



## **“ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”**

### **THE MEMORY OF THE CIVIL WAR AND THE NATIONAL EXPANSION OF SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON, 1856-1930**

The profound devastation caused by the American Civil War, as well as the transformation that occurred in its wake, forever altered America’s national identity. Zooming in, Isabelle Taft ’17 examines how the war’s legacy shaped the character of the fraternity Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE). Analyzing publications, correspondence, and speeches, Taft reveals how the memory of the Civil War influenced SAE policy – initially functioning as a barrier against Northern expansion, it eventually became a source of motivation for extending the fraternity’s reach above the Mason-Dixon line. Yet, even as a national fraternity inspired by the goal of overcoming sectionalism, SAE retained its link to Southern history and culture.

By Isabelle Taft, SM ’17  
Written for “Problems in American Historical Memory the Civil War”  
Professor David Blight  
Faculty Advisor: Glenda Gilmore  
Edited by Andrew Tran, Bernard Stanford, and Noah Daponte-Smith

William Brandon was already known as one of Sigma Alpha Epsilon's guiding lights when he took the stage at the fraternity's 1914 convention in Chicago. SAE, founded at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa in 1856, had survived the Civil War to become one of the nation's largest fraternities, with 15,000 members – within striking distance of the older, better known and originally Northern Delta Kappa Epsilon.<sup>1</sup> An Alabama judge and University of Alabama alumnus, Brandon had previously served as Eminent Supreme Archon – national president – and gained a reputation as an excellent orator.<sup>2</sup> Brandon was proud to declare his roots in the “Sun-kist hills of Alabama” and his romantic toasts, with titles like “Down Where the Magnolias Bloom,” could bring to its feet an audience comprised of brothers from all over the nation.<sup>3</sup> At the Chicago convention, “General Brandon,” as he was called because of his service in the Spanish-American War, was so overcome with fraternal feeling that he declared, “My father surrendered at Appomattox, but I surrendered at Chicago!”

The remark was meant to convey that this convention had been truly first-rate. But it also showed that only in the context of his national fraternity gathering could this Son of the South fully renounce sectionalism. It demonstrated the Civil War was still a potent presence in the minds of many Americans any time they gathered across sectional lines. And it indicated that, to Brandon at least, the fraternity symbolized the importance and power of the nation itself. Where his father had surrendered to Federal troops, Brandon had surrendered to the nationwide embrace of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Brandon was met with riotous applause. An observer wrote that the phrase “seemed to express the spirit of the convention precisely. All of us surrendered at Chicago ... it was a willing surrender, for we were not conquered by arms of steel or at the cannon's mouth, but we surrendered to the spirit of brotherly affection.” Brandon's address celebrated both the nationalization of the fraternity and a new era of unity for the country, even as he waxed poetic about “the classic shades of old Tuscaloosa” where SAE was born.<sup>4</sup> He spoke of surrender, but it was not clear what he had given up.

As the weekend wore on, other convention events would highlight simultaneously the fraternity's old Southern roots and new national outlook. Eminent Supreme Archon Marvin E. Holderness, a Vanderbilt alumnus, celebrated the fraternity's “conquest of nation-wide extension” from her Southern origins, and the convention's banquet featured entertainment in the form of an orchestra that first played the fraternity anthem “Sing, Brothers, Sing” and then launched into “Dixie,” to furious applause from the 500 attendees.<sup>5</sup> Memories and remembrances of the war and the Old South shaped the convention from beginning to end.

