

THE DELPHIC FRATERNITY, INC.

A Historical Perspective



1871 - 2004

By Phillip L. Velez

Delphic of ΓΣΤ, Fall 1987

Table of Contents

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
Dedication and Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Greek History	4
Alpha Chapter, Geneseo	5
Beta Chapter, Oneonta	7
Gamma Chapter, Jamaica, NY	9
Delta Chapter, Mansfield, PA	10
Epsilon Chapter, Cortland	11
Zeta Chapter, New Paltz (<i>The Beginning</i>)	13
(<i>Early to mid-1900s</i>)	14
(<i>Sigma Tau Gamma</i>)	17
(<i>Sig Tau Confederation</i>)	18
(<i>An End of an Era, 1960s/70s</i>)	19
(<i>Gamma Sigma Tau – The Re-Establishment</i>)	20
(<i>Delphic Alumni Association</i>)	23
(<i>Re-Birth</i>)	24
Eta Chapter, Plattsburgh	24
Baconian Chapter, Potsdam	25
Theta Chapter, Binghamton	26
The Future	26

Dedication

This history booklet is dedicated to all of Delphic: *Unity Amongst All*. Special thanks to the brothers of Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity, who continue to keep the history and tradition of the Delphic fraternity alive.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This reference work would have been inconceivable without the valued assistance and cooperation of the following people:

Nan Pollot, Liz Argentieri, Reference/Special Collections, Milne Library - SUNY College at Geneseo.

Joanne Kershner, Alumni Relations - SUNY College at Geneseo.

Pat Keegan, Special Collections Center, James M. Milne Library - SUNY College at Oneonta.

Jim Driscoll, Historian - Queens Historical Society, Jamaica, New York.

Charles Young, Reference Librarian - Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, New York.

Frances S. Garrison, Reference Librarian - Mansfield University, Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

Patricia T. Viele, Sue Bush, Reference Librarians, Memorial Library - SUNY College at Cortland.

Linda Tantillo, Reference Librarian - Elting Memorial Library, New Paltz, New York.

Gerlinde Barley, Reference Librarian - SUNY New Paltz.

Mike Burgess, Special Collections, Feinberg Library – Plattsburgh State.

Sally E. Rusaw, Reference Librarian, Crumb Memorial Library - SUNY Potsdam

Scott Brockelmeyer, Director of Communications - Sigma Tau Gamma National Fraternity.

Brian Castelli, Sigma Tau Psi Fraternity - SUNY College at Geneseo.

Dave Kayajan, Director of Alumni Relations - SUNY New Paltz.

Dave Hines, Sports Information Director - SUNY New Paltz.

The Delphic Alumni Association.

Introduction

The Delphic Fraternity is more than 130 years old. Very few local or regional Greek letter organizations can say the same. The organization was originally founded as a literary society, which held social and political debates, literature readings and provided its student body with various social activities. Around the early 1900s, the organization became a statewide fraternity based at several normal schools in New York and one in Pennsylvania. By the 1930s, most of the Delphic chapters became inactive, except for the one in New Paltz, New York, which continues to resurrect itself over time. In the 1950s the Zeta chapter at New Paltz became briefly affiliated with a national fraternity. It then became a local chapter once again. It was also a member of a regional alliance of chapters that were once nationally associated. Eventually, the organization became inactive and was re-established as Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau, the first multicultural fraternity in New York State. In the 21st century the organization finds itself with two active chapters: The Zeta chapter at the State University of New York at New Paltz, and the Theta chapter at Binghamton University. Both chapters continue to represent one of the oldest local fraternities in the country and the first multicultural fraternity on the east coast.

Greek History

To better understand our organization's rich history, it is important to know a little about the history of fraternities and sororities and why these institutions have become a part of American culture for more than two hundred years. Greek letter societies originate from the universal desire of association with others that share common interests, goals and ideas.

Participation in these organizations leads to the opportunity of knowledge and self-improvement. The added desire for companionship, especially in academic life, forms the foundation point for every organization of this character. The first Greek letter society to be formed was Phi Beta Kappa. It was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. It is the first national academic honors society. The first social fraternity to be formed was the Kappa Alpha Society, which was founded in 1825 at Union College in Schenectady, New York. The creation of these organizations led the way for fraternity and sorority life on hundreds of campuses throughout the United States.

Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity is the oldest local fraternity in New York State and one of the oldest independent local fraternities in the country. It was originally founded as the Delphic Society in 1871 in upstate New York. Its creation sparked the formation of similar societies throughout the vicinity. The name Delphic originates from the city of Delphi, which was the seat of the most important ancient temple and oracle of the Greek god Apollo. Delphi was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the center of the world. The most refined and largest intellects awaited the pronouncements of its great prophecy. The prestige of the Delphic Oracle reached its height by about 580 BC. The oracle was consulted in private matters and on affairs of the state, and its utterance often swayed national policy.

