

The Purpose of Alpha Gamma Rho

To make better men, and through them a broader and better agriculture by surrounding our members with influences tending to encourage individual endeavor, resourcefulness, and aggressive effort along lines making for the development of better mental, social, moral, and physical qualities; to promote a wider acquaintance and a broader outlook on the part of agricultural men through fellowship in a national organization that stands for the best social, mental, and moral development.

History of Gamma Chapter

Alpha Gamma Rho

Foreword

Any history of Gamma chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho must have, for a backdrop, the revolution which hanged farming from a struggle with unending drudgery into a dignified and important business. Beginning with the decade 1900-1910, more advances have been made in the United States in the science of food production than in the whole world throughout all preceding ages.

This new knowledge has been developed and put to work in colleges and universities through the association of inquiring minds. Established in 1855 as the Farmers High School, The Pennsylvania State College, now the University was little more than an agricultural experiment station during the first fifty years of its existence. Nevertheless, it served as a proving ground in the discovery and evaluation of improved farm practices.

Tillers of the soil are proud people. Beset with multifarious problems and wanting income, Pennsylvania farmers turned slowly to their Agricultural Experiment Station for help, and only on evident proof that help was available. Until dependable data could be accumulated, there was no agricultural science, hence no School. As a fund of information was built, farmers perceived its advantages. They began to demand that their sons understand how best to manage the land which they would soon inherit. As a result they started to send their sons to agricultural colleges.

To quote La Vie – 1912, dedicated by H.P. Armsby: “Among the many interesting features in the recent rapid development of the Pennsylvania State College, probably the most striking has been the growth of the School of Agriculture with its affiliated Agricultural Experiment Station and Institute of Animal Nutrition. In such growths, the thrifty spreading branches and rich fruit (of science) bespeak a stout trunk and earlier formed root system----.”

In La Vie – 1913: Brother Alva Agee, the first director of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Extension Service wrote: “Ten years ago the only important buildings on the campus were Old Main, the Engineering Building, the Natural Science Building, the Armory and the small Botany Building flanked by its Dutch gardens, the Auditorium (Schwab), the Library (Carnegie) McAllister Hall, and the Mining Building (Ellen I. Richards) and the group of permanent agricultural buildings were dreams of the future----. Four hundred and twenty-four students were enrolled—now 1643 – 669 in the School of Agriculture.”

In such a setting, boys enrolled in agriculture were bound to demand a voice in student affairs, a voice which up to this time had been denied. In this atmosphere, Alpha Gamma Rho came to this campus, your Gamma being the third chapter to appear in a nation-wide organization.

“---- This earth belongs to the people. The farmer is the agent of society, to use the land for the good of us all as well as for the good of himself. No man has the right to skim the soil or to destroy its productiveness. He has responsibility to himself and to God for the use he makes of it” Liberty Hyde Bailey.

“The machine which was most instrumental in transforming Pennsylvania agriculture was the tractor,” writes Brother S. W. Fletcher. “Gasoline engine tractors appeared about 1910, but were not common until after 1930 when the light general-tractor became available----“

Coincident with the appearance of the farm tractor was the employment of electricity in lighting homes and doing farm chores. In America and here in Pennsylvania in a century we have seen a conversion from human to animal power on farms followed by a similar change from animals to machines.

As this revolution progressed and their aching sinews suffered slow relief, farmers were better able to think and had time to do so. They sent more of their sons to college to learn new farming methods. Many who came to Penn State also came to Gamma for fellowship and social guidance.

The depression, beginning in 1929 and lasting through the 30's, emphasized the farmer's need for financial aid and assistance in the management of his affairs. It gave great impetus to the cooperative movement which in turn brought about a kind of commercial competition heretofore unknown. These developments provided jobs for college-trained agriculturists and opportunities for service which they seek and enjoy.

“Change” is the universal law of life. We welcome and fear it. “Problems” are its eternal associate. When Gamma was born, a farmer on the average produced enough food for himself and perhaps eight others. By 1920, he could feed himself and 10 more. Even as he fought bankruptcy throughout the 1920's and 30's, he improved his livestock, his equipment and his capacity to produce. By 1930, farm surpluses were a recognized problem. Although burdensome, they have continued to be and still are the basis of our national strength.

When Gamma was an infant, the School of Agriculture faced a crisis. New buildings had been built and departments organized in the previous decade, but administrative strife developed and in 1912 many staff members resigned. The next year, Brother Ralph A. Watts was appointed Dean of Agriculture and Director of the Experiment Station. During his 25 years as Dean, the School was greatly expanded in service to the Commonwealth and he remained Gamma's staunch friend and patron.

By 1926, when Ralph Dorn Hetzel became President of Penn State, old "Old Main" was in a sad state of disrepair. Other new buildings were badly needed to meet demands created by growing enrollments of students in all of the Schools. Dr. Hetzel was able to arouse public interest in Old Main and in the College. Old Main was rebuilt in 1929. In spite of the depression, further construction programs were initiated. Imposing new buildings have appeared on campus ever since nearly as fast as they can be built and the staff had been expanded accordingly.

In college towns like State College, population tends to duplicate student enrollment in numbers. The housing shortage in State College has been long lasting and shows no sign of abatement. A like statement may be made regarding religious, amusement, and business houses including eating and service establishments. State College is chronically "bursting at the seams".

Early Beginnings

In the spring of 1910, five members of the Junior Class at The Pennsylvania State College (1911), feeling that they would benefit from an organization combining social opportunities with agricultural technology, formed a fraternity known as Alpha Alpha Epsilon. They were Frank App, Thomas D. Harmon Jr., Charles Preston, Guy Carlton Smith and William Reitz.

Robert Dunlap, Harvey Smith Adams, and Earl F. Glock, sophomores and Charles Snyder Adams, a freshman, were almost immediately added to the group. These nine brothers later became the charter members of Gamma Chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho.

Up to this time, a single organization had control over all activities in the School of Agriculture. One of the aims of Alpha Alpha Epsilon was to force democratic guidance into these activities in an effort to provide more friendly competition. Members of the new fraternity were aware that they would achieve recognition more promptly if their organization was affiliated with a national group.

