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http://irkellyco.com/project_200810280850550x63343700x8868323/Sigma%20Chi.jpg

INVENTORY TO THE COLLECTION OF SIGMA CHI FRATERNITY COURT CASE MATERIALS, 1879- 2000

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Compiled By: Mary A. Segó

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Sigma Chi Fraternity
Title	Collection of Sigma Chi Fraternity Court Case materials
Collection Identifier	MSP 37
Date Span	1881-2000, predominant 1881-1883
Abstract	Documents, newspaper clippings, and photocopies of materials pertaining to the Delta Delta chapter of Sigma Chi, the first fraternity formed at Purdue University in 1875. After Purdue University President Emerson White abolished Greek societies on campus, a member of Sigma Chi sued the University. This collection documents the legal dispute and is sometimes referred to as the "Purdue case" or "Sigma Chi case."
Extent	0.4 cubic feet (1 box)
Finding Aid Author	Mary A. Sego
Languages	English
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Preferred Citation:	MSP 37, Collection of Sigma Chi Fraternity Court Case materials, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Coffroth, John R.

Hawley, Thomas P.

McMillin, John S.

Shaw, James B.

Smart, James

Vinton, D. P.

Waugh, James Milo

White, Emerson Elbridge

Organizations

Sigma Chi Fraternity

Purdue University

Form and Genre Types

Papers

Newspaper clippings

History of Sigma Chi Fraternity Court Case

On May 6, 1869, Purdue University was established, and Richard C. Owen was president at the time. When classes started in 1874, the enrollment was 39 students and 6 staff members, and Abraham C. Shortridge was president of the university. The next year in 1875, the enrollment was up to 75 and on March 3, the Delta Delta chapter of Sigma Chi was established at Purdue, making it the first fraternity on campus. The founders were Blair, Clark, Harper, Hatch, Jamison, Reed and Vanada. Shortridge did not like fraternities, but he tolerated them, because he did not want to deter prospective students.

The next president was John S. Houghham, who only remained for 6 months, giving way to Emerson Elbridge White on May 1, 1876. White disliked fraternities even more than Shortridge and vowed to abolish them, guided by James McCosh of Princeton University. He was quoted as saying that Purdue should "rise above the rest and stand alone," free to pursue its greatness "with industrial classes with industrial interests." White also believed fraternities to be immoral, because they presented students in a negative way along with his feeling that students would not have time for such student organizations. Although not significant, it seems almost fitting that on September 11, 1877 with the full support of the faculty, White established what was known as the matriculation pledge, beginning the entire fight against the oppression of the Greek system. This pledge stated that students would not be allowed to join any secret or Greek lettered societies, smoke or drink, skip classes, or even go to the bars. This pledge was aimed at abolishing the Greek system within 3 to 4 years, since it could not be required for students already admitted. Ironically, even those faculty members who had been associated with fraternities when they were in school still promoted the new mandate, and they played an integral part in its passing, due to the reluctance of White. This forced Delta Delta to go underground, having to conduct meetings in total secrecy and initiate new members while classes were not in session. There were 7 new members initiated during this time, called "sub-rosas" as a result of the secret status of their initiations. Due to the actions of Purdue's administration, the brothers of Delta Delta did not wear their letters around campus, a tradition that is continued today, showing great respect for the courageous actions of those who came before them. During the ensuing months, the brothers of Delta Delta fought their case. Over the course of 1878 and 1879, there were 5 of 6 members expelled. This left only one brother, James Milo Waugh, who today is recognized as the only fraternity member on the entire Purdue campus at that time. He died on October 22, 1930. A student by the name of James B. Shaw, one of the 5 expelled, was suspected to be connected with the blowing up of a fountain by the ladies dorm on campus. Later he was cleared of any suspicion, because he had just been experimenting with chemicals for a class he was taking. Three years later Purdue awarded him an honorary doctorate degree in science, and he later became a renowned professor.

The first lawsuit filed, was a class action lawsuit against Purdue in the name of Thomas B. Hawley in 1882. The case was to be conducted in the Tippecanoe Circuit Court System. Despite their political connections, they lost their case. Judge D. P. Vinton, who ironically had two sons that were initiated in the Delta Delta chapter unbeknownst to him, made the ruling. Soon after, Samuel T. Stallard, Esq. filed a writ of mandate, but it was denied. Unsatisfied with this verdict, McMillin, Coffroth and Ward appealed the ruling to the Indiana

Supreme Court, and on June 21, 1882 they ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. The ruling read: "There was no impropriety in either becoming a member of or being otherwise connected with the Sigma Chi fraternity ... and that the objections seemingly entertained by the faculty against other fraternities of the same class were unfounded."

President White, upset by this ruling, mandated a set of new rules against fraternities. They said that although fraternity members could remain on Purdue's campus, they would not be allowed to receive any types of honors. The Governor of Indiana, Isaac P. Gray, along with his Lieutenant Governor, Thomas Hanna (both Sigs) quickly stepped in and attached a rider to Purdue's appropriations bill that prevented White's mandated rules to take effect. They also attached another rider that would abolish any future actions taken against fraternities.

