CHAPTER 5

1947 to 1952

Historian: Louise Neely Stewart, YY



Louise Neely Stewart, YY

Dear Pearl:

The autumn of 1947 was a momentous one for Alpha Sigma Alpha as its events marked a significant change in policies and status. Having closely watched educational trends through the years, the national officers of Alpha Sigma believed that the fields of the social sorority and of the social education sorority had become identical and that to adhere to the limited area in which we had been functioning since 1914 was to restrict services and curtail growth.

Hence on Sept. 15, 1947, with approval of the chapters, the sorority placed the following petition:

"To the National Panhellenic Conference:

"The Association of Education Sororities has concluded that separate fraternity fields for National Panhellenic Conference and the Association of Education Sororities can no longer be clearly defined or satisfactorily maintained. This unanimous conclusion is based upon extensive study and convincing experience relevant to changes in classification and accreditation of the colleges now designated as AES field. Therefore, Alpha Sigma Alpha, a member of the Association of Education Sororities, by the authority vested in its National Council, petitions National Panhellenic Conference for associate membership."

Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president, and Helen Corey, KK, secretary, signed the petition.

Best regards,
Louise Neely Stewart, YY
Historian, 1938-1958

1947 to 1948

"Stars in My Crown" published

The advisers handbook "Stars in My Crown" was issued in the fall of 1947. Written by Polly Smelser Schlosser, BB, it presented the adviser picture in a most concise and usable form.

Rho Chi, Beta Pi installed

On Sept. 14, Rho Chi Chapter, pledged in the spring, was installed at Wayne University in Detroit. Services were held at beautiful Dearborn Inn. For an explanation of why the chapter was called Rho Chi, see its history on p. 431. The alumnae group found it more feasible to remain intact and thus established a second alumnae chapter in Detroit known as the Rho Chi Alumnae Chapter.

Beta Pi, Concord College, Athens, W.Va., was added to the chapter roll Sept. 27.

Stressing scholarship by giving national recognition to outstanding students, The Phoenix of November 1947 listed girls who had been honored for their scholarship average on their campuses. Among other items, it is noted that in five chapters all members had better than "C" averages for the entire year: Kappa Kappa, Beta Eta, Beta Theta, Beta Gamma and Xi Xi.

Sorority joins NPC

In the Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph of Nov. 14, 1947, this news item appeared:

"Eleven sororities were unanimously voted admittance into the National Panhellenic Conference at the meeting in session at the Broadmoor Hotel Thursday. They were admitted into associate membership with certain requirements. The list includes the following American education sororities: Alpha Sigma Alpha, Alpha Sigma Tau, Delta Sigma Epsilon, Pi Kappa Sigma, Sigma Sigma Sigma, and Theta Sigma Upsilon.

"Four Jewish sororities were admitted on the same basis. They are Alpha Epsilon Phi, Phi Sigma Sigma, Delta Phi Epsilon, and Sigma Delta Tau. The Catholic sorority, Theta Phi Alpha, also was admitted to Panhellenic associate membership.

"Miss Amy Onken said that the NPC has taken a constructive step and its effectiveness will be increased by admitting these groups.

"The members of the committee making the recommendation were Mrs. N. Tiel Smith, Delta Gamma, Philadelphia, chairman; Mrs. M. C. Burnaugh, Beta Sigma Omicron, Chicago, Ill.; and Mrs. Darrell Ragmussen, Alpha Omicron Pi, New York."

Because the Association of Education Sororities was organized by Sigma Sigma Sigma and Alpha Sigma Alpha, it was fitting that Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president, should make the motion at the AES meeting for the dissolution of that organization, its work having ended with the action of NPC. AES was thus terminated Nov. 12, 1947, having existed since September 1915.

The NPC action of Nov. 12 regarding the education sororities carried the provision that certain constitutional requirements of NPC must be met by June 1, 1948. For Alpha Sigma Alpha, this meant that the membership roll must be cleared of all dual members and that

all chapters must be in colleges or universities accredited by the Association of American Universities or the pertinent recognized regional association.

Four chapters dropped

The January 1948 Phoenix was an alumnae bulletin designed to acquaint the membership with recent events within the sorority and the new regulations that must be met. Forms were sent asking those who were also members of current NPC organizations to state their choice of affiliation.

