

## THE ROAD TO BAGDAD

### PART III

It was only a few days after this that I started to Columbus to install the Beta chapter, little realizing that someone other than myself would officiate at this ceremony- but that is a story which must be told in due time. I was accompanied to Columbus by Brother Kessler, of Marion, one of the last men initiated into the Alpha Grand chapter. Our reception at Columbus was much the same as that which had been accorded us at Portland. I was the guest of Brother Marsh, while Brother Kessler stayed at the home of one of the candidates. It must not be forgotten that, while Brother Marsh was an honorary member of Alpha chapter, and that it was through his instrumentality that Beta chapter had been organized with Edward Ziegner as official local organizer, Brother Marsh was still high in the affairs of Kappa Alpha Phi. Naturally we were all pledged to secrecy regarding his connection to Phi Delta Kappa, and I was his guest by right of being his Kappa Sigma brother, rather than because he was interested in Phi Delta Kappa.

The Columbus candidates looked promising. All were in the upper classes of high school and after school hours Edward Ziegner, who is now state editor of the Indianapolis News, worked as a reporter on the newspaper which was owned by Brother Marsh's father. I had another Kappa Sigma brother in Columbus- Will V. O'Donnell- who was entirely unaware of the fact that Marsh, as a means of benefiting Kappa Alpha Phi, had instigated the organization of a chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

The installation of the new chapter was to take place on the second night after the arrival of Brother Kessler and myself in Columbus, this ceremony being impossible on the first night owing to a dance which held the interest of all concerned. A room at the hotel had been engaged as the scene of the installation ceremony, which, like that at Portland and Marion, was to be as simple as possible. The next day was given over to getting better acquainted with Ziegner and the others who were to be the charter members of Beta chapter. In the meantime Brother Kessler had been in communication with a friend of his in Indianapolis, and the prospect of a visit with this friend in the state capital had more attraction for him than a chapter installation at Columbus. So one morning preceding the installation ceremonies he left Columbus, leaving me to manage alone.

That evening I left Brother Marsh's home in company with Cleveland Young, who was one of the candidates. Brother Marsh had gone to his father's newspaper office where he had some work to do, but had promised to be at the hotel in time for the installation. Busily discussing fraternity affairs, Cleveland Young and I walked towards the hotel that "the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley". I had one ritual with me which I carried in the inside pocket of my coat. The other seven, which were to be turned over to the new chapter, were in my grip at Brother Marsh's home.

As we passed an alley in the business section of Columbus, a group of boys that had been loitering there, suddenly sprang forward and Young and myself were seized and carried back into the alley. It all happened so suddenly there was no time to think. One of my arms chanced to be free for a moment and instinctively I struck, landing on someone's cheek bone. I don't know how much damage I did, but the force of the blow was sufficient to give me a sore hand for several days after. But fighting was of no use, for we were whisked away in the twinkling of an eye.

Young had recognized our captors and knew them to be members of Kappa Alpha Phi, and from their good natured banter I soon grasped the situation and submitted as gracefully as possible under the circumstances. We were taken to a vacant house in a sparsely settled neighborhood, and within a few moments my Kappa Sigma brother, Will O'Donnell joined the crowd, grinning from ear to ear. The cat was out of the bag then, and I knew that I had been made the victim of one of O'Donnell's practical jokes.

Like many jokers, this Kappa Alpha Phi crowd turned out to be royal good fellows. They kept us prisoner until they knew it was too late for me to go on with the chapter installation that night, but they also produced a basket well filled with welcome refreshments and the kidnapping turned into a love feast. I went home with Will O'Donnell that night and I shall never forget how he chuckled as he thought of the story he had written for the newspaper- for he too, was a reporter- in which he had graphically described how the installation of the new chapter of Phi Delta

Kappa had been delayed owing to the kidnapping of the master of ceremonies.

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Neither shall I forget the look of dismay that was on his face the next morning when, arising at an early hour to get the morning paper from the front porch, he came into the room I was occupying and read the story that appeared in place of the one he had written before joining the kidnappers in the vacant house.

“Despite the fact that Paul R. Martin, National Master -of- Ceremonies of the Phi Delta Kappa fraternity, was kidnapped last night by a crowd of Kappa Alpha Phi boys, the Columbus chapter of this new organization was installed according to the original plan. Oliver Kessler, who accompanied Martin to Columbus, but who went to Indianapolis yesterday morning, returned last night, learned of the existing situation and installed the chapter.”

