

**HAND BOOK OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
CHAPTER OF PHI BETA KAPPA
DELTA OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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Hand Book of the University of Pennsylvania Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa Delta of Pennsylvania
by Various

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**HAND BOOK OF THE
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CHAPTER OF PHI BETA KAPPA
DELTA OF PENNSYLVANIA**

UNIV. OF
HAND BOOK CALIFORNIA
of the
University of Pennsylvania
Chapter *of*
Phi Beta Kappa
Delta *of* Pennsylvania



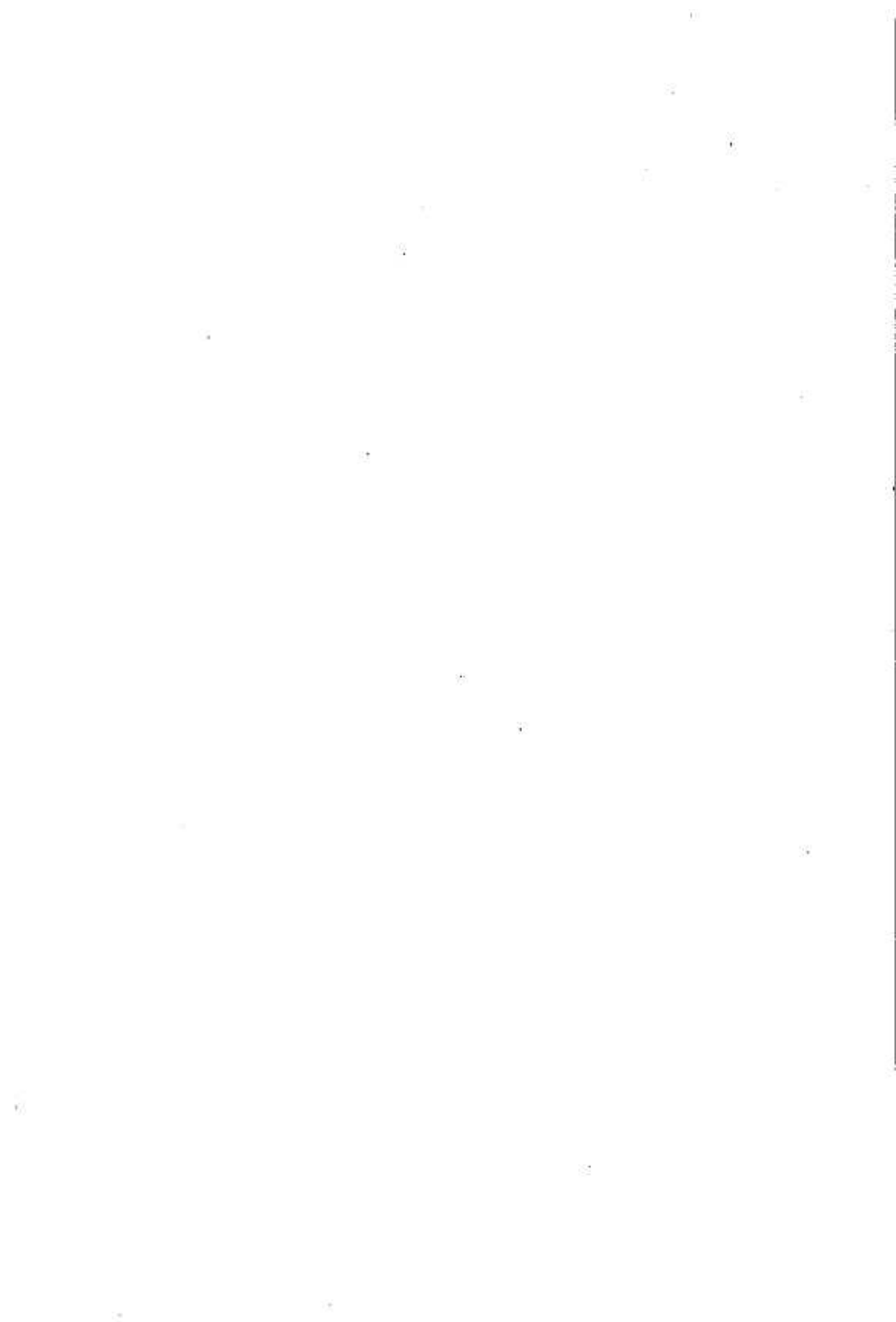
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INTRODUCTION

After many delays this handbook is finally ready for distribution. It is hoped that this volume may prove of interest and value to the members of the University of Pennsylvania Chapter and to the Φ B K Society at large. Scholarship and character, expressing themselves through service, loyalty and sacrifice, are indispensable to a true Φ B K spirit, and it has been the constant aim of this Chapter to make worthy contributions to the spiritual life of the University. Members of the Φ B K Chapter are sons of the University who owe their Alma Mater special obligation. It is our hope that the near future may secure us a hearth and a home, where comradeship may warm the intellectual and ethical aspirations that belong to the Chapter as a heritage and as a present possession.