Four active chapters — Gamma Gamma, Northwestern State College, Alva, Okla.; Beta Gamma, Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Okla.; Beta Eta, State Teachers College, Dickinson N.D.; and Beta Xi, New York State College for Teachers, Oneonta, N.Y. — were in institutions unable to secure accreditation before the deadline. Hence it was necessary to drop these groups from the chapter roll.

After visits from national representatives, these chapters assumed local names and status with the understanding that whenever their institutions could meet the new standards, Alpha Sigma Alpha would consider a petition for nationalization. Fully initiated members retained all the privileges of national membership in Alpha Sigma Alpha, including that of participation in alumnae chapter activities.

On May 26, 1948, Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, sent by registered mail to Mrs. E. Granville Crabtree, NPC secretary, a statement of the fulfillment by Alpha Sigma Alpha of requirements for associate membership in that organization. On June 2, Mrs. Crabtree's acknowledgment stated, in part, "It is a pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of the credentials indicating that Alpha Sigma Alpha has met all the requirements and is therefore now an associate member of the National Panhellenic Conference."

The June 9 NPC Bulletin reported that the six AES groups, in assuming their new status, relinquished a total of 19 chapters at nine schools. It also noted that, "It is recommended that not until Jan. 1, 1949, shall any overtures leading to future chapters be made by or given consideration by any member group of NPC, active or associate, on campuses now occupied by present AES groups." After Jan. 1, the 232 campuses then occupied by women's groups were open to all.

A newly appointed group of chapter alumnae secretaries gave valuable assistance in checking addresses and reaching strayed alumnae in those months. Also, 176 class representatives, who came into being in 1942, assisted in the project with news of marriages, births and addresses.

Beta Sigma, Beta Rho installed

Although the changed status of Alpha Sigma Alpha was foremost in the thoughts of its members, the sorority had two more reasons to rejoice: the addition of Beta Sigma Chapter at Southwest Missouri State College in Springfield on Nov. 1, 1947, and of Beta Rho Chapter, Northern Illinois State Teachers College in DeKalb on Feb. 7, 1948.

1948 to 1949

Regional conventions

"Design for Building" was the theme of the five regional conventions held in 1948. Detroit's meeting on April 10 came first with Evelyn Bell, ΠΠ, and Virginia Carpenter, OO, in charge.

Region III was next, on April 17, with Esther Bucher, HH, and Phon Johnson Gillespie, EE, trying to coax all of their Alpha Sigma Alphas to Kansas City. On April 24, region I girls gathered in Philadelphia with Helen Corey, KK, in charge, while the Southerners in region IV were in Hot Springs, Ark., on May 1.

Finally, on Oct. 30, the Westerners, with Denver as their center, vied with all the other groups for the most enthusiastic conclave of all. General program covers were in red and white, with red, white and blue cord ties, while banquet covers were blueprints carrying a house and plans for design.The toast program centered on a house-building theme. President Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, wrote a ceremonial service for the regional meetings.

And in the world ...

1949

KitchenAid introduces the electric dishwasher.

National officers meet

A workshop conference of national officers was held at Gratiot Inn, Port Huron, Mich., Aug. 16-20. Participants created a new office of public relations director with the rank of a chairmanship. Also at that meeting, members made plans for using visual aids in preparing rushees and for education within the sorority for a higher quality of public relations and publicity.They also revised the extension booklet to conform to the sorority's associate membership status in NPC.

The officers also endorsed continued sponsorship of philanthropic projects to veterans hospitals, with emphasis on occupational therapy equipment, comfort gifts and recreational materials.

Columbus alumnae sponsored an area luncheon for Founders' Day, making a commendable effort to gather all who could possibly find transportation to Columbus for that day. In addition to the traditional Founders' Day celebration, members honored Dorothy Porter Cummins, a charter member of Lambda Lambda and 1948 winner of the Wilma Wilson Sharp Alumna award.

The January 1949 Phoenix took the form of a bulletin sent to all alumnae, reporting the news and activities in brief for the past year, and also stressing the "house party convention" to be held in August. Husbands and families were urged to attend.