By the time Brandon took the stage in Chicago, nearly sixty years had passed since the founding of Sigma Alpha Epsilon in 1856, fifty years since the Civil War and thirty since the establishment of SAE's first chapter north of the Mason-Dixon Line.<sup>6</sup> Brandon

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

was correct to declare SAE a national fraternity, and such claims were ubiquitous within the fraternity and without. *Baird's Fraternity Manual*, an almanac of Greek life that offered data about each organization's chapters and less objective assessments of their strength and overall quality, declared in 1912 that SAE and a few other fraternities founded after the war that were “originally distinctively Southern, have completely lost that character.” *Baird's* listed 102 SAE chapters, of which 46 were above the Mason-Dixon Line or west of the Mississippi.<sup>7</sup>

But Brandon's speech and its themes of Southern pride and heritage, valiant military sacrifice, and the righteousness of SAE's national expansion from the South show that a “distinctively Southern” character persisted within the fraternity, which is today the only national fraternity founded in the antebellum South.<sup>8</sup> That a Southern character should persist is hardly surprising. The fraternity was only five years old when the Civil War began, and roughly 330 of its 500 members, spread over 14 chapters, fought for the Confederacy (an additional seven fought for the Union).<sup>9</sup> More surprising, then, is that the fraternity was able to triumph on the battlefield of national extension – appealing to young men all over the country – while also actively commemorating the war and especially celebrating the valor of Confederate soldiers and the unique culture of the South.

The dark days of the Civil War and the damage they did to the fraternity have become as much a part of SAE's origin story as the founding itself. Because fraternity culture places great importance on teaching each pledge the fraternity's history and retelling that history at celebrations and special occasions, the origin story loomed large in the conscious of each active brother. For the first few decades after the war, that story made the establishment of chapters in the North unacceptable. But after the mid-1880s, the story transformed into a rationale for Northern extension – through nationalization, SAE could show that it and the South as a whole had triumphed over sectionalism. Nationalization of the fraternity, a mission rendered more meaningful by the memory of the war, enabled Southern members to escape the shame of loss of the war by conquering the nation and insisting that the South had been made new. Through national expansion of the fraternity, Southern SAE brothers could understand the United States as not only the government that had defeated the Confederacy, but also as the landscape of their brotherhood – an understanding that did not require the renunciation of Southern heritage or the Confederate cause. By 1930, SAE had achieved fully national status, and in the process carried the celebration of the Old South and Confederate valor into universities across the United States.

### THE ORIGINS OF SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON AND THE CIVIL WAR

Sigma Alpha Epsilon was founded before the war, but the four years *of* the war eventually became more important in establishing fraternity lore, fraternity heroes, and a

vocabulary of manliness. For the first twenty years after the war, its memory also confined SAE to the South. When the push for Northern extension finally began in the mid-1880s, the memory of the war rendered the establishment of each Northern chapter meaningful as a demonstration of the fraternity's, and the South's, triumph over adversity.

The first meeting of Sigma Alpha Epsilon took place on March 9, 1856, in an "old Southern mansion and by the flicker of dripping candles." In attendance were eight Alabama natives who were students and friends at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Of the seven living by the time of the Civil War, six would enlist in the Confederacy, and three of them died. Their leader, considered the founder of the fraternity, was Noble Leslie DeVotie, who would graduate that July as class valedictorian.<sup>10</sup> DeVotie was the son of a Northern-born pastor who married into one of Montgomery, Alabama's leading families. He grew up in Marion, Alabama and entered the state university in 1853.<sup>11</sup> DeVotie and the other founders were the elite of the Southern elite, attending university at a time when just 1 percent of the workforce was college-educated.<sup>12</sup>

During the antebellum era, American colleges generally attracted three types of students: wealthy young men seeking a college education because it was the gentlemanly thing to do; poor or middle-class students preparing for careers in the clergy; and those enrolled at military academies, who were generally middle-class and sought a practical education for careers as engineers, teachers, and lawyers. Colleges in the South generally attracted more of the first group—they were more expensive and geared towards the wealthy. Perhaps as a result of their homogeneity, they were slower to develop fraternities, which functioned in Northern colleges as a way for wealthy men to disassociate from their poorer classmates.<sup>13</sup> The first Greek-letter secret societies were formed at Union College in New York in the 1820s; by the 1850s they had spread throughout New England, the Middle Atlantic and, to a lesser extent, into the South and the Midwest. Fraternities provided a social break from the monotony and regimentation of university life.<sup>14</sup> The curricula generally offered almost no flexibility, requiring every student to take Latin, Greek, and mathematics, and administrators tightly controlled all facets of life. At the University of Georgia, for example, students could not leave town without the express permission of the faculty.<sup>15</sup>