The Alpha Chapter, Geneseo, NY

In the early 1900s, the Delphic Fraternity consisted of eight chapters at normal schools throughout New York State and Pennsylvania. The origin of the fraternity, also known as the Alpha Chapter, traces back to the formation of the **Delphic Society** at the State Normal School in

Geneseo, New York. The Delphic Society was the first Greek organization on campus. This initial group of thirteen young men was given a room in the Normal Building to hold formal meetings and was decorated by the society at its own expense. The group's focus was on literary improvement and was organized on **October 13, 1871**, during the first term of the first year of the school's existence. Frank E. Welles was its first president. Other officers included John B. Abbott, William Janes, Frank Winnie William Kershner, and Loring Olmsted. The aim of the society was to provide a means for extended cultivation in thought and language, for social advancement and promotion of good fellowship. The literary society performed public concerts that embodied orations, essays, debates, selected readings, declamations and music. Their first concert, entitled the "Exercises of the Delphic Society," was held during the school's first commencement on July 1, 1872.

The following November gave birth to the female counterpart of the Delphic Society, known as the Clionian Society. The Delphic-Clionian partnership provided Geneseo with a its large share of cultural activities. For years to follow, the two societies held joint concerts serving the community. A portion of the joint proceeds was donated to the reading rooms in the village of Geneseo. The remainder of the profit would support society rooms and prepare for future performances. Concerts were held several times a year. The societies would ask for contributions from the normal school and community toward the lecture series. The local newspaper, *The Livingston Republican*, supported the societies in this endeavor. The paper would also cover the lecture series by summarizing the scheduled events. The concerts became so popular that performances had to be repeated for people who were turned away from the initial crowded showing. The lectures would later include guest speakers. Notable professors from

Syracuse and Rochester Universities would occasionally attend. A parliament member from Dublin was once a guest speaker.

The State Normal School at Geneseo was the largest in the state. In its first year, 488 students were enrolled. Normal schools served as training institutions for future teachers. The concerts sponsored by the societies served as a training ground for students, providing an arena to develop poise and confidence in public performances. The societies became quite popular and grew with the time. By 1905, there were seven literary societies at Geneseo: three for men - Delphic, Philalethean, Gamma Sigma; and four for women - Clionian, Agonian, Arethusa, and Alpha Delta. These societies were later found on other normal school campuses. With the addition of other affiliated chapters, the Delphic Society became known as the Delphic Fraternity. It officially existed on the Geneseo campus until the late 1930s.

The Beta Chapter, Oneonta, NY

Fifteen young men formed the Beta Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity on **December 13, 1889**, at the Oneonta Normal School. The school officially opened on Wednesday, September 4, of that year. A practical need for "an association of individuals for the purpose of literary development" led to the formation of the **Young Men's Debating Club**. Its first president was F.H. Lane. Soon after formation of the debating club, the members were encouraged by Oneonta's principal, Dr. James M. Milne, to confer with the Alpha chapter of the Delphic Society at Geneseo about forming a second chapter of the society. This second society mainly focused on debates and formed a glee club to supply vocal music in between exercises. The Oneonta chapter was similar to Geneseo in several ways. It also was the first such organization

to appear on campus and was followed by the young ladies of the Clionian Society. The two parties collaborated to present a portion of the school's first commencement program in 1890. The Philaethean and Agonian societies joined Delphic and Clionian the following year. These societies would frequently combine their efforts for the pursuit of similar objectives. Eventually, the two older groups, Delphic and Clionian, became closely involved while the younger ones, Philaethean and Agonian, did the same. Although literary in nature, these societies added to the social life on campus.

The Oneonta chapter of Delphic was notable for its banquets. Delphic Banquets were recorded as being held in the years 1894, 1896 and 1898. Plays and speeches composed these banquets as well as fine food and music. The banquets were held at the Windsor Hotel with school officials, Delphic alumni, delegates from other chapters of Delphic and fellow Greek societies in attendance. Throughout its existence, the chapter contributed greatly to the campus community and was said to have been awarded with a special gift. In 1896, Dr. James M. Milne and Dr. Andrews, a Greek professor at Colgate University, presented the members of Delphic with priceless treasures from their exploration trip to Greece. Even though they were advised that, "on nothing, not even a stone, must a hand be laid," they managed to bring back a piece of Greek history. Presented to the brotherhood was an arm bone of one of the high priests of the sanctuary of Apollo, as well as a piece of the marble that supported the statue of the world-renowned god. The chapter was indebted to the professors and guarded the relics with all respect. The treasures were placed in an oak frame and kept in the Delphic room.