The Columbus Alumnae Chapter in January also published a newsletter that was sent to all Ohio members who were thought to be interested in the renewed activity in their state.

"March of the Alpha Sigs"

Eta Eta's Shirley Hellrich's search for original songs yielded tangible material, as was indicated in March when "March of the Alpha Sigs" was presented to Phoenix readers. The same month, the sorority announced that for the first time there was an organized group outside the continental limits of the United States.

National council 1949-1952

President, NPC delegate
Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ

Vice president
Virginia Carpenter, OO

Secretary
Helen L. Corey, KK

Treasurer
Esther Bucher, HH

Registrar
Jean Raup Grady, BE

Alumnae director
Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ

Phoenix editor
Genevieve Steele Leib, XX

The "Hui Hoolaulea" (PleASAnt Gathering) Chapter of Honolulu, territory of Hawaii, sent a picture of the nine charter members to prove their existence and the "pleASAntness" of their gathering. They also planned to include all Alpha Sigma Alphas living on the other four main islands of the territory. The organizational meeting was held Nov. 11, 1948.

Chapters reinstated

The 1949 meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools was a happy occasion for Alpha Sigma Alpha — although probably few of the delegates to that assembly realized it — for action there resulted in the accrediting of Northwestern State College, Alva, Okla., Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Okla., and State Teachers College, Dickinson, N.D.

Therefore, three chapter reinstatements were possible: Beta Gamma at Tahlequah April 5; Gamma Gamma at Alva April 7; and Beta Eta at Dickinson April 23. The school year ended with the reinstatement of the fourth chapter relinquished because of NPC ruling when State Teachers College, Oneonta, N.Y., was accredited by its regional association, and Beta Xi was reinstated on June 1.

1949 to 1950

House party convention

The "house party convention," held at the Gratiot Inn Aug. 22-26, was the first convention at which Alpha Sigma Alpha had required a registration fee. While this was necessary because of rising costs and had been used by other organizations for some time, delegates were pleASAntly surprised to find that an attractive, printed songbook with music could be given to them as a result. This 1949 edition of ΑΣΑ songs proved an outstanding addition to the convention program.

Because the inn was on the shore of Lake Michigan, a "saucy" red fish swam on the circle of the convention badge. Programs were compact sheets folded in three sections and easily carried in a pocket or purse.

Detroit Alumnae were in charge of the opening luncheon, which was followed by the familiar "hanging of the shields" session. A surprise of the "all-aboard dinner" was a box of leis for the national council, the gift of the Hawaiian alumnae. Round tables and the regional dinner were featured on the second day, with the initiation service after the dinner.

The memorial service and business sessions filled the daylight hours on Wednesday, which ended with a "wagon wheels" dinner and a hayride to the dunes. Delegates unacquainted with Michigan nights found the warmth of the hay most welcome and the inner circle by the fire highly desirable.

Two business sessions, installation of officers and the formal "captain's dinner" filled Thursday. The dinner was memorable in that all alumnae chapters had participated in its decorations and events.

That "happy fog"

On Friday the all-ashore breakfast and presentation of awards ended the house party. Buffet luncheons, dancing and stunts in the casino and an occasional dip in the lake had punctuated the days so that delegates were in that happy fog traditional for ΑΣΑ convention-leavers.

Although the beach was most tantalizing, delegates were conscientious in spending long hours in business sessions, because legalities involved in the incorporation of the sorority and the adoption of a new constitution required much time. The convention body approved the action of the national council to incorporate the organization on Oct. 13, 1947, under the statutes of Missouri, as well as the revised constitution and bylaws presented by Phon Johnson Gillespie, EE, constitution chairman.

In accordance with changes in the constitution and bylaws, delegates voted that a minimum sum be set aside from the Endowment Fund to be invested in registered securities and the amounts beyond this be used during the coming triennium for certain specified purposes. To care for changes in the sorority's status, certain changes in ritual were recommended and adopted. Initiation fees and national collegiate dues were increased to care for rising costs.

Delegates also decided to continue the national philanthropic project of giving aid in veterans hospitals and to devote the $10 assessment of college and alumnae chapters to this project again rather than to the Fellowship Loan Fund.

