

Chronicle of The
DELPHIC FRATERNITY
Gamma Sigma Tau

Over 150 Years of Brotherhood
More Than 185 Years of History



*Founded in 1871, re-established in 1987,
with origins dating back to 1833.*

Sesquicentennial Edition



“Fearless leaders and independent thinkers do not lack followers. A fraternity that does not wait to see what others say, think or do wins respect for its own opinions. A self-reliant self-centered fraternity needs no backing. Leaders, not followers, original thinkers, not imitators, members with strong individuality, are in demand everywhere.”

– *Delphic Oracle (fraternity newsletter) February 1902, Cortland, NY.*

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Dedication

This e-book is dedicated to all of Delphic, past, present, and future: Brothers All - Unity Amongst All. Special thanks to the Delphic Brothers of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the Re-Establishing Brothers of 1987, and every member of Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity who continues 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 - Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo.

Joanne Kershner - Alumni Relations, SUNY Geneseo.

Pat Keegan, Heather Beach - James M. Milne Library, SUNY Oneonta.

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

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

Frances S. Garrison, David Guinn - Mansfield University, Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

Patricia T. Viele, Sue Bush, Richard J. Powell - Memorial Library, SUNY Cortland.

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

Gerlinde Barley, Morgan Gwenwald - Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz.

Mike Burgess - Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh.

Sally E. Rusaw, Jane Subramanian - Crumb Memorial Library, SUNY Potsdam.

Scott Brockelmeyer - Sigma Tau Gamma National Fraternity.

Brian Castelli - Sigma Tau Psi Fraternity, SUNY Geneseo.

Charlie Cowling - Drake Memorial Library, SUNY Brockport.

Melissa Mead - University of Rochester Library Archives.

Sarah Keen, Erin Patterson - Special Collections Archivists, Colgate University.

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

Dave Hines - Sports Information Director, SUNY New Paltz.

The Delphic Alumni Association of SUNY New Paltz.

The Gamma Sigma Fraternity International Alumni Association.

Zachary T. Haines - Historian and Archivist, Beta Theta Pi Fraternity.

Nick Pavio - Historian, Delta Kappa Tau Fraternity.

Meredith Kaye Tierney, Historian, Archivist - Sigma Gamma Phi, Arethusa Sorority

Joseph P. Craven and Delphic Brother Wenhong You for their superb editing and proofreading expertise.

Delphic Brother Eric Guzman for his research and consultation throughout the years.

Introduction

The Delphic Fraternity, Inc. is a historic multicultural organization with over 150 years of history, tradition, and brotherhood. The fraternity was originally founded in 1871 in Geneseo, New York as a literary debating society, which held social and political debates, literature readings, and provided its student body with various intellectual and social activities. Though founded in 1871, the Delphic Society can trace its history back to 1833. Around the early 1900s, the organization became a regional fraternity based at several normal schools in New York and one in Pennsylvania. Normal schools were institutions dedicated to training high school graduates in the art of teaching.

By the late 1930s, most of the Delphic chapters became inactive except for the Zeta Chapter in New Paltz, New York, which has resurrected itself over time. In the 1950s, the Zeta Chapter at New Paltz briefly became affiliated with a larger national fraternity. Delphic later was a member of a regional alliance of chapters that were once nationally associated with the larger fraternity. Eventually, the Delphic organization became inactive in the early 1970s and was re-established in the late 1980s as the first multicultural fraternity in New York State. It is the second fraternity in the nation to officially promote multicultural diversity within collegiate institutions and the first truly multicultural fraternity to be formed on the East Coast.

In the 21st century, Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity finds itself as an organization represented by an active undergraduate chapter in Virginia, three graduate chapters respectively in New York City, Washington, DC., and Charlotte, North Carolina, and three alumni chapters representing New Paltz, Binghamton, and Delhi, NY. All chapters continue to represent the prestigious history of this multicultural organization.

This publication will concentrate specifically on the Delphic Fraternity, however, it will also mention other organizations, past and present, that are historically connected to Delphic. With over 150 years of brotherhood and more than 185 years of history, the Delphic lineage reaches far and wide and its DNA is interwoven within the fabric of the greater North American fraternity movement.

Greek History

To better understand our organization's rich history, it is important to know a little bit about the history of fraternities and sororities in general 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 solidifying 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 and was also the first national academic honor society. The first official social fraternity to be formed is said to be the Kappa Alpha Society, which was founded in 1825 at Union College in Schenectady, New York. However, Chi Phi Fraternity can trace its history back to 1824 in Princeton, New Jersey. The creation of these organizations paved the path for fraternity and sorority life on hundreds of campuses throughout the United States. College literary societies were oftentimes precursor organizations to the national fraternity movement. However, literary societies were usually local in nature with no outside governing body.

The Delphic Fraternity (also known as Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity) is one of the oldest social fraternities in the country. According to the Wikipedia List of

Social Fraternities, Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau would be the 31st oldest existing social fraternity in the United States. It was originally founded as the Delphic Society in 1871 in upstate New York. Its creation sparked the formation of similar societies throughout the region. The Delphic Society, founded in Geneseo, NY, was the quintessential college literary society and debating club of the time.

The City of Delphi and the Delphic Oracle

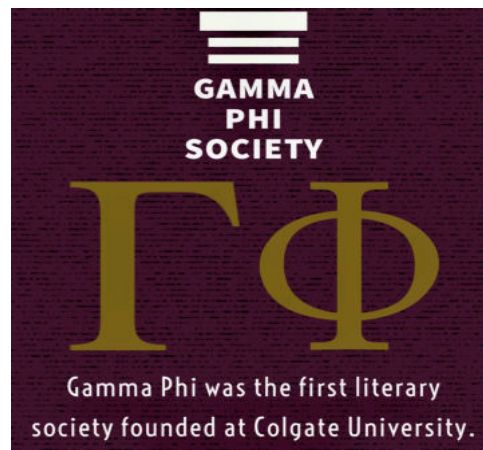
The name Delphic originates from the city of Delphi in Greece, which was the seat of the most important ancient temple and oracle of the Greek god Apollo. Delphi was considered by the ancient Greeks to be the center of the world. The most refined and largest intellects awaited the pronouncements of its great prophecy. The prestige of the Delphic Oracle reached its height by about 580 BC. The Delphic Fraternity is named for the city of Delphi in Greece. Because the word Delphic has held a strong connection to ancient Greece and the mystical oracle, other college literary societies have named their organizations after Delphic, or by similar names such as Adelphic, Adelphian, Adelphi, etc. This history e-book's focus is the Delphic Society/Fraternity which was founded in Geneseo, NY in 1871.

College Letter Societies

College literary societies were one of the first extracurricular associations in a great number of American institutions of higher learning. These literary societies were non-exclusive, local in nature, and student-created spaces where members gathered to explore intellectual concerns, refine orator skills, and enjoy social companionship. Eventually, almost all college literary societies became extinct, while others morphed into some of the oldest social fraternities in the United States.

From the late 18th century to the early 19th century, the college literary society was an important part of campus student life. Most colleges and universities had at least two literary societies that sponsored public debates on various topics of the time. These societies were generally formed soon after the establishment of the host college or university and membership was not only open to all the students but in many cases, membership was all but required.