This made a good newspaper story, and had been written by Will Marsh, learning of the kidnapping a few minutes after it happened, rushed home, procured a ritual from my valise, and installed the chapter himself.

The dramatic installation of the chapter at Columbus must have brought good luck to Phi Delta Kappa. It may have been a good omen pointing to the fact that the organization would be able to overcome all handicaps. Be that as it may, the growth of the fraternity from that time on was not only rapid and gratifying to those who were working for its advancement, but it likewise exceeded our fondest expectations. It was not long until Gamma chapter had installed the chapter at Fairmont, that Portland installed a chapter at Muncie and Muncie, in turn, had installed a tremendously large chapter at Bluffton. If I have not given these installations in proper order it is because I am drawing entirely from memory and have no records at hand.

Then Brother Sanderson, who was attending school at Butler College, Indianapolis, got busy and, with the aide of Professor Faunce, a member of the faculty of the Manual Training high school, installed a chapter in Indianapolis.

During that Winter the affairs of the fraternity occupied all of my leisure time as well as time that should have been devoted to other pursuits. The two chapters at Marion had combined to maintain a suite of rooms and as I look back on it now it seems that during the most vital period of the fraternity's history we were housed in rooms on the north side of the public square, where we were at least comfortable. When we moved into these rooms our furniture was of the same nondescript sort that we had from the very earliest days Iota Tau Kappa. Some of it, in fact, was the same furniture, and none of it, with the exception of a table which Jim Reed had made, was anything other than junk.

Gamma chapter had initiated a young man named Ray Simmons, whose brother, Chester, had been an Iota Tau Kappa initiate, but who had not been received into Phi Delta Kappa, as he was in the east at the time the reorganization took place. Ray Simmons was a genius when it came to wood working, and he made a creditable set of furniture which added greatly to the appearance of the interior of our rooms. Then the chapter found itself with sufficient credit to open a charge account at a furniture store where we purchased some chairs and other pieces. And now we came to the introduction of an elementary business system into the fraternity, and the manner in which we paid off this bill.

Among the newest members of Gamma chapter was Vivian Patterson, a country boy who lived north of Marion, and who was a student at the high school. Patterson drove into Marion every Sunday afternoon to spend his time with the other members of the chapter, the majority of whom lounged around the fraternity rooms until it was time to go and keep their evening “dates.” It may be remarked at this time that Phi Delta Kappa in Marion had gained a social status it had not had before and that it had formed an affiliation with Theta Phi Lambda, a local sorority. Few of the boys ever went home to dinner- or rather supper, it was called in Marion- but would eat downtown at a restaurant.

Patterson conceived the idea that it would be a good plan to serve a buffet supper every Sunday night in the fraternity rooms, and his idea being acceptable to the rest of the chapter, he assumed full charge of these repasts. From his farm he would bring huge baskets filled with sandwiches, pies, cakes, salad and other good things to eat. He installed a little gas stove where some of these viands were heated and where a big pot of coffee was boiled. I forget how much a supper cost, but I do remember that the plan was a great success, and the money thus raised did not go into Patterson's pocket, except enough to pay the basic cost of the food he provided, but into the chapter

fund. There was a splendid profit and, with this money in the treasury, it was not long until all of our furniture had been paid for, and we were able to buy many other things which added to our comfort.

In the meantime the other chapters were all active and there was much pleasant visiting back and forth between those which were located in what used to be called the "Gas Belt" section of the state. Fairmont was so close to Marion that we saw the boys frequent intervals and likewise exchanged visits with Muncie, Portland, and Bluffton. The fraternity had begun to open up a new vista for a lot of us and for the first time we knew what it was to have acquaintance and something in common with our neighbors.

As I have set forth in a previous article of this series, the fraternity government was being operated under the first constitution which I had written and which was adopted by Alpha chapter. This was what might well be described as a provisional constitution, drafted to meet the needs of the moment, but which we all realized must give way to a more democratic form of government as the fraternity increased in size and in age. The chapters which had been received up to this time were all under the temporary charters that had been issued, and some of them were somewhat over the six months period. They had demonstrated their fitness for permanent charters and the national officers, who were, as you will remember the officers of Alpha chapter, began to make plans for granting of these permanent documents.

The matter of constitutional revision was of foremost importance, and early in the spring of 1906, we decided to hold a sort of constitutional convention. We would have liked to make this a general convention, but did not feel able to assume the responsibility of entertaining a general convention at this time, so we decided to invite each chapter to send two delegates. The meetings were held in the fraternity rooms at Marion, with the result that the old constitution, except in its general principals, was discarded entirely and a new constitution was adopted, giving each chapter the right to present candidates for any national office, and also making new laws regarding the installation of new chapters, the payment of national dues, etc.