About 1909, Brother Charles E. Snyder of Beta Chapter came to Pittsburgh as associate editor of the National Stockman and Farmer. Thomas D. Harman, Jr., whose father owned this publication, became acquainted with Brother Snyder who told him about Alpha Gamma Rho and they discussed the possibility of establishing a chapter at Penn State. Brother Harman brought this information back to his close classmates and the group looked forward to affiliation with Alpha Gamma Rho when they organized Alpha Alpha Epsilon.

In the fall of 1909, Brother Sleeter Bull (Beta), Grand President of Alpha Gamma Rho, came to Penn State for graduate study. He made contact with Alpha Alpha Epsilon immediately and helped to prepare a petition for entry into Alpha Gamma Rho. This petition was acted upon favorably at the fourth national convention held in Chicago in November 1910. See "History of Alpha Gamma Rho" by Nathan L. Rice (Alpha '21) for details regarding the founding of the parent fraternity.

Gamma Chapter was established on a wintry night, February 2, 1911, at the Bush House, then a famous hotel in Bellefonte. A charter having been granted, the chapter was installed by Grand President Bull, Grand Registrar Kelly, and Brothers "Bull" Durham and D.C. Mote of Beta Chapter. Alpha Chapter was to have been represented, but because of the expense involved, this plan was abandoned. The nine members of Alpha Alpha Epsilon were first initiated as charter members of Gamma Chapter. Three freshmen (class of 1914) were immediately initiated. They were Charles S. Adams, A. M. Barron and John W. Harmon.

The trip to Bellefonte, in a horse-drawn hack, started about five o'clock in the afternoon and lasted until the wee hours of the morning. The party was "dry" but witty, according to the reports, an in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

When Gamma Was Young

Early initiations were held out-of-doors in the mine hole west of town not far from the railroad "Y", because the chapter did not have a house. Other meetings were held in members' rooms. In preparation for initiation, a roaring bonfire was built in the mine hole. Candidates were lead out of town but blindfolded before they approached the mine hole. At the spot where they could best observe the weird fiery glare of the bonfire, blindfolds were removed. Then the blindfolds were replaced and the candidates were led by a circuitous route into the hole where the ceremonies took place. See Rice's History for a report on the ritual used.

This and other bits of horseplay in which students engaged reflected lack of outlets for surplus energy. The colleges and universities of the day were noted for that kind of thing. At Penn State the old Track House was headquarters for athletes, but athletics were not well organized. Calisthenics and military drill centered at the Armory but were loosely taught. Football returns from games away from home were portrayed on a large board with moving objects and lights in the chapel of Old Main, where student enthusiasm was converted into noise.

Attendance at chapel several times weekly and on Sunday was compulsory. The Y.M.C.A and the Y.W.C.A also fostered religious influences and moral values. Frank D. Buchman provided excellent leadership assisted by the Reverend "Bob" Reed, College Chaplain. Buchman, whose nickname was "Pure John", game much of his time to boys on athletic squads and some to own characters whose morals needed attention.

Mother Dunn's and Babe Wood's movie house on Allen Street was the only amusement place in town. Known as "The Passtime", this old wooden shack would house about 150 persons. Admission was 5 cents and three shows were held each night. The fellow drumming the piano often was drowned out by the noisy reactions of the audience to wild west and romantic productions.

Mass contests between freshmen and sophomores organized under the names of "Push Ball", "Cider Barrell", or "Flag Pole" were common. Anyone who lost his feet in the rush usually was carried off to the hospital. Fist fights were common. Eventually these "Push" contests had to be abandoned in order to save lives.

Systematic hazing was the rule and freshmen were constantly on the march on fall evenings, up and down College Avenue and out into the country. Many a farmer's field of corn shocks was leveled was leveled by freshmen learning to "tackle" under the direction of naughty sophomores. When Halloween came around, all kinds of personal property were in evidence on the campus and in college buildings the next morning. Pigs were found running around classrooms, chickens roosting on seats, and now and then a cow or mule in the top floor of Old Main.

Andy Lytle, perennial freshman and sort of class mascot, joined every freshman class for a decade or more. He was a gray-haired, jolly little man who attended class meetings and made short speeches when called upon.

Old landmarks included the orchard just west of where Carnegie Hall now stands. The College didn't need much help to pick apples for most of them found their way to students' rooms.

The Woman's Building housed all of the co-eds, about 40. The Class of '14 has six enrolled in it.

Chapter House – 501 West College Avenue – 1912-1919

This section is written as an appeal for information as any brother who recalls incidents relative to the establishment of Gamma in its' first house and of life there, before and during World War I.

- (1) That a house was hoped for when the national charter was received on February 2, 1911, but members were insufficient in numbers the next fall and the project was postponed for a year.
- (2) That the house was rented and occupied in December 1912.
- (3) That it was erected according to chapter specifications by a Mr. Hanley (of Bellefonte?) or Mr. Lytle (of Oak Hall) conflicting info on owners. Who leased it to the chapter for 10

years at a rental of \$1200 per year. Evidently as the lease ran out, sentiment among chapter members grew for ownership and development of a house of their own.

- (4) The house was substantial, and satisfactory in a measure, is easily provided: it is still standing and in use for housing.
- (5) The membership in the chapter during this period ranged from 12 to 20 or thereabout
- (6) The house had several athletes in this period. Paul Horst and Tommy Nolan were both intercollegiate Wrestling Champions in 1917-18 (2 on a team is good and we had 2 from the house) Horst lost 30 pounds to make weight class to help the team.

Gus Dippe, Ben Cabbage Otto Tavenner, Barron '15, Cece McDowell were all football players

Romig, Jess Krell, Don Dobbin and Hank Kaufman were track stars.

Ralph Starkey was a star soccer player

- (7) Russ Underwood was Noble Ruler 1917-1918. McCulloch (1917) and John Dodge (1916) were house assistants. C.W. McDonald was the sheep man, staying after graduation for a few years. Sterling Walters was head ladies' man and fist to go see the college widow. Gilbert Watts was active in Ag Society and Grange. Dutch Herman was active in the above two organizations and played in the orchestra. Jim Gearhart was on the tennis team a couple of years. Paul Koenig could print notes in class as fast as others could scribble in long hand.
- (8) Some Ag faculty members were at house almost every Sunday for dinner. The scarlet fever outbreak in 1916 and mumps in 1918 hit the house.
- (9) Ralph Blasingame was house advisor for several years.
- (10) The ninth Alpha Gamma Rho annual conclave was held at Gamma, February 10-12, 1916. Sixteen delegates and all of the national officers with the exception of the Grand Treasurer were present.