As colleges and universities grew and began to offer other social resources and activities to the student body, like student union centers and athletic programs, college literary societies became less popular and eventually diminished in number. Students began to organize private literary societies for smaller groups which were more intimate associations and these quickly developed into secret associations. These groups eventually led to fraternity and sorority life on college campuses, making fraternities and sororities one of the first student organizations.



Gamma Phi Society at Colgate University

The seminal concept for the future formation of the Delphic Fraternity stems from the founding of the Gamma Phi Society at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. Although no exact founding date is known to be historically recorded for Gamma Phi, the year 1833 is the earliest we can reference an organizational connection to the

Delphic Fraternity. The Gamma Phi Society serves as the historical genesis of the Delphic Fraternity as we trace its evolution in this chronicle.

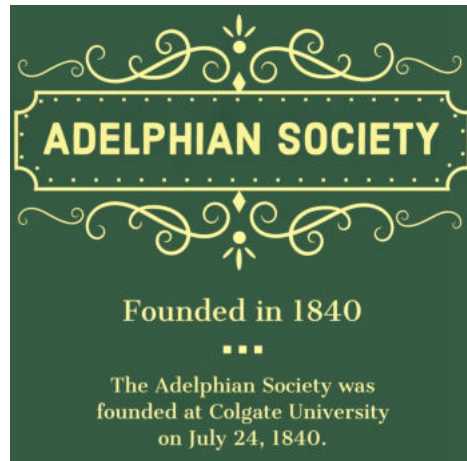
Gamma Phi was the first literary society at Colgate University, which was founded in 1819. According to *A History of Colgate University 1819-1969*, by Howard D. Williams, Gamma Phi was founded sometime prior to 1833 when Colgate University was called the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute. The Colgate University archive collections database does not list any records from Gamma Phi and its dates of existence come before the forming of any student newspapers or yearbooks at the institution.

Unfortunately, Williams did not source where he obtained the information about Gamma Phi but he does credit Gamma Phi and Pi Delta, founded around 1834, as the first literary societies at Colgate. Little trace of their activities remains except the names of their orators on commencement programs. The university recognized the associations as the first literary societies in its list of early student organizations during its “Colgate at 200 Years” celebration in 2019. The Colgate University website notes, “Both Gamma Phi and Pi Delta dissolved about 1840 as the Adelpian and Aeonian Societies emerged with similar aspirations and attracted greater student interest.”

A Colgate University college newspaper article from 2010 entitled “The History of Greek Life” stated the fraternity movement at Colgate grew out of the Gamma Phi and Pi Delta literary societies. The report sourced Williams’s book and noted a fierce “competition between them for members led to faculty intervention, with the result that both seem to have dissolved in 1840 when the Adelpian and Aeonian Societies came into existence.”

With the limited number of enrolled students at the time, the dissolution of one society and the formation of a new one during the same period makes it certain that the

membership of both organizations consisted of the identical student group. The membership of one society most likely melded into the other.



Adelphian Society at Colgate University

The Adelpian Society was founded on July 24, 1840, at Colgate University and was organized on October 31, 1840, when the founding officers were elected. The society was formed by 31 men led by its first president, Orrin Bishop Judd. The purpose of the society was to “progress in literary attainments and cultivation among all the members of an undecaying friendship.”

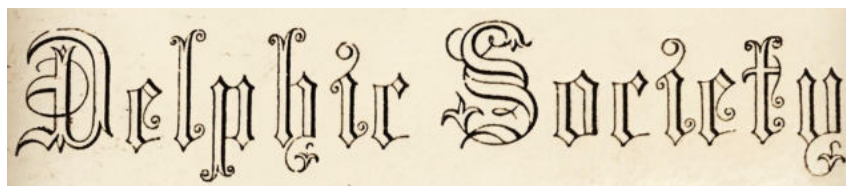
The Adelpian Society was founded on the same day as the Aeonian Society. The brother societies, as aforementioned, were built on the remains of the Gamma Phi and Pi Delta Societies. Early activities of both the Adelpians and Aeonians focused on the presentation of original student work. According to Howard Williams, the “faculty considered that both groups stimulated the development of oral and written expression, which were phases of the curriculum badly in need of expansion.”

The Adelpian Society at Colgate University existed until 1880 and produced a long list of successful alumni including the honorable Thomas Ward Osborn, a United States Senator representing the state of Florida. Osborn, who was a Union Army officer,

is credited with being instrumental in passing legislation to complete construction of the Washington Monument, in Washington, DC.

On December 10, 1880, the Adelpian Society became a chapter of the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity that is currently active at Colgate University. In a Beta Theta Pi Fraternity article entitled "From Adelpia to Beta Theta," Volume I of the Beta Theta minutes states, the Adelpian Society "was founded on the ruins of Gamma Phi and the Pi Delta societies" and "It is interesting to note that the Adelpian Society had Greek letter roots, being based upon two expired local fraternities. Hence, our origin pre-dates the general fraternity's founding."

The history of both the Adelpians and Aeonians intertwines with the emergence of social fraternities at Colgate University. Associates of the Adelpian Society also helped form a literary society at another university in the State of New York. In the late 1840s, trustees of the former Madison University, today Colgate, wanted to move the university to Rochester, New York. A dissenting group of trustees legally fought the relocation resulting in a fraction of students, faculty, and administrators migrating to form the University of Rochester.



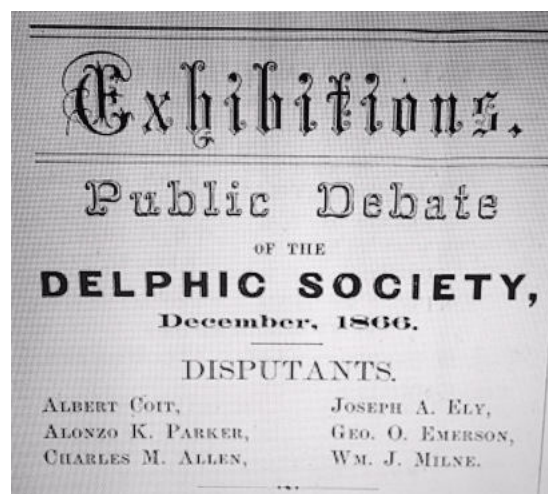
The Delphic Society at the University of Rochester

On November 2, 1850, five students from Madison University (today Colgate University) who were members of the Adelpian Society, relocated to the newly created University of Rochester. The students from Madison/Colgate University decided to form a literary society similar to the one in Hamilton but with a slightly different name. These

students became the founding fathers of the Delphic Society at Rochester. The five founders were Stephen Haskins Carpenter, Nathaniel Judson Clark, Andrew Longyear Freeman, John Butterick Jones, and Franklin Smith Lyon. The Delphic Literary Society at Rochester was formed for the "promotion of the literary improvement of its members."

There were two societies at Rochester, Delphic and Pithonian, which fostered debates and other activities aimed at increasing their members' writing and public speaking skills. Almost all undergraduates belonged to one of the groups. Professors, some trustees, and interested townsmen affiliated with honorary membership. The Delphic Society at Rochester was formed to serve "Wisdom and Reason."

The nemesis of the societies at Rochester was the social fraternity. Five of them, the "old nationals" as they were called, came into existence in the first decade of University life. Due to the drop in enrollment and to the competition of the secret fraternities, which were exclusive, smaller, and afforded more social enjoyment, the Delphic and Pithonian societies ceased to exist soon after the American Civil War. The Delphic Society at the University of Rochester existed on campus until 1866.