For twenty-one years, the Delphic Fraternity was a cornerstone of Oneonta. By the early 1900s, the enrollment of male students began to decline. In 1900 there were twenty-three men in

the graduating class. In 1907 there were fourteen; in 1908, eight; in 1909, four; and in 1910, none were listed. An event called the Delphic Reunion and Banquet was held on June 29, 1914. The banquet celebrated the fraternity and created an opportunity for brothers to gather one last time. The festive dinner was filled with song and cheer. Like most present day Greek letter organizations, the fraternity adopted a yell and a song that was heard throughout. In 1898 a Delphic Banquet program was inscribed with the phrase, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

The Gamma Chapter, Jamaica, NY

Though it may be certain all of the original eight chapters of Delphic were rich in their own history, not all left behind traceable signs of their existence. During research of the fraternity, it is plain to see some chapters had less of a historical connection to their respected schools than others. The Gamma Chapter of Delphic is noted as being formed at the Jamaica Normal School, in Jamaica, New York. The actual chartered date is unknown. It seems to be between September **1897**, when the school opened, and October of 1898, when two delegates from the chapter attended the Delphic Banquet at Oneonta. Arthur Mayer and Augustus Ludwig were the two delegates. Because the first two chapters of the organization were created shortly after the opening of each school, 1897 may be a more precise estimate. Delegates from Jamaica also attended Grand Council at Mansfield, Pennsylvania in October of 1900. Grand Council, later to be called the Grand Convocation, was the meeting of existing chapters of Delphic to create and formalize statewide fraternal business. A particular chapter would sponsor the annual event that usually took place during the month of October, which coincides with the original

chartered month of the Alpha chapter. James V. Griffin served as the Secretary and Treasurer of the 1900 Grand Council and was a representative of the Gamma chapter of Delphic in Jamaica, New York. The Jamaica chapter of Delphic also took part in the Grand Council held at Cortland in 1901 and New Paltz in 1902.

In the 1901 Cortland convention, Thomas B. Higgins, a representative of the Gamma chapter, recited a poem entitled *The Delphic Aim*. The last two lines of the poem read, "Knowledge, power, wisdom, fame – constitute a Delphic's aim."

Jamaica may be considered the "lost chapter" of Delphic because no actual mention of the fraternity is found anywhere in the limited history of the school. Unlike the other normal schools, it never evolved into an institution of higher learning. The normal school existed until the early 1930s. In 1960, the building was demolished and replaced by a public high school. Hillcrest High School now stands on the former site of the Jamaica Normal School. It seems the Gamma chapter ceased to exist sometime after 1909, its last recorded appearance at the Grand Convocation, which was held that year in Potsdam, New York.

The Delta Chapter, Mansfield, PA

The Mansfield Normal School in northern Pennsylvania was the home of the Delta Chapter of Delphic. The chapter was formed in **1898**. The Delta chapter is the only one known to be formed outside the state of New York. Not much history is available about the chapter. As previously noted, it sponsored the Grand Council of 1900. Clionians were on the Mansfield campus as well and held picnics and social gatherings with the fraternity. The life of the organization did not last long at Mansfield. Dr. Straughn, the principal of the normal school,

disband the fraternity in 1914. He felt Greek letter societies were elitist and wanted to create a sense of equality on the campus. The last official pledge class was initiated in 1915. Members continued to meet secretly on a regular basis. The alumni later continued to meet at social gatherings. Harold Strait kept the alumni of the Delta chapter together, meeting at least annually until the 1960s. Mr. Strait was a member of the last official pledge class. Before his death, he donated a Delphic chair, table and banner to the alumni house at Mansfield University. Although the chapter at Mansfield was short lived, its existence will forever be embedded on the campus.

In 1915, the fraternity donated a traditional white marble bench to the school. The bench is inscribed with the name and insignia of the fraternity and the years 1898-1915. The insignia is composed of a circle over a triangle with the number seven centered within the triangle. There are leaves at the sides of the seven and the letter of each chapter was written on the base of the circle. The bench was traditionally reserved for engaged or married couples. To this day, the bench is still situated on the front of the campus.

The Epsilon Chapter, Cortland, NY

The range of information for each chapter varies according to how its normal school kept historical notes and how the chapter itself kept record of their activities and functions. In 1899 the Delphic chapters at Oneonta and Mansfield solicited the **Young Men's Debating Club**, at the normal school at Cortland, New York, to become the Epsilon Chapter of the union. The debating club was the first student organization to appear at Cortland. It traces its origin back to the Cortlandville Academy, years before the normal school was founded in 1869. According to historical publications of the Cortland Normal School, the YMDC was used as the typical picture

society of the time. The group was well organized. Minutes of all regular and special meetings of the club were available from September 1877 until long after it became the Delphic Fraternity. The president and secretary signed all meeting minutes. Presidents were required to deliver an "inaugural address" upon assuming the duties of their office, and members were fined for absences and tardiness. The YMDC, and later the Delphic Fraternity, published the student newspaper until the early 1900s.

The YMDC became very popular and membership into the club was in high demand. The club could not accommodate all interested students. Because of this, a second debating club was formed at Cortland. The Normal Debating Club was organized in 1870. In January 1892, the club was granted a charter from the Gamma Sigma Fraternity at Rochester. The two societies later held joint literary performances. In 1878 the Ladies Normal Debating Club was founded. In 1902, the club became the Agonian Society.

Along with its history of being a debating club and literary society, the YMDC also had strong roots in the fine art of music. In October of 1891, it organized an orchestra and held public performances. The club decided to have music at its weekly meetings. It felt this would decrease the number of absences and tardiness as well as keep high spirit during club debates. In June 1897, the debating club performed at the Commencement Week exercises. Each club would present a public program. The club provided a unique blend of literary and orchestral presentations.