This convention settled on the type and design of initiation robes, a number of changes in the ritual, the present cost of arms and the secret motto.

World War I – 1917 -

From a letter written by Brother Koenig to Ralph Starkey, dated June 30, 1958. "Shortly after the war was declared (WWI) on Germany on April 6, 1917, the College announced that all students in good standing would be granted indefinite "leave of absence" to return to the home farm or to work on other farms, thus helping to meet the need for wartime food production. All those leaving were granted credit for the balance of the school term, but college classes were continued in a fashion right thru final exams in June. For Gamma the exodus started April 20th, one or two at a time. Until May 1, we only had 14 left; 4 of these

left during the next 10 days. Many of those going home eventually went in the service, but very few, before the summer or fall of '17.

“Come the fall of 1917, the chapter outlook was pretty dismal.” “ We rocked along through the year, losing several more men to military service, but we racked up the best record for many years, fore or aft, in taking new members. We took in 8 more by April 12 making the year’s total a big 20. Decision was announced to close the College term about a month and a half earlier than usual (commencement was on April 22).

“As indicated in my letter to Bill J., I was around for the full college year, '18-'19, Funkhouser and I being the lone remnants of the '19 class. About all we could hope to do was a “survival” job as a chapter during the SATC regime. The house was taken over as a barracks, to provide capacity housing for non-fraternity men as well as our chapter members. I and others who got back about September 5th found that the opening date had been postponed for two weeks and we spent our time cleaning the house and getting it in readiness for barracks use, preliminary to SATC Enlistment Day, October 1.

Chapter House – 501 West College Avenue – 1920-1924

The chapter continued to live on College Avenue. The rent was \$1,200 – payable in 10 installments. During this time, the lease expired during this period the rent was increased to \$1,500 per year. The chapter was responsible for all the furnishings and interior decorating. In fact, the room decorating was the individual responsibility of the occupants.

The chapter consisted of approximately 35 actives and pledges each year. During the first part of this period a number of World War I veterans were contemplating their B.S. degrees.

The base monthly house bill was \$42.50. This covered only room, board and chapter dues. All dances, house parties, etc., were in addition and prorated among those participating.

Emphasis was placed on both scholarship and campus activities. The only scholarship requirements for membership was no “below grades” during the semester in which a man was initiated. Study hours were pretty well maintained during evenings.

Athletically, these were the years of Blondy Romig and Hank Kauffman in track.

The livestock, dairy and fruit judging teams always had a Gamma man included. Members were also to be found among the officers of campus agricultural organizations. In addition, the “Collegian” and “La Vie” staffs included men with Alpha Gamma Rho addresses.

There were two items of special importance during 1920-24. The first was the establishment of what has come to be known as Alumni Day. The first of those was sponsored by the College the fall of 1921. Fraternities were asked to cooperate. Gamma Chapter made a special effort to encourage the return of alumni for that weekend. As a result, some thirty

Gamma alumni returned. This response caused a considerable amount of braggadocio on the part of the actives. No other fraternities on the campus seemed to have had such good response.

The second item was one of long lasting benefit to Gamma Chapter. It was the purchase of the Buckhout property located at the southwest corner of Beaver Avenue and Pugh Street. This was the beginning of a permanent home, in spite of the fact a chapter house was never built on this property. Before sufficient funds were available to permit construction the town had grown and it seemed unwise to build on such a valuable property. The purchase price was \$12,000. This property was never occupied by Gamma. It was rented to Ralph and Israel Adams who operated it as a rooming and boarding house. There were later tenants before it sold in 1944.

The purchase of tangible property made possible the emphasizing of the need for alumni and actives to activate the plan of membership in the Alumni Association. The payment of \$100 established a paid-up life membership. Paul Koenig, secretary of the Alumni Association, was a driving force in this movement. Many members will well remember Paul making a plea in chapter meetings about 1923 for actives to make some advance on dues so that a mortgage payment could be met.

These were difficult times financially, but in the end the foresight to make the sacrifice was good business.

1925-1930

The years 1925 to 1930 might be referred to as a period of achievement for Gamma Chapter. It represents a time when chapter morale was at a high level. Activity prevailed in almost all aspects of fraternity life. Rushing was systematized and carried on with a determined effort to secure sufficient manpower and yet maintain Alpha Gamma Rho standards for membership. Manpower was a real problem during this period, as many students lacked the necessary money to join a fraternity. Furthermore, it was necessary for a high percentage of the members to have part-time employment to help defray fraternity expenses.

1925 to 1930 was also a period of increased activity in sports and other extra-curricular activities. Much emphasis was placed upon this phase of college life and it was particularly impressed upon pledges. Gamma Chapter produced many outstanding athletes during this period. Charles W. Packard, Ed T. Wilson, Carl B. Cranmer and Harold Hubler were mainstays of the varsity wrestling team, with Packard and Wilson emerging as Eastern Intercollegiate Champions during their junior and senior years (160 and 125 pound class, respectively). Carl Davis was outstanding in track representing the varsity team in the quarter-mile. K.R. Slamp and Thomas D. Evans represented Gamma Chapter in football, having won letters in the sport. Several others from the chapter were understudies to regular team members. Dick Marshall and William L. Hutchinson both won letters and were team captains in soccer. John S. James

won his letter in this sport also. Whitey Radcliffe won his letter in cross-country. Mitchell Ferguson was a letterman in lacrosse.

In other campus activities, William J. Durbin became Associate Editor of the Penn State Collegian and R.B. Kilborne was Circulation Manager. R.B. Donaldson served on Student Council for two years and was Business Manager of the Penn State Farmer and a member of Lions Paw. C.H. Gough was President of the Junior Class. R.F. Hahn and C.T. Haupt served on Student Council during this period.

Bruce Baldwin probably reached the peak in campus activities when he was elected President of his Senior Class, President of Student Council and Editor of La Vie. Several Gamma men during this period were elected to campus societies, such as Sphinx, Skull and Bones, Parma Nus, Druids, Blue Key and Lions Paw.