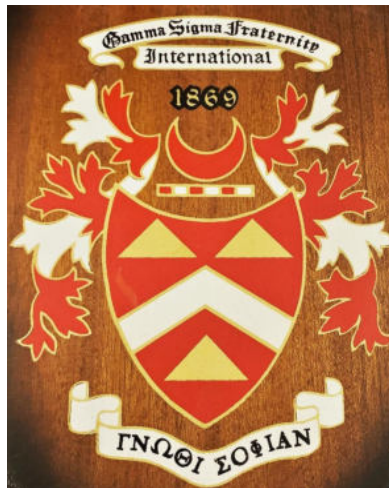


Advertisement for the last public debate in 1866 of the Delphic Society at the University of Rochester which includes William J. Milne as a disputant or participant in the debate.

The Delphic Society at Rochester was the model organization for the formation of the Delphic Society in Geneseo. In 1866, William James Milne, a student at the University of Rochester and a member of the Delphic Society, participated in the last public debate in December of 1866. Milne later became the first principal of the Geneseo State Normal School and was instrumental in the founding of the Delphic Society at Geneseo. The Delphic Society founded in 1850 at the University of Rochester did not evolve into a social college fraternity. However, several members of the Delphic Society, including Milne, were later initiated into the Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity at Rochester. The ADPhi chapter was also founded in 1850 and is presently active at the University of Rochester.

The Delphic Society at Geneseo is the successor organization to the Delphic Society at the University of Rochester. The connected name and close proximity of the societies along with William J. Milne links the two associations. The Delphic Society founded in 1871 at the Geneseo State Normal went on to become the historic regional Delphic Fraternity.

Gamma Sigma Fraternity, Brockport, NY



Painting of the Gamma Sigma Fraternity Crest

An article in the 1915 yearbook of the Geneseo State Normal School entitled "The Delphic Fraternity" by John R. MacCone notes, "Several young men who had enjoyed society life in another school, realized that a society should be formed here in order that they maintain a high standard of literary work." The other school was the Brockport Normal School and the society there was the Gamma Sigma Society.

The Gamma Sigma Society was founded on October 11, 1869, by Professor Charles Donald McLean at the Brockport Normal School (known today as SUNY Brockport). Charles McLean, who previously attended the University of Rochester, was the principal for the first several decades of the normal school at Brockport and helped establish one of the major elements of the school's culture, the Greek Letter Societies. These societies flourished at the school from 1869 to 1940.

The Gamma Sigma Society formed chapters at other schools, both normal and high schools, and eventually became known as the first international high school fraternity when it established a chapter in 1927 in Niagra Falls, Ontario, Canada. Gamma Sigma Fraternity International no longer has active chapters at the secondary education level but it does have an active alumni association based in Ontario, Canada.

It is highly plausible that Charles McLean was well aware of the Delphic Society while he was a student at Rochester and wanted to provide students at Brockport with a similar societal experience. Another University of Rochester graduate was also a professor at Brockport: William J. Milne. While at Brockport, Professor Milne became an honorary member of the Gamma Sigma Society. McLean is credited with the idea of the formation of society while Milne is credited with its naming.

According to information in *Gamma Sigma: The First One Hundred Years*, by Joseph W. Atkinson, "The motto, Gnothi Sophian, from which the letters Gamma

Sigma are derived, were proposed by the committee on name and was adopted by the membership at the regular meeting of November 13th, 1869. It was suggested by Dr. William J. Milne, a professor at Brockport Normal and later Principal of the Geneseo Normal School." *Gnothi Sophian* means "Seek wisdom," or "Know the truth."

In 1871, Professor Milne accepted the principalship at a new normal school in Geneseo, New York. Milne, along with several students from Brockport, relocated to Geneseo. The students, with the help and guidance of Professor Milne, founded the Delphic Society at the Geneseo State Normal School. Technically, it would have been the Beta Chapter of the Gamma Sigma Society. However, literary societies of the time were considered local in nature and the idea of chapters of the same society at other schools did not occur to anyone. The founders of Delphic decided to call the newly formed society at Geneseo the Delphic Society, most likely to emulate the society at Rochester of which Milne was also a member.

The Alpha Chapter, SUNY Geneseo, NY



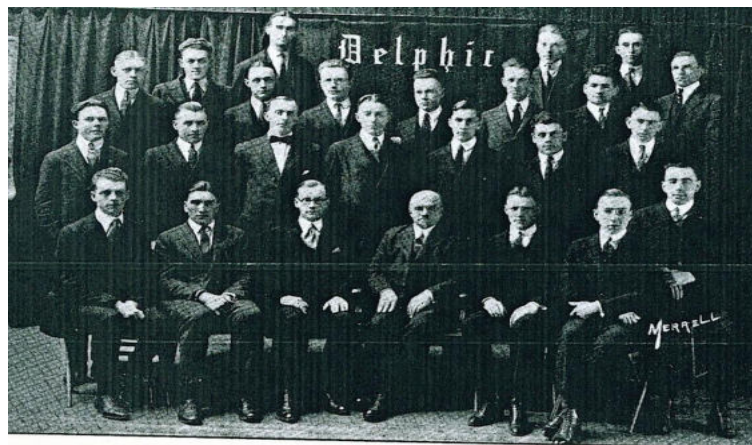
The Alpha Chapter of Delphic in 1888/9.
(Photo courtesy of the SUNY Geneseo Library Archives.)

In the early 1900s, the Delphic Fraternity consisted of eight chapters at normal schools throughout New York and Pennsylvania. The origin of the fraternity, also known as the Alpha Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity, traces its history 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 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 initially organized on October 13, 1871, during the first term of the school's initial existence.

As previously noted, Principal William J. Milne was instrumental in the founding of the Delphic Society at Geneseo. Frank E. Welles was its first president and John Beach Abbott was the first vice president. The other founding fathers of what would soon be known as the Delphic Fraternity were Charles W. Barney, Lewis Eugene Coe, John Norris Drake, William S. Janes, William S. Kershner, Scott L. McNinch, James M. Milne, Loring Olmsted, Charles S. Wilbur, Ara Wilkinson, and Frank A. Winnie. The purpose of the Delphic Society at Geneseo was to “give its members opportunities for exercise in extemporaneous debate and other literary exercises (declamations and selected readings.)”

The literary society performed public concerts that embodied orations, essays, debates, readings, and music. The organization's first concert entitled the “Exercises of the Delphic Society” was held during the school's first commencement on July 1, 1872.



Delphic Fraternity

Alpha Chapter Delphics at Geneseo in 1922.
(Photo courtesy of the SUNY Geneseo Library Archives.)

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 large share of cultural activities. For years to follow, the two societies performed joint concerts serving the community. Concerts were held several times a year. The societies would ask for contributions from the normal school and community, which would go toward the lecture series. A portion of the proceeds from these affairs was donated to the reading rooms in the village of Geneseo. The remainder of the profit would support society rooms and underwrite future performances.

The local newspaper, The Livingston Republican, supported the societies in these endeavors. 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, which included notable professors from Syracuse and Rochester Universities, and would occasionally draw dignitaries from as far as the parliament in Dublin, Ireland.

The Geneseo State Normal School, today SUNY Geneseo, was the largest in the state. In its first year in 1871, 488 students were enrolled. The first principal of the school, along with some faculty and students, came over from the Brockport Normal School to help form the Geneseo Normal School. Normal schools served as training institutions for future teachers and most evolved into institutions of higher learning. The concerts and other special events sponsored by the literary societies served as training grounds for students, providing arenas to develop poise and confidence in public performances.

