CHAPTER 3

# 1930 to 1936

Historian: Hattie Kelly Thomas, A



Hattie Virginia Kelly Thomas, A

*My dear Pearl:*

*With six new chapters having been installed since the 1926 convention, it was natural that many Alpha Sigma Alpha actives and recent alumnae should have been thinking about and planning the Boston convention June 30-July 3, 1930, with every resource at their command.*

*To many girls, especially those from these chapters, it represented an opportunity to learn more about their sorority and to experience the yet unknown joy of association with sisters from every section of the United States.*

*Moreover, the setting of the convention, so well publicized by Gertrude Halbritter, ΘΘ, national editor, in The Phoenix issues of that year, was equally alluring to those from distant and more recently settled areas.*

*The possibility of having fabled characters and scenes come right out of the book's covers was a most delightful expectation. And both New England and the sorority ultimately furnished a truly never-to-be-forgotten week.*

*Hattie Kelly Thomas,* A
*Historian, 1932-1938*

## 1930 to 1931

### A never-to-be-forgotten week

The sights of Boston and a most convenient excursion from Buffalo brought the first contingent on a Saturday morning. Under the leadership of Elizabeth Bird Small, ΠΠ, the group encamped in several large suites of the Hotel Statler, which immediately resembled a college dormitory. It is amazing what two in-a-doors [Murphy beds], seven cots and 11 girls can do in transforming a staid $18-a-day corner suite. Literally having walked all over Boston on Saturday, the Buffalo and Ohio girls felt like old settlers when greeting more arrivals on Sunday. In fact, by Sunday evening, the lobby of the Statler was filled with coeds peering at each other and hoping to see an Alpha Sigma Alpha badge.

By Monday morning, things began to happen officially when two large buses took the entire delegation to Swampscott. Betty Fellows, ΞΞ, wrinkled her nose and remarked that the Pacific Ocean had a nicer smell than the Atlantic, yet nearly everyone else was sufficiently satisfied to even see the Atlantic, regardless of its odor. The beach, the food and the delightful summer hotel atmosphere of the New Ocean House promised a delightful day.

And indeed, when those same buses returned everyone to Boston and the Statler that night, certainly no Alpha Sigma Alpha could feel that anything had been omitted in making the first day of convention the most breathtaking and exciting period of time imaginable.

Its events had made both college girls and alumnae realize more deeply than any instruction or initiation what Alpha Sigma Alpha was, and could be, and what could be accomplished when women inspired by the same ideals and motives joined in cooperative effort.

Among the outstanding legislative acts of that day had been the election to the national presidency of Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, a charter member of her college chapter and from 1922 to 1930, national registrar.

In the election of Mrs. Sharp, the sorority gave its most important office to one who had been initiated as a college girl and who completely understood the viewpoint of the college member of Alpha Sigma Alpha as well as that of the alumna member. Moreover, as keeper of the records, she had become familiar with the membership at its period of greatest expansion.

Subsequent sessions of the convention were held in Parlors A or B at the Statler Hotel. Highlights were a luncheon at Durgin and Park's, a boat trip to Nantasket Beach where the shore dwellers took delight in teaching the Midwesterners the mysteries of clam eating in a shore dinner (even a thunder shower did not spoil the fun) and a trip to Concord and Lexington.

The final event, an informal-formal luncheon, drew those who had brought long dresses in anticipation of an evening affair; those who had trains to make came in traveling attire.

At least the 1930 convention picture is an excellent representation of collegiate styles of the period, regardless of the event. But clothes and food made little difference to the girls and women who, at the close of the hour, drew into a circle, with arms entwined, and sang "Auld Lang Syne."

To them, the acquaintances made during that memorable week could, under no circumstances, ever "be forgot." Nor would they forget the efforts of Julia Lancaster, ΘΘ, and the Boston alumnae in convention management and hospitality.

Convention business consisted of actions that seemed necessary to strengthen the organization. Plans were begun for rewriting the constitution and the safeguarding of the Endowment Fund and other monies. More emphasis was placed on the responsibility of the entire membership for determination of policies. Indeed, Wilma Wilson Sharp, the newly elected national president, put much of this into words in her memorable farewell speech:

"The consciousness of the great responsibility which you have placed on me is very grave to me. Yet, I know I shall not carry that responsibility alone — for each of you, every Alpha Sigma, shall share it with me. ΑΣΑ is your sorority. It must reflect the individuality,

**National council 1930-1932**

President
Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ

Vice president
Mary A. Wagner, KK

Secretary
Leona Wilcox, II

Treasurer
Grace G. Fultz Haworth, ΔΔ

Registrar
Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ

Chaplain
Louise Neely Stewart, YY

Alumnae officer
Doris L. Feeley, PP

A.E.S. representative
Minnie M. Shockley, ΓΓ

Trustees chairman
Elizabeth Bird Small, ΠΠ

Phoenix editor
Julia E. Lancaster, ΘΘ



In what could be viewed as a coup, Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, center (in black dress) was elected national president during the 1930 convention.

the charm, and the capability of its composite membership.

"Remember this convention for its delightful sisterhood, for its affectionate, inspiring fellowship, for its glorious manifestation of loyalty. The world, the whole world, challenges you — college girls, sorority girls, my girls of ΑΣΑ. My message to you is to go back to your college campuses, and to your individual positions determined to broaden the horizons of your daily experiences. Life is immense — live it to its fullest."

Not since 1914 had Alpha Sigma Alpha gone from a convention with so young a national council, most of whom had been early members of their own chapters and who had experienced college sorority life as Alpha Sigma Alphas.

Although post-convention problems might call forth their comment that "life is never dull in ΑΣΑ," with the cooperation and faith of the membership, they were able to solve them more or less satisfactorily.

## The real story

Members who read "Some Conventions Highlights" by "one who was there" in the November 1930 Phoenix gained a different perspective on the event:

"In attempting to bring to you a report of the 1930 Alpha Sigma Alpha Convention, I am reminded at once of my limitations as a writer. Were I a dramatist I might easily arrange for you the scenes within the acts, or, were I a novelist I might lead you to the thrilling climax and anti-climaxes in a manner fitting to the events of June 29th-July 4th. Being neither novelist nor dramatist you must content yourself with a mere outline of the proceedings.