In 1920, the Board of Directors was instrumental in buying the Buchhout property and on December 26, 1926 the present location on Thompson Street was purchased for \$2500 from Anne and J.W. Henszey. It was during 1927 that definite plans for building a new chapter house was developed and actual construction started in the fall of 1927. Much credit for our present fraternity home must go to R. U. Blasingame and S.W. Fletcher of the Alumni Association and R.H. Hahn of the active chapter. The total cost of the House (lot, construction and furnishings) was \$65,000. The class of 1929 was the first class to graduate from the present house, with William C. Bramble as Noble Ruler.

Other Noble Rulers during this period were as follows:

1924-1925 - Charles H. Gough

1925-1926 - William J. Durbin

1926-1927 - L. F. Derr

1927 – 1928 – John Neidel

1928 – 1929 – William C. Bramble

Although scholarship was not watched as closely in those days as now, considerable progress was made in study hour regulations and in academic improvement. At least two years during this period in Gamma Chapter was in the upper ten in scholastic standing. During all of this period P. N. Fagan acted as Chapter Advisor and devoted much of his time to the undergraduates of Gamma Chapter.

1931-1935

During the years from 1931 to 1935 many things of a national impact had a definite bearing on the college and fraternity. As we think back, there was a depression: the bank holiday when scrip was used in State College, if you could get it; the NRA, the WPA, and the CCC

camp. Forty cents per hour earned on WPA jobs was more than anyone could get for common labor.

Of course, all of these had great bearing on fraternity life. It was difficult to find sufficient boys with financial ability to join a fraternity. Then, too, the fact that the new house was built almost prior to the depression meant that the Alumni Association had the terrific burden of carrying this financing. They also owned the Buckhout property, which added to their problems. It was extremely difficult to get the \$55/month necessary for house rent, for the house was not full and bills were often overdue.

The caterer was often not too popular because of the necessity of stretching dwindling funds at the end of the month. When we think of this, we remember the simple prayer in the dining room one day at lunch - - "God bless these apple dumplings." Mrs. Herman, the food. Ida, the maid, cared for the house and helped to raise the morale of the boys. R.H. (Bob) Berlin and his wife succeeded them in 1934.

Because of the great financial problems, it was decided that it might be better for the office of treasurer of the active chapter to be held by an alumnus rather than a student. Sam Garner, '33, was the last active treasurer before Bill Jeffries, '24, undertook the job. He, too, had a tough time keeping bills current, as well as collecting delinquent accounts, but managed to do a good job. Alumni dues were even more difficult to collect, many delinquent alumni dues not being paid until the more prosperous years of the '40's.

It is easy to forget how simple our life was at that time. In the fraternity, most of the boys were living better than they were accustomed to live at home. Because of lack of funds, there weren't too many social functions, but the few there were, were appreciated all the more. Spring and fall house party, poverty dance (later called the bowery dance) and one dinner dance were the main social events with occasionally another dance or two. There were many happy hours spent around the piano with Jim Baker and the gang.

Another pleasant memory is of the Fireside Chats held on Sunday afternoon. At that time, Dean Ray, Dean Watts and other outstanding faculty members met with us and discussed various subjects informally and then had supper with us.

There weren't many cars around, so the boys weren't too much on the go, except for the weekends. Most of the boys stayed in their rooms during the week and "hit" the books. We remember some of the all-night "cram" sessions in the sun parlor while we listened to that little-known disc jockey, Arthur Godfrey, broadcasting from some station in Alexandria, Virginia.

It was during this time that prohibition amendment was repealed. Of course, there was some drinking, but it wasn't a great problem. Alpha Gamma Rho enjoyed the status of being a "dry" house.

Without the active interest and backing of the Alumni Association, the fraternity might have had tougher sledding. Many of them gave much time and thought in guiding the actives, for which they will always be grateful. "Beanie" Callenbach came to the rescue of the financial

situation. Bill Jeffries, chapter advisor, tried to help some of the night owls and correct some “wise” thinking. Al Cooke was the Alumni social light. F.N. Fagan, R.U. Blasingame, Vice Dean S.W. Fletcher and R.B. Donaldson also gave graciously of their time and wisdom.

As mentioned earlier, it was difficult to find enough pledges to fill annual quota. There was always a search for likely prospects. Rushing was a continuous project, with any good man being given quite a rush. At that, it was difficult to keep standards high. Some agricultural fraternities admitted non-agricultural students, but not AGR. While it was necessary to lower the standards somewhat, still there were many fine fellows in the fraternity during these years.

The students, then as always, had a wide variety of interests, as the following list of students with achievements proves:

HATMEN

Clinton Van Cise '33

Harry Wilson '33

Robert Gray '33

Eugene Arthur '34

William Rishel '34

WRESTLING

Grant Stein, '31

Clyde Jackson, '33

Melvin Reimer '34

SOCCER

William Hutchinson '31, Captain

R.F. Bressler '32 Asst. Mgr

Eugene Arthur '34, Mgr

CROSS COUNTRY

Clinton Van Cise '33

GRANGE

Charles Hess '33, Master

Harold Benedict, '35, Overseer Lecturer

AG STUDENT COUNCIL

R.F. Bressler '32

James Baker '35

STUDENT COUNCIL

Eugene Arthur '34

R. F. Bressler, '32

BLUE BAND

William McGeehan, 32

Arthur Allen '32

COLLEGE CHOIR

James Baker '35

William Rishel '34

THESPIANS

GYMNASTICS

James Baker '35

Calvin Potts '34

Ralph Anderson '35

GLEE CLUB

James Baker '35

PENN STATE FARMER

Dawson Molyneaux '31 Mgr, Editor

JUDGING TEAMS

Calvin Potts '34

Merrill Zimmerman '35, Livestock and Dairy

James Baker '35 Adv., Mgr.

There were many of the boys who not only were members of departmental clubs and honorary fraternities, but also held offices in their group.

Last, but not least, on our list of fraternity leaders during this period were the Noble Rulers. They were Ernest Karger '32, Clyde Jackson '33, Eugene Arthur '34, and Merrill Zimmerman '35. Among their many duties was the enforcement of quiet during study hour. It is interesting to note that these are the comments on how it was done: "By ye old paddle", "by request", "by yelling", "checking on study room", "quiet persuasion", "fear", "by acting a good guy", "by patrol and force". At any rate, they, with the help of all the boys, performed their job well and helped to make this period a good one for Alpha Gamma Rho.