The societies became quite popular and grew with time. By 1905 there were seven literary societies at Geneseo: three for men - Delphic, Philaethan, and Gamma Sigma; and four for women: Clonian, Agonian, Arethusa, and Alpha Delta. These societies were later founded on other normal school campuses. With the addition of other affiliated chapters, the Delphic Society eventually became known as the Delphic Fraternity, which officially existed in name only on the Geneseo campus until 1938.

In 1938, for a historically undocumented reason, the Alpha Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity at Geneseo decided to change its name and become an independent local chapter, calling itself Alpha Sigma Epsilon. At this time, the Zeta Chapter of Delphic at New Paltz was fully active and inherited the Delphic Fraternity legacy.

In 1948, the local chapter at Geneseo became a chapter of the Delta Kappa Fraternity which was founded in 1920 at Buffalo State College. The Geneseo chapter continues to exist today as Delta Kappa Tau. DKT at Geneseo notes that it, "evolved from the Delphic Fraternity." There is currently no official organizational tie between the former Delphic chapter at Geneseo and the greater Delphic Fraternity.

The Beta Chapter, SUNY Oneonta, NY



Members of the Beta Chapter of Delphic in Oneonta, NY, circa 1903.
(Photo courtesy of the SUNY Oneonta Library Archives.)

Fifteen young men formed the Beta Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity on December 13, 1889, at the Oneonta State Normal School. The school officially opened on September 4, 1889. 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 Frederick H. Lane. Soon after its formation, members conferred with the Alpha Chapter of the Delphic Society at Geneseo about forming a second chapter of the society. James M. Milne, a founding father of the fraternity from Geneseo, was the first principal at Oneonta and helped found the chapter. James M. Milne is considered the “Founder of the Delphic Fraternity” because the association between the Geneseo and Oneonta chapters of Delphic officially formed the Delphic Fraternity.

This second society mainly focused on debates and formed a glee club to supply a cappella music to the community. This Oneonta chapter was similar to Geneseo in several ways in that it was the first such organization to appear on campus and was also followed by the forming of the Clonian Society for young women. 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 Clonian the following year.

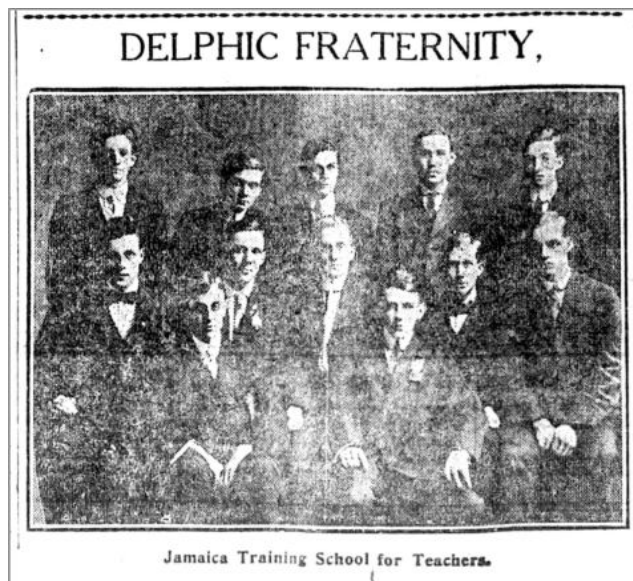
These societies would frequently combine their efforts for the pursuit of similar objectives. Eventually, the original groups, Delphic and Clonian, became closely involved with the younger ones, Philaethean and Agonian, nurturing toward the same goal. Although literary in nature, these societies added to the social life on campus at the time.

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 accompanied 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.

For twenty-one years, the Delphic Fraternity was a cornerstone of the Oneonta societal structure. The chapter was also instrumental in the founding of other chapters of Delphic. By the early 1900s, the enrollment of male students on the Oneonta campus 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 the recounting of memories, songs, 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 Shakespearean phrase, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." The phrase has been permanently adopted to imbue the Delphic reputation.

The Gamma Chapter, Jamaica Normal School, NY



Only known photo of the Gamma Chapter of Delphic at the Jamaica Normal School in 1908.
(Photo courtesy of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle.)

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. Some chapters had less of a historical connection to their respective schools and community than others. The Gamma Chapter of Delphic is noted as being formed at the Jamaica State Normal School in Jamaica, New York.

The actual chartered date is unknown, yet it seems to have been between September 1897, when the school opened, and October 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 fraternal business. A particular chapter would sponsor the annual event that usually took place during the month of October, which coincides with the original founding date of the organization. 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 New Paltz in 1902. The Jamaica chapter hosted the Grand Council in 1906.

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. This normal school existed until the early 1930s. In 1960, the sole building was demolished by the Board of Education and replaced by a public high school.

Hillcrest High School now stands on the former site of the Jamaica Normal School. Organizationally, the chapter was last referenced in attendance at the 1909 Grand Convocation held in Potsdam, New York. The last historical reference of the chapter's existence appeared in a local newspaper in 1916 noting a formal dinner held at the St. Denis Hotel in Manhattan.

The Delta Chapter, Mansfield University, PA

The Mansfield State Normal School in northern Pennsylvania was the home of the Delta Chapter of Delphic. The chapter was formed in 1898. It is the first chapter to be formed outside the State of New York. As previously noted, it sponsored the Grand Council of 1900. Clonians were on the Mansfield campus as well and held picnics and social gatherings with the fraternity.



The Delta Chapter of Delphic at Mansfield, PA, circa 1903.
(Photo courtesy of Mansfield University Library Archives.)

The life of the organization was short at Mansfield, as Dr. Straughn, the principal of the normal school, disbanded the fraternity in 1914. He felt Greek letter societies were elitist and wanted to create a sense of equality on the campus. Despite expulsion,

members continued to meet secretly on a regular basis. The last official pledge class was initiated in 1915.

The alumni later continued to meet at social gatherings. Harold G. Strait, a member of the last official pledge class, maintained the unity of the alumni of the Delta Chapter, meeting at least annually until the 1960s. Before his death, he donated a Delphic chair, table, and banner to the alumni house at Mansfield University. In 1915, the fraternity donated a traditional white marble bench to the school. The bench was inscribed with the name and insignia of the fraternity and the years 1898-1915.



Picture of the white marble bench situated on the campus of Mansfield University in Pennsylvania.

The insignia is composed of a unity circle over an equilateral triangle with the secretive number seven centered within the circle. There are laurel leaves at the sides of the seven and the Greek letter designation of each chapter was written on the base of the circle. There have been several variations of the bench, which was traditionally reserved seating for engaged or married couples. Two versions situated the front of the Mansfield campus until 2007. A third replica of the Delphic Stone Bench was found in storage and re-positioned at the same location on campus in 2015.

The Epsilon Chapter, SUNY Cortland, NY



The Epsilon Chapter of Delphic at Cortland in 1904.
(Photo courtesy of the SUNY Cortland Library Archives.)

In 1899, the Delphic chapters at Oneonta and Mansfield solicited the Young Men's Debating Club (YMDC) at the Cortland State Normal School in New York to become the Epsilon Chapter of the fraternity. According to *Cortland - Our Alma Mater*, by Bessie L. Park, the debating club was the first student organization to appear at Cortland. It was formed in 1842 as the Cortland Academy Debating Club, making it one of the oldest debating clubs in the United States. According to historical publications of the Cortland Normal School, the YMDC, which was founded on December 26, 1865, was used as the typical picture of a collegiate society/club of the time.