On June 14, 1899, by the suggestion of the normal schools at Oneonta and Mansfield and induced by the favorable report of its committee sent to Oneonta, the club adopted a Hellenic name, calling itself the Delphic Fraternity. On **June 16, 1899**, the club members were duly

initiated as the Epsilon chapter of the fraternal association. In 1900, the fraternity sponsored the regular "Term Social." It was held in the main-floor hall, the reception room and the principal's office. The latter part of the evening was spent at the Normal Hall where a literary program, consisting of a vocal solo and a French play, was given.

The Epsilon chapter supplied much culture to the Cortland Normal School and may have been the most refined of all of Delphic. The chapter sponsored the organization's Grand Council in 1907. This chapter however, also eventually became inactive. The reason for this chapter's demise was also the decline of male membership at the school. The outbreak of World War I signified the end of the fraternity. The beginning of the war may have also been the reason for the end of other chapters, however it is not duly noted anywhere else but at Cortland. By 1917, there were no representatives of Delphic on the campus.

The Zeta Chapter, New Paltz, NY

(The Beginning)

One chapter that has clearly passed the test of time is the historic Zeta Chapter at New Paltz, New York. Of all nine chapters of Delphic, no other stands out as being the most influential, respected and valued part of its school and community. For more than a century, the chapter continues to play an important role in the history of the Delphic Fraternity. It is one of only two Delphic chapters currently active which represent the life a fraternity with more than 130 years of history and tradition. With its longevity came many changes. The chapter has become inactive several times throughout its history, but has always managed to be reborn to continue the basic Delphic premise of friendship, fellowship and fidelity.

The Zeta Chapter of Delphic officially began with the merger of two local Greek letter organizations. **Alpha Pi Nu**, the first men's fraternity at the New Paltz Normal School, was founded in the fall of **1889**. Henry Jansen was instrumental in its formation. He circulated a petition among his peers and presented it to the school principal, Dr. Capen, for his approval. Gideon B. Travis was chosen as the first president of the society. Its sister sorority was Phi Kappa Pi, which later became Clionian. Dr. Capen became an honorary member. Notable alumni included Martin HasBrouck, Frank J. LeFevre and Louis H. Deyo. The other fraternity was **Kappa Delta Alpha**, which was formed in **1896**. Its sister sorority was Thalia, which later became Arethusa. The fraternity's motto was "Power through struggle." The aim of KDA was to "develop the power of expressing the results of accurate perception and correct thought in a forcible and pleasing manner." Its first president was Arthur Ezra Rose. Notable alumni included Alfred Harcourt, Charles Deyo and T. Edward DuBois.

An unhealthy rivalry developed between the two fraternities. In 1899, a merger of the groups was deemed necessary by both parties for the general welfare of the two male societies on campus. The new group approached Mr. Scudder, the principal at the time, about their decision. Mr. Scudder suggested that instead of creating a larger, newly named organization, the group should ask for a charter from one of the state-wide fraternities.

Delegates from each society were sent to the State Normal School at Oneonta to judge the merit and advantages of the well-known organizations of Delphic and Philalethean. William R. Ward and Alfred Harcourt, representatives of the New Paltz association, spent two days at Oneonta. They were welcomed and cordially entertained by the fraternities. After their trip, the new organization made their decision. Delphic had been the clear choice. Soon after, Messrs.

Naylor and Mertching, Beta Delphics of Oneonta, initiated Zeta into the mysteries of the brotherhood. On **October 28, 1899**, the combined young men's societies at New Paltz became the Zeta chapter of the Delphic Fraternity. Alfred Harcourt became its first president. He later became the co-founder of the Harcourt Brace Publishing Company in New York City. William Ward served as the first vice president. The new fraternity vowed always to be "loyal to Delphic" and make the Zeta chapter "one of the strongest."

(Early to mid-1900s)

Delphic began its long commitment to the community. Members were involved in athletics and student government. Several brothers became presidents of their senior class. Others became captains of the school's baseball and football teams. In the spring of 1900, Delphic sponsored a series of lecture courses to benefit the Athletic Association. It hosted a social for the ladies of Arethusa and a masquerade party to the Clionian Society. These events and others were noted in the student newspaper, *The Normal Review*, which began in 1894 and was published by the literary societies.

October of 1902 found the Delphics of New Paltz sponsors of the fraternity's annual Grand Council. Council was held at the famous resort at Lake Mohonk. Delegates of the various chapters of Delphic arrived at the school on Thursday evening. On Friday they were taken by carriages to Mohonk and given a tour of the resort. A fraternal business meeting was held that evening as well as all day Saturday. The chapters were elated about the prosperity of Delphic throughout the state. On Saturday night, a reception was given in honor of the visiting delegates by the local Clions and Delphics. The visiting Brothers of Delphic departed on Sunday. The Zeta

chapter had every reason to believe the weekend was a success, "for success has always been a characteristic of Delphic."