"Throughout this report I ask you keep in mind always the very serious problem we faced during this convention; namely, saving the material and the idealistic resources of Alpha Sigma Alpha from further despoliation by an enterprising and autocratic individual. To meet cunning with thorough mastery of legal technique is not easy when an individual possesses the former and the group must quickly learn the latter. With this principle in mind let us proceed to the business at hand.

"June 29th found some 40 or more Alpha Sigs in the Hotel Statler at Boston. All were eager to finish outlining plans concerning the re-statement of sorority policies. Almost everyone present knew at least a little concerning:

"1. The revocation of Rho Rho's Charter in February 1929 without the consent of the members of the National Council, without a hearing of the alleged charges and without the knowledge of the remaining Chapters of the sorority;

"2. The withdrawal of Alpha Sigma Alpha from the A.E.S. in May 1929 without the consent of the National Council or the vote of the College Chapters;

"3. The suit for $500 brought against Carol D. Pierce, ΓΓ [undergraduate secretary, 1927-1928] (on the grounds of misappropriation of funds during the inspection trip) by Ida Shaw Martin in the name of Alpha Sigma Alpha — again without Council knowledge or consent;

"4. The mephistophelean interpretation of "to hold the power of final decision on all disputed points" as found in Article V, Sec. 1, page 4 of the manual.

"There were countless other issues perhaps not so well known as: (1) the dismissal of advisers and the forced resignation of council members; (2) the un-investigated A.S.A. badge contract at seemingly high rates; (3) the rate of dues and life-membership fees as compared to sororities of similar standing; (4) the complex relation of the National President of A.S.A. to the Sorority Service Bureau, Theta Sigma Upsilon, Phi Delta Theta, Lambda Omega, Theta Upsilon and several other similar organizations.

"Most Alpha Sigs were not aware that the Presidents of the Association of Teachers Colleges were raising questions concerning educational sororities in general and A.S.A. in particular. In light of the actions of the May 1929 meeting of the [AES], 21 of the presidents from the 23 Teachers Colleges where there are A.S.A. Chapters signed a request for an investigation of the administration of the sorority to be made by its chapters. Failure in this particular [sic] would mean the necessary dismissal of these Chapters by their respective college administrations.

"Because these Teachers College presidents believed in the good of properly conducted sororities, they were willing to send their attorney to convention to give advice to the girls in the mastering of various technicalities such a situation automatically produces. Thus it was that Mr. O.E. Jones of Missouri came to Boston — the legal representative of the association of Teachers College Presidents.

"Realizing how important it was for the delegates to control this convention from the very beginning, we asked Mr. Jones to explain to us the customs pertaining to Convention assemblies and the means of obtaining control in them. Some of us wondered whether an "appeal from the chair" would be effective with Ida Shaw Martin occupying such a chair — we were to learn later that she had taken steps to make such action utterly impossible by having police protection at hand!

"At 8:15 on Monday morning, June 30, two bus loads of happy Alpha Sigs set forth for Swampscott. ... The New Ocean House royally welcomed us upon arrival. ... Convention and hotel registration was flawless, thanks to Gertrude Halbritter [ΘΘ]. When we were all settled in out respective rooms we eagerly awaited the outcome of the scheduled advisers' session at 11 o'clock. When this meeting was not called, and we had assured ourselves that the National President was securely established in room 120, some of us became a bit suspicious. By 2 o'clock it was generally believed that a committee should endeavor to confer with Mrs. Martin about the problems confronting this convention. Her refusal to entertain this committee was curt and showed us plainly what we must do to avoid the entanglements of a 'ramped convention.'

"It was about 2:40 when we decided to declare ourselves in convention assembled, but upon going to the Colonial Room in the basement (believed to be our designated headquarters) we found the room closed to us, so room 320 was used instead. It was 2:50 when Miss Hook, AB [Ethel Hook, Alpha Beta adviser] moved that in view of the exigencies confronting us the National Convention of Alpha Sigma Alpha be declared in session with the Vice-President in the chair. Motion carried and Miss Shockley [ΓΓ] called the Convention to order.

"It was at once moved, seconded and passed that the nomination for National President be in order. Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, was triumphantly elected and called to the chair. The first order of business in the new administration was the motion concerning the appointment of a Board of Trustees to immediately assume the protection and control of all Alpha Sigma Alpha monies and investments. This board is composed of Miss Small [Elizabeth Bird Small, Pi Pi adviser], Mrs. Nattinger, ZZ, and Miss Bauch, MM.

"A committee was then appointed to notify Mrs. Martin (and any others with her) that the convention was in session and would be glad to have her present her case before it. It was one of the most dramatic events of the convention, I believe!

"Formulating the proper words (with the help of Mr. Jones) — going to the desk to engage a bellboy — following him to the doorway of the Colonial Room to witness the receipt of the message by Mrs. Martin — dismissing the bellboy — seeing the Colonial Room door close — hearing just behind me the clang of a bell — and walking down the short passage to find two men appearing! Do you wonder at my statement concerning drama? We realized at once that they were plain-clothes men, but, the committee remained there in the corridor walking with them for an hour! Deeming that a 'reasonable length of time' for an answer to our notice [had passed], we returned to Room 320 to report.

"Getting the National Treasurer with the Convention money in a place of safety and learning that an ex-collegio girl was being shadowed by the plain-clothes man seemed sufficiently important reasons for voting to continue the Convention session at the Hotel Statler in Boston (despite newspaper items to the contrary).

"And with the appointment of Julia Lancaster [ΘΘ] as Convention Manager plans were made to check-out that evening immediately following dinner. As much as we hated to leave the beauties of Swampscott we realized that the safety of the city was to mean more to us. But Julia gave us a wonderful time — and in every way Chicago was entirely out of the running in comparison [the 1926 convention at the Hotel Sherman].

"In fact, I hesitate to imagine the glories that Julia and her committee would have produced had she been able to make plans in advance.

