

# **ΔΘ - Delta Theta**

## **The Pennsylvania State University Chapter**

### **May 17, 1952**

Barton A. Fields and Bob Hanna arrived on the main campus of the Pennsylvania State College in September 1950. They had met the previous year and become good friends while attending the Harrisburg branch campus of Penn State as freshmen and had agreed to become roommates when they got to University Park.

When they arrived on campus, they moved into the dormitories. In those days the College extended an unusual courtesy: there was a short transition period during which you could get out of the dormitories if during that time you were able to make other living arrangements. Fields and Hanna decided that they couldn't afford the dorms and promptly started looking elsewhere for lodgings. They ended up getting a room at the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity house on Atherton Street along with sophomores Roger Sneed and Allen Haile. When asked why they chose to live at the Que House, Brother Fields explained that with only fifty or so African Americans on campus and with racial prejudice as rampant as it was, there really weren't a whole lot of choices.

While living at the Que house, Fields and Hanna enjoyed the camaraderie of their future rivals and developed associations that lasted for years. Among the Ques, it was generally assumed that they would pledge Omega sometime in the coming year. But Barton had other ideas. For some time, he had been friends with Nupes in the Philadelphia area and he entered Penn State with a strong determination to pledge Kappa.

Allen Haile and Roger Sneed on the other hand decided to give Omega Psi Phi a try. Along with another sophomore, Walter Hutchins, they joined the Ques' Fall 1950 line. But according to Brother Hutchins, something happened that semester which turned all three of them completely off and caused them to depledge.

Since they were thoroughly disillusioned with Omega Psi Phi, when Barton approached the trio about pledging Kappa, they enthusiastically embraced the idea. Roger Sneed had two brothers who were Nupes at Lincoln so, given a choice between Kappa and Que, it was only natural that he would choose Kappa anyway. Barton's good friend and roommate, Bob Hanna, was of course also down with the program. That fall they also met a sixth companion, the late Herbert Winston, a sophomore from Philadelphia, who decided to join their noble quest.

They all were excited by the prospect of starting an organization from scratch and having the opportunity to shape things in their own image. In particular, they were opposed to some of the more stringent physical requirements of pledging. By starting a new chapter, they hoped that they could make the Fraternity a kinder, gentler organization.

During Christmas break of 1950, Barton Fields, Herbert Winston and Walter Hutchins, met with the late John Williams, a Kappa from Lambda Chapter. During their visit, they obtained all of the information they needed to become Scrollers.

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Once they decided to become Kappas, they faced the daunting task of informing the Ques. Barton sat down with the President of the Ques, the late Richard Payton, to break the news. Surprisingly, he learned that Payton had also once heard the siren song of **Kappa Alpha Psi**, but had somehow gotten lost along the way. Payton explained that he had been a Scroller at North Carolina A & T but when he transferred to Penn State he learned that there were no Kappas on campus. Lacking the enthusiasm to change things for the better, he decided to pledge Que instead. Having given their notice, the four prospective Scrollers decided to move out of the Que House and try to find a place of their own.

In 1951, State College was much more of a rural community than it is today. It was difficult for anyone to find housing, much less a group of African Americans in a cold glacier of pristine white faces. Bob Hanna remembers answering the advertisement for a place to stay bright and early one snowy morning. It was the very next day after seeing the ad but upon entering the house, he was told that the apartment had already been rented. He found this particularly curious since there weren't any other footprints in the snow leading up to the house.

The foursome eventually did find lodgings at Mrs. Gifford's boarding house, which was just off West College Avenue. Fields and Hanna have fond memories of dealing with their landlady at this address. They explained that the thermostat was covered with a grate so that they couldn't get to the controls to turn up the heat. But Roger Sneed figured out that if you put towels on the grate and soaked the towels with alcohol, the effect of the alcohol evaporating would cool the thermostat enough to raise the temperature. Fields laughingly explained that "the landlady never did figure that one out!"

Shortly after Christmas break, Louis Ivey, a transfer student from Temple, was introduced to the crew by Herb Winston. Ivey and Winston had met in the Fall of 1950 while they were both living in the Nittany dormitories. Lou had been exposed to **Kappa Alpha Psi** while attending Temple the previous year and had become friends with John Williams. It wasn't long after he met Barton Fields and the others that Lou Ivey decided that he too wanted to become part of the bond that was growing among this very special group of young men.