By 1911, other fraternal groups joined the society at New Paltz. In 1901, the Philaletheans were first established. They later became Phi Alpha. The Knights of King Arthur shortly joined. They incredibly enough had their meetings at Castle Huguenot. A fraternity called Delta Sigma came and went. World War I made it difficult for Greek letter societies to maintain membership. Phi Alpha and Delphic survived the First World War by providing membership to local high school boys. This decision made it possible for the fraternity to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary by giving a school dance in November of 1924. The same year saw the formation of the Agonian Sorority, which was joined by another sorority, Theta Phi, in 1929. The fraternity of Tri-Kappa, which later was called Delta Kappa Zeta, came onto the scene in 1934. The Delphics and Kappas created the first Inter-Fraternal Council at New Paltz, sometime around 1936. In 1949 another new fraternity, Phi Eta Sigma, was born at the college. These were just a few of the changes that occurred in Greek life on the New Paltz campus.

In 1929 the fraternity held a benefit movie, a talent show and a successful Annual Banquet. Leigh Stuart was the president of that busy year. In 1935 the fraternity moved into a house on upper Main Street, next to the College Inn. An invitation was extended to the student body in the campus newspaper, *The Nepano*. Delphic co-sponsored a Fall Sports Dance with Arethusa and the first Inter-Fraternity Prom with the Tri-Kappas in 1936. In 1939 Delphic played the role of Santa Claus by calling for all old and damaged toys. The objects were restored at the Delphic Toy Hospital and given to needy children during the holiday season. In 1941

Delphic sponsored a pre-Christmas party at its house where each person attending contributed toys and games for the fraternity's continued holiday service.

Members of Delphic contributed much more than just their time. World War II had a personal impact on the fraternity. Several Brothers of Delphic lost their lives in the conflict. In the 1947 *Paltzonian*, the New Paltz yearbook, the chapter honors the capable men of scholastic, social and athletic realm who gave their lives for their country. Members honored were Clinton Wallwork, Edward Branen, Lawler Kingsley, Thomas Cully, John Robertson, Roy Greene and John Duxbury. This tragedy unfortunately occurred once more. Delphic Brother Heinz Alhmeyer lost his life in the Vietnam Conflict. Heinz was a Marine Lieutenant who died on May 10, 1967. He was an exceptional athlete who participated in several sports during his time at New Paltz. His positive attitude was a major factor in each team's overall success. After his death, the college named an award in his honor. The Heinz Alhmeyer Award is presented each year to the New Paltz athlete whose "dedication, perseverance, and service beyond self has been an inspiration to both his/her teammates and fellow students."

(Sigma Tau Gamma)

The growth and popularity of the Delphic Fraternity during the 1950's brought on a significant change in the organization. In May of 1950, while on a baseball trip to Oneonta State Teachers College, a few members of Delphic became interested in affiliating themselves with a national organization. Correspondences between the national fraternity of Sigma Tau Gamma and the Delphic Fraternity soon followed. Herman D. Pauls, the secretary of Delphic, was instrumental in the formal discussions.

Though the fraternity was interested in becoming larger than its forty-seven members, it also was hesitant of this gigantic step. In a letter dated July 8, 1950, Mr. Pauls states some of the fraternity's concerns. One concern was its colors. The original Zeta chapter colors were lavender and white, which may have stem from the official colors of Kappa Delta Alpha. The state-wide Delphic Fraternity colors were red and white, which were also the chapter colors at the time. The New Paltz group also wanted to retain their fraternal insignia and name by becoming the Delphic chapter of the national association. Pauls wrote his group wanted "to keep as many of our traditions as possible." Delphic alumni were contacted to gather a general consensus on whether to become a part of the national organization. After the completed forms and conferences, a decision and compromise was made. On Saturday, **June 2, 1951** the New Paltz chapter of Delphic became the Alpha Rho chapter of the organization of **Sigma Tau Gamma**. The new group was now known as the Delphic chapter of the national association and retained its Delphic Seven insignia. However, the official colors of the chapter became that of the national organization: blue and white.

The national affiliation did not officially last very long. In 1953, the State University of New York Board of Trustees band all Greek letter organizations on campus from having a national affiliation. In *Webb vs. NYS Board of Trustees*, the board claimed "in loco parentis," which was the legal term for its belief that the board could better serve as a parental guardian to local associations. The New Paltz fraternity complied with the state's decision and became known as local Delphics once again. In 1976, the State Supreme Court overturned the prior decision in favor of student rights.

(Sig Tau Confederation)

In 1961 several SUNY fraternities that at one time were nationally affiliated with Sigma Tau Gamma decided to form an alliance called the Confederation of Sig Tau. The Zeta chapter of Delphic at New Paltz was part of this association, which eventually included local chapters of Sig Tau at Oneonta, Buffalo, Cortland, Oswego, Geneseo, Albany, Plattsburgh and Potsdam. The groups met several times over the years in hopes of creating a strong regional alliance of chapters, however the confederation never really took off. The Zeta chapter of Delphic attended a confederation meeting in 1967 held in Oneonta. Such events were social in nature and ceased to exist after 1969. Today, the only organizations of the former Sig Tau Confederation that are currently active are Sigma Tau Chi at Oswego, Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau at New Paltz and Binghamton, and Sigma Tau Psi at Geneseo.