"May I remind you that every member of the National Council is a duly rushed and elected member of her respective college Chapter, every member has served her Chapter in some official capacity, and no member is sufficiently removed from college day[s] to have lost her collegiate viewpoint (the 'average age' being about 28, I imagine). You must be able to imagine what a marvelous council meeting we had on Thursday evening, July 3rd, and how much we grew to love and respect our National President.

"As I retrospect on Convention happenings I very often wonder whether we are adequately conscious of the very marvelous piece of work our advisers accomplished? To save Alpha Sigma Alpha and its $60,000 for the girls who belong to the sorority was no mean accomplishment. Facing tremendous odds they fought for us most gloriously and there seems no adequate measure of expression for the Miss Shockleys, Miss Hooks and Miss Smalls of our sorority!

"The 1930 Convention is over — another great chapter in the history of the sorority is

written. The re-organization of 1914 is famed for the beginning of a great autocratic rule (necessary in the beginning of most organizations); and we are convinced that 1930 will be famed for the democratic rule of representatives from our Chapters.

"Independence Day seemed a legitimate climax to the Convention — and how much every Alpha Sig should have gloried in it!"

## A collegian's perspective

Delegate Martha C. Tom, YY, offered another look at the Boston convention in her letters to Marie McNamara Hawes, Upsilon Upsilon Chapter adviser:

*July 1, 1930*

*9 a.m.*

*Dear Mrs. Hawes -*

*I never had a more exciting day in my life than I had yesterday. It all sounds just like a divine novel. I have learned a great more things since I came. First of all, Miss Shockley is just as splendid as she can be. For instance, when she was put on our slate of officers, she asked to be taken off because with her name on she didn't think it had as much chance of going thru and did want those people in the offices. Miss Fultz ... is perfectly charming and as loyal and sensible as she can be.*

*Mary Wagner, the former chaplain, is personality plus and Mrs. Sharp, our president, is just lovely. In fact, that is what impressed me about the whole bunch of them. ... The Buffalo chapter is here 18 strong and all of them just peachy girls.*

*I'm saving Mrs. Martin until last. I have seen her but once, but I can safely say that she is the most hideous woman I have ever seen in my life. She had on a black straw hat that had a very big crown rising to almost a point in the middle; it had a brim about 6 inches wide that turned down a trifle at the edge all the way around.*

*I have come to the conclusion that Mrs. Martin's trouble is not that she is growing old, but that she is just a plain crook. Really, you hate to think it but after yesterday you can't help it.*

*Well, I guess I might just as well begin at the beginning: On the train [to Boston] I met Miss Roseberry [Eulalia Roseberry, first adviser of Eta Eta Chapter], Mrs. Hendrix, and the delegate from* HH. *They told me that they were going on to Swampscott immediately, from which information we gathered that Mrs. Martin was gathering her forces out there.*

*When I got to the hotel I asked for Evelyn Bell and, after much time, trouble, and traveling up and down on elevators, I found the meeting. Miss Hook [Ethel Hook, Alpha Beta adviser] was in the chair and Evelyn was the secretary. When I said I was from Mrs. Hawes' chapter, everything seemed to be all right.*

*They were just discussing what they were going to do in the convention. If we stuck together, we could easily control the convention, for we had every chapter but Miss Roseberry's, Eta Eta.*

*The Theta Theta Chapter, Boston, said, "You folks are just having a taste of what we have endured for years."*

*Anyway, this was the line of action:*

1) *Mrs. Martin was not to preside (explained later).*
2) *Roll call — official delegates counted.*
3) *One person could have but one vote and she must decide what division she is representing.*
4) *Reinstatement of Rho Rho.*
5) *Our continuance in A.E.S.*
6) *Withdraw our name from a law-suit Mrs. Martin had brought against Carol Pierce,* ΓΓ, *in the name of Alpha Sigma Alpha.*

*There was a specific person assigned to move and one to second each of these. We thought we ought to have legal advice on that last one, and it was near lunch time, so we adjourned until 2 o'clock. Stew [Louise Stewart,* YY*] and I went to Child's for lunch, for it is right across the street and we were afraid to venture any farther for fear we'd never find our way back. . . .*

*. . . Then we hashed and rehashed about getting Mrs. Martin out of the chair. It really wouldn't have been so easy to get her out, for she was perfectly entitled to the position. However, we were going to present a resolution to the convention with a lot of whereases in it accusing her of everything and asking her to abdicate in favor of the vice president.*

*There was a possibility that she wouldn't recognize us and would declare a motion carried that wasn't and so on and so Mr. Jones [the lawyer brought by Miss Hook] said it might even be reduced to force. Well, by that time we were prepared for almost anything.*

*A nominating committee was appointed (Stew was put on it) and they met during dinner. The meeting was over at shortly before six. Again I went to Child's, but alone this time, because Stew had to go with the committee.*

*That nite at 8:00 everyone: delegates and visitors, met and everything was put before them. We stood around and talked for a while and who should walk in but dear, old Rosie [Miss Roseberry] herself. Some of the people said they wouldn't be a bit surprised if she had actually been listening at the key-hole; it seems they did catch her at it in Chicago last time.*

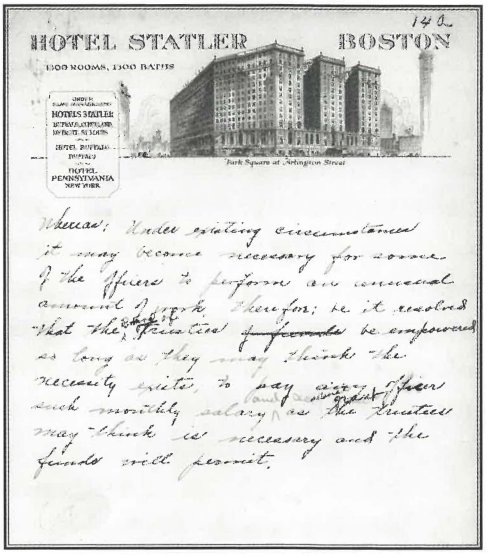
*That was all the meetings for that day and we went back to our rooms. We were in a suite of rooms with some of the Buffalo girls and there were ten of us all together. We rather relaxed and didn't get to bed until 12. Some of the girls had heard so much about how awful Mrs. Martin looked they were really scared. I was just dying to see her.*

