

**CATALOGUE OF THE  
VANDERBILT CHAPTER,  
PHI BETA KAPPA**

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Catalogue of the Vanderbilt Chapter, Phi Beta Kappa by Various

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PHI BETA KAPPA  
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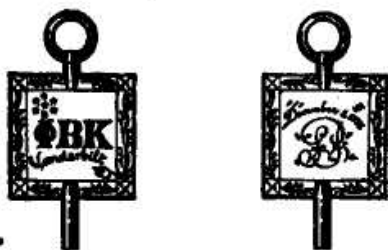
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**B. H. STIEF JEWELRY CO., OFFICIAL MANUFACTURERS OF  
THE Φ B K KEYS FOR THE VANDERBILT CHAPTER.**

The following recommendation was adopted by the National Council  
September 12, 1901:

"That the Council instruct the officers of the United Chapters to request  
all jewelers known to be engaged in the manufacture of college badges not  
to deliver a Phi Beta Kappa badge to any person, except upon an order  
countersigned by an officer of a Chapter."

TO THE  
ASSOCIATION

PREFACE.<sup>1</sup>

THE preamble (page 25) of the original minutes shows Phi Beta Kappa to be native to America. Efforts have been made to trace the society to the Order of the Illuminati founded by Professor Weishaupt at Ingolstadt, Bavaria, in 1776, but all to no purpose. To the handful of men who gathered at Williamsburg, Va., in Apollo Hall of the Raleigh Tavern, whose walls were still vocal with the patriotic invectives of Patrick Henry, belongs the honor of inaugurating this movement.

The society was founded in the very birth hour of our republic, and every Phi Beta Kappa key still bears the date, December 5, 1776, in memory of that day. "A student," says Hon. William Short, "who proved himself the best Hellenist in the college probably devised the Greek motto," which in after years was destined to become synonymous with scholastic distinction.

It will be seen that the silver Φ Β Κ medal of 1776 (page 25) is practically the same as the present badge, with the exception of the later addition of the key point. The insignia are no longer secret. Phi Beta Kappa are the initial letters of the Greek words Φιλοσοφία Βίου Κυβερνήτης—"Philosophy the Guide of Life." The hand pointing to the stars symbolizes aspiration. Yet in its organization the fraternity was strictly secret, as shown in the "oath of fidelity." (Page 25.)

With its bonds of brotherhood and its mysteries the Phi Beta Kappa became the parent of our numerous Greek Letter Fraternities which have to-day a healthy existence in most of our colleges. But a more honorable career was destined for the ancient institution. About the year 1810 the

<sup>1</sup> Several portions of this brief historical sketch of the Society were written by the undersigned for the *Yale Monthly Magazine* and the *Vanderbilt Observer*.

H. C. T.



Morgan fanaticism against Freemasonry so worked on the Harvard Chapter that it violated its solemn pledges and exposed all the secrets of the order. Mr. Avery Allen published a "Key to the Phi Beta Kappa," in his "Treatise on Masonry," and criticised the motto of the society in the following words: "Philosophy has been the watchword of infidels in every age, and by its learned and enchanting sound many unwary youths have been led to reject the only sure guide to heaven." Such men as John Quincy Adams, Judge Story, and Edward Everett were pronounced in this anti-secret movement. In fact, Edward Everett, so the record runs, "touchingly set forth that the students of Harvard had such conscientious scruples as to keep them from taking the oath of secrecy, and the society life was thus endangered. There was stout opposition, but the motion prevailed. . . . The secret, of course, was out. The world did not stare at the discovery." This was the great influence that changed the character of Phi Beta Kappa from a Greek Letter Fraternity to an Honorary and Scholastic Brotherhood. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, in the *Atlantic Quarterly*, July, 1879, wrote: "For nearly half a century Phi Beta Kappa was the only society in America that could pretend to be devoted to literature and philosophy, and it happened therefore that in the infant literature of the nation some noteworthy steps are marked by orations and poems delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa."

The spirit of broader brotherhood than that of State lines appears in the action of the Virginia Society recorded in the minutes of May 4, 1779 (page 26), and those of December 4 and December 9 (page 27). Three Chapters were voted for certain towns in Virginia, which, if established, were crushed by the Revolution, and two Chapters were founded at Yale and Harvard, known as Zeta and Epsilon, respectively. A still broader feeling was manifest in the preparation of the charters, and the two New England branches received the names of the Alpha of Connecticut and the Alpha of Massachusetts Bay. "The introduction of Phi Beta Kappa," says George Dwight Kellogg, "into New England is one of



the romantic incidents of American College history. In 1779 Mr. Elisha Parmele, who had resided two years in New Haven as an undergraduate, and subsequently received his bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1778, was compelled to travel South for his health. Being an earnest scholar, he was no doubt attracted to the flourishing college at Williamsburg, where, according to tradition, he attended the lectures of Prof. George Wythe, who held the first chair of law founded in an American college. . . . When he started on his northward journey, he was intrusted with two 'charter parties,' drawn up December 4, 1776, and with power to establish two 'scyons,' in Cambridge and New Haven respectively; but inasmuch as he reached New Haven first, the Yale Chapter, founded November 13, 1780, antedates that at Harvard, which was organized September 5, 1781."