(An End of an Era, 1960s/70s)

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the Delphic Fraternity was a prominent force on the New Paltz campus. It sponsored annual Christmas food drives and was famous for its Halloween parties. It became best known for its annual White Rose Weekend, which consisted of a ball and parade. The white rose is the official flower of the Delphic Fraternity. A White Rose Queen was crowned for each of the annual events. Usually the queen would be a member of one of the sororities on campus. Members of the Clionian, Agonian and Theta Phi sororities were crowned past White Rose Queens. The weekend also provided the town with a spectacular White Rose Parade. Floats were made by Delphic and each of the sororities on campus. Each sorority float submitted was eligible for the title and trophy of best float. The Clionian float won best float in 1960 with the theme of "Cinderella." That year the theme for the Delphic float was "Our Blue Heaven." In 1960 Theta Phi Sorority was the winner of the float contest with a

tremendous elephant decorated with the number "75" signifying the 75th anniversary of the State Normal School at New Paltz. "Seventy-Five Years of Greeks" was the theme of the Delphic entry, which was a replica of an ancient Greek building. Arethusa won best float in 1964 with its theme of "Saint George and the Dragon." The White Rose Ball itself was held at Kingston, New York at the Governor Clinton Hotel in 1960 and 1964. The fraternity became synonymous with this successful event. It was the one event the entire town of New Paltz anticipated each year.

New Paltz, like the rest of the world, was affected by the turbulent late 1960s. Protests due to the Vietnam Conflict and the Civil Rights movement created an uneasy atmosphere on the campus. Students began to question all forms of authority and Greek letter organizations began to be seen as elitist groups. Interest in Greek life declined significantly. Sometime in the early 1970s, due to the severe low number of prospective pledges, the current members of the Delphic Fraternity decided to disband the organization. They felt it would be in its best interest to end the group's existence on a successful note rather than see its history and traditions diminish over time. A historic era had now come to an end. For approximately fifteen years there were no representatives of Delphic on the New Paltz campus.

(Gamma Sigma Tau - The Re-Establishment)

In the fall of 1986, twelve young men at the SUNY College at New Paltz became interested in establishing a new fraternity on campus. At the time, fraternities consisted of predominantly white or predominantly black organizations. This unique group of young men provided an alternative. They were to compose the first multi-cultural fraternity on campus. Of the twelve men, five were White, five were Latino, one was African-American and one was Asian-American. They began research toward forming their ideal fraternity. A few of the

forming members were acquainted with sisters of Alpha Kappa Phi, the Agonian Sorority, who mentioned the prior existence of Delphic. The men began intense research into the inactive fraternity and found ideas and values similar to their own. They began to contact as many alumni as possible in the hopes of re-establishing the legendary association. Four alumni came forth and met with these determined young men. The Delphic alumni were Albert Beard, Don Kachmore, Tyrone Sands and John McCormick. The twelve men were initiated into the Delphic Fraternity in December of 1986. Eugenio Rodriquez was its first president. The other members were Steve A. Carle, Jose Carrion, Gil DeLeon, Emmauel Egipciaco, Ventura Lopez, Steve Rappleyea, Michael Rand, Todd Reed, Edwin Ruiz, Geoff Seoul, and Lawrence Troutman.

The Delphic Fraternity had always been a diverse group of individuals consisting of different nationalities and religions. It was one of the reasons the re-establishing brothers found the organization quite appealing. Its diversity had always pre-dated that of society's. The first vice president of Kappa Delta Alpha was of Latin decent. His name was Jose DeCastro. J.M. Gonzalez followed in 1902 as an officer of the Delphic Fraternity. The 1940s and 1950s saw a mix of Catholic and Jewish members, which for a fraternity was ahead of its time. The first African-American to join the fraternal group was Charles L. James, who became a member in 1959, four years into the start of the Civil Rights movement. Delphic Brother Tyrone Sands followed during the height of the movement in 1968. Two brothers in the same era were from Lebanese and Syrian ancestry and the first Delphic of Puerto Rican descent was inducted in 1970. The association's overall history of diversity had become a focus of the re-establishing members of Delphic.

The newly formed group inquired about being affiliated again with the national fraternity of Sigma Tau Gamma. This would mean another acceptance process, higher national dues and possible restrictions imposed upon them. The group decided to remain a local autonomous organization. Being with the times, the organization desired Greek letters to go along with the Delphic name. Albert A. Beard, Interim Principal of the New Paltz Central School at the time, assisted the re-established fraternity in being recognized by the college administration. In a letter dated December 15, 1986 to L. David Eaton, Dean of Student Life, Mr. Beard wrote "as a past president of Delphic, I authorize the group to use the name Delphic in social and community functions." He also wrote that "in order to preserve the historic tradition of the organization, this group will be known as **Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau**, a name which combines the original Delphic and the transposed letters of Sigma Tau Gamma."