There were some hot and heavy discussions at these sessions, and one amusing incident has remained in my mind throughout all the years that have since elapsed. This is the famous speech of Edward Ziegner, which was never delivered. Brother Ziegner was one of the prize orators in the high school at Columbus, where much attention was given to oratory. At one of the sessions the chapters were called upon to present reports, and Brother Ziegner, arose in behalf of Beta chapter. He was all cocked and primed for the occasion and I imagine that he would have given us a flight of oratory that would have been much better than most of that with which we have been bored at dinners in later years.

Slowly and with great dignity Ziegner took his place before the gathering of delegates. There was a moment of silence and then he began. "From time immemorial it has been the custom of men to bind themselves together in clans and societies." His very voice was laden with oratory, but the average high school boy has little stomach for poetical language. From a corner of the room came a groan. Then somebody snickered. There was coughing and the scraping of feet. Brother Ziegner turned red and was plainly flustered. He realized that his eloquence would be wasted on the desert air, and after his grandiloquent beginning he stammered and presented his report in the simple and unaffected language of boyhood.

But this meeting accomplished much for Phi Delta Kappa, and the things that were done there laid the foundation for what has followed. Nicely printed permanent charters entitled to them and we held our first election of officers under the new constitution. In this we made one "faux pass," but it had no disastrous results. Although our youngest chapter, Indianapolis, was not represented at this meeting, we thought it would be a good plan to elect Professor Faunce as national president, for he was older than any of the rest of us, and what is more, he was a faculty man, and even then we realized the necessity of faculty friendship. Professor Faunce accepted the election, but for some reason best known to himself, he never served.

But this did not impede the progress of the organization, for several years during the ensuing year several more chapters, including Fort Wayne, were admitted to the fold. I will not attempt to mention these here, for they are out of mind and besides, they were completely set forth in an issue of The Phi Delta Kappa Magazine some months ago. For those of us belonging to the Marion chapters there was a glorious summer in store. We decided to move out of our rooms for the summer at least, and to take a house. An ideal location was found, this being a deserted cottage located in picturesque surroundings on a bluff overlooking the river and adjacent to a winding, shaded road which

bore the appropriate name of "Lovers Lane."

A committee was sent out to examine this house, which was found to be in sad need of repair, but our building geniuses figured out that we could set it to rights with little expense. The rent came within reach of our means and we closed a deal with the real estate agent. There followed several busy weeks of shingling, painting, papering, and decorating. Never have I seen a group of boys do good hard work with such a will. Jim Reed (as usual) and Lewis Elliott did yeoman service in making the major repairs. Leo Brown and myself learned that we were excellent wood work painters. Larry Freel occupied himself with many odd jobs, singing the while in a high tenor voice, while Scrubby Nottingham bossed everything from an arm chair on the front porch.

And when our task was finished there was reason to be proud of it. Here we had several acres of ground, lots of shade and a fine view of the river. The interior of the house was commodious enough for the summer, when most of the attractions were out of doors. We opened our new place with a pillow shower, arranged by the Phi Lambda girls, and then began an era of wholesome social events which I, at least, shall always look back upon as among the most enjoyable of my life. It was a summer that few of us shall ever forget and sometimes in this age of automobiles and jazz bands and wild dancing, I wonder whether the young people of the present enjoy themselves half as much as we did with our house on "Lovers Lane." How I wish that we could have bought that place and made it a national fraternity headquarters- a sort of shrine to which we could return to revive the spirit of youth.

The heating problem presented itself as autumn blended into winter, and, though during the first cold days the fireplace in the hallway, where we could burn wood, was sufficient to give us all the warmth we needed, it became necessary to seek other quarters for the winter, and so the house was given up and we took rooms downtown. These were in the Koontz building on Fourth Street, just around the corner from the first rooms occupied by Gamma chapter- the rooms in fact, in which that chapter had been installed by candlelight. I was at home only at infrequent intervals during the winter and therefore know little of what was done. I do know, however, that the fraternity as a whole prospered, and, although we were not without our troubles and internal dissensions, things went on with a steady advance all along the line.