The addition of Lou Ivey augmented the total number of prospective Scrollers to seven. The pledge period commenced in January 1951. Since there weren't any Kappas on campus, pledging was conducted from afar. The Scrollers were required to come to Philadelphia on certain weekends to visit Lambda Chapter's fraternity house on Belmont Avenue (south of Girard Avenue) where they received instruction and indoctrination from the Brothers of that chapter. Brothers from Lambda and Philadelphia Alumni also came up to State College on the weekends to provide guidance on site.

Lambda tradition dictated that the final week of pledging, Hell Week or Probation, would commence the Monday after Easter when all of the surrounding colleges were out of school for Spring Break. At this point, Delta Theta did not exist so Probation was conducted in Philadelphia by Lambda Chapter. There, Barton Fields, Roger Sneed, Allen Haile, Walter Hutchins, Louis Ivey, and Herbert Winston joined Lambda Chapter Scrollers Charles Bowser, Rollin Washington, and Mark Canty in being initiated into **Kappa Alpha Psi**. Despite the

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protests of his line brothers who offered to loan him the money, Bob Hanna deferred his initiation until the following year because he couldn't afford it at the time.

Most of the initiation activities were conducted at a Masonic Hall in South Philadelphia. Included in Probation was an interesting script about a trip through a desert aboard camels. (Sound familiar?) This script was developed by John Williams and Lambda's 1951 initiates were among the first to experience it. The following year after our chapter was chartered, it became a Delta Theta tradition that lasted for more than thirty years.

After the initiation ceremonies, six new Nupes returned to State College to continue their studies. Now that they were Kappas, they could begin to work in earnest on making their group into an official chapter.

When first approached with the idea, the Pan Hellenic Council and the University administration offered resistance to the idea of establishing another Black fraternity on campus. They seemed to think that with the Alphas and the Ques already on campus, Black males already had an ample selection of organizations to choose from. But with the help of John Williams, Barton Fields was able to persuade the administration that if White students had a choice of fifty or more fraternities, Black students should be able to choose from at least three. Barton remembers John Williams as being a veritable firebrand during the ensuing discussions. Although he went on to become a doctor by profession, Barton claims he presented his arguments with the vigor and enthusiasm of a prosecuting attorney. And it was a good thing too: the negotiations were not without some degree of animosity. At one point Barton threatened to write a letter to the *Pittsburgh Courier* about the situation. Ultimately, the administration yielded and in the persona of Dean Harold W. Perkins approved the formation of the new chapter.

In the fall of 1951, McKinley Wardlaw transferred to Penn State from Tuskegee. At Tuskegee, he had pledged Kappa and become part of the Gamma Epsilon chapter. When he first arrived on campus, he temporarily moved into the Eisenhower Hotel. When he learned that there was a group of Kappas on campus, he quickly made their acquaintance and moved it with them. By this time the Kappas had moved from the Gifford's to an apartment in the 400 block of South Fraser Street.

Later that year, the group found a house not far from the Gifford's which they began to envision as a full-fledged fraternity house. Located at 523 W. College Avenue, it was quite large, consisting of a first floor that included a very large living room, a social room, a dining room, kitchen and bathroom. The second and third floors consisted of five and four bedrooms each with a full bath respectively. They did some quick computations and determined that the cost of renting the entire house would work out better than their current arrangement at the apartment.

Just before Christmas of 1951 and well before they received their charter, the group moved into the first fraternity house. Barton Fields, Roger Snead, Allen Haile, Walt Hutchins, McKinley Wardlaw and Bob Hanna were the first occupants of the new fraternity house. (Lou Ivey's mother wouldn't let him move into the house because she thought his grades would suffer. Herbert Winston also declined fraternity house living.) Leroy Yates and Malcolm Taylor, two independents, also rented rooms in the House much like Fields, Snead, Hanna

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and Haile had lived in the Que House. Arent structure of \$25 per month for Brothers and \$20 per month for non-brothers was established. (Lou Ivey continued to contribute to the rental even though he was not living at the House.)



*The Kappa Kastle – 523 W. College Avenue - 1952*

The monthly rental was cheaper, but initially the group still didn't have enough money to furnish their new Kastle. After scraping together all that they could (including a loan from McKinley Wardlaw who having been in the Air Force was a little more well-heeled than the others) they were ready to buy the basics. Most of the furniture they purchased was used and the final payment was made by check. Before writing the check they all put their heads together and determined whose bank was the furthest from State College. It turned out that Allen Haile who was from Greensburg, South Carolina, was the furthest, so the check was written from his account. The extra few days it took the check to clear were just enough to enable them to squeak by.

