, too. Phi Psi’s temporary quarters during its renovation, became the library’s temporary quarters when we began our renovation the following year. We seemed to have some things in common.

- **Phi Kappa Psi** was formed in 1865 by non-fraternity students and dissatisfied members of Beta Theta Pi and Phi Gamma Delta. Thirteen men were voted into membership by the Ohio Alpha Chapter, first known as "Phi Kaps" or Phi Kappas,” and today as “Phi
Psis.” As with many fraternities, the first chapter room was a rented hall on the second floor of a downtown office building. The chapter rented houses at several locations before deciding shortly after the start of World War I to build on the site of the present location at 502 South College Avenue. The house was damaged by fire in 1916 and was eventually replaced by a new house in 1923.

- Matt first started to work for the Archives and shortly after Pierre joined our staff. Pierre was the key hire to get the fraternity ball rolling. Pierre was historian for Phi Psi, and a history major. (Incidentally, while Pierre was a history major, we have generally found no correlation between a student staff member’s major and their interest in our work in the Archives. We have had successful student employees from nearly every area of study at DePauw.) Pierre first approached me with the idea of placing their records at the Archives. We talked some time about it and decided that an agreement of some sort would need to be drawn up clearly indicating what each institution’s responsibilities were in regard to the Phi Kappa Psi records being placed at the university archives.

- The agreement was first drafted by Pierre in consultation with the fraternity’s alumni advisor and legal counsel. The most important aspect of the agreement is the point made in the opening paragraph that states that the records remain the property of the fraternity and are in reality on deposit. This is probably the single determining factor in getting fraternity records into the Archives. If the chapter representatives feel secure in the knowledge that the records are still their property, then they also feel secure in entrusting them to the Archives for long-term preservation. To quote the agreement: “With property rights remaining with us, the chapter would like the DePauw Archives to recognize the following stipulations on the Phi Kappa Psi records.” Other points describe what was deposited and which of those records are restricted. Some were restricted for a time period (30 years), after which they are open. Copyright and property rights are retained by the fraternity and are indicated in the agreement. This agreement also included a section that described what sort of future deposits might arrive and how or whether they would be restricted, too.

- Permission to view records may be requested from the President or Vice-President of the fraternity chapter. Permission to quote or publish materials from the collection must also be given by chapter officers.

- Future deposits are described as being open to research use, but I believe that if the fraternity representatives later felt otherwise, they would indicate it at the time of the deposit.

- Last, Phi Kappa Psi reserved the right to remove records from the Archives. This has not happened with Phi Psi, but it has with another fraternity. The other fraternity arranged for me to set up an exhibit of their records at the house for an alumni event. I set it up
and took it down on the same day. I imagine that we might do something similar for Phi Psi should they ask.

- **Who better to process** and describe the collection than Pierre and Matt Fox? They produced a nicely detailed inventory because they took the time and care to include information that was important to the final product. It was revised with the addition of new material two years after they graduated, but it is essentially the same description.

**Competition played a role** – the fraternity collections that followed

- With the addition of the Phi Kappa Psi records in 1989, we now had two fraternity collections. The other was **Delta Kappa Epsilon** that had come in much earlier without restrictions. Other work-study students in fraternities heard about the Phi Psi records. Various ones over the next few years talked with me about the possibility of depositing records at the Archives. As employees, they knew our repository and its collections, generally. They could present a persuasive argument for preservation of their chapter’s records and recommend it to their houses. This worked.
- **Delta Upsilon**, 1990-92, an open agreement, deposit initiated by a work-study student
- **Delta Chi**, 1992, deposit initiated by a student researcher.
- **Lambda Chi Alpha**, 1993, deposit initiated by a work-study student.
- **Sigma Alpha Epsilon**, 1995, deposit initiated by a work-study student.
- **Sigma Nu**, poems about Thibideau, their chapter Saint Bernard, 1995, deposit arranged by alumni.
- Sigma Nu, 2000, deposit initiated by a work-study student.
- And about when we thought there would be no more, **Alpha Tau Omega** brought their records in 2007 (Their records had been here before and removed in the ‘80s, now they’re back).
- Competition extended beyond the fraternities, too … The **Men’s Hall Association** records deposit was arranged by alumni (Its founding was a case of the anti-fraternity becoming a “fraternity”).
  - Not really a new phenomenon
  - Many fraternities started in response to something that students felt was not right about the existing Greek letter social organizations
  - This one was late (1930s) and local
  - Within a decade or so, it adopted all the trappings of a fraternity – seal, pins and formal membership
  - At their big reunion in 1997, they donated all their early records to the Archives w/o restriction
Sororities, too – sort of

- Records from sororities have not arrived in the volume or comprehensiveness of the fraternity collections.
- We did receive some items from our “field agent” – a neighborhood lady who collected cans for recycling and once in a while, items for the Archives. This time she found scrapbooks and a hand-written magazine with decorative covers called the Mirror, made by members of Alpha Phi in the teens.
- Alpha Gamma Delta letters to and from alumni, 2000; a scrapbook in 2008, gift arranged by alumni.
- We have advised and assisted Delta Zeta and Tri-Delta with temporary deposits when their chapters closed.

Good, solid deposit agreements are a must

- The Phi Psi example was so comprehensive, it became a model for future ones. A balance was struck between privacy and open access. As mentioned above, it described the type of records received and which ones have restricted access.
- While Delta Upsilon is non-secret, an agreement still exists because the records remain the property of the chapter.

What use are the collections?

- Students use them to look at their chapter in the past: Two of the older fraternity collections were used years ago by pledges on assignment from the actives in charge of their orientation. They would come in and spend a couple hours looking for some obscure bit of information. While looking they would see many more items that would give them a glimpse into the life of a member of their fraternity from years earlier. When one of the fraternities closed several years ago, the importance of keeping the records became very apparent.
- Other students look at open parts of collections for information about student life.
- Records have been used for papers comparing student organizations – a fraternity compared to Men’s Hall Association, for example.
- They preserve the local chapter of the organization’s history. Believe it or not, sometimes 18-22 year-olds don’t appreciate historical records – even their own organization’s records.
Where we are now?

- **Most all the chapters** that wanted to or could deposit records, already have, we believe, but we could be surprised again.
- Fewer chapters exist now than when we started our initiative over 20 years ago.
- There are **decreasing numbers** of fraternities and sororities at DePauw:
  - 1985: 12 fraternities, 10 sororities
  - 2010: 9 fraternities and 6 sororities in chapter houses
  - But if we look at the numbers that include chapters without houses
    - In 2010 for fraternities: There are 4 w/o houses – 2 lost houses, 2 never had them (didn’t exist in 1985)
    - In 2010 for sororities: There are 6 w/o houses, none of these had ever had chapter houses
- **So now we need to begin** to work with the newer chapters that do not have houses to arrange for more fraternity and sorority records deposits.