The group, which prior to 1865 was known by a variety of names, was well organized. Minutes of all regular and special meetings of the club were available from September 1877 until long after it became a chapter of 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.

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 and keep the spirit high during club debates. In June 1897, the debating club performed during Commencement Week exercises. Each club would present a public program. The club provided a unique blend of literary and orchestral presentations.

From early on, the YMDC became very popular, and membership in the club was in high demand. The club could not accommodate all interested students. Because of this, a second debating club was organized and formed at Cortland in 1870 and titled the Normal Debating Club. In January 1892, the club was granted a charter from the Gamma Sigma Fraternity at Rochester.

As previously mentioned, Gamma Sigma Fraternity was founded at the Brockport Normal School in 1869 and was another statewide fraternity at the time. The two societies, the YMDC and Gamma Sigma Fraternity, later held joint literary performances. In 1878, the Ladies Normal Debating Club was founded. In 1902, the club became the Agonian Society, which later became known as the Agonian Sorority.

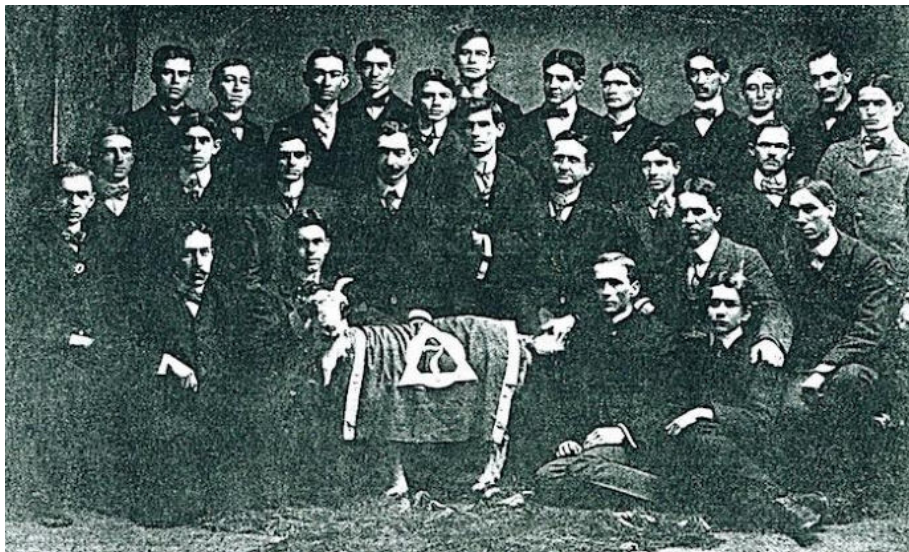
On June 14, 1899, by the suggestion of the normal schools at Oneonta and Mansfield and induced by the favorable report of its committee sent to Oneonta, the club adopted a Hellenic name calling itself the Delphic Fraternity. On June 16, 1899, the club members were initiated as the Epsilon Chapter of the fraternal association. The chapter's first president was Ward C. Moon, and the first vice president was Charles E. Smith. In 1900, the fraternity sponsored the regular "Term Social." 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 Delphic Chapters. The chapter sponsored the organization's Grand Council in 1907. This chapter, however, also eventually became inactive. The reason for this chapter's demise is concurrent with the decline of male membership at the school.

The United States' participation in World War I in 1917 demanded male troops be dispatched to Europe. With the country's focus on the war between 1917 and 1919, overall Delphic membership may have been strained and contributed to the end of other chapters. However, this is not duly noted anywhere else but at Cortland. By the end of 1917, there were no representatives of Delphic on the Cortland campus.

The Zeta Chapter, SUNY New Paltz, NY

(The Beginning)



Delphic Fraternity Brothers at the New Paltz Normal School in 1902.

(Photo from the Normal Review, New Paltz Library Archives.)

Of the original eight chapters of Delphic, the historic Zeta Chapter at New Paltz, New York stands out as being the most influential, respected, and valued part of the local school and community. For more than a century, the chapter played an important

role in the history of the Delphic Fraternity. However, with its longevity came many changes. The chapter has become inactive several times throughout its history, but somehow it has managed to be reborn over time.

The Zeta Chapter of Delphic officially began with the merger of two local Greek letter organizations: Alpha Pi Nu and Kappa Delta Alpha. Alpha Pi Nu, the first men's fraternity at the New Paltz State Normal School, was founded in the fall of 1889. Henry Jansen was instrumental in its formation. He circulated a petition for the founding of the fraternity among his peers and presented it to the school principal, Dr. Frank Sumner Capen, for his approval. Gideon B. Travis was chosen as the first president of the society. Dr. Capen became an honorary member.

Notable alumni included Martin Hasbrouck, Frank J. LeFevre, and Louis H. Deyo, who were all members of prominent families of New Paltz. Alpha Pi Nu's sister sorority at the time was Phi Kappa Pi, which later became Clionian. The other fraternity, Kappa Delta Alpha, 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 Myron Tracy 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 statewide fraternities.

Delegates from each society were sent to the Oneonta State Normal School 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.

On October 28, 1899, after three years of rivalry and soul searching, the combined young men's societies of Alpha Pi Nu and Kappa Delta Alpha were unified and initiated as the Zeta Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity. Alfred Harcourt became its first president, and 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."

Delphic began its long commitment to the New Paltz 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 with 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.

In October 1902, the chapter sponsored the fraternity's annual Grand Council. Council was held at the famous Lake Mohonk Resort. Delegates of the various chapters of Delphic arrived at the school on Thursday evening. That 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 their accomplishments and 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 had been formed in New Paltz. In 1901, the Philaletheans were first established, which later became Phi Alpha. The Knights of King Arthur were formed shortly after Phi Alpha. The Knights of King Arthur, incredibly enough, had their meetings at Castle Huguenot. A lesser-known fraternity called Delta Sigma came and went. As previously mentioned, the national demands of 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 due to their ineligibility to serve in the armed forces.

This decision made it possible for the fraternity to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary by having a school dance in November 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.

In 1929, the Delphic Fraternity held a benefit movie, a talent show, and a successful Annual Banquet. Leigh Stuart was the fraternity's president that busy year. During this period, Delphic's imprint in the community seemed to be thriving. In 1935, the fraternity moved into a house on upper Main Street, next to the College Inn. An invitation of membership 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, years before the famous Toys for Tots campaign by the Marine Corps, Delphic played the role of Santa Claus by calling for and collecting 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.

During World War II, members of Delphic contributed much more than just their service time. The war had a personal impact on the fraternity. Several Delphic Brothers lost their lives in the conflict. In the 1947 Paltzonian, the New Paltz yearbook, the chapter honored 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. These sacrifices unfortunately occurred once more.



Photo of Delphic Fraternity Brothers in the 1949 New Paltz Yearbook.

Delphic Brother Heinz Alhmeyer lost his life in the Vietnam Conflict. Heinz was a Marine Lieutenant who died on May 10, 1967. He was a good-natured athlete who played 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." The college also named an annual soccer game after Delphic Brother Heinz.

