

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Phi Charge of Theta Delta Chi was founded at Lafayette in 1867. Clay Holmes (Class of 1869), one of the founding brothers, wrote the chapter's history which appeared in the January 1891 edition of the Shield, the Theta Delta Chi publication. Lafayette's Phi Charge is particularly significant because it was the last chapter to petition to the Alpha Charge (the founding chapter of Theta Delta Chi). In point of fact, as Holmes states in his history, the approval of the Lafayette petition was the last official action performed by "the Mother Charge" before her disbanding.

Most of the surviving records relate to the early years of the Lafayette chapter of Theta Delta Chi. The Phi charge had many members of high academic standing, who were involved with many various groups and clubs during their student days, and early records show that the brothers of the Phi charge were active in the national Theta Delta Chi Grand Lodge (the governing body), holding the offices of Secretary, Treasurer, and or President in the years 1868-1869, 1872-1875, 1877, 1881, and 1890. Clay Holmes was especially active in the national Theta Delta Chi organization, serving as secretary in the Grand Lodge in 1868, and as president from 1890-1892. He was also the editor of the Shield from 1871-1879, and succeeded in rejuvenating the failing publication; and publisher of two Theta Delta Chi histories. Many of the brothers went on to occupy important positions in both political and corporate spheres. Among Phi's more prominent early members were John W. Griggs (Class of 1868), who went on to become Attorney General of the United States (1898-1901); James V. Long (Class of 1870), who was the United States Consul in such places as Florence, Greece, Venice and Malta; and Isreal P. Pardee (Class of 1874), who was heavily involved in the management and direction of many railroad, insurance, mining and manufacturing companies; as well as serving on the board of trustees at Lafayette (1892-1934), holding the position of president of the board of trustees (1915-1926), and serving as president of the Lafayette Alumni Association.

The Phi charge's charter was revoked in March of 2001 in a joint decision by the Theta Delta Chi alumni house corporation and the national headquarters. This final action was taken after the fraternity had undergone a difficult year. In August of 2000 the house had been condemned, but passed a re-inspection later that month and was reopened. In February The Lafayette reported that an alcohol "incident" had occurred, jeopardizing Theta Delta Chi's status on campus. According to college administrators, policy violations resulted in the revocation of the Phi charter.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Theta Delta Chi, Phi charge records is comprised of the President's record book; a compilation of letters, biographical history, and photographs; and a scrapbook. Both the historical record book and the scrapbook are paginated, and there is a carbon copy of the former.

The President's record book (1898-1983) consists of annual reports written by chapter presidents, which documents biographical information on the brothers, their activities, and events relating to Theta Delta Chi. These records are primarily holographic, with the exception of the years 1945-1946, 1946-1947 and 1970-1971, which are typed. There are no records from 1949-1950 to 1969-1970.

The historical record book, which was compiled in 1947, is a compendium of materials documenting the history of Phi charge. It contains materials dating from c. 1870-1947. Included are Photostats and typed copies of letters relating to Theta Delta Chi; a biographical history (part of which was taken from Holmes's history); and a few photographs. These photographs are mostly of Phi alumni. Also included are an appendix and short biographies of some of the brothers (located both within the text and in the appendix). The appendix contains entries on the following: Living Alumni, Biographies (of prominent brothers), Correspondence for History, Grand Lodge Officers, Charge House, Memorial Library, Occupations (of alumni), Organization, Publications, Scholarship Award, Phi Charge Song, Statistics, Traditions, Undergraduates, and War Service.

The scrapbook (1880-1926, bulk 1898-1917) is not a Phi charge item. It was compiled by Edward Van Winkle, president of the 45th Grand Lodge and member of the Rho Deuteron charge. It is composed of items relating to the fraternity. There are programs, songs, memorabilia and programs from the annual Theta Delta Chi convention, Christmas notes, an invitation to the launching of the Battleship Arizona from 1915, and several invitations issued by the mayor of New York City. It also includes items from Theta Delta Chi Chapters at: Columbia College, Hamilton College, Harvard, University of Virginia, William & Mary, Dartmouth, University of Michigan, Stevens Institute of Technology, University of Rochester, Brown, Tufts, College of the City of New York, Columbian University at Washington, University of Pennsylvania, and University of Washington.

INVENTORY

Box 1 –

President's record book, letter book, carbon copy of letter book

Folders

1	President's record book
2-6	Historical record book
7	Carbon copy of letter book
8-21	Scrapbook

Information taken from: Holmes, Clay W. Theta Delta Chi. Elmira, New York: Elmira Advertiser Association, 1891; Holmes, Clay W. Theta Delta Chi Fraternity with an account of the semi-centennial convention and banquet. Elmira, New York: Clay W. Holmes, 1898; The Lafayette. v.126 n.1., v.127 n.16., v.127 n.22.

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