The next step for the fraternity was to be recognized by the Inter-Greek Council. At the request of the Delphic alumni and in an effort to be accepted into IGC, the new group had to solicit bids from the other Greek organizations and perform a few community services. During its re-establishing process, the new members help restore a local church and participated in a campus-wide blood drive. They introduced themselves to the Greek community by attending various social functions. Hard work and determination led the re-establishing brothers of Delphic to their goal. On **March 11, 1987, Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity** became fully recognized members of the Inter-Greek Council at New Paltz. The organization became a combination of new and old ideas and values. The official colors of the fraternity became red and white, for the original colors and traditions of Delphic, and royal blue for the significant contributions of Sigma Tau Gamma.

Delphic had always been historically affiliated with various sororities on campus. Serenading had become a great pastime of the fraternity. In order to establish this tradition once more, the fraternity became affiliated with the Agonian Sorority. This relationship ended within a short period of time due to irreconcilable differences. Delphic still desired a female counterpart. In the spring of 1988 the fraternity created an auxiliary of the organization. Thirteen young ladies joined the group to originate the **Delphic Dahlias of Gamma Sigma Tau**. The Delphic Dahlias contributed to the success of the fraternity. They quickly became a valued part of the larger group and desired a Greek letter to call their own. In the fall of 1992, the **Gamma Rubies** were incorporated into the name of the auxiliary.

The organization as a whole began to serve the local campus and community. Since 1987 the fraternity has volunteered several times as marshals at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Kingston. Cystic Fibrosis was chosen as its official charity and fund-raisers have been conducted to raise money for the cure of this childhood disease. The group also participated in a recycling day with the New York Public Interest Resource Group, the student state environmental group. School dances were held at the student union building and social mixers were given with various Greek letter organizations on campus. A hurricane relief fund was conducted to assist people in Puerto Rico and the Carolinas. Successful food and clothing drives were held during the holiday seasons. The fraternity has also co-sponsored various cultural campus events including the 1994-1996 Latin Weekends and the 1998 Jam Asia event.

(The Delphic Alumni Association)

Representatives from the 1960s and 1970s created the **Delphic Alumni Association** in **1992**. Members gathered at P&G's, the local bar known as the "Cornerstone of New Paltz."

While reminiscing about their college years and watching a college basketball game on television, Jim Townsend, the "founding father" of the alumni association, Doug Slingerland, John McCormick, Dick Price, Fred Wall, Don Kachmore, Mike Smith and Danny Zipkin, conceived the idea of the Delphic Alumni Association. The association developed a network of Delphic alumni consisting of more than three-hundred living members throughout the United States. It has held three successful reunions, the last one in July of 2002. Participants ranged from pledge classes as far back as the 1930s. It created a great opportunity for old friends to meet and reminisce about their fraternal and New Paltz experience. It was said, "a good time was had by all." During the All Greek Alumni Weekend celebration in October of 1995, the Delphic Alumni Association donated to the Hopfer Alumni House at New Paltz, the official stain glass Delphic window that once decorated the Old Main Building. The window joins previous Delphic memorabilia donated to the college.

(The Re-Birth)

In the fall of 1998, the Zeta chapter of Delphic at New Paltz became inactive. It seemed that the historic organization had come to the end once again, however, like the Phoenix, a mythological fire bird that resurrects from its ashes, the Zeta chapter was re-born in 2002 with the induction of three new members: Komain Somapeera, Paul Williams and Michael Bascon. In January of 2003, the Delphic Executive Board was formed by active alumni members to help guide the active chapters and govern the operations of the organization. New Paltz continues to be considered the "mecca" of Delphic, the motherland. It is the chapter with the longest history of Delphic. It however is just one of a noble set of nine chapters that make up the historic Delphic Fraternity.

The Eta Chapter, Plattsburgh, NY

The Eta chapter at the Plattsburgh Normal School in northern New York is similar to a few previous chapters of Delphic in that only a limited amount of information is available about its existence. It was founded around **1900**. A group of fifteen young men initially formed the Independent Society, which later became the Eta chapter of the Delphic Fraternity. The chapter attended the Grand Council at Mansfield in 1900 and the Delphic Convention at Cortland in 1901. J. Lowra Rea represented the Plattsburgh chapter at the Cortland convention. The only other thing known about the Eta chapter is that it sponsored a farewell banquet in their chapter room at the Plattsburgh Normal School. The banquet was mentioned in the student newspaper, the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, on June 20, 1902. The Delphic Banquet was held on Friday evening, June 13. Edwin Sartwell was the Delphic president who spoke about the society since its foundation. The chapter colors were purple and white while its fraternity color was red. Nothing else is known officially about the brief existence of the chapter. Until 2003, it was believed that Plattsburgh was the last of the original chapters of Delphic formed in the late 1800s/early 1900s.