(Sigma Tau Gamma)

The growth and popularity of the Delphic Fraternity during the 1950s brought on a significant yet brief official 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 larger 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 influential in the formal discussions.



New Paltz Yearbook photo of Delphic Brothers in 1956.

Though the fraternity was interested in becoming larger than its forty-seven members, it also was hesitant about this gigantic step. In a letter dated July 8, 1950, Mr. Pauls states some of the fraternity's concerns. One issue was its established colors. The original Zeta chapter colors were lavender and white, which may have stemmed from the official colors of Kappa Delta Alpha. The regional 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 larger 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 of opinion on whether to become a part of the national organization. After the completed forms and conferences, a decision and compromise were 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 prohibited 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 state won the case against national Greek-letter organizations. The New Paltz fraternity complied with the state court's decision and became known once again as a local fraternity. In 1976, the State Supreme Court overturned the prior decision in favor of student rights and the support of the right of freedom of association.

(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 in 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.



1968 Composite of the Zeta Chapter of Delphic
(Photo courtesy of Delphic Brother Dr. Edward W. Savarese.)

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, along with the Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity, the only other organizations of the former Sig Tau Confederation that are currently active are Sigma Tau Chi at SUNY Oswego and Sigma Tau Psi at SUNY Geneseo.

(An End of an Era)

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 renowned for its Halloween parties. Yet, it became best known for its annual White Rose Weekend, which consisted of a formal ball and parade. The white rose is the official flower of Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau. 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. One year the theme for the Delphic float was “Our Blue Heaven.”



Composite of Delphic Fraternity Brothers at New Paltz in 1971.

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

existence of fraternities and sororities 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 the best float in 1964 with its theme of “Saint George and the Dragon.” The White Rose Ball itself was twice held in 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 celebratorily anticipated each year.

New Paltz, as well as the rest of the United States, was affected by the turbulent late 1960s. Protests against the Vietnam Conflict and the Civil Rights Movement created an uneasy atmosphere on 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 severely low number of prospective pledges, the then members of the Delphic Fraternity decided to disband the organization. Delphic members at the time felt it would be in the fraternity’s 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 wanted to provide an alternative. They were to compose the first multicultural 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, also known as 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. Five alumni stepped forward to assist these determined young men. The Delphic alumni were Albert A. Beard, Don Kachmore, John McCormick, Dick Price, and Tyrone Sands. The twelve men were then initiated into the Delphic Fraternity in December 1986. Eugenio Rodriguez was its first president. The other members were Steve A. Carle, Jose Carrion, Gil deLeon, Emmanuel Egipciano, Ventura Lopez, Steve Rappleyea, Michael Rand, Todd Reed, Edwin Ruiz, Geoff Seoul, and Lawrence Troutman.



Here are 9 of the 12 Re-Establishing Brothers, Spring 1987

(Photo courtesy of Delphic Brother Edwin Ruiz.)

Since its origin, the Delphic Fraternity had always been a diverse group of individuals consisting of different nationalities. It was one of the reasons the re-establishing brothers found the organization quite appealing. Its cultural diversity had always pre-dated that of the society's. The first vice president of Kappa Delta Alpha was

of Latin descent. His name was Jose DeCastro. J.M. Gonzalez followed in 1902 as an officer of the Delphic Fraternity.

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, who was also African American, followed during the height of the movement in 1968. Two brothers in the same era were of 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. However, this idea would have involved another acceptance process, higher national dues, and possible restrictions imposed upon them. The group decided to remain a local autonomous organization. The re-established 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 (IGC.) At the request of the Delphic alumni and in an effort to be accepted into the IGC, the new group had to solicit bids for induction into the council from the other Greek

organizations on campus and perform community service. During its re-establishing process, the new members helped 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, the Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity became fully recognized members of the IGC at New Paltz. The re-established organization represented a combination of contemporary and established ideals and values. The official colors of the re-formed fraternity became red and white, the original colors of the statewide Delphic Fraternity, and royal blue was added to represent its past connection with Sigma Tau Gamma.

The organization as a whole began to serve the local campus and community. Since 1987, the chapter had 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 had been conducted to raise money for finding a cure for this childhood disease.

The group also participated in a recycling day with the New York Public Interest Resource Group, the student statewide environmental group. School dances were held at the student union building and the fraternity had social mixers with various other Greek letter organizations on campus.

A hurricane relief fund drive was conducted to assist people in Puerto Rico and the Carolinas. Successful food and clothing drives were also held during the holiday seasons. The fraternity has also co-sponsored various cultural campus events including the 1994-1996 Latin Weekends. In 1998, Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity proudly became a founding National Multicultural Greek Council member.

(Delphic Alumni Association)

Representatives from the 1960s and 1970s created the Delphic Alumni Association in 1992. The spark for its formation began at a gathering of alumni at the home of John McCormick in 1991. John was persistent in having alums unite to strengthen the bonds of the Delphic Brotherhood. Members later gathered in 1992 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, John, Jim Townsend, Doug Slingerland, Rich Koenig, Dick Price, Fred Wall, Don Kachmore, Mike Smith, and Danny Zipkin conceived the idea of the Delphic Alumni Association. Dick Price hosted alumni meetings at his home, Doug Slingerland helped organize reunions in 1992, 1995, and 1998, and fraternity archivist Rich Koenig cared for and maintained Delphic memorabilia for several decades.



Delphic Brothers at the 1998 Alumni Reunion in New Paltz, NY.

The Delphic Alumni Association developed a network of alumni with about two hundred members living throughout the United States. It has held successful reunions

throughout the years. Participants ranged from pledge classes as far back as the 1930s to current undergraduate members. It created a great opportunity for old friends to meet and reminisce about their fraternal and New Paltz experiences. The last two reunions also served as a way for newer and current Delphic members to learn about Delphic history from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s via firsthand accounts. 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 stained glass Delphic window that once decorated the Old Main Building. The window joined previous Delphic memorabilia donated to the college.



Delphic Brothers at the 2016 installation of the Delphic 7 Stained Glass Window at the Old Main Building at SUNY New Paltz.

The historic stained glass window was returned to the Old Main Building in 2016. A Delphic Window re-dedication ceremony was held during New Paltz Alumni Weekend on Saturday, October 15, 2016. The event was sponsored by the Office of Alumni Affairs and organized by Delphic Brother Robert Thorn. Delphic Alumni live all across the United States. Retired alumni in Florida have been meeting once a year for a

reunion for the last several years. Delphic alumni always try to make an appearance every October for SUNY New Paltz Alumni Weekend and for our annual Delphic Weekend Reunion in March.

(Re-Birth)



Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity Brothers in 2002 at the 15th Re-Establishing Reunion in New Paltz, NY., a.k.a. Delphic Weekend.

In 1998, the Zeta Chapter of Delphic at New Paltz briefly became inactive. It seemed that the historic organization had come to the end once again; however, like the Phoenix, a mythological firebird that was resurrected 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 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 the Delphic Fraternity. It is the chapter with the longest history but is but one of a noble group of fourteen chapters, both active and inactive, that make up the historic Delphic

Fraternity. Unfortunately in 2004, the undergraduate chapter became inactive. It has, however, actively operated as an alumni chapter since 2004.

(Female Auxiliary)



Delphic Dahlias/Gamma Rubies in New Paltz in the early 1990s.

Delphic had always been historically affiliated with various sororities on campus. Serenading, a romantic form of group singing, had become a great pastime of the fraternity. In order to re-establish this tradition, 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 balance, so in the spring of 1988, the fraternity created an auxiliary of the organization.