The Alumnae Round Table recommended that the alumnae chapters assess each non-life member $1 a year until the membership fee was completed and that there be a national alumnae project to assist in raising money for the Golden Jubilee convention.

The College Round Table offered the following recommendations: "To take an inventory of chapter personnel prior to starting another rush season; to concentrate on pledge training so all may be full initiates as soon as possible; to conduct study sessions on sorority background and regulations for initiated members instead of written examinations; to develop leadership in ourselves and our chapters in school, community, and national ΑΣΑ affairs."

First-day records show that 159 Alpha Sigma Alphas were registered for this convention. National council and committee chairmen had seven each; college delegates, 36; alumnae delegates, 27; advisers, five; and college and alumnae visitors, 38 and 39, respectively.

There were also additional registrations and the "men's auxiliary," which included 4-year-old Demie, who, with his teddy bear and its red and white luggage, joined his mother Harriet Naylor, BE, and her carload of Virginians for the trek to Michigan.

Statisticians found that 1,637 words were printed in the five newspaper stories of the Port Huron paper about this convention. However, the events were also well-covered in The Alert, produced by Genevieve Steele Leib, XX, Phoenix editor, and her able staff. The Alert replaced ΑΣΑ Antics as the convention daily.

"Take time to think"

Alumnae in Action, an attractive booklet done in color on the hectograph, was issued in

And in the world ...

June 27, 1950

The United States begins its involvement in the Korean War.



From left, Eloise Proctor, XX, Phoenix alumnae editor; Joan Steinmiller, ΠΠ; and Polly Smelser Schlosser, BB, scholarship chairman, work on The Alert, the convention paper.

1950 as a handbook for alumnae by Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ, alumnae director.

"Alpha Accent Time" was inaugurated in the fall of 1950 by Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, as a time when active chapters might draw closer together and consider the important issues of our times. "Take time to think; it is the source of power," the chapters were told.

In 1950 Mary Harpole, HH, received the honor of being the first winner of the Frost Fidelity award. Emma Coleman Frost, ΠΠ, and her husband Donald created the award at the 1949 convention. It was to be given to the girl who had done the most in service to her chapter and Alpha Sigma Alpha. For more on Emma Frost, see p. 319.

1950 to 1951

Alpha Alpha reinstated



In 1950, Mary Harpole, HH, was the first recipient of the Frost Fidelity award. Her many campus activities included serving as president of the college Panhellenic council, secretary of the student activities council and treasurer of the senior class.

Ohio dreams were partially realized when on Dec. 9, 1950, Alpha Alpha Chapter was reinstated on the Miami University campus. It was a gala occasion for the actives and alumnae, especially "the old Alpha Alphas" who braved ice and snow to drive to Oxford.

However, when the Phi Delta Thetas loaned their national headquarters building for the ceremonies and as dormitory facilities for the national officers, they also provided an excess of heat, and the discomforts of the world without meant little.

With four national councilors — including the national president — three national chairmen and a large delegation of alumnae and actives from Middletown, Dayton, Hamilton, Indianapolis, Columbus and Muncie present, one could almost imagine the occasion a regional convention.

From the Chicago alumnae were the mother and aunt of colonizer Anne Petree. These women, both members of the former Alpha Alpha Chapter, were among those who reminisced with Miss Amy Swisher, their adviser, and Elizabeth Newhall Johnston, charter member of Alpha Alpha, whom the new colony had been fortunate enough to find as head of a campus dormitory and claim as their adviser.

After the ritual services, the formal banquet was held in Hamilton Hall. The event concluded with a Panhellenic tea in the ballroom of historic Oxford College.

State days return

During this year, state days again entered the picture, with Indiana taking the initiative in Indianapolis on May 6. Virginia held two, in November 1950 and April 1951, the first being in Richmond and the second in Farmville. Oklahoma gathered its members in Oklahoma City in April 1951, and Indiana did it again that month, this time in Muncie on the Ball State campus. On the same Saturday, the Pennsylvanians and a few recruits from Boston and Virginia congregated in Philadelphia.