Sometimes during the fall of 1951, the group held its first smoker. Jim Brewer, a sophomore and basketball scholarship recipient who had just transferred from the Ogontz campus, was the first Scroller. Before coming to Penn State, Jim attended West Philadelphia High School where he had befriended Hardy Williams. When he arrived at Penn State, he looked up his old friend who by that time had become a Que. Unfortunately, he found that he

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couldn't relate to the Ques. But when he met Barton Fields, Lou Ivey and Walt Hutchins, things just seemed to click. It wasn't long afterward that he decided to pledge Kappa.

Jim recalls that the pledge period consisted of learning material, performing errands for the big brothers, and general psychological harassment. Roger Sneed was designated his sponsor.

In the spring of 1952 after the completion of his pledge period, Brewer was placed on probation along with Bob Hanna. Since the organization still didn't have a charter, Hell Week was once again conducted in Philadelphia at Lambda Chapter. During Hell Week, Brewer claims that he carried a brick, shaved off one-half of his mustache and went on a Jericho. After a week of "Pro", on April 21, 1952 Hanna and Brewer became the newest members of the "almost Delta Theta Chapter."

With the initiation of Brewer and Hanna, the group had now grown to a total of nine brothers. With the entire paperwork already in place, it was just a matter of time before they would become an official chapter of **Kappa Alpha Psi**. On May 17, 1952 it happened: Walter Chisholm, Polemarch of the Northeast Province, Enos Andrews, Past Polemarch of the Northeast Province, Hilary Holloway, future Grand Polemarch, Ray Edwards, Delmar Brown and, of course, John Williams came to State College to ceremonially confer the charter upon the fledgling chapter. And in customary Delta Theta fashion, there was a full weekend of activities to celebrate our genesis. A banquet was given at the State College Hotel and later that night a party was held at the Kappa Kastle. Both events were, of course, jellified.

On May 17, 1952 on the campus of the Pennsylvania State College, Delta Theta Chapter of **Kappa Alpha Psi** made its bid for recognition within the great name of Kappadom. The activities, which marked the chartering of this new chapter, Delta Theta, were many and interesting.

Brothers of the Delta Theta Chapter were: Barton A. Fields, Polemarch, W. Roger Sneed, Vice Polemarch, Walter W. Hutchins, Jr., Keeper of Records, Allen C. Haile, Keeper of Exchequer, Charles T. Stancil, Advisor, James Brewer, Robert J. Hanna, Jr., Louis A. Ivey, Lt. Mckinley Wardlaw, Jr., and Herbert R. Winston

On the first night of the weekend, there was a dinner dance for the brothers and their dates at the chapter house. Saturday afternoon from 1:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. the house was opened for public inspection. During this time many of the members of the college administration visited the house and offered their congratulations on the progress the brothers had made.

**Welcomed Into Bond:** At 6:00 P.M. the same evening there was a beautiful banquet given in the Beaver Room of the State College Hotel. At this time, amidst the aroma of a delicious meal, Enos S. Andrews, Past Polemarch of the Northeastern Province, William Chisholm, Polemarch of the Northeastern Province, and John N. Williams, Polemarch of Delta Eta Chapter, christened this new chapter Delta Theta and welcomed us into the bond. Later that night there was a party given at the chapter house. Here amidst the strands of "bop" and blues, countless students and friends enjoyed a taste of true Kappa hospitality. Music was provided by a live combo and a good time was had by all.

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*Delta Theta Charter Members - 1952*

**House Before Charter:** Delta Theta has the distinction of being the first chapter to have a house before it received its charter.

Having made such an entrance, and realizing the importance of Kappa on such a large and beautiful campus as that of the Pennsylvania State College, Polemarch Elect Barton A. Fields pledged himself to carry out the high ideals of Kappa with unswerving fidelity.



*Delta Theta Chapter Celebrates It's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – October 16-18, 2002*

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Since the chartering of the Delta Theta Chapter, there has been much progress. However, there have been many problems. Our number is small, and we are looking forward to a brilliant stay on the campus, and we would like to feel that we have the good wishes of all Kappas behind us. On October 16-18, 2002, the Delta Theta Chapter celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Pennsylvania State University. Many of the brothers who had been enrolled at the Pennsylvania State University during the past fifty years attended the celebration. Executive Director Richard L. Snow, an alumnus of Delta Theta was the keynote speaker. Four of the charter members were in attendance. They were Barton A. Fields, Allen C. Haile, Walter Hutchins and McKinley Wardlaw, Jr.