The Editor is indebted to The University of Pennsylvania Alumni Society, The American Philosophical Society, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania for permission to consult their records.

Provost Edgar Fahs Smith, Vice Provost Josiah H. Penniman and Mr. George E. Nitzsche (Recorder) have put the Editor under obligation by securing him access to University records and by giving him information not otherwise obtainable.

It is hoped that the data included in the lists of names may prove to be quite free from error. Corrections will be gratefully received.

GEORGE DEPUE HADZSITS.

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A HISTORY OF PHI BETA KAPPA

At least a brief history of Phi Beta Kappa ought to appear in every Chapter Handbook.

Founded in December of 1776 at William and Mary College, Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest College fraternity in the United States. We have the records of the first meeting, which was held on Thursday, the fifth day of December, and was attended by five students. Of these John Heath is regarded as the real founder of the Society. At the time there existed at William and Mary College another society which had come to be noted for conviviality and dissipation. John Heath enjoyed a great reputation as a Hellenist; he established the Phi Beta Kappa in opposition to the older, existent organization and one of its early rules heavily penalized and therefore discouraged intoxication. "Honor, probity and good demeanor" were required of its members. The meetings of the parent society were literary and social in character and according to tradition the first meeting of the fraternity was held in the Apollo room of the Raleigh Tavern. Records tell of the character of these meetings, when "the night was" innocently "spent in Jollity and Mirth." Debates were conducted on such questions, as: "Whether Brutus was Justifyable in Killing Caesar," "Whether the Execution of Charles the First was Justifyable," "Whether a general Assessment for the support of Religious Establishments is repugnant to the principles of a Republican Government," "Is Public or Private Education more Advantageous?", etc. It has been suggested that this aspect of the early Phi Beta Kappa life was due to the philosophic clubs then in existence among the collegiate students in France and on the continent. It certainly seems clear that

the founders of the fraternity believed that the scholar should enter politics.

The secret fraternity idea was jealously cultivated by the parent chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the Alpha of Virginia: the chapter had its grip, seal, its token of salutation and society colors; emphasis was laid upon the mystery of secrecy, upon an initiation ceremony, an oath of fealty and the requirement of unanimous election; a badge was devised for external display and the ambition early manifested itself to make the Fraternity, national, by organization of chapters in each of the United States.

In January of 1777, a mode of initiation was reported:

“And first in corporation, an oath of fidelity being considered as the strongest preservative, an initiation was accordingly resolved upon and instituted as follows:

I, A. B., do swear on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, or otherwise, as calling the Supreme Being to attest this my oath, declaring that I will, with all my possible efforts, endeavor to prove true, just and deeply attached to this our growing fraternity; in keeping, holding, and preserving all secrets that pertain to my duty, and for the promotion and advancement of its internal welfare.”

On February 27, 1779, a ritual * that was quite elaborate and couched in quaint language, was adopted. The ritual of the chapter of the University of Pennsylvania retains many phrases and all of the essential ideas of this earliest ritual. Friendship, virtue and love of literature appear to be the foundations of the fraternity structure. The record book of the Alpha of Virginia describes the first medal, as a square, silver one, adopted “for the better establishment and

*The ritual is printed, in full, in the 1912 Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Catalogue, pp. 91-93, and in the University of Chicago 1915 Phi Beta Kappa Catalogue, pp. 11-13.

sanctitude of our unanimity, . . . engraved on the one side with S. P., the initials of S— P—, and on the other, agreeable to the former, with the Greek initials of Phi Beta Kappa, and an index imparting a philosophical design, extended to the three stars," the symbol of high aspirations. The Greek letters stand for the motto of the society, *Φιλοσοφία Βίου Κυβερνήτης*.* As for the meaning of S. P., let me quote a letter of Senator E. A. Birge, under date of March 23, 1908, addressed to Professor F. W. Shepardson, of the University of Chicago: "The words S. P. on the Phi Beta Kappa badge mean either '*Societas Philosophica*' or '*Societas Philosophiae*.' So far as the original manuscript goes, there is nothing which will enable one to decide between the two forms. I was disposed to accept the first, but I am informed that the traditions of the William and Mary Chapter are in favor of the second, and, in absence of definite evidence, I think that this tradition should control." The minutes of December 9, 1779, contain the resolution granting authority for the establishment of the Yale chapter and this statement appears: "*Whereas* this Society is desirous that the Phi Beta Kappa should be extended to each of the United States; *Resolved*: That a second charter be granted to our brother, Mr. Elisha Parmele, for establishing a meeting of the same in the College of New Haven, in Connecticut, to be of the same rank, to have the same power, and to enjoy the same privileges with that which he is empowered to fix in the University of Cambridge."

The Beta, Gamma and Delta chapters, or "meetings" as they were then called, were organized in neighboring Virginia towns, but little is known of their activities. Charters

*It seems to me very possible that the motto was inspired by the text of *Cicero's Tusculan Disputations*, V. 2, 5: *O vitae philosophia dux, o virtutis indagatrix expultrixque vitiorum! quid non modo nos, sed omnino vita hominum sine te esse potuisset? etc.*