*We had chartered buses to take us to Swampscott the next morning at 8:15, so we had to get up rather early. . . . The place is run on the American plan, so we ordered everything from soup to nuts. Near the end of the meal we were told to go to Miss Hook's room right after we were finished, so we did. There were about fifty of us in a room about the size of your dining room or perhaps a trifle smaller. Mr. Jones was there and said that it*

*was known that Mrs. M. was taking two plain-clothes men to the convention with her! (I wondered at the time whether Rosie had heard and carried back the word that we might resort to force.) …*

*At 3, Mrs. M. held her convention down in the Colonial room with Miss Halbritter, Miss Roseberry, Mrs. Hendrix, Avys Ray Taylor,* HH, *and Grace Fultz present. Miss Fultz had pinned in "her bosom" a draft for $4,000 to pay the expenses and all her reports and records were in her brief-case. She feared Mrs. M. so, that she was physically afraid not to be there. I wondered then how she could be, but later I found out.*

*To get back to our meeting upstairs: Mrs. Sharpe [sic] appointed two someones to go down and try again to see Mrs. M., but she refused to answer their note. They waited an hour. Then she sent someone else to go down and get Grace. The poor girl was a nervous wreck by the time we got thru. She still had the draft, but had left her brief-case! Her sister is here and Mrs. M. seemed to suspect her more than Grace, so she [Mrs. Martin] set two detectives to shadow her and she couldn't even go to the bathroom unless one of them stood outside the door! We learned later that each one of us was being shadowed also! Really, I never had such an exciting time in my life!*




In anticipation of the newly elected 1930 national officers having to "perform an unusual amount of work," Wilma Wilson Sharp drafted what appears to be a resolution allowing officers to be paid "as the trustees may think is necessary and the funds will permit."

*The plain-clothes tried to keep Grace there, but Mr. Jones got her to the Statler finally, where she could put her draft in the vaults and could have the protection of the hotel. In fact, that last is the reason we are all here. We had a lot of discussion about the Rho Rho affair and finally got everyone informed about the business. At about 6 we went to our respective rooms and packed. They charged us $800 for the time and meals! It was when I was checking out that I saw Mrs. M., and nearly dropped over.*

*At 9:00 we were in the buses and headed for Boston again, tired, excited, scared and disappointed. A room had been reserved for you and your badge was all ready so we were rather expecting you to come in as a surprise.*

*We had quite a time getting registered as long as there were 50 of us at the same time, but I never was so glad to see a shower and a bed in my life. Stew sat up until 1:15 writing to you and I went to sleep with the big lights on!! Slept straight thru until 8:45 and the meeting was at 10 this morning.*

*This meeting was entirely different from any of the others. We were rested, not tired or worried and knew that everything was coming along just fine. We opened by singing some songs and I played for them. Then we proceeded with what business we had decided upon and seemed necessary.*

*All went along smoothly until someone reported that Mrs. M. considered that an officer took her office one month after her election and therefore Mrs. Sharpe [sic] was not president. We looked it up in the manual and it said that she takes her office within four*

*weeks after election, so that, when we asked her to take the chair, she was duly elected and installed. So much for that.*

*We're supposed to go out to some beach tonight, but the extra-convention program is so upset that I know no more of it. I forgot to say that Miss Swisher is a most fascinating woman.*

*Mrs. Sharpe [sic] is to appoint a committee this afternoon to take care of the revising of the manual and I have a sneaking suspicion that I am to be on it. I do hope so for I can explain things so much more easily first-hand than second-hand, of course.*

*The rest of them have gone to some special place for lunch, but I didn't care to walk thru the streets of Boston for half an hour with a bunch that looks like an orphanage out for an airing!*

*… Just came back from another meeting. There's something rotten in Denmark and I'm rather bothered. This was supposed to be a regular meeting, but, when we went in, there sat Mrs. M.'s lawyer and he just wouldn't budge. Grace finally got him out and after awhile Wilma, in fact more of the officers, was there and someone was asked to conduct an informal discussion of the changes in the manual. It was purely a stall for time and, considering that one of the girls heard Mrs. M. say something about bringing a law-suit, I'm rather worried about what may be happening. All but about 2 advisers were absent from this meeting. I'm almost expecting to be hailed [sic] into court.*

*There were some very interesting changes suggested, particularly about ex-collegio and city associations and their duplications in members, dues and votes. That was about as far as we got. …*

*Last night we just bummed around doing nothing in particular. We heard that Rosie and Katie had decided to come over to our side after all. I don't know, but it sounded awfully as though she was watching out to see that she was on the right side.*

*This morning the meeting was at 9 and Rosie and Katie were there! Someone said that their delegate was closeted with Mrs. M., but that turned out to be false. Anyway, we took them in with open arms.*

*Since the Board of Trustees of the funds had to operate here and now, they substituted Miss Bauch's name for yours and it was announced that our expenses would be paid, but I had already sent home for money and now I'll be getting more.*

*In the afternoon meeting yesterday, the* HH *delegate was there feeling much relieved and happier. One of the Louisiana girls came there, too; an awfully sweet girl.*

*The newspapers have got hold of it from our point of view and from Mrs. M.'s and the difference is amusing. Stew has all the clippings. The papers seemed to make quite a bit out of the fact that Mrs. M. had her convention open by singing "Naught Can Break the Tie." We didn't get to bed until late again.*

*Now I'm down to Thursday morning, am I not? It began at 9:30 (that is, the meeting did) and everyone seemed so happy. More discussion of revisions and resolutions and I guess that was all. Then this noon we had a lovely luncheon in the room where we have been meeting — at which the council got sarcastic and sang "Naught Can Break*

*the Tie"! — followed by songs and stunts — and then we began the final meeting. Just finished up the last things and then were presented with souvenir bill-folds and the banquet program we were supposed to have as originally planned.*

*(Oh, I forgot — we all had our pictures taken this morning when we were all dressed up for the lunch and had to traipse about a block and a half before we found a place to have it taken.)*

*(Also, yesterday, Balfour's had a display here and presented us with pendants with the crest and we got you one. Be sure to ask Stew for it. At that time the man said that our pins cost $11.00 and with royalty, $13.50! He was perfectly dumbfounded when he found that we paid $16.00.)*

*We were supposed to have a model initiation, but, of course, we didn't have time and, even though we had had the time, Mrs. M. is holding the ΘΘ paraphernalia and we would have had to send to Buffalo! A gavel was given to Mrs. Sharp with the crest on it and a clock to the chapter with the most mileage. I think it will be Pi Pi.*

*... Now it is over and I feel like I imagine I would feel if I were in a four by four room with stuffy air and suddenly the walls disappeared and I were in a field with a fresh wind blowing and the smell of clover in my nostrils. It has been both a tense and an intense time, but we have enjoyed it.*

*I want you to tell the active chapter as soon as you possibly can that whatever troubles we may have locally, nationally we have officers who are the finest, loveliest, and most cultured women there are in the world and that they are working for anything but personal gain. They are capable and know how to do things; they are constantly trying to put more things into the hands of the active girls. And they are not old: Mrs. Sharp hasn't seen 30 yet, Evelyn Bell looks like 18, Mary Wagner is about 28, Leona Wilcox is about 35, Grace is about 32, Doris Feeley about 25, and you know Stew.*

*Unpleasant things have happened, but we can easily forget those for there are so many things that are nice to fill our minds now. To the officers — when you write your letters (and they won't be so frequent hereafter) think of those officers as girls, not women and ask any questions you want. They are keen to help.*

*I want to thank them for sending me, from the bottom of my heart. I wouldn't have missed it for the world!*

*Yours most faithfully,*
*Martha*

## Upsilon Upsilon closed

January 1931 brought the recall by the national council of the charter of Upsilon Upsilon Chapter at Denison University. Since the Denison chapter president of that period did not concede that social and professional life may go hand in hand, to the enrichment of the latter, Alpha Sigma Alpha felt its period of service on the Denison campus should be ended.

To quote the chapter's own history: "Campus politics, prejudices and changes proved

too much for the impatient, active group. Since it was evident that the requirements and desires of the girls were incompatible with the policies of Alpha Sigma Alpha, the resignations of active members were requested by national council."

In June 1931 there was news of the pledging of the S.A.B.E. Club at San Diego State Teachers College as Omega Omega Colony.

## 1931 to 1932

### Council meets in Denver

Aug. 22-24 brought together all members of the national council at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Denver. The finance chairman, Elizabeth Bird Small, ΠΠ, was unable to be present, however. An excerpt from president Wilma Wilson Sharp's report best summarizes the discussion of those days:

"If by next year we can have settled policies, drawn up an adequate constitution, evolved workable ex-collegio plans, added new chapters to our roll, started constructive programs, erased all memories of unpleasant occurrences, my heart will be happy in the attainment of our administration."

### Omega Omega installed

The outstanding event of the following winter was the installation of Omega Omega Chapter Jan. 16, 1932, at San Diego State College — the only national sorority on campus. This chapter became the second in California.

Adda Anderson, EE, past national secretary, was installing officer. Assistants were Nell Grant, EE; Anna Gassaway, ΞΞ; Orrel Hester, ΞΞ; Mildred Rich, ΞΞ; Ethel Tobin, ΞΞ; Lillian Criswell Hinrichs, ΔΔ; Eugenie Welcher [chapter not known]; Katherine Taylor, ΞΞ; Ruth Farnsworth Morstad, EE; and Hazel Nealy, AB.

## 1932 to 1933

### Convention in Colorado

From Aug. 26 to 29, 1932, Alpha Sigma Alphas "went to the mountains" for their convention. The Chalets, Estes Park, Colo., welcomed 115 delegates and visitors. Delegates were present from each of the 25 chapters active at that time and six city associations and ex-collegio chapters.

There were also 10 members of the national council and advisers of 18 chapters. It had been many years since the sorority membership was so well-represented at a convention.

The most important business was the acceptance of a revised national constitution and bylaws. Under the chairmanship of Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ, registrar, the committee appointed at the Boston convention reported on its two-year study of the manual. In addition to Miss Bell, members of the committee were Dorothy Willamson, NN, and Martha Tom, YY. Also considered was the revision of ritual as presented by Louise N. Stewart, YY, chaplain, and her committee consisting of Ruth Hollinger Cole, ΔΔ, and Genevieve Palmer, ΛΛ.

In addition to making certain changes in the existing ritual, including combining the

Ribbon Pledge and the Phoenix Degree services into one pledging service, the convention added a national service for installation of officers to replace the various services originated and used by individual chapters.

The amalgamation of the two pledging services was made to conform to campus customs of other national groups and to ensure that lack of time in a full college calendar did not cause chapters to illegally combine the services to suit themselves.

In spite of the many, many hours devoted to constructive work on behalf of the sorority, those in attendance at Estes Park found the period delightfully packed with fun and relaxation.

Linen-backed badges in the shape of the pin were printed in red and black with a mountain outlined in the background and a place for the wearer's name and chapter. These helped in quick acquaintance of delegates.

Gamma Gamma Chapter sponsored the rainbow dinner on the first night and the reception and "mixer" that followed. The following evening a steak fry on the mountainside behind the hotel provided an ideal opportunity for a songfest. Again and again the favorite convention song was heard:

*"From the east and west we've traveled*
*To these Rockies far away*
*Where convention days will bring us*
*Friendships that will last for aye.*
*Here amid these snow-capped mountains*
*We will seek, aspire, attain*
*The ideals, the dreams, the visions*
*Of our glorious* ΑΣΑ*"*

This had been written by the Denver City Association to the tune, "When It's Springtime in the Rockies."

Early Sunday morning, white-clad Alpha Sigma Alphas assembled on the shore of Mary's Lake for the model pledge service. No spot could have been lovelier for this service, the first ritualistic one held nationally since the 1926 convention in Chicago.

After this, Miss Ethel Hook, Alpha Beta adviser, conducted the traditional memorial service. During the afternoon, members took a bus trip to the Continental Divide where one of the thrills was a snowball battle — in August. That evening, initiation was held for Jacqueline Kendel, BB. Following this service, Mrs. Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president, announced the names of the founders — names that had been lost during the years 1914-1930.

On Monday afternoon, the national council for 1932-1934 was installed using the newly adopted ritual for this event.

That evening the Denver City Association hosted the formal banquet. Place cards and programs were green block prints on golden yellow paper and represented a mountain scene. The toast program, "Mountain Trails to a Broader View," was presided over by Inez

**National council 1932-1934**

President
Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ

Vice president
Mary A. Wagner, KK

Secretary
Leona Wilcox, II

Treasurer
Grace G. Fultz Haworth, ΔΔ

Registrar
Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ

Chaplain
Louise Neely Stewart, YY

Extension officer
Elizabeth Uhe Fuller, AB

Trustees chairman
Elizabeth Bird Small, ΠΠ

Phoenix editor
Julia E. Lancaster, ΘΘ

Nicholson McKinley, BB. Finale of the evening was the trek to the Hotel Stanley for a dance with Phi Delta Theta, in session there.

Awards were presented at the closing breakfast the following morning.

By midmorning, the buses were loaded with singing girls. To the strain of "Carry Me Back to Old Virginy," they rolled away down Big Thompson Canyon to "the east and west," but hoping to meet again in 1934 in the state of the sorority's founding — and to have the founders present in person.

## Delta Delta lost; Alpha found

Although the situation at Ohio University in Athens had been revealed at Estes Park, relinquishing the 15-year-old Delta Delta Chapter in the fall of 1932 was no less painful.

The country's economic depression and the increased training demanded by the State Department of Education of Ohio for elementary teachers made competition for desirable girls too difficult on a campus where National Panhellenic Congress groups also rushed.

According to the chapter's history, the group was urged by the dean of women to "give up their chapters and become N.P.C. groups by petition or amalgamation. The Delta Delta girls felt that their sorority was Alpha Sigma Alpha and refused to take action as a group, although it was necessary to cease existence as an ΑΣΑ chapter. Upon the invitation of Phi Mu, part of the membership affiliated with that group but remained loyal to Alpha Sigma Alpha as members."

Since 1919 the mother chapter at Farmville, Va., had existed as the local Delta Sigma Chi. However, especially since the 1932 convention, efforts had been increased to again claim this group as Alpha Chapter.

Thus, most joyfully, in January 1933, The Phoenix announced that a petition for reinstatement had been received from Delta Sigma Chi. The weekend of May 19-21, 1933, Alpha Sigma Alphas from far and wide assembled in Farmville for reinstatement ceremonies.

Installing officers were Mrs. Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president; Miss Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ, registrar; Miss Jean Richmond, Nu Nu adviser; and Emeline Putnam, Nu Nu president.

Also present were early alumnae of Alpha: Mrs. Louise Cox Carper, founder; Mrs. Hattie Kelly Thomas, early initiate and current national historian; Mrs. Margaret Patterson Martz; Mrs. Edna Elcan Jones, first grand president; Mrs. Gordon Seamon Chalmers; Mrs. Mildred Booker Dillard; Miss Lillian Minor; Mrs. Louise Price Koiner; Mrs. Bessie Ferguson Carey, former grand secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Lucy Dunnington Shields; and Miss Katherine Watkins.

Thirty-four actives and alumnae of Delta Sigma Chi were initiated on May 20 into Alpha Sigma Alpha. That evening, the reinstatement banquet was held at Longwood, a historical home owned by the college. Among the distinguished guests were Dr. Joseph L. Jarman, president of the college, and Miss Mary White Cox, head of the home, both of whom had held positions at Farmville at the time of the sorority's founding in 1901.

After the banquet, copies of the original charter of the national sorority were presented to Mrs. Sharp for the sorority and to Alpha Chapter.

The next morning, the new initiates were formally installed as Alpha Chapter, and the

chapter charter, tied with the original colors, was given to Mary Berkeley Nelson, chapter president. Among the initiates that weekend was Nancy Burgwyn, daughter of Louise Gordon Baskerville, who had been initiated at the first service of Alpha Sigma Alpha in January 1903.

**And in the world ...**

Dec. 5, 1933

The 21st Amendment to the Constitution repeals prohibition.

### Pledge manual printed

Other headline events of the year were the printing and distribution of the constitution adopted at the 1932 convention and the first printed pledge manual to replace an earlier mimeographed form. Julia Lancaster, ΘΘ, national editor, compiled both pledge manuals.

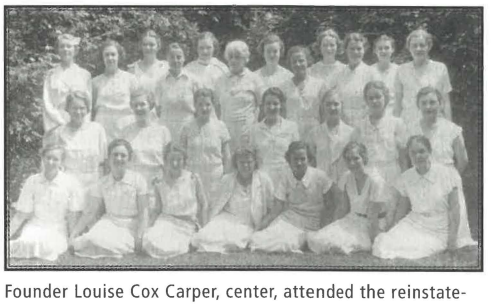
Included in the printed manual was "The Alpha Sigma Alpha Creed," written by Mrs. Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president. This simple, five-line summary of her personal convictions became one of the sorority's most cherished written works.

## 1933 to 1934

### Bound ritual

In late November 1933, the national chaplain issued the "Book of Ritual," bound in white kid leather and containing the entire body of the ritual in semi-printed form.

For many years, at least since 1914, the ritual had been typed by the councilor in charge and issued in loose form to each chapter as needed. The sorority considered the achievement of a white book for the presiding officer and a more permanent portfolio file for other officers a most important step in ensuring adequate and standard ritual for all chapters.



Founder Louise Cox Carper, center, attended the reinstatement of Alpha Chapter May 19-21, 1933.

For Founders' Day that year, the regular issue of The Phoenix was displaced by an Aegis edition of esoteric nature and named for the second Alpha Sigma Alpha magazine. Content dealt largely with historical material. The issue featured pictures of the founders, messages from them, stories of the early Alpha Sigma Alpha and accounts of the reinstatement of Alpha.

### Chi Chi requests inactive status

In August 1933, when Association of Education Sororities representatives had convened at the Hotel Belmont in Chicago, the situation at Indianapolis was reported in detail. The transfer of Indianapolis Teachers College to the campus of Butler University and its inclusion as the College of Education of the university made it possible for AES groups to rush only girls registered at the College of Education.

Since many freshmen would register in the College of Liberal Arts and later transfer to Education, the rush list in the fall of 1933 would probably total 31, the total list for all AES sororities. Thus, at the request of Chi Chi Chapter actives and alumnae, the Alpha Sigma Alpha chapter was given permission in the fall of 1933 to be inactive for two years.

**National council 1934-1936**

President
Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ

Vice president
Mary A. Wagner, KK

Secretary
Leona Wilcox, II

Treasurer
Polly Smelser Schlosser, BB

Registrar
Dorothy Williamson Crook, NN

Chaplain
Louise Neely Stewart, YY

Finance chairman
Elizabeth Bird Small, ΠΠ

Phoenix editor
Genevieve Steele Leib, XX

## 1934 to 1935

### Home to Virginia

In 1934 the sorority focused on the impending national convention. For the first time since 1912, when members had convened in Norfolk, Alpha Sigma Alpha was to meet in Virginia, the state of its birth.

The place chosen was the New Chamberlain Hotel at Old Point Comfort. Mary Wagner, KK, vice president, served as convention chairman, and Hattie Kelly Thomas, A, historian and a member of the first group initiated into the sorority, was official hostess.

From Aug. 22 to 26, the 103 delegates and visitors reveled in the good fellowship and the historical setting of the convention. The presence of three founders — Louise Cox Carper, Juliette Hundley Gilliam and Virginia Boyd Noell — gave particular inspiration.

Early Alphas included the four Batten sisters: Elizabeth Batten Johnson, Sehna Batten Miller, Florris Batten Webster and Dorothy Batten Kitchen; Margaret Patterson Martz and Louise Baskerville Hunter (and her 1934 Alpha daughter, Nancy Burgwyn). Other Alpha daughters were Pauline and Mary Jones, whose mother was Edna Elcan Venable Jones.

At the final session of the convention, these official delegates were reported registered: national council, nine; national committee chairmen, three; collegiate chapter delegates, 24; collegiate chapter advisers, five; alumnae chapter delegates, 10; for a total of 51 voting delegates.

Significant actions of the Old Point Comfort convention were:

1. It was reported that the sorority's lawyer had recommended that the sorority be incorporated and also that it have an executive secretary. The recommendation on incorporation was approved unanimously and a committee appointed to study the necessary steps. Authority was given the national council to make the necessary changes in the constitution to conform with requirements of incorporation laws if the sorority were to incorporate.
2. Authority was given to establish alumnae chapters where at least eight graduate members or members withdrawn from college resided. These chapters were to petition and be chartered.
3. The national council was made to consist of nine members: eight to be elected and the chairman of the finance committee to be appointed by the national president.
4. Alumnae supervision and supervision of philanthropic work were given to the national vice president.
5. Supervision of chapter rushing and pledge training were delegated to the national registrar.
6. Slight changes were made in installation fees.
7. The alumnae round table recommended that the same percent of expenses be paid from the national treasury for official alumnae delegates to future conventions as the percentage of life members within the chapters.
8. The report of the national songbook chairman was accepted but it was moved that a committee of the national council decide printing details.

9. The national council was authorized to investigate the placing of a commemorative plaque at State Teachers College, Farmville, Va.

In a section so rich in American tradition, it was to be expected that history would be important in the various activities of the 1934 convention. Since the hotel was practically surrounded by water — moreover, the U.S. fleet on its Atlantic tour was beginning to assemble there — the official badges, though very similar to those of 1932, bore the outline of a boat. Programs were white, tied and printed in red.

**And in the world ...**

1934

A DuPont chemist produces nylon.

Ritz crackers hit the market. Nabisco bakes a record 5 billion crackers during the first year of production.

## Scatter-brained

On Wednesday the boat, trains and private cars had brought most of the delegates so that after the luncheon, all were ready for the opening session at 2:30. Dinner and an informal reception filled the evening.

In addition to the council and convention hostess, three of the founders were in the receiving line. However, they were so excited to be together for the first time in many years that they were as scatter-brained as the college girls.

Mrs. Carper was very greatly surprised when Mary Wagner, KK, addressed her as Mrs. Gilliam (upon reading her badge), but investigation proved that the two had absentmindedly donned each other's badges as they were rooming together. For them, it was merely a reversion to their own college habits of each using the possessions of the other.

The next day a motor trip arranged by the Virginians took the entire convention across the new James River Bridge and to historic St. Luke's Church in Isle of Wight County. The church, built in 1631, was the oldest Protestant church standing in America.

Late in the evening, "the Navy" and other young gentlemen joined the members for an informal dance in the hotel's roof garden.

Although the sun refused to come out and the wind to stay in, model pledging service was held on the roof of the hotel early the next morning. The usual memorial service preceded a roundtable discussion after breakfast.

An all-afternoon trip to Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown, followed by initiation, completed the day. The blue-green draperies of the convention parlors formed an attractive setting for the service at which Kathryn Blood, KK, Catherine Brackin, NN, and Evelyn McDonie, PP, were initiated.

At the close of the service, when the last initiate had been led from the altar, Hattie Kelly Thomas, A, was escorted there to receive a jeweled badge and commendation for her unusual service throughout the years.

## Handsome passengers

Alice Weinheimer, ΠΠ, and Marvella Shridde, TT, described the excursion to the fleet the next afternoon: "First there was the excitement of getting together and jumping down to the little boat that took us to the battleship. This involved dropping of purses in the water and breaking of heels. There were two ships, the U.S.S. Lexington and the U.S.S. Texas.

"When we arrived at the battleships we were helped up on a little platform and then

climbed about three flights of steps. This brought us on the deck. Here we could see where the airplanes land, and the guns and cannons that would be used in time of war. We were on the ship about two and a half hours. ... Besides the attractions of the ship itself there were the thousand or more regular passengers, some of whom were very interesting and handsome."

(It was the Lexington of which Marvella wrote. During World War II this vessel was sunk.) Alice was in the group boarding the Texas. "We were shown to the Admiral's cabin and royally entertained until our guides arrived. Five of the Pi Pi girls in a group found a lieutenant very engaging.

