

FRAN 19 DKG History  
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Presentation on Origin of Alpha Alpha Chapter  
At the 4<sup>th</sup> Helen E. Quinn Service to Education Meeting  
May 2, 1996

Thank you, Carol and Anne, for an opportunity for May 15, 1955 Revisited! Your request has evoked many memories and a visit with Clara Bishop who sent me some notes and a story I will share with you today.

Our initiation and the formation of Alpha Alpha Chapter occurred at the Pi State meeting at the Starlight Room of the Sheraton Hotel on East Avenue, Rochester. It was a beautiful spring day in May, a day for beginnings – the beginning of a new chapter in Delta Kappa Gamma Society and the beginning of new professional associations.

In preparing for my presentation I checked my files and found my invitation to become a member signed by Louise Blood of Eta Chapter, the program for the Pi State Chapter Annual Convention May 13-15, 1955: and a letter from Marion Masoner, President of Eta Chapter. In reading through the program for the Convention I noted the discussions and concerns of the membership were similar to concerns of our chapter today that is – membership, program, communications and changes needed.

In this year preceding the formation of Alpha Alpha Chapter, Eta Chapter had determined that there was a need for additional chapters in the area to offer more professional women the opportunity for membership in Delta Kappa Gamma. As a result, Alpha Alpha and Alpha Xi representing the Ontario region were organized at the 1955 Convention.

There were 14 women in the charter group; twelve were initiated that day. Three of us were from Brockport, Jane Stevens, Rosalie Mower and myself. Jane left after a few years for a library position in New York City. Rosalie moved to the Education Department at the College at Oneonta, was married and returned to Macedon to raise her family and become town librarian and a well known puppeteer in the local area.

The three of us were newcomers to the area and much in awe of the proceedings, as we knew few Eta members other than those faculty women at the College at Brockport who were our mentors. We knew no other initiates. In reading Clara's notes I was astonished to learn that she and Helen Quinn felt the same way! They did not know who was being initiated. And I thought Clara Bishop and Helen Quinn knew everyone!

The lovely luncheon was followed by an impressive initiation ceremony. Mary Wintish of Eta Chapter then met with us and guided us through our first organizational meeting, the forming of a new chapter and electing officers. We were mostly strangers but certainly fortunate in our selection of the slate of officers for our new chapter.

President - Katharine M. Reichel  
Vice-President – Frances M. Moroney

Corresponding Secretary – Betty Vary  
Recording Secretary – Betty Mower / Dorothy Champney  
Treasurer - Clara Bishop  
Parliamentarian – Dorothy Burton

There is an interesting story related to Clara's first task as the new treasurer. She was presented with a bill for \$40 for the luncheon. She paid the bill with her personal check to cover expenses until books could be set up and organized. Thereafter, Clara's diligence helped this new chapter become solvent.

Clara served as our first treasurer, worked with Alpha Xi Chapter in those beginning years, worked on the Coordinating Council with Pauline Hemmeter and Helen Quinn in sponsoring and guiding new chapters, served in many roles at that time and continues to do so. Her contributions to Alpha Alpha have been immeasurable! We remember her energy, her creativity and those beautiful corsages and unique favors which were a part of our gatherings.

The background of our new chapter represented diversity in professional responsibilities and school districts. Areas represented were: Guidance, Library Service, English, Latin, Math and Social Studies at the Secondary school level, Special Education and Health Education, the Junior High and Elementary with three members from the College at Brockport and one from the College at Geneseo.

In gathering information about those early years I consulted the Who's Who in Alpha Alpha compiled by Kay Reichel and her committee. This booklet reads like a Who's Who in History and in the history of Education in Western New York State. It was an impressive group many of whom had family roots in the history of Western New York State:

Helen Quinn whose great grandfather was a Civil War Veteran,  
Dorothy Burton who was descended from Yankee settlers,  
Betty Vary from a line of Revolutionary ancestors,  
Kay Reichel from pioneer Canadian families.

There were many achievements or "firsts" for this fledgling chapter, which should be mentioned. One was the organization of the Coordinating Council adopted by the Pi State and which has played such a vital role in the functioning of all area chapters. Pauline Hemmeter, Charter Member, proved innovative in her idea for the Coordinating Council with other suggestions. She organized conferences and met with initiates briefing them on the goals of the chapter and responsibilities of membership, and was instrumental in simplifying some procedures at the State Convention. In addition a Delta Kappa Gamma Breakfast was introduced at the Central Western Zone Meetings and Kay Reichel served as Editor of Pi-Lights.

Alpha Alpha has honored the leadership and contributions of many of the early women by creating awards, memorial funds and study grants in their names.

The Mary K. Vollmer Memorial Fund honors an outstanding musician and Kindergarten teacher, she who contributed much to the chapter in those early years.

The Betty Weidel Independent Study Grant recognizes a Charter Member who left to raise a family and returned later to serve as treasurer of the chapter for several years.

The Helen E. Quinn Service to Education Award honors a charter member for her outstanding Service to Delta Kappa Gamma and to her profession. It is awarded to one who reflects the ideals and service of Helen E. Quinn. Almeta Whitis, tonight's recipient, is a most worthy candidate for the Quinn Service to Education Award.

The Katharine M. Reichel Award recognizes an outstanding graduating high school senior woman who is enrolled in teacher education at SUNY College at Brockport. This Award is truly a tribute to Kay. This year's award winner whom you will meet in June is an exemplary recipient.

The contributions made by Kay Reichel, Helen Quinn, Clara Bishop, Mary Vollmer and many others have been legion. They have served as outstanding role models for many who have followed. We have many examples of members who have served in the tradition of these women and have given generously of their time and talents: Carol Kausch, Cheryl Ohls, Jeanette Banker, Anne O'Toole, Mary Bastian and Gretchen Hughes to name a few.

The torch has indeed been passed from Kay Reichel, our first president, through you to our recent inductees as we recognize that the Second Reichel Award winner in 1986, Judy Fuller, was inducted into Alpha Alpha Chapter this spring, ten years later. Kay would be pleased and I find this continuity impressive.

To Judy and to all new members we welcome you; we congratulate you and wish you Godspeed as you continue your journey in education and in Alpha Alpha Chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International.

Thank you.

Fran Moroney Whited  
Charter Member  
May 2, 1996