By the time of the founding of SAE, three northern fraternities—Delta Kappa Epsilon, Alpha Delta Phi, and Phi Gamma Delta—had established chapters at the University of Alabama.<sup>16</sup> Taking their cue from the national fraternities, the SAE founders almost immediately began expanding into other Southern universities. The second chapter was established at Vanderbilt in 1857. Generally, a new chapter was established when a brother wrote to a student at the institution in question, usually with the referral of a mutual friend. Thomas C. Cook, one of the early members of Alabama Mu, left Tuscaloosa to attend Princeton but continued to work for the fraternity, writing to a Martin Fleming at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill about the possibility of starting a chapter

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

there. “The above named Society is strictly a Southern Institution, and has for its object the advancement of literature and the promotion of friendship,” Cook wrote. “If you have ever seen the DKE, ours is almost like it.” Within a few months, Fleming had submitted his petition to start a chapter to the founders at Alabama Mu and had received permission to begin fraternity meetings.<sup>17</sup>

But while the founders of SAE planned from the beginning to expand their organization, their constitution explicitly confined extension to the South.<sup>18</sup> Even so, some brothers raised questions about Northern extension within the fraternity’s first two years. After beginning fraternity meetings, Martin Fleming of North Carolina Xi wrote to Cook again to ask whether SAE might reconsider the constitutional ban on Northern chapters. Cook responded that “the constant agitation of the Slavery question” and other differences of opinions between the South and the North “almost precludes the possibility of a harmony of feeling” between fraternity brothers from different sections.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, chapters spread across the South. By the time of the war, SAE boasted 14, mostly at the South’s leading institutions, including the College of William & Mary and the University of Virginia.<sup>20</sup>

Two years after Cook’s letter to Fleming, the impossibility “of a harmony of feeling” exploded into the Civil War. For the rest of their lives, the early members of SAE would have a special place in fraternity lore: not only had they helped to found the organization, they had bravely defended their homeland during America’s darkest hour. Their cause mattered not, a Northern SAE historian wrote in 1893, for “theirs were true hearts... there is not one of them of whom Sigma Alpha Epsilon is not proud.”<sup>21</sup>

Across the country, universities represented large repositories of battle-eligible young men. This was particularly true in the South, where white men were a smaller proportion of the population than in the North, making the participation of college men more crucial—80 percent of Southern white men of the appropriate age enlisted, compared to half of Northern white men. Military colleges, naturally, were a particularly important source of manpower. Before the war, the South boasted nearly 100 military schools or cadet corps, and when the military institution students were counted alongside other university students, the South’s college enrollment rate for white men ages 16 to 19 was four percent, compared to New England’s 2.5 percent.<sup>22</sup> By the start of the war, two of SAE’s fourteen chapters served military colleges—Pi at the Georgia Military Institute and Chi at the Kentucky Military Institute.<sup>23</sup>

All Southern colleges, military or civilian, contributed mightily to the Southern war effort. Institutions such as South Carolina College shut down completely during the war as students and faculty enlisted in the Confederate army, and the University of Georgia suspended classes during the last years of the conflict for the same reason.<sup>24</sup> Among fraternities, SAE’s record of Civil War service was considered particularly impressive. When the war broke out, the fraternity had about 500 members, 376 of whom enlisted, all but

seven in the Confederate Army. SAE's enlistment rate of 75 percent towered above Delta Kappa Epsilon's 45 percent, and a writer for Phi Delta Theta's *The Scroll* declared in 1913 that "to none was [the war] more disastrous than to SAE."<sup>25</sup> Even before the battles began, the war had inflicted a casualty on SAE: Noble Leslie DeVotie, drowned on February 12, 1861 after falling off a dock at Fort Morgan, Alabama where he was stationed as a chaplain in the Confederate army. The fraternity claims him as the first casualty of the Civil War.<sup>26</sup>