1936-1940

The active chapter was in such poor conditions at the beginning of this period that it was unable to meet its financial obligations. At the suggestion of E.W. Callenbach, Treasurer, a realistic budget based on 35 men was set up and adopted by both the alumni and actives. This went into effect in September 1935. At the same time a stricter set of regulation dealing with financial obligations of members and pledges was adopted. Beginning in 1937, the active chapter moved into a quite satisfactory financial relationship with the Alumni Association.

Negotiations continue throughout the period for the sale of the Buckhout property. At one time in 1936, it appeared the property practically sold. The hitch that apparently ultimately spoiled the deal was receipt of two identical bids for \$15,000. When notified of this, both bidder apparently was interested in going higher and both backed out.

The directors voted in December 1940 to neither oppose nor formally agree to construction of a filling station on the property adjoining the Buckhout property. Advice of real estate men had been conflicting.

In July 1939, the first mortgage of the Alumni Association for \$33,000 was refinanced from 6% to 5% through the Punxsutawney National Bank of Punxsutawney, PA. At the same time a move was started to reduce the interest rate on the second mortgage bonds from 6% to 5%. By December 1940, the latter move was substantially completed.

An interesting and amusing vignette illustration some of the financial trials of the early part of this period contained in the April 19, 1936 minutes of the Alumni Board and the minutes of an informal meeting held January 13, 1939. Briefly, R.U. Blasingame and S.W. Fletcher were apparently “conned” into co-signing a note for several thousand dollars for the chapter without realizing their personal liability. The bank refused to release them and trips to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and the Farm Show by A.P. Cooke to try to line up other brothers to co-sign with them were to no avail.

Active chapter leaders were:

1) Noble Ruler -'36-37 – Furman Gyger

- '37-'38 – Clifton Rogers
- '38-39 - W. William Clarke
- '39-40 – William Walsh

2) Scholarship

Albert C. Grosche	Martin V. Rockwell (Valedictorian '40)
Neal Witmer	Samuel Dum
Robert S. Bowman	J. Robert Brunner

3) Athletics

Paul (“Duke”) Wolslayer – best all around athlete of the period
Forest Preston, varsity numerals in wrestling

4) Extracurricular

Forest Preston II - President, Dairy Science Club 1936-7
Cornelius Smith – Secretary, Forestry Society 1938-9
Robert E. Hopkins – President, Collegiate F.F.A. 1938-9
- President ATA 1938-9

- Vice President, Ag Student Council 1938-9

J. Robert Brunner – Asst. Mgr., Gym Team 1939-40

Donald G. Lerch – President, Ag Student Council 1939-40

- All College Cabinet 1939-40

Wallace H. Dunlap – President P.S.C.A 1939-40

- All College Cabinet 1939-40

Scholastic Standing (recollection only)

1936-7	Poor to fair
1937-8	Fair to good
1938-9	Good to excellent
1939-40	Good to excellent

Study hour was well enforced during most of this period by Noble Ruler.

Intramural Standing High

Softball '37 and '38	Cross Country '37
Touch Football '37	Basketball '38
Bridge '36	Wrestling '38
Horseshoes '37 and '38	

Outstanding Social Events

- Bowery Dance
- Tri Ag Dance
- House Parties

Financial Conditions

- 1936-7 Fair
- 1937-8 Good

1938-9 Good

1939-40 Good

Membership (including pledges) – 35 to 50

Scholastic requirements for membership were tightened up about 1937 to a 1.0 average.

Improvements to the House

- 1) New Furniture in Great Hall
- 2) Repainting
- 3) New Study Room Furniture
- 4) New floor in fourth floor
- 5) New radio-victrola
- 6) New sunparlor-victrola

Hired Help

Ed Sipe – Custodian – well liked

Mrs. Sipe – Cook – swell all around

Bill Gulvin – Cook – Good cook but less said the better aside from that

Pappy Davis – Custodian – well liked

Mrs. Davis – Cook – well liked

Helpful Alumni (a few of the most frequently mentioned)

E.W. “Beany” Callenbach – Tops

Bill Jeffries

Bob Donaldson

Bill Whitacre

1941 to World War II

The period from 1941 until the chapter house operation was discontinued due to World War II was an era in which scholastic achievements and financial security of Gamma Chapter

made significant progress. The one individual who probably was more directly responsible for the healthy financial condition of the chapter was E.W. Callenbach, who gave much of his time and energies freely to the problems of the chapter. W.R. Whitacre served as Chapter Advisor in 1941 and 1942. He resigned on October 5, 1942 and D.V. Josephson was elected to succeed him on November 2, 1942. Brother Josephson held the position until the active chapter was inoperative during the war. E.A. Keyes was very active in directing the affairs of the fraternity also. The names of W.S. Jeffries, R.B. Donaldson, Wm. Bramble and Robert Meahl are mentioned frequently by men who were active members during this period.

Robert Powers was elected Noble Ruler in 1941. During this period the scholastic standing of Gamma Chapter was very good. "Study hour" usually started in the early evening and it was enforced to a degree by the upper classmen. Evidence that the study period proved successful can be shown by the fact that several members were elected to honorary fraternities during the year. Monthly house bills amounted to \$50-\$55. The Alumni Association (and the First National Bank) owned the chapter house and rental paid by the active chapter was \$500/month for nine months. Mr. and Mrs. Lawton Davis were the housekeeper and cook respectively during 1941. Major improvements in the house during the year were few because the financial condition of the chapter did not allow excessive spending.

Gamma had no outstanding individuals in the intercollegiate athletics picture during this period. As one alumnus phrased it, "We were stronger on brains than muscle". However, many of the men participated in the intramural sports program. Walt Benny was a good boxer, Wilmer Richter gave a good account of himself in wrestling Elwood Schaffer and Joe Hallowell were good soccer standouts and Sam Dum was a great performer at horseshoes. Nearly everyone participated in touch football, softball and track events. Our I.F.C. Intramural sports rating was considered good.

Participation in other activities was above par. Many members were active in departmental clubs, religious groups, music and all-University organizations. Sam Dum was President of Ag Student Council in 1940. J.P. Bressler was Editor of the Penn State Farmer in 1941-2. The annual picnic held at W.R. Whitacre's cabin always was remembered by the members during this period.