The Baconian Chapter, Potsdam, NY

The Baconian chapter of the Delphic Fraternity at Potsdam, New York is known as the "newfound" chapter because the Delphic organization only became aware of the chapter's historical association in the summer of 2003. A random Internet search led to its discovery. What is known about that chapter is that it originated around 1900 as a literary society called the **Roger Baconian Society**, named after an English scientist and philosopher. The society held

debates and public speaking events at the Potsdam Normal School. In **1906**, the Roger Baconian Society was incorporated as the Theta Chapter of the state-wide Delphic Fraternity, however, the society retained its old name and was known as the Roger Baconian Chapter of the Delphic organization. In 1907 the Potsdam chapter of Delphic participated in the Annual Convocation, the former Grand Council, of the Delphic Fraternity held in Cortland, NY. On October 22, 1909, the Baconian chapter at Potsdam sponsored the Annual Convocation. Delphic members came from Geneseo, Oneonta, Jamaica, Mansfield, PA, and New Paltz, NY. The Potsdam Chapter was also host of the 1923 Delphic Convocation. The Baconian chapter of Delphic at Potsdam ceased to exist around the mid to late 1920s.

The Theta Chapter, Binghamton, NY

On **April 19, 2003**, five new members of the fraternity were initiated to form the Theta Chapter at Binghamton University. The Binghamton chapter of Delphic is the first chapter to be formed in the 21st century and represents the future of the historic organization. Alumni brother Elias Ortiz of the New Paltz chapter was instrumental in the founding of the Binghamton line. The five founding brothers of the Theta Chapter are of Trinidadian, Dominican, Filipino, Russian, and German-Italian heritage. Their names are Pete Williams, Manny Galva, Ed Menchavez, Andrei Patergin and Karl Stand. The Binghamton chapter was designated the Theta chapter in April of 2003. At the time, the organization was unaware of the Potsdam chapter's former existence. Since the former chapter at Potsdam preferred to be called the Baconian chapter of Delphic, the Binghamton chapter kept its Theta chapter designation. Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau welcomes our new brothers to our historic organization. The Theta Chapter

at Binghamton represents the future of the historic organization. May they continue the legacy of Delphic.

The Future

The Delphic Fraternity marked its 130th year anniversary in October of 2001 and celebrated its 15th re-establishing anniversary as Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity in March of 2002. Delphic alumni, the Executive Board and the remaining active chapters of Delphic keep the memory of all nine historic chapters of Delphic alive in their continued activities. The Delphic Alumni Association hopes to keep organizing fraternity reunions throughout the coming years. The Delphic E-Board aims to keep the lines of communication open among all divisions of Delphic. Two new Delphic brothers joined the Theta Chapter at Binghamton in the Spring of 2004 and the future looks bright for the soon to be 133-year-old organization. May it continue to make history and promote multiculturalism for many years to come.

"The strength of any fraternity does not depend entirely upon the number of chapters it contains, nor upon the great membership enrolled. The broad and noble principles which it fosters, the high ideals formed and carried to completion, strong convictions and the large heart to dare and do, -- these make for power."

— *The Delphic Oracle*, the fraternity paper published in February 1902.

(Fraternity history last revised in Sept. 2004)

Bibliography

The Stone Strength of the Past: Centennial History of the State University College of Arts and Science at Geneseo, New York, by Rosalind R. Fisher (c1971).

The Normalian, Geneseo Year Books, 1915 and 1922.

The Lamron, Geneseo student newspaper, November 9, 1938.

A Brief History of the Fraternities and Sororities of the State University College at Oneonta, New York, by Richard C. Grimm, January 14, 1963.

Life at Mansfield: A Visual Reminiscence, by Gale Largey (c1984).

Cortland - Our Alma Mater: A History of Cortland Normal School and State University of New York Teachers College at Cortland, 1869-1959, by Bessie L. Park, '01 (1960).

Cortland College: An Illustrated History, by Leonard, F. Ralston, Copyright 1991 by the Alumni Association of Cortland College.

The Delphic Oracle, Vol. 1, No. 1, the fraternity newspaper, published in February 1902 and distributed to delegates at the Delphic Convention at Cortland.

The Normal News, the student newspaper of the Cortland Normal School, Vol. XVII, No. 5, June 1899.

Auld Lang Syne, State Normal and Training School, New Paltz, NY, published by the Graduating Class of 1892.

In a Valley Fair: A History of the State University College of Education at New Paltz, by Elizabeth Lang and Robert Lang, New York, 1960.

The Normal Review, the student newspaper of the New Paltz Normal School. Feb. 1897 through Feb. 1903.

The Paltzonian, the year book of the New Paltz Teachers College and SUNY College at New Paltz. 1929, 1936, 1939, 1947, 1959 and 1961.

The Nepano, student newspaper of the New Paltz Teachers College. Oct. 11, 1934, Nov. 14, 1935, Jun. 2, 1938 and Dec. 18, 1941.

The Oracle, student newspaper of the SUNY College at New Paltz. Mar. 14, 1958, Mar. 11, 1960, Oct. 23, 1964 and Nov. 6 and 13, 1964.

The Normal Magazine, the Potsdam student newspaper, Vol. 11, #3, December 1906, and Vol. 14, #2, November 1909.