On May 5, 1988, Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity, Inc. decided to create an auxiliary organization to support the Delphic mission. Thirteen young ladies joined the auxiliary group, which became known as the Delphic Dahlia of Gamma Sigma Tau. The founding mothers of the Delphic Dahlias are Monica Agosto, Bonnie Brawn, Barbara Boice, Annette Cipriano, Amy DeJesus, Jeanine Lopez, Nancy O'Hehir,

Melissa Padilla, Tina deLeon, Lynn Hensler, Dara Lasky, Mary Grande, and Stacy Mediatore.

The Delphic Dahlia auxiliary group quickly became a valued part of the Delphic Fraternity and desired a Greek letter to call their own. In the fall of 1992, the name Gamma Rubies was incorporated into the name of the auxiliary organization. The following ten young ladies oversaw the transition from Delphic Dahlias to Gamma Rubies: Ruth Santos, Silvia Venancio, Yehonela Ortiz, Mercedes Torres, Norma Diaz, Maria Hernandez, Griselda Puello, Xiomara Perez, Cynthia Tapia, and Guarinelly Hernandez.

The Delphic Dahlia/Gamma Ruby “little sisters” were only active at the Zeta Chapter of Delphic at New Paltz, which became inactive in 2004. In 2016, a new generation of sisters led by Alexis Brown was initiated at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. This new group eventually transformed the auxiliary into a sister sorority called Dahlias of Lambda Gamma Tau but it became inactive a few years after its founding.

The Eta Chapter, SUNY Plattsburgh, NY

On April 6, 1900, representatives of the Oneonta chapter of Delphic helped charter the Eta Chapter at the Plattsburgh State Normal School in northern New York. The Plattsburgh chapter originated in January of the same year as the Alpha Kappa Sigma Society with W.C. Taylor as the society’s first president. The first president of the Eta Chapter of Delphic was Edwin Sartwell. The chapter attended the Grand Council at Mansfield later that year. The Eta Chapter would sponsor farewell banquets each year in their chapter room at the Plattsburgh State Normal School, today SUNY Plattsburgh. One banquet was mentioned in the student newspaper, the Plattsburgh Sentinel, on June 20, 1902. At that particular Delphic Banquet, held on Friday evening,

June 13, Edwin Sartwell spoke about the fraternity since its foundation. The chapter colors were purple and white while its fraternity color was red. The Eta Chapter existed until the fall of 1907. Until 2003, it was believed that Plattsburgh was the last of the original chapters of Delphic formed in the late 1800s/early 1900s.



Group picture of the Eta Chapter of Delphic at Plattsburgh, circa 1906.
(Photo courtesy of the SUNY Plattsburgh Library Archives.)

The Baconian Chapter, SUNY Potsdam, NY

The Baconian Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity at Potsdam, New York is known as the “newfound” chapter because the organization only became aware of the chapter’s historical association in the summer of 2003. A random Internet search was what led to its discovery. The chapter traces its history back to 1870 with the creation of the Baconian Literary Society. The literary society evolved into the Roger Baconian Society in 1876, named for an English scientist and philosopher. The society held debates and public speaking events at the normal school.

DELPHICS TO MEET IN POTSDAM

FRATERNITY CONVOCATION TO
BE HELD HERE NEXT
WEEK

Theta Chapter, Potsdam Normal will entertain the convocation of the Delphic fraternity at Potsdam on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, of next week, May 10th, 11th, and 12th. The program includes a banquet at the Albion Hotel on Thursday evening, a ball for the visiting delegates and the Alpha Society in the Normal gymnasium on Friday, and a business session Saturday morning.

Murray Rutherford of this place, is grand president of the fraternity. He will preside at the business session. M. G. Barnett will act as toast master at the banquet. The banquet speakers will include the visiting delegates, Principal R. T. Congdon of the local school, C. R. Van Hoesen, and J. W. Maxey of the faculty, Murray Rutherford, Floyd Burnham, George Lenney, and John Olmstead.

The Delphics have in New York State, three chapters at the Normal schools of New Paltz, Potsdam and Genesee.

In 1906, the Roger Baconian Society was incorporated as the Theta Chapter of the statewide 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 Genesee, Oneonta, Jamaica, Mansfield, and New Paltz. The Baconian chapter of Delphic at Potsdam ceased to exist around the early 1930s.

The accompanying news article was published in the Courier Freeman, Potsdam, NY, on May 5, 1923.

The Theta Chapter, Binghamton University, 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. 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 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. The undergraduate Theta Chapter at Binghamton became inactive in 2010. However, the chapter's alumni are still active within the organization.



2004 photo of Zeta & Theta Chapter Brothers & Delphic Dahlias/Gamma Rubies in Binghamton, NY.

The Kappa Chapter, University of Virginia, VA



Kappa Chapter Delphic Brothers in 2015 at the University of Virginia.

In the fall of 2008, an interest group at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville contacted Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau to become a chapter of the fraternity. Wenhong You led the group of eight members, who were mostly of Chinese background, through the long and involved process of becoming recognized by the Multicultural Greek Council at UVA. With the assistance of the Delphic Executive Board and the diligent work of the interest group at UVA, the Kappa Chapter of the Delphic Fraternity was fully recognized as a member of the university's Greek community on November 8, 2009. Wenhong You was the chapter's first president. The other seven members included James Zhenyu Liao, Sijie Xia, Yiran Yao, Qihan Zhang, Sam Shanshan Li, Yizhou Jing, and Christopher Myers. The Kappa Chapter of Delphic is the first multicultural fraternity to be established at UVA and provides a solid fraternity presence in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In 2019, the chapter celebrated its 10th Year Anniversary.



Group photo of the Kappa Chapter of Delphic at UVA, Spring 2023

The Lambda Chapter, SUNY Delhi, NY



Crossing celebration photo of the Lambda Chapter of Delphic, April 2020.

The SUNY Delhi chapter of Delphic came about when the son of one of the Re-Establishing Brothers, Gil deLeon, decided to form a chapter of his father's fraternity at his school. Gil's son, William deLeon, then enlisted Enmanuel Picardo, Jason Rios, and Victor Rodriguez as the fellow founding fathers of the Delphic chapter at SUNY Delhi. Delphic Brother Komain Somapeera from the Zeta Chapter at SUNY New Paltz was the Pledge Master of the founding line of the chapter. The Lambda Chapter at SUNY Delhi was founded in 2016 and remained active until 2022.

Professional Graduate and Associate Chapters

On February 6, 2016, the fraternity met its expansion goal by formalizing the creation of a professional graduate chapter and two undergraduate associate chapters. The graduate chapter represented New York City and two associate undergraduate chapters of the fraternity were founded at SUNY Delhi and Lincoln University in Oxford,

Pennsylvania. As noted previously, the chapter at SUNY Delhi, which is a technical college in New York State established in 1913, went on to become the Lambda Chapter of Delphic.



A 2016 picture of the founding fathers of the NYC Graduate Chapter and the Associate Chapters of Delphic at SUNY Delhi and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.

The other associate chapter was formed at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, the first degree-granting historically black college/university. It was founded as a private university in 1854 and has been a public institution since 1972. The Lincoln University associate chapter came to be when one lone member of a small interest group was initiated into the Delphic Brotherhood. With the strong guidance and support of Theta Chapter alumnus Alvin Gordon, Kasim Nasir became the founding father of the Delphic at Lincoln University. Unfortunately, the chapter did not achieve full chapter designation and became inactive in 2019.