In March 1942, new officers were elected and Joe Hallowell became Noble Ruler. E.W. Callenbach was treasurer and W.R. Whitacre remained as advisor. The chapter house had a full complement of about 45 men, including 15 pledges. The monthly house bill was \$55 and the financial condition of the chapter was good under the guidance of Brother Callenbach. No major improvements were made to the chapter during this period. A few replacements of chairs and desks were made in the study rooms. Chapter scholarship remained at a high level. Gamma ranked among the top ten fraternities on campus in this respect.

The Alumni Association, which owned the Buchhout property on East Beaver Avenue, where the Weis Food Market now stands, rented the house on the property to members of the Penn State Football team during 1942.

Gamma men enjoyed the usual number of dances, other social events and sports programs during the year. The activity, which probably impressed the boys as much as any other function was a friendly rivalry with Delta Theta Sigma, reached great intensity during the year. One of the final gestures planned by DTS was a raid in which they hoped to plant tear gas bombs in the house at two o'clock in the morning. Their plans were exposed and the alert Gamma boys were ready for the "guests". No one was injured, DTS was sent home with a rather poorly-barbered "cres-cuts" and the AGR's enjoyed the role as the "spoilers".

In February 1943 Brother Keyes signed papers for the chapter house to be part of a pool of fraternities to be prepared for occupancy by Army or Navy personnel. The dining room was closed February 6, 1943, at which time the remaining members boarded at Phi Kappa Psi. In the spring of 1943, the Army leased the chapter house and used it as a housing unit for trainees studying at the University. During this period, the Alumni Association sold the Buckhout property to Irvin Mohnkern in October 1944 for \$20,000. The Army terminated its' lease of the chapter house on December 1, 1945 and the house was reopened on December 10, 1945, with 8 pledges who had been rushed by members of the Alumni Association.

World War II Period

Anyone visiting the Penn State campus during late April or early May 1943 would have found very few fraternity houses being operated by their chapters because, just prior to that date, most of the fraternities had been leased to the College and the members remaining had found rooms elsewhere in the Borough of State College.

With the pressure of war activities, fraternity life, even fraternity interest, on the part of alumni, almost ceased to exist for nearly a year.

As the spring of 1944 approached, two things happened that developed interest and spirit on the part of AGR that later helped tremendously in gaining united support and proved to be very instrumental in reactivating the chapter at a later date.

Late in the winter a group of alumni and two undergraduates met at the Nittany Lion. As a result of this meeting, the first issues of a mimeographed letter which took the place of the Crescent, edited by William R. Whitacre, was published on April 1, 1944, but due to work away from the campus, Whitacre relinquished his duties the following month. On May 1, 1944, Frank P. Ferguson, Eta, assumed these duties and continued to send the monthly letter throughout the period of the war.

Another activity on the part of the alumni mentioned in the first letter was the AGR luncheon meeting held monthly at noon in the Dairy Seminar Room, Dairy Building. On March 6, 1944, 20 brothers attended this first meeting which Brother Don Josephson and Ed Keyes served soup, coffee and sundry dairy products at a charge of 25 (plus) cents. At this time it was decided to make it a regular monthly get-together.

The two undergraduate members – Dale Bower was elected Chairman and Ted Torrey elected as Secretary.

At a meeting of the Alumni Board of Directors held at the State College Hotel on August 20, 1944, several items of interest received attention. Brother E.W Callenbach, who had served on the Board with untiring effort during a very trying period during the preceding eight years resigned as Secretary, but continued as Treasurer. Brother Bob Donaldson withdrew as President of the Board to serve as Secretary. Plans were made at this meeting for the annual Alumni Day meeting and banquet on October 14, 1944.

Brother Patton, serving as temporary Chairman of the Monthly Luncheon, was designated to write Sleeter Bull, Secretary of the National Chapter, in regard to rushing, pledging, initiation and the possibility of electing chapter officers. The following is a copy of the reply:

“Urbana, Ill., Aug. 31, 1944. Dear Brother Patton: Replying to your letter on August 29, it is not only permissible but desirable for a committee of alumni to elect officers, pledge and initiate new members, and operate the chapter until such time as the actives are able to do so themselves.

“The National Interfraternity Conference has a committee working on post-war plans. The Committee will submit its report to the IFC Sept. 9 for approval. I assume the report will be available for all Chapters and I will send it out with any comments of my own which seem pertinent. Fraternally, Sleeter Bull”

To appreciate the interest in Alpha Gamma Rho, not only of those of Gamma Chapter, but members of other chapters, on had to call the roll of those living in State College or vicinity when 34 of the 35 brothers attended the Alumni Day gathering at the Presbyterian Church, along with a limited number of other alumni for the Annual Meeting on October 14, 1944.

A few excerpts from the minutes of this meeting charts the course the active chapter will follow until such time as the war ends:

“(1) The Board of Directors at a special meeting authorized the sale of the Buckhout property for the sum of \$20,000. (This action was later approved by the alumni present at the Annual Meeting.)

“(2) The following directors were elected for a three-year term:

W.T. Womsley (Pittsburgh), C.M. Davis (Orangeville), and W.M Myers (State College). T.H. Patton automatically becomes a member of the Board as Noble

Ruler of the active chapter

“(3) The following members of the Alumni Association were elected to form the “Active Chapter” unit such time as the war ends and the chapter house is again

Operating with undergraduate men:

T.H. Patton, Noble Ruler
R.U. Blasingame, VNR
W.M. Myers, Secretary
E.A. Keyes, Treasurer
H.F. Doran, Usher
D.V. Josephson, Chapter Advisor
F.F. Lininger, Chaplain

Bob Donaldson, Secretary
Alumni Association”

The officers elected by the Alumni for the Active Chapter pledged and initiated six alumni, all members of the College staff in resident teaching, research, and extension during the war period. These were L.H. Bull, Russell Larson, Arthur Maw, Elton Tait, Joseph Thurston, and Ray Yoder.

A brief review of wartime activities of Gamma members in WWII, if the list is complete, 108 members in the armed forces, scattered throughout the Army, Navy, Marines and Merchant Marines. Three members made the supreme sacrifice to the nation. Brother Eugene Forquer died as a prisoner of the Japanese after having been taken prisoner at the fall of Bataan. He kept a diary of the Japanese cruelties, which he buried before being put on a prison ship. This diary has been dug up by the US War Crimes Commission and is being put to proper use. Brother Charles M. Long was also missing in the fall of Bataan and Brother J.W. Walsh in action over Germany.

In September 1945, three undergraduate brothers returned to the College. Sam Haines, Roy Smith and Fred Kretzer (of Alpha Theta, Maryland) and with the help of Brother John Zubler, who returned to take graduate work, a rush program was started, although the number of Agricultural students enrolled was very limited. So limited, in fact, that the Noble Ruler asked permission from the National Fraternity to rush students studying sciences related to Agriculture, but not enrolled in the School of Agriculture. Permission was not granted.

Late in November 1945, we were notified that the Army was leaving December 10th and that the College would like to continue to rent the house until June. For three successive Sunday afternoons, the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association met with a few brothers and made a decision to take the house back after repairs were made; although at that time, only three active brothers and eight pledges were available to occupy the house.

On the evening of January 1, the returned brothers and pledges, a total of 15 men, occupied the third floor of the chapter house, although the repair program and painting job had not yet been completed.

Since January 2, formal meetings were held each week with the Noble Ruler Patton and Chapter Advisor Brother McCulloch present. Other alumni brothers also attended some of the meetings.

At the start of the spring semester, March 8, 1946, seven brothers returned from the services and entered college, making a total of nine active brothers in the house and 18 pledges. During the last week of March, 11 pledges were initiated into Gamma Chapter.

A decision was made in the fall of 1945 by the Board of Directors of the alumni association to take over the house when the Army left was a good one, because it not only permitted Gamma Chapter to furnish a home for the brothers returning from the armed forces and permitted them to enter college that semester because they had a place to live.

A great deal of credit must be given to the active members and pledges living in the house at that time for the fine work they did in putting the house in livable condition. Much time and effort was spent by them in cleaning and varnishing all floors in the halls and study rooms of the house. It also involved numerous details in the house and the grounds.

With 30 men living in the house in the fall of 1946, the financial operating statement was in the black figures, making it possible again to pay rent to the alumni association. The alumni association indebtedness was \$31,231.96 in Sept 1944.

Four of our members died during the war, Private David Wayne King, Captain Charles Long, Captain Eugene Forquer and J.W. Walch

1946-1950

Return of WWI veterans all but forced the College into a period of expansion. Total enrollment rose from 6,000 to 11,000 from 1946 to 1950 when Milton S. Eisenhower became president. Buildings and teaching facilities were strained to capacity, although freshmen were only admitted only at distant training centers. Temporary housing, temporary classroom buildings, even a temporary student Union mushroomed and continued in use until permanent buildings could be constructed.

Gamma prospered with the influx of students, many of whom were older than is customary and of unusually definite purpose. Officers, committee members actives and pledges worked together to build a strong house and they achieved wonderful results.

Efforts were made to maintain high standards in ethics. Religion and scholarship. Gamma led AGR in scholarship and receives national plaque three years in a row. During that period, two members had 3.0 semester averages.

More AGR actives were varsity lettermen form 1946-1950 than the previous period. In 1948, the captains of the soccer and swimming teams were AGR's, as were eight lettermen in 1949-50. Many Gamma men were officers in campus organizations. Alvin Saylor was president of the Ag Ec Club in 1949 and 1950.

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Spring and fall house parties became big events these years along with the Christmas dance. Gamma became noted for its' hoe-down when the house was always packed to overflowing. Members were very social minded and had more of each year's budget was allotted to social purpose.

Living costs rose: house bills from \$55 to \$75 per month, although Gamma was run cheaper than any other fraternity house on the campus. In spite of rising costs a surplus was earned by the house each year which went to pay for new projects.

House rent paid to the association was \$400/month but a number for improvements were made. A new kitchen was added, a new furnace installed and the dining room was re-laid. In addition, new footsteps and curb were built, Great Hall furniture was restored and new rugs, drapes and mattresses were purchased. The house was also repainted, inside and out.

1951-1955

H.R. McCulloch was replaced by Bill Davey as House Advisor. Monthly house bill was \$60-75/month. The apartment was added for the cook. New carpeting was added to Great Hall. Complete landscaping program started. New steps and walk, parking lot resurfaced and the entrance to the lot was widened. New bathrooms, house rewiring of the second and third floors and furnace were also added. Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Kerstetter were employed as the houseman and cook. Russ Darling, Boyd Wolff, Lou Laffoon, Barry Anthony, Dick Bauer, Lowell Lewis and Bob Flowers were the most outstanding in scholastic achievement. Study hours were somewhat enforced by special committee, where a few fines were (\$0.25) were levied and placed on house bills. Gamma was outstanding in soccer and horseshoes. Alvin Saylor was president of the Ag Ec Club in 1949 and 1950. Boyd Wolff was editor of both the Penn State Farmer and Penn State Dairymen as well as received PSU's Mr. Agriculture award in 1953.

Alumni that were involved during the time were H.R. McCulloch, E.W. "Beanie" Callenbach, Hal Doran, Robert Meahl, Carl Bitner, William Davey and W.S. "Bill" Jeffries.

1956/57

Alumni rent was \$4500/semester, \$1032/summer

1958/59

Lillian Garbrick was hired as house mother

1964/65

House bills were \$105/month. There were 49 living in the house with a \$4500 annual rent to the alumni association. Grades were 14th of 54 fraternities in the fall and 5th in the spring. Emotional tensions ran high between undergrads and alumni about the alcohol policy. A sanctioned trial period for controlled use of alcohol was implemented from February to May and the treat to be revoked in the fall term. This caused much uproar and the potential for several undergrads to move out and the possibility of the association to rebuild the chapter and the fall plan was rescinded.

1966

August 4th the house suffered from an electrical fire. Everyone got out safely, but extensive fire damage occurred on the 3rd and 4th floors. Considerable water and smoke caused damage to the 2nd floor, Great Hall and basement floors.

1968

The alumni corporation outlines the new alcohol policy. The three main points of the new policy were:

- 1) Areas where alcoholic beverages may and may not be served
- 2) Times when alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed
- 3) Storage of alcoholic beverages

House was put on visitation probation by National for consuming alcoholic beverages outside in the presence of women at an unregistered social function.

Grades were 14th out of 56 fraternities.

Dexter Putnam resigned as advisor and Richard Stuby replaced him.