As it was for white Southerners writ large, the Civil War for SAE was a story of collective suffering. But it was also a story of individual moments of heroism that in later decades would become a kind of liturgy for the fraternity, filling the pages of fraternity histories and inspiring reverential toasts and retellings in the pages of *The Record*. The story of the Georgia Military Institute's Georgia Pi – "the chapter that went to war" – was a favorite, constantly retold at conventions and Founder's Day banquets. Fraternity historian William Levere described it as "enfolded in the imagination of the fraternity as containing all those priceless elements of chivalry, courage and honor which the noble of the earth esteem of greater worth than even life itself." A member of the chapter who joined in 1857 and lost an arm and his younger brother in the Confederate service listed off Georgia Pi's record in a Founder's Day toast in 1907: all 41 members enlisted and provided one brigadier-general, two colonels, four majors, sixteen captains, nine lieutenants – 34 commissioned officers. Ten died. The chapter itself ceased to exist in 1864 when General William Sherman burnt the university to the ground on his March to the Sea, calling it a "hatchery for young rebels." "He spoke truly," declared the speaker.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of the war, only the chapter at Columbian College (later George Washington University) known as Washington City Rho was still intact. Gradually, students returned from the war and began to rebuild the universities "with a courage equal to that they had shown on the battlefield," according to Levere. The Civil War had become the reference point for all subsequent SAE activities, the moment of glory and valor to which all others would be compared. The first chapter to revive was Virginia Omicron at the University of Virginia, followed by Georgia Beta at the University of Georgia, which was brought back to life by three Georgia Pi brothers who had returned to the Georgia Military Institute to find it burnt to the ground.<sup>28</sup>

The Civil War catalyzed greater changes in Southern universities than in Northern ones. A number of colleges had been destroyed by the Union army, the presence of four million freedmen raised questions about who the colleges should serve, and widespread poverty forced the institutions to change their educational offerings to provide more vocational skills.<sup>29</sup> It was in this landscape of economic and political turmoil, social transformations, and great loss that SAE began to expand again after the Civil War. New chapters were founded in Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee, and chapters that had been destroyed by the Civil War were revived.<sup>30</sup>

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

At the 1879 convention in Nashville, the fraternity voted to begin publishing a quarterly newsletter, called *The Record*. Modeled after the fraternity newsletters published by older Greek organizations, *The Record* published transcripts of speeches delivered at the conventions, essays and poems submitted by brothers, clippings of newspaper articles relevant to the fraternity, biographies and obituaries of prominent brothers, and articles from other Greek organization publications, as well as letters from each chapter. The first issue declared that the publication would be “broad, liberal, progressive” –befitting an organization that already viewed itself as modern and expansive.<sup>31</sup> Early on, *The Record* introduced to the fraternity the literary forms that would memorialize the Civil War within its pages for the next several decades.

One of the primary forms of commemoration was biographies of fraternity alumni who had fought in the war. The second issue of *The Record* featured a biography of Noble Leslie DeVotie, explaining that he was working as a minister in Selma, Alabama when “the tocsin of war sounded” and the men of the town “flocked around the Confederate standard, and with patriotic ardor took up arms to battle for the cause they esteemed right, dear, and most sacred,” and praising him for joining the Confederacy as a chaplain.<sup>32</sup> DeVotie, as the fraternity founder, would surely have been venerated regardless of his record in the war. But for rank-and-file brothers, service to the Confederacy became the lifetime achievement that justified the inclusion of their obituaries in *The Record*. William A. Elliott, who graduated from Bethel College in 1860 and died in 1881, is hailed for enlisting, “heart and soul, in the Confederate cause” and eventually rising to Captain of a cavalry unit. The five-paragraph obituary is mostly devoted to describing his Confederate service and the aftermath of the war: “For four long years, through sunshine and storm, he battled for the Sunny South. And when the ‘conquered banner was folded forever,’ he came home and applied himself to repairing the ravages of war.” Neither his career after the war, nor the name of his wife is mentioned. In the same issue, an obituary for Albert L. Harris, who died in 1879, is similarly devoted to describing Harris’s activities during the war—even though “on account of delicate health” he could not enlist and instead served as “a manufacturer and furnisher of necessary army supplies.”<sup>33</sup> Similar biographies would appear in the pages of *The Record* until the early 1930s.<sup>34</sup>

