

## II. Alpha Sigma Phi History – 15 Minutes

*Below is a description of the Fraternity's history you can share at this time. It covers the founding, Delta Beta Xi, Delta Chapter, and the second founding. Be sure to review this in advance of the meeting. Additional history information can be found in the to Better the Man book.*

*This section can be presented in a number of ways. You are encouraged to make it as interactive as possible. Consider one of the following suggestions:*

- *Rather than presenting the information in lecture format, break the new member class into small groups. Assign each small group a portion of the history (Founding, Delta Beta Xi, Delta Chapter, and the Second Founding). They should review the applicable section of to Better the Man and develop a timeline to use to present their section to the group.*
- *You could assign the applicable readings from to Better the Man in advance of this meeting. Then, during the meeting you could provide the new member class with a list of facts that they must place in chronological order.*
- *Ask an alumnus of the Fraternity to attend and share the story of the Fraternity's history.*

### **Founding – pg. 189 – 201 of to Better the Man**

- Yale University in the mid-19th Century was dominated by a strong tradition of class loyalty. Men would enter Yale and many would join freshman class societies. As they progressed through their studies, men would join sophomore and junior societies. Each society became more selective and prestigious before being selected to join one of the three senior societies, which are secret societies that exist to this date at Yale.
- Our founders entered Yale in 1845: Louis Manigault, Stephen Ormsby Rhea, and Horace Spangler Weiser.
- Manigault and Rhea, friends since preparatory school, chose not to join a freshmen class society. Louis Manigault observed the sole sophomore society—Kappa Sigma Theta—as having an obnoxious and condescending attitude.
  - In a quote from Manigault's writings, "Standing alone in the Sophomore Class, guarded by her Patron Saint Minerva, the Kappa Sigma Theta seemed not only to scorn, but to behold with contempt all outside members as hardly worthy of being their classmates."
- Manigault shared his plans with Rhea of starting his own Sophomore Society, to compete with the arrogance and brutality of Kappa Sigma Theta; Rhea introduced Manigault to Weiser, and the three began their task.
- On Saturday evening, December 6, 1845, the three men met in Manigault's room at 59 Chapel Street; Manigault outlined his plans for the society and that night, the three men committed themselves to the establishment and perpetuation of Alpha Sigma Phi.
  - Over the following months, Manigault designed the Ritual, the Mottos, the Insignia, and the Badge.
  - In his writings, Louis Manigault names June 24, 1846 as the Founding of Alpha Sigma Phi, as that was the date that the new Sophomore Society announced its first class of initiates. Yet, it is well documented that the Founders' commitments to proceed were formalized on December 6, 1845—the date we understand as truly our Founding.
- Before long, opportunities for expansion of the society to nearby colleges appeared.
  - Beta: Harvard in 1850
  - Gamma: Amherst College in 1854
  - Delta: Marietta College in 1860
  - Epsilon: Ohio Wesleyan University in 1863

- Meanwhile, the Alpha Chapter at Yale continued its intense rivalry with Kappa Sigma Theta, eventually succeeding. Kappa Sigma Theta was formally dissolved in 1858.
- In 1864, Alpha Sigma Phi at Yale was disbanded by the Yale faculty over a series of misconduct issues resulting in the transition to Junior societies.

#### **Delta Beta Xi – pg. 202 – 203 of *to Better the Man***

- Recognizing the vacuum that had been created in this absence of Sophomore societies, the graduates of Alpha Sigma Phi (now members of Junior class societies) formed Delta Beta Xi as the successor organization to Alpha Sigma Phi.
- To non-members, Delta Beta Xi seemed to be a wholly separate organization from Alpha Sigma Phi.
- However, the first class of Delta Beta Xi was the secretly-initiated fall 1864 class of Alpha Sigma Phi. Furthermore, the ritual and motto were not changed from those devised by Manigault. The insignia were only changed by substituting Delta Beta Xi for Alpha Sigma Phi. Initiates into Delta Beta Xi took an oath to Alpha Sigma Phi.
- Truly, Delta Beta Xi allowed Alpha Sigma Phi to function secretly at Yale for many years, continuing its ritual and traditions.
- This was the case until 1875, when a gathering to celebrate the new freshmen selectees into DBX got rowdy and riotous. In response, the faculty suppressed Delta Beta Xi.

#### **Delta Chapter – pg. 203 – 207 of *to Better the Man***

- From the demise of the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Sigma Phi in 1864 until 1907, Delta Chapter at Marietta College existed as the sole chapter of Alpha Sigma Phi.
- Of the nine men who were Founding Fathers at Delta, eight went and fought in the Civil War. Only Lyman Strong, Marietta 1860 remained a civilian; he single-handedly kept the chapter alive so that his brothers had a chapter to return to after the war.
- Throughout the Civil War and beyond, the Delta Chapter faced a series of struggles. The brothers at Marietta closely guarded the secrets now only they could keep. Still, as a functionally local group competing with other national fraternities at Marietta, the pressure to petition for charter in a different national fraternity was always high. Nonetheless, Delta persevered and the traditions of Alpha Sigma Phi were kept alive.
- Eventually, the vitality of Delta Chapter waned. By the end of the spring term in 1900, only one Alpha Sigma Phi undergraduate was enrolled at Marietta College. The alumni stepped in and breathed new life into the chapter, but it was short lived, as the vitality was again ebbing in 1907.
- Fortunately, it was in this year when word arrived that a group of students at Yale University were seeking Delta's approval to revive the Alpha Chapter.

#### **Second Founding – pg. 207 – 214 of *to Better the Man***

- In 1906, the Masonic Club was established at Yale as a purely social club for students who were Masons. In December 1906, friends who were all members of the Masonic Club conversed about the Yale Fraternity system. They came to the conclusion that the Yale system put too high an emphasis on class loyalty. The idea was proposed to start a new fraternity at Yale—one that drew its membership from all classes.
- Edwin Waterbury, Yale 1907 knew of the past success of Alpha Sigma Phi at Yale, and he knew the group still maintained a chapter at Marietta College. A petition was made to revive the Alpha Chapter.
- On March 28, 1907, five of the six members of the petitioning group arrived in Marietta, Ohio. The group was initiated and the Alpha Chapter formally resurrected on this date.

- Although there were Six Second Founders of Alpha Sigma Phi, Edwin M. Waterbury, Yale 1907 and Wayne Montgomery Musgrave, Yale 1907 are credited as chief among them. Both men committed seriously to the success of the new chapter and spent much time reviving and revising our Ritual.
  - Waterbury revived the Tomahawk in 1909 (the Fraternity publication that remains to this date) as well as the Black Lantern Processional.
  - Musgrave served as the chief operating head of the blossoming national organization from 1907 until 1923.
- The reactivation of Alpha Chapter began the growth of Alpha Sigma Phi into a true “national” fraternity. National Conventions began to occur annually, and—in just a few years—our Fraternity rapidly expanded and operated over 20 chapters from coast to coast.
- The success continued through the First World War and into the late-1920s.