A general convention was called to be at Bluffton in the spring and the chapters represented must have been more than double those that attended the first delegates' convention which had been held in Marion. From several chapters had come the request that I announce myself as a candidate for national president, and this I did, being elected without opposition. But I am not particularly proud of the work I accomplished during the time I held this office. Shortly after the convention, I was called to Indianapolis to become dramatic critic of the Indianapolis Star. My new duties were strenuous, they were in strange surroundings and gave me little time for leisure. As a result, I could handle only the routine duties of the Presidency of Phi Delta Kappa and as far as the constructive work is concerned, I had done far more as national master of ceremonies than I could possibly do in the higher office. I don't even remember what chapters were added to the roll during that year, although I believe that Richmond was one.

Then came early summer and with it the third convention which was to be held at Muncie. I had made it plain that I would not be a candidate for re-election, and two candidates were announced. One of these was Frank McDowell, of Bluffton, the other George Patterson, of Muncie. There was a story whispered around the convention that is worth telling here because it illustrates the spirit that dominated Phi Delta Kappa at the time. Patterson was away from Muncie- just where or why I don't know- and his candidacy had been announced by his chapter. It would seem that funds were low, but the presidential candidate knew full well that it was important for him to be on the ground if he was to stand any chance of election. So wherever he was, he boarded a train hobo fashion, arriving in Muncie on the morning of the convention dirty, begrimed, but full of spirit.

Several things of interest were brought before the Muncie convention. One was a law requiring all members of the fraternity still in school to maintain a high scholastic average each month. If they failed to make passing grades they were to be barred from the fraternity rooms, social affairs and meetings, until they brought their record up to requirements. Another law was that chapters affiliated with schools must have a faculty adviser. These regulations were adopted in view of the growing legislation through which the enemies of the fraternities hoped to eliminate them altogether. The sentiment against so-called high school fraternities and proposed did not meet with any cordial response on the part of the faculties of the various schools with which we were in contact, and as everyone knows now, the anti-fraternity legislation was passed despite what opposition we could bring to bear. Perhaps it was just as well, for it gave Phi Delta Kappa a new status and one which has made it what it is today. Had it been confined to

the limitations of a school society, it is scarcely likely that it ever would have assumed the solidity it now enjoys.

It is also of interest that it was at the Muncie convention we decided to have a magazine which would be the official organ of the fraternity. It was to be called "The Red and Black," and Lawrence R. Freel was appointed as its first editor, with Eugene Chute as business manager. But this was a plan that was not carried into execution for a number of years. However, it was the germ from which the magazine finally came into being and today, I am sure that all of us may regard the Phi Delta kappa Magazine, which is the successor of the earlier publication "Red and Black," as one of the most vital forces of our fraternity life.

I am ashamed to confess it, but after the Muncie convention, which marked my retirement as a national officer, I lost touch with fraternity affairs. Work demanded my attention; then came marriage and the building of a home. It was only at long intervals that I saw those with whom I had been associated in the foundation of Iota Tau Kappa and Phi Delta Kappa. But I never forgot. I was content to leave the great task of furthering the fraternity in the hands of others, for it was demonstrated that these hands were fully capable of performing the important task allotted to them.

So from this point on, the story of Phi Delta Kappa must be told by those who are better acquainted with it than I am. But one thing is certain. There is none of us of that little group that gathered on the high school steps at Marion and brought into existence the organization which was to go far beyond our own dreams, but that is proud of part he played in laying the foundations of this great national body which already done so more and which is destined to do much more. It has been a factor in our lives, an influence that will always be felt. So let us all, old members and new, strive to live up to those principals which, through our rituals, are inculcated into us at the time of our initiation. And if this history which I have been able to contribute, which has been written in some haste and some chapters of it during trying days of illness, will only serve to revive old memories, to open the eyes of our younger brothers to all that has gone before, to inspire them to continue the good work so humbly begun, then I shall feel well satisfied with that I have done.

So here's to you Phi Delta Kappa! Here's to you, old friends of my youth and here's to the days that will never live except in retrospect. To you, this little history is dedicated. May reading it give you the same thrill of pleasure that the writing of it has given me, and some day, with our children's children about us, let us tell them the story of Phi Delta Kappa. It may sound like a fairy tale, but it is true none the less. Here indeed, the pumpkin has turned into a golden chariot.

The story that you have just read, was taken from the Magazine which was printed in the months from April, 1926 to October, 1926. I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I did when I first read it. I want to thank PNP Dave Holloway, for rewriting this in 1977, which is how I found it. I believe this gives us the best and clearest history of the early days of PDK. Thanks again Dave.

By Craig Brutout

Beta Eta Winchester