1969

On October 13, 1969, the Inter-fraternity Council of PSU passed unanimously, Bill No 45 which would extend to all fraternities the privilege of entertaining women guests on a 24/7 basis. The only regulation contained within Bill 45 was that all "conduct during visitation will be subject to University regulations and all the laws of the borough, state and nation". No additional restrictions were contained.

1970

Approximately 90 men attend a university fraternity conference at Penn State in February 1970. The future of the fraternity system was discussed

Gamma received the National Excellence in Scholarship Award for the 1970-71 school year. Gamma obtained a house average of 2.85 with 47 members in the house contributing to the average.

Rhomate Ginny Tallman, (sister of John Tallman) is named Penn State Queen of Agriculture in November 1970.

John Tallman receives Newton Comley award.

1970 Officers Seminar of AGR was held at the chapter.

1971

On November 21st, Gamma initiated its' 1000 member, John K. Johnston. The six other members of the pledge class included Thomas Johnston, Joseph Katrona, Philip Freiling, Carl Reist and Thomas Movinsky.

John's father is a 1934 PSU alumni and a member of Gamma, #331.

Scholastics Fall 7/51 2.77

 Winter 13/51 2.82

1972

Jeffrey Ott won the Newton Comley award. Keith Masser was president of the Ag Engineers Club. Bob Conlinger was president of the Pre-Vet Club

1973-74

Gamma ranks 1st of 48 fraternities at PSU in Scholastic Average for Spring term in 1973. Steven Cupcheck receives the Newton Comley award. Alumni debt was \$20,465.37. The apartment was renovated. Great Hall got new furniture for \$2500.

Mortgage debt was \$21,511.17. Alumni rent was \$9900/yr. Apartment rent was \$675/yr

39 members lived in the house.

Richard Browell had highest GPA in the Fall 1973.

Brother Hepler, Chapter Advisor, was appointed Department head for the Department of Horticulture

1974-75

On April 11, 1975, Gamma participated in a fundraising carwash to raise money for Todd Wheeler Burn Fund. Todd was the unfortunate victim of an electrical burn received while fighting a brush fire. Thanks to Alpha Fire Company of State College, who let us use their station, the house raised over \$3000 by washing more than 700 cars.

42 men lived in the house. House bills were \$450/term. Rent to the alumni association was \$6500/year and \$625/year for the apartment. Mortgage was \$20,465

1975-76

Mark Francis won the Newton Comley award. Art Ramicone won the highest GPA in Fall. Spring was won by Dennis Reitz and Frank Reist. Gamma Chapter was awarded the Excellence in Scholarship Award from National for the fourth consecutive year and said it was the first time a chapter earned the award four times.

Mortgage was \$18,294.63.

1977

Gamma's alumni board took preliminary steps in several house improvement projects. These included new drapes for Great Hall, improvement and expansion of the parking lot, new chairs for the table in Great Hall and book shelves for the beginning of a new library.

1978

Homecoming 1978, the house entered the window decorating contest at the Student Union Building and took 1st place. We also took 2nd place in float competition, with a theme: "We are a good thing growing at Penn State".

Carl Anderson, took the office of President of the Pain State Dairy Club.

1979

Alumnus Penrose Hallowell took office in February 1979 as Secretary of Agriculture for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Roland Daniels, Chapter Advisor, receives the College of Ag's best professor award

1980

Several brothers and alumni contract salmonella bacteria from the turkey served at Founder's Day at the Sheraton. 80% who attended got sick, with 8 hospitalized.

1983

The house was insulated

1984 - 1985

March 9-11, Rhomate Convention held at Gamma Chapter. The Computer Room and McCollough Library were added. The wool rugs were added in Spring of 1985.

1987-88

Rent was \$14,437.50/year and \$1800 for the apartment

1991

The Brotherhood Program implemented, creating a 3 day program for brotherhood in order to eliminate hazing. Gamma, Beta (Ohio State), Kentucky (Omicron) and Western Kentucky (Alpha Chi) placed on probation. The national board now allows for 3 undergraduate members across Alpha Gamma Rho to be elected to the National Board on one year terms. Also at the National Convention, it was voted that Statute Changes now have to get 51 percent vote from the chapters. Prior to this Statute changes were implemented by the national board only.

Alumni Rent was \$10,000/semester. The bathrooms were renovated.

1992

Gamma Still on probation. Worked on getting grades, numbers, finances, risk management and brotherhood program implemented and turned around. John H. Gilliland (Cal Poly) became house advisor.

1993

Jon Schroer was nominated and became Gamma's First Undergraduate Director on the National Board of Directors

1997: The Original Charter is sent to Paley for Posterity

In the fall of 1997, Noble Ruler Scott Yerkes (Γ1341) made an arrangement with Penn State's Archives Office. Paley Library would keep Gamma's original charter, signed by Penn State's President and our nine charter members, in 1911. The Office made a professional copy of the charter, framed it, and presented it to Gamma Chapter. That framed copy hangs in Great Hall today. The original charter resides in the Penn State Archives.

Winder break, new doors and frames on 2nd and 3rd floors, new hall carpets. Alumni rent \$10,000 semester

1998

House Bill \$2200/semester

1999

House bill \$2275/semester

2000

New kitchen, windows, dining room floor, apartment renovation, \$3200/semester, alumni rent \$14,000/semester

2001

Portico remodeled, waterheater

2002

Bathrooms remodeled, new stove. Rent \$14,000/semester, apartment \$6300/year

2003

Rent \$15000 per semester

2003/4

Rent raised to \$16,500/semester

2004/5

Rent raised to \$18,000/semester. Kicked off our own local capital campaign to pay sprinklers and several other major projects

2007

Gamma Alumni and National Grand President Rick Carpenter donates the first \$1000 to Gamma's Educational Foundation at the National Foundation. Gamma installs sprinkler and fire alarm system to meet borough codes to keep house open. The cost was \$150,000. Rent raised to \$22,000/semester.

Hired Pennington Company to perform a feasibility study for capital campaign. Hired BASCO/Buchart Horn to do initial cost study on the projects. Acquired a \$400,000 line of credit to pay for sprinkler system, feasibility study and potential capital campaign.

2008

Hired Pennington to do capital campaign for \$1,000,000 or more goal. Rent raised to \$37,000/semester

2009

Jonathon Tabolt was nominated and became Undergraduate Director on the National Board. Hired BASCO to create architectural plans for capital projects.