President White retired soon after this and was preceded by James Henry Smart (Xi '76) in 1883. Smart had previously acted as the President of the National Education Association in 1880. Another new person added by the Board of Trustees was Oscar J. Craig, another member of the Xi chapter, as head of the Academy. As a result of the actions of all those involved in the struggle to keep the Delta Delta chapter alive and functioning at Purdue, there was a precedent set for future fraternity chapters to follow in their footsteps..

Source(s):

Retrieved December 15, 2009 from <http://www.purduesigs.com/history.html>

Collection Description

Scope

The Collection of Sigma Chi Fraternity Court Case Materials (1881-2000; 0.4 cubic feet) documents the court battle from the inception of President White's matriculation pledge, to the Supreme Court decision and beyond. Types of materials include: newspaper clippings, magazine articles, reports, documented opinions of Circuit Court Judge P. Vinton and others, and other extraneous materials related to Sigma Chi. The materials are organized by type of material and are placed into acid-free folders for ease of use by groups of users.

Descriptive Rules

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

All materials have been housed in polyester sleeves, acid-free folders, and acid-free boxes. All newsprint has been photocopied and in most cases original newspaper clippings have been discarded.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Collection of Sigma Chi Fraternity Court Case Materials, 1881-2000

(0.4 cubic feet)

1 Box Contents

Item

1. Booklet 1, "The Greek Fraternity Issue," copied from the Seventh Annual Report of Purdue University, by Emerson E. White, 1881, pp. 27-76. [photocopy]
2. Booklet 2, "The Greek Fraternity Issue," copied from the Ninth Annual Report of Purdue University, by Emerson E. White, 1883, pp. 29-56. [photocopy]
3. Booklet 3, "History of the Purdue Fraternity Case," includes Indiana Supreme Court report (1881); opinion of Judge P. Vinton, Circuit Court (undated), report to the Board of Trustees of Purdue, by Emerson E. White, on his retirement (1883)
[booklet is in poor condition and fragile]

Folder

1. "Greek Fraternity Issue 1876," includes "The Purdue Case" article from the *Lafayette Daily Journal*, 1881 [one photocopy and two originals]
2. The 7th Annual Report of Purdue University for the Year Ending June 30, 1881 and letter from William Hepburn, Purdue Librarian, to President Edward Elliott regarding the Purdue Fraternity Controversy, 1943
3. "The Fraternity Controversy at Purdue, Including Some Facts Not in the Records," typescript by H. A. Huston, 1943 and "When Fraternities Survived at Purdue," *The Indianapolis Star Magazine*, 1976 [photocopy]
4. "Opinion of Judge D. P. Vinton, Circuit Court, The Anti-Fraternity Rule of Purdue University Declared Legal and Valid," circa 1880s. [copy 1]
5. "Opinion of Judge D. P. Vinton, Circuit Court, The Anti-Fraternity Rule of Purdue University Declared Legal and Valid," circa 1880s [copy 2]
6. "Opinion of Judge D. P. Vinton, Circuit Court, The Anti-Fraternity Rule of Purdue University Declared Legal and Valid," circa 1880s. [copy 3]
7. "Opinion of Judge D. P. Vinton, Circuit Court, The Anti-Fraternity Rule of Purdue University Declared Legal and Valid," circa 1880s. [copy 4 and copy 5 (photocopy)]
8. Articles, 1965, 1976
 "In 1880s President White Fought the Fraternities—And Lost," *Campus Copy*, March, 1965, pp. 5-7. [2 copies – photocopies]
 "When Fraternities Survived at Purdue," *The Indianapolis Star Magazine*, 1976
 [two photocopies and one original, second original is missing pages]
9. Article from a book on "The famous Purdue Case...", undated [no publication information available – 2 copies]
 Clipping on Emerson E. White, *Purdue Exponent*, Sunday, April 22, 1928
 Clipping on Emerson E. White, *The Mid Century Debris*, v. XXXVI, p. 126
 "Power of the Purdue Authorities", opinion of the Supreme Court, 1882
 "The Greek Fraternity Issue" The Greek Fraternity Issue," copied from the Seventh Annual Report of Purdue University, by Emerson E. White, 1881, pp. 27-28 only
 [2 copies]

- The 7th Annual Report of Purdue University for the Year Ending June 30, 1881
Founders of Sigma Chi, undated [no publication information available, 3 copies]
“Sigma Chi Marks 125 Years,” *Journal and Courier*, Sunday, June 11, 2000
10. Excerpt from *A Century and Beyond: The History of Purdue University* on Sigma Chi, 1988, pp. 108-109
Pledge Advice,” undated [photocopied poem, no publication information available]
Excerpt on Sigma Chi from the Debris, 1895, pp. 116-117
“Greek Fraternities and Purdue University,” by Emerson White, from *Indiana School Journal*, v. 24, 1879, pp. 28-29