Missouri did not call it a state day, but Zeta Zeta decided to celebrate the golden anniversary early and issued invitations for a banner weekend at Warrensburg on Feb. 10-11. The other Missouri active chapters as well as Epsilon Epsilon and Eta Eta from Kansas participated in the workshop and dance. Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president, cut the birthday cake.

Also on that weekend of April 21, while the two states in the East were meeting, the

Kansas City alumnae invited neighboring alumnae chapters for a tea; Warrensburg and Topeka were represented. The "spring luncheon" in Columbus had for years been a mecca for Ohio members and was held as usual. In addition, the Saturday before Easter a so-called "state day" in Ohio was held in Columbus in November 1951, in connection with the 50th anniversary Founders' Day.

Feeling that another rally was needed before the jubilee convention, the Licking-Muskingum Alumnae issued an invitation to Columbus and all other Alpha Sigma Alphas in Ohio, as well as those across the border, to a spring state day at the Granville Inn on the Saturday after Easter in 1952. However, Indiana held its own convention that weekend. On the same day, 56 Oklahoma Alpha Sigma Alphas and Esther Bucher, HH, convened in Tulsa.

And in the world ...

1951

Tupperware is taken out of stores to be sold only at home parties.

1951 to 1952

Sorority turns 50

The golden cover of the November 1951 Phoenix proclaimed it a very special issue, for it announced to the world that Alpha Sigma Alpha was now 50 years old. It was also proud to present to the membership the pictures of the five founders, all of them living.

Richmond alumnae were fortunate in having both Juliette Hundley Gilliam and Mary Willamson Hundley as guests in their celebration. Founders' Day events all over the country began the year-long celebration of this very important birthday.

Beta Upsilon, Beta Tau installed

The same issue of the magazine carried detailed accounts of the installation of two new chapters: Beta Upsilon at Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, on Oct. 6, and Beta Tau at Oswego State Teachers College, Oswego, N.Y., on Oct. 13, 1951.

Pi Pi and the Buffalo alumnae held a golden-silver anniversary in October, commemorating both the golden jubilee and the installation of Pi Pi in 1926.

Meanwhile, members were looking forward to celebrating another event that occurred in Virginia: the 175th anniversary of the founding of Phi Beta Kappa. Representatives of the National Panhellenic Conference, the National Interfraternity Conference, the Professional Panhellenic Association and the Professional Interfraternity Conference met in the Williamsburg area, transacting the usual business of their respective conferences and joining in an interfraternity banquet at the New Chamberlain Hotel, Old Point Comfort, in honor of the beginning of the fraternity system.

This commemorative event, sponsored by the Interfraternity Research and Advisory Council, was designated as a "Thanksgiving for Freedom" celebration, and, quoting Amy Burnham Onken, national president of Pi Beta Phi, its discussions and decisions "were marked by a deep consciousness of the importance of the college fraternity as an integral, not an isolated, part of the American way of life and of its responsibility for proving itself an effective weapon against the forces which would destroy the basic freedoms of American democracy and for those which would preserve them."

NPC admits Alpha Sigma Alpha

The 32nd biennial meeting of NPC was held in Williamsburg from Nov. 27 to Dec. 1, 1951. So that all groups might have a vote in the deliberation of the conference, the question of admitting associate member organizations to full membership was considered on the first day. All 11 groups that for the past four years had held associate membership were unanimously granted full membership.

Because of its place in the alphabet and because the names of the former education sororities headed the list, Alpha Sigma Alpha's name was read first. And so, in the state that had seen its birth as a general sorority just 50 years before, Alpha Sigma Alpha returned to general status with the right and privilege of establishing and maintaining chapters in any and all institutions of collegiate rank open to NPC.



President Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, on steps, is greeted by Ella Pilkinton Adams, A, left, president of the Richmond Alumnae Chapter, and Jean Raup Grady, BE, registrar, at Byrd Airport in Richmond, Va. Mrs. Sharp was en route to Williamsburg, Va., for the 32nd National Panhellenic Conference Nov. 27-Dec. 1, 1951.