The NYC Professional Graduate Chapter, also known as the Tau Alpha Chapter of Delphic, was officially formed with the initiation of Philip Garnett, Bon Somapeera, and Ted Vibulayacom. Zeta Chapter alumni brothers Phil Velez and Komain

Somapeera, Bon's biological brother, played vital roles in the graduate chapter's formation. The NYC grad chapter will focus on graduate chapter recruitment and assist with the formation and overall support of undergraduate chapters in the NYC metropolitan area.



Tau Gamma Graduate Chapter Founders with a Re-Establishing Brother (Gil deLeon).

In the summer of 2018, two men in the Charlotte, North Carolina area inquired about forming a graduate chapter of the Delphic Fraternity. One of them, Shawn Mackey, was already familiar with and intrigued by Delphic societal membership having family ties with Delphic Brothers Gil and William deLeon. Shawn enlisted Jonathan Schretzman on a journey to become Delphic. With help and guidance from the Tau Alpha Graduate Chapter of NYC, on March 9, 2019, Shawn and Jonathan became members of the Delphic Fraternity and founders of the Tau Gamma Graduate Chapter in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Notable Alumni

The library at SUNY Oneonta is named after James M. Milne, a founding father of the Delphic Fraternity who was the first principal of the Oneonta State Normal School. Another founder, John B. Abbott, was a Livingston County Court Judge and served as Geneseo's postmaster under the Grover Cleveland administration.

A highway in Mansfield, Pennsylvania is named after Harold G. Strait, a Delphic member of the Delta Chapter, who was an outstanding member of the Mansfield community. A planetarium at Mansfield University is named after Harold's father, George Strait, who was a popular professor at the university. William George Butler, another member of the Delta Chapter, was an accomplished musician and composer.

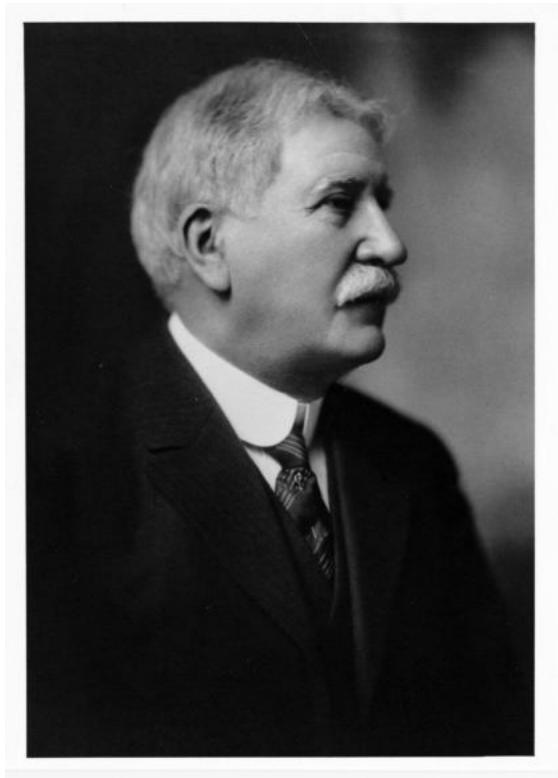
Henry Albert Dickinson, a member of the Young Men's Debating Club (the predecessor group of the Epsilon Chapter at Cortland) was a New York State Assembly Member. David Eugene Smith, another Cortland alumnus, is considered one of the founders of the field of mathematics education. A third Cortland alum, Louis Jay Heath, was a foreign correspondent for United Press International, one of the first organizers of the American Newspaper Guild, and a descendant of United States President John Adams.

Alfred Harcourt, the first president of the Zeta Chapter of Delphic at New Paltz, was co-founder of the Harcourt Brace Publishing Company (today Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) in New York City. Harcourt is recognized as one of the great publishers of the 20th century. The post office in Pearl River, New York was renamed the Heinz Ahlmeyer, Jr. Post Office Building in 2005 in honor of the distinguished member of the Zeta Chapter of Delphic who lost his life during the Vietnam Conflict.

For more than a century and a half, there have been many Delphic alumni who were outstanding community members deserving of honorable mention. However, not everyone could be noted in this history book. There are also living alumni who are

making great strides in various industries and younger up-and-coming Delphic who are sure to continue to make the fraternity proud.

William James Milne



Although never an officially fully pledged member of the Delphic Fraternity, William James Milne could very well be considered an honorary founding father of the organization. Dr. Milne, known for leading two teachers' colleges in New York State and writing numerous mathematics textbooks, was a man who understood the values of allegiance and brotherhood, which are essential for personal growth and development. As a member of the Delphic Society and Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity at the University of Rochester and an honorary member of Gamma Sigma Fraternity at the Brockport Normal School, Milne experienced

firsthand the bonds of friendship and kindred spirit that can be formed through shared experiences and common goals. Throughout his life, he remained committed to fostering these types of relationships, both within his own social circles and in the wider community. Regardless of his formal membership status, Milne's vital contribution to the creation of the Delphic Society at Geneseo is undoubtedly an important part of the Delphic Fraternity's history and heritage.

William James Milne, Ph.D, 1913 (Photo courtesy of the Archives at the University at Albany, SUNY.)

Summation

Each fraternity has its own unique history, character, and legacy that contributes to the overall narrative of the nature of fraternities. Whether a fraternity has one chapter or 100 chapters, every one has its own spirit of brotherhood, camaraderie, and cohesiveness. Chronicling the Delphic Fraternity and its genesis, it is evident that the organization, and the various iterations of it, has had an impact on its local community and has left, and continues to leave, an indelible mark on its members.

This organization has reached a significant milestone with its sesquicentennial anniversary. Not many social fraternities still in existence today can say the same. Although the legendary brotherhood has experienced multiple challenges and transformations throughout the last century and a half - if the past is any indication of the future - there is much ahead for Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity.

The Delphic Fraternity marked its 150th year anniversary in October of 2021 and celebrated its 35th re-establishing anniversary as Delphic of Gamma Sigma Tau Fraternity in March of 2022. The ongoing work of the Delphic Executive Board, the current undergraduate chapter at the University of Virginia, the alumni chapters at SUNY New Paltz, Binghamton University, and SUNY Delhi, and the graduate chapters in NYC, DC, and North Carolina, help keep the memory of all 14 historic chapters of the Delphic Fraternity alive. The fraternity aims to expand its membership and when and where possible reactivate inactive and dormant chapters. Our goal is to continue the legacy of the Delphic Brotherhood's practices of friendship, fellowship, and fidelity, and promote the culture of multiculturalism for many more years to come.

Delphic Fraternity

Γ Σ Τ



Since 1871

“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.”

– *Delphic Oracle (fraternity newsletter) February 1902, Cortland, NY.*

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History Page: <https://delphicfraternity.net>

Wikipedia Page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphic_Fraternity

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DelphicGST>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/delphicgst>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/delphicfraternity/>

Web Portal: <https://delphicfraternity.webs.com>

UVA Kappa Chapter Website: <https://www.uvadelphic-gst.com/>

UVA Kappa Chapter Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/delphicuva>

SUNY Delhi Chapter Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/DelhiDelphics>

[Tau Gamma Graduate Chapter Facebook Page](#)