On January 3, 1781, the British fleet under Benedict Arnold approached the Virginia Coast. The life of the old college was threatened, and the precautionary measures were adopted to preserve the records of the society seen in the minutes of January 6, 1781 (page 27). At the close of the war the parent Chapter ceased to exist until 1849. At that time Mr. Short, the old president, then ninety-two years of age, reestablished the Virginia Chapter at Williamsburg, and thus the succession with the past remains unbroken. The Civil War again interrupted the life of the Alpha of Virginia, but it was revived in 1893. The old records (quoted on pages 25-27), which, during the vicissitudes of the college, were preserved in the Virginia Historical Society, are now again in possession of the mother Chapter. It will be interesting to know that measures were taken to mark the spot in Virginia where Elisha Parmele lies buried. The National Council has devoted a sum of money for the erection of a suitable memorial; for beyond the removal of the barn on the site of the old burying ground, and beyond the marking of the grave in the Shenandoah Valley, a far grander and more enduring monument is the Elisha Parmele Scholarship Fund.

During what is known as the "Alpha Period," which extended for over one hundred years, each Alpha had the privilege of establishing other Chapters within its own State, while the consent of all the Alphas was necessary to extend the society to another State. This law was based on the charter of the Alpha of Massachusetts Bay, which gave "the privileges of the meeting Alpha in Virginia in granting charters for the establishment of other meetings anywhere within the State of Massachusetts Bay, which meetings are to stand in the same relation to you that the junior branches of this society stand in to the meeting Alpha here."

On August 20, 1787, the Alpha of New Hampshire was established at Dartmouth through the consent of the Alpha of Massachusetts and the Alpha of Connecticut. These three Chapters remained the only representatives of Phi Beta Kappa from 1787 to 1817.

In 1817 an Alpha charter was granted Union, which established Chapters at University of City of New York (Beta, 1858), College of the City of New York (Gamma, 1867), Columbia (Delta, 1869), Hamilton (Epsilon, 1870), Hobart, (Zeta, 1871), Colgate (Eta, 1878), Cornell (Theta, 1882).

The Alpha of Connecticut extended the society to Trinity (Beta, 1845) and Wesleyan (Gamma, 1845). The Alpha of Massachusetts established branches at Amherst (Beta, 1853) and Williams (Gamma, 1867). Alpha charters were granted Bowdoin in 1825, Brown in 1830, and Rutgers in 1869. The Alpha of Vermont, at University of Vermont, chartered in 1848, granted a charter to Middlebury (Beta, 1868). The Alpha of Ohio was established at Adelbert, 1848, and chartered the Chapters at Kenyon (Beta, 1858) and Marietta (Gamma, 1860).

The year 1881 marked a new era in the life of the ancient organization. On October 18 sixteen Chapters sent representatives to New York to take measures toward the establishment of a National Council. The first meeting of this council was held at Saratoga September 5, 1883. The constitution was ratified by Bowdoin, Harvard, Dartmouth, Union, University of Vermont, Trinity, Amherst, Wesleyan,

Williams, College of the City of New York, Columbia, Hamilton, Hobart, Middlebury, University of the City of New York, and Kenyon.

At the second council, September 1, 1886, the constitution was ratified by Yale and Cornell, and charters were granted Rochester, Dickinson, and Lehigh.

At the third council, September 4, 1889, the constitution was ratified by Rutgers, and charters were granted to Lafayette, De Pauw, Kansas, and Northwestern.

At the fourth council, September 7, 1892, charters were granted Tufts, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania.

At the fifth council, September 11, 1895, the constitution was ratified by Brown, Western Reserve, Marietta, and William and Mary. Charters were granted Swarthmore, Iowa, Nebraska, Colby, Syracuse, and Johns Hopkins.

At the sixth council, September 7, 1898, charters were granted Boston, California, Chicago, Cincinnati, Haverford, Princeton, St. Lawrence, Vassar, Wabash, and Wisconsin.

At the seventh council, September 12, 1901, charters were granted Allegheny, Missouri, and Vanderbilt.

At the eighth council, September 7, 1904, charters were granted Smith, Wellesley, Mount Holyoke, Leland Stanford, North Carolina, Texas, University of Colorado, Colorado College, Ohio State University, and Woman's College of Baltimore (now Goucher).

At the ninth council, September 11, 1907, charters were granted Michigan, Illinois, Grinnell, Franklin and Marshall, Oberlin, Ohio Wesleyan, Virginia, and Tulane.

At the tenth council, September 13, 1910, charters were granted Washington and Lee, Beloit, Denison, Indiana, Miami, and West Virginia.

At the eleventh council, September 10, 1913, charters were granted Radcliffe, Georgia, Washington (Seattle), North Dakota, Lawrence, Pomona, Washington (St. Louis), and Carleton.

In Vanderbilt University Phi Beta Kappa has become a part of college life and tradition. As the record shows, we have elected from time to time several of the alumni who