This action increased the membership of NPC to 31. Other organizations admitted to full membership at the same time were the former AES sororities Alpha Sigma Tau, Delta Sigma Epsilon, Pi Kappa Sigma, Sigma Sigma Sigma and Theta Sigma Upsilon; the Jewish sororities Alpha Epsilon Phi, Delta Phi Epsilon, Phi Sigma Sigma and Sigma Delta Tau; and the Roman Catholic sorority Theta Phi Alpha.

Writing of these 11 groups, in a bulletin from its committee on college panhellenics, NPC stated, "All of these fraternities took their places on the National Panhellenic Conference rolls with stabilized internal organizations — four of them having been established more than 50 years ago, and all of them for more than 30 years.

"During the period of NPC Associate Membership, the individual fraternities have continued to function on the campuses they served. The remarkable points of similarity in organization on both the national and local level have accounted for their immediate success in adapting themselves to NPC procedures.

"The national fraternities formerly comprising the Association of Education Sororities have brought to the National Panhellenic Conference a valuable knowledge of their particular campuses and a program as a basis for integration, which for years has closely related to the purposes of colleges they have served. ... Throughout the years the main difference has been merely of terminology, with the word, 'education' used to define a field of operation."

At this NPC conference there were the greatest number of fraternity officers in history — 155. In addition to the regular delegates, editors and executive secretaries were present for special meetings, and other national officers attended as well as visitors. Representing Alpha Sigma Alpha were Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, as official delegate, and Evelyn G. Bell, ΠΠ, with Helen Corey, KK, and Jean Raup Grady, BE, present for part of the sessions.

The Golden Jubilee

In March 1952, Helen Corey, KK, convention manager, issued the first mimeographed announcements of convention details. She noted that convention would begin with a luncheon on Aug. 19 and end with breakfast on Aug. 23. Reminiscent of an earlier day in the sorority's conventions was the statement that dinner would be held at Natural Bridge Hotel in Natural Bridge, Va. (site of the 1909 convention).

The glittering gold seal in the shape of the badge and carrying "Alpha Sigma Alpha" in green headed the page. This seal, first used in November, had already become very familiar to Alpha Sigma Alphas as a symbol of the golden year. The March Phoenix was so full of Virginia and its possibilities as a vacation spot that no loyal Alpha Sigma Alpha could possibly resist at least the desire to head for that historic state in August.

And in the world ...

1952

Jonas Salk discovers the vaccine against polio.

Recognition of Eminence award

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Alpha Sigma Alpha, the national council, at its meeting in August 1951 in Roanoke, created the Recognition of Eminence award.

The first recipient was Dr. Ethel J. Alpenfels, BB, on April 8, 1952. The award consisted of a gold medallion bearing the Alpha Sigma Alpha coat-of-arms and the words "Alpha Sigma Alpha, Recognition of Eminence, 1952." For more on Ethel Alpenfels, see p. 313.

Genevieve Steele Leib, XX, Phoenix editor, presented the award at a reception held in the home of Jean Baldwin McCammon, XX, at which the Indianapolis Alumnae Chapter entertained the Indianapolis Panhellenic Association. School officials of the area were also present. Guests lingered long and late, so interested were they in Dr. Alpenfel's speech and comments.



Alpha Sigma Alphas attending the 1951 NPC meeting in Williamsburg include, from left: Jean Raup Grady, BE, registrar; Helen Corey, KK, secretary; and Wilma Wilson Sharp, ZZ, president.

Beta Phi installed

"That Saturday after Easter" in 1952 — April 26 — was notable in assemblages of Alpha Sigma Alphas, for in addition to the state days already mentioned, a group journeyed to Menomonie, Wis., to install Beta Phi Chapter at The Stout Institute.

Meanwhile, Alpha Sigma Alphas in Arizona were busy with the new colony at Tempe. On May 17, 1952, Emma Coleman Frost, ΠΠ, alumnae organizer, pledged at Arizona State College a group that upon installation will be known as Beta Chi. On the same date, Sigma Sigma girls at Western State College in Gunnison, Colo., were celebrating their silver anniversary.

Also in May, the sorority announced that Erie, Pa., and Kalamazoo, Mich., had new alumnae chapters. Three other new alumnae charters had been granted earlier in the year. In fact, the first year of Alpha Sigma Alpha's second half century was in every way memorable.