"During our tour, we met Captain Leahey who, being a native Buffalonian, decided we must have some special recognition; consequently, he supplied us with head bands bearing in gold letters 'U.S.S. Texas.' "

Miss Ethel Hook, AB, found Uncle Sam's cobbler very adept at fixing the heel she had broken on her sea venture. The sea voyagers rushed back to shore in time to elect the new national officers and install them, Miss Hook reading the service.

## Breathless moment

The formal banquet of that evening was made memorable by talks by the three founders present. Favors from the L.G. Balfour Co. were pins bearing the coat-of-arms.

Who would receive the awards? The answer was found the next morning at breakfast. To be sure this meal was delayed somewhat because of those attending the churches of the region. Included among these was the carload headed by Louise Carper, who had taken early communion at St. John's in Hampton, the quaint little Episcopal Church in which service had been held continuously for a longer period of time than in any other Protestant church in the United States.

Concerning the breakfast, Julia Lancaster, ΘΘ, is quoted: "The silver tray for the best display was awarded by Mrs. Haworth [Grace Fultz Haworth, ΔΔ] of the judges committee, to Omega Omega. Their charming model of San Diego campus had received much admiration and was supplemented by a beautiful set of perfectly kept books.

"The Song Book trophy was awarded to Kappa Kappa. Pi Pi has long been our banner convention chapter. They received again the trophy for traveling the greatest total mileage. Our hostess chapter, Alpha, had the largest number of delegates.

"Finally came the breathless moment when Mrs. Sharp announced the winner of the cups. Kappa Kappa and Alpha Gamma had tied in efficiency! A duplicate cup has been sent to the tying chapter."

## ΑΣΑ's Antics

The 1934 convention saw the birth of ΑΣΑ's Antics, the convention news sheet. Mimeographed, it recorded the famous before and behind-the-curtain proceedings.

In it one reads: "In remarking upon the hospitality shown us at every turn, we wish to comment upon the cordiality of the mosquitoes. They greeted us with luscious bites which

have left a lingering memory," and "At the reception Wednesday evening the receiving line assembled in the Antique Shop. Was this the attraction of like for like?" (Thus did youth of those college years classify the council and founders.)

The staff for the first Antics issue was Julia Lancaster, ΘΘ, national editor; Jane F. McDavitt, XX, alumnae editor; Margaret Huston, ΠΠ, art editor; Mary Couvrette, ΩΩ; Nancy Simpkinson, AA; and Elizabeth Eppstein, TT.

An account of the Virginia conclave of 1934 may well close with the often-sung convention song by Georgia Barton, II. It was sung to the tune of "The Man on the Flying Trapeze."

*"Oh, we came on the buses,*
*We rode on the train,*
*We motored in autos,*
*We hiked in the rain,*
*But now, dear Virginia,*
*We're back home again,*
*To be here with our Alpha girls.*

*"Oh the scenery we loved as we sped here*
*From the North and the South and the West,*
*But the scene of our founding we most do revere,*
*Virginia is still far the best. (Repeat first stanza)*

*"Oh we've brought our exhibits, we've written new songs*
*We've determined to take home the prize!*
*And above all we've come here to plan and to learn*
*How to better our chapters and rise. (Repeat first stanza)"*

## Lambda Lambda requests inactive status

At the beginning of the fall quarter of 1934 came a request from Lambda Lambda Chapter for a two-year period of inactivity. After courageously struggling for the past year, the girls felt it impossible to continue. It was a source of gratification, however, that the chapter was not the first at Ohio State to succumb to the Depression.

One national group and one local had become inactive since 1932, and one weak national had merged with another group as a result of a national amalgamation.

## First extension materials

The next spring the sorority produced an informative, mimeographed pamphlet to provide specific information about Alpha Sigma Alpha to college administrations and locals considering nationalization. This first edition has been revised from time to time and kept up-to-date.

**And in the world ...**

Aug. 14, 1935

The Social Security Act passes, creating a joint federal and state program for both unemployment and old-age pension.

The first licensed-character lunch box appears, displaying Mickey Mouse.

## 1935 to 1936

### Council meets in Buffalo

From Aug. 20 to 23, 1935, the national council convened in Buffalo, N.Y., at the Hotel Statler. The four days were crowded with official business, and although they included two tea opportunities to become acquainted with the Buffalo actives and alumnae, sessions lasted far into the night. Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, national president, set forth the objectives of the conference as:

"1. Alpha Sigma Alpha must shape her course so that, in a changing and critical educational world, she has a valuable and unquestionable contribution to make to the development of her members.

"2. Alpha Sigma Alpha must enlarge her sphere — through the addition of chapters, the holding of alumnae interests, the gaining of valuable new friends who will lend their efforts and influence in her behalf. Wise expansion and judicial promotion must be the watch words for 1935-1936."

In addition to making proposals by which the above might be gained, the council decided that the sorority efficiency year should extend from May 16 to May 16 and that a Fellowship Loan Week should be instituted, during which contributions should be sent to the fellowship loan chairman.

Moreover, the council authorized for the mimeographing of the "National Book of Devotions," compiled by the national and chapter chaplains. Louise Stewart, YY, national chaplain, distributed the book in October.

Pledges that fall were presented with an attractive, green-covered, printed "Pledge Manual," a revision of the 1932 form.

### First directory since 1930

In January 1936, under the direction of Genevieve Steele Leib, XX, national editor, and Dorothy Williamson Crook, NN, registrar, a directory of the sorority appeared for the first time since July 1930. It contained the names of all initiated members.

Also in this winter, Alpha Sigma Alpha became the first Association of Education Sororities group to pay any part of alumnae expenses at a national convention, and one of the few sororities of any classification to do so, as only 10 NPC groups were known to do so then. It was guaranteed that each chartered alumnae chapter would receive hotel expenses for one official delegate at the 1936 convention.

### Chi Chi to return

In May, because of the untiring efforts of the Indianapolis Alumnae Chapter, a petition was announced from Sigma Alpha Sigma, a local at Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Ind.

It was stipulated that the new chapter should receive the name Chi Chi and that the loyalty of the Indianapolis Teachers College alumnae should be transferred to it since activity of the original Chi Chi Chapter had by then proved impossible.