Much of the literary content of *The Record* also addressed the Civil War, touching on themes of battle valor, national reconciliation and societal change in the South. “The Cross in the Valley,” a poem exclusively published in the January 1882 issue, lyrically depicts the grave of a “boy-hero dead,” and describes how it summons visions of the glorious Southern past:

The tocsin of war, shrilly sounding,  
Again seems to ring o’er the land;

And thrilled by the resonant music  
     See! Marshal the musketed band !

...

And sadly we gaze on the picture  
     That time can not dim or efface;  
 That picture which tells the grand story  
     Of failure unblent with disgrace

The narrator concludes that the crosses that mark fallen Confederate soldiers are signs “that shall bind in the Southland / The living and dead evermore; / Till Time, weary-worn with its burden / Shall die on Eternity’s shore!”<sup>35</sup> The poem’s author, J.O. Wright, had graduated from the Kentucky Military Institute in 1870 and was working as a bookkeeper in Louisville, but found time to write the Civil War-themed poem and evidently concluded that the magazine of his old fraternity was the best place to publish it.<sup>36</sup> More than 15 years after the war, with the fraternity on the cusp of national expansion, the landscape of the South still called to mind the bloody conflict and the tragic yet dignified Confederate loss in which SAE brothers had played a substantial role.

“The Song of Sandy Bacon,” written in the style of Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Raven” was recited at the 10<sup>th</sup> reunion of the University of Georgia’s Class of 1870, and published in *The Record* in June 1884. The poem’s titular character is a boy from “the pine-lands dreary” who is inspired by a traveling preacher to “quit the drowsy old plantation” and attend the University of Georgia to “take his stand among the nation” – a journey emblematic of the transformation of the Old South into the “New.” But though young Sandy Bacon has broken with his father and his family’s traditions to create for himself a different future, at the university he is inspired by the heroes of Georgia’s past. The poem names to “Georgia’s roll of honor” Alexander Stephens, a US Representative, vice president of the Confederacy, and later a US Senator; Robert Toombs, US Senator and Confederate Secretary of State; and Confederate and later US Senator Benjamin Hill – all graduates of the University of Georgia.<sup>37</sup> These men, the poem continues:

Filled the land with civil glory,  
 Thrilled the land with martial glory,  
     Wrought a work that we adore;  
 Fought for Georgia’s fame and honor,  
 When the despot’s heel was on her  
 Thus their fame and glory won her  
     Loved allegiance evermore.  
 And their living, gracious memories



## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

On our inmost bosoms' core  
Shall be graven evermore.

As it was read at the 10<sup>th</sup> reunion of the class of 1870, the poem likely represented, in some way, the feelings of the men about their own college experience. Perhaps some of them saw themselves as Sandy Bacon, rising from the farm to gain an education; perhaps others came from wealthy families but had met Sandy Bacons at the university, which became less socioeconomically exclusive in the decade-and-a-half after the war. To survive in the economically depressed post-war South, Southern universities had to lower tuition in order to expand and open their doors to a greater number of students.<sup>38</sup>

But Civil War memory did not merely manifest itself in the poems and obituaries found in the pages of *The Record*. Memories of the war also shaped fraternity policy, first as a barrier to Northern extension and then, in a dramatic shift, as fuel for Northern extension. By expanding throughout the country, SAE brothers could ultimately cast off the sectional shame of defeat and prove themselves the equals of any Northern man. But that would take time. The question of Northern extension was raised at the 1867 Nashville convention, the fraternity's first after the war, with nine chapters in attendance. The lone proponent of Northern extension was a member of Mississippi Gamma; the issue was quickly settled against him.<sup>39</sup> An 1858 initiate of North Carolina Xi railed that the proposal suggested that the Northerners were “not only taking the ‘niggers’ of the South—but the Fraternity as well.”<sup>40</sup> Northern extension was thus precluded by memories of the loss of the war and the institution of slavery—a loss that had shaken the racial and gender hierarchies of the South. To risk the takeover of the fraternity, an institution created to celebrate elite white manhood, by Northerners would have been unthinkable. Instead, the brothers focused on expansion within the South and embraced reconstruction of the fraternity with the same zeal with which they had fought the armies of the North. “Her sons rallied to [SAE's] standard as did the men of the Confederacy to the South,” wrote one fraternity historian in 1887. The Confederacy was gone, but the fraternity was still in its youth, an institution its Southern members could build just as they had tried to build a new government.

The work of Southern extension led to the establishment of 17 additional chapters throughout the 1860s and 1870s. Annual conventions were held at cities such as Nashville, Tennessee, Richmond, Virginia, and Augusta, Georgia. The publication of *The Record* in 1880, “an event unequaled in importance by any that had occurred in the post bellum history of the fraternity” marked a major milestone for the fraternity and showed it was hoping to compete with national fraternities.<sup>41</sup> The fraternity had established itself as among the foremost Southern fraternities, and it had a reputation for being forward-looking, leading Baird's Manual to praise it in 1883 for its members who “rank high socially and intellectually in the ‘New South.’”<sup>42</sup>

It was only a matter of time, then, before the question of Northern extension would be raised again. *The Record's* very first issue included an editor's note suggesting that the fraternity was weakened by its confinement to the South, though it also sounded a note of pride that SAE had succeeded "by the greatest exertions of an impoverished people," and an article by a brother who urged the fraternity to consider extending North to demonstrate its "high moral and intellectual standard. On these two qualities we challenge the Union for superiority."<sup>43</sup> Here, then, was a shift: a new confidence and willingness to embrace competition with the North – still spoken of more readily as "the Union" than as part of the same country. The desire to challenge the fraternities of the North led Oliver E. Mitchell of Georgia Beta (the University of Georgia) to offer this resolution at the 1881 convention in Atlanta: "That every Chapter in the Different States lying on the line of the Southern States, and all other Chapters embraced in this Frat, be urgently requested to abolish the old custom of confining this Fraternity to exclusively Southern States, and that they be urged to press on their work, knowing no South, no North, no east, no West." *The Record* and convention minutes say nothing about how this resolution was received.<sup>44</sup> Decades later, SAE historian William Levere discovered that the convention's recording secretary had expressed doubt that the editor of *The Record* would want to publish the resolution at all. And William B. Walker, like Mitchell a member of Georgia Beta and a supporter of Northern extension, wrote Levere to say that he, too, had given a speech in favor of establishing chapters north of the Ohio River, but "was cut short by a motion to adjourn for dinner." He was allowed to conclude the speech the next day, but it "fell flat at that time."<sup>45</sup>

The transcript of each debate over Northern extension has been lost to history, if it ever existed. Decades later, however, a W.E. Edmondson of North Carolina Xi recalled in an address to a national convention that in the early 1880s, the fraternity was full of "fire-eaters" who refused to go North. "As I remember, they said we would be spread out too thin, that we would lose everything that we had already gained by our high principle and every bit of our splendid ritual, and all those things could not stand to go North," he said.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, in private, some fraternity members were quietly corresponding about the benefits of Northern extension, and others wrote to *The Record* to express their support for heading North.<sup>47</sup>

Though divided, the fraternity seemed to be moving towards embracing Northern extension as a demonstration of sectional power and worthiness. The actual realization of the long-discussed expansion in 1883, however, came as a surprise to the fraternity's rank and file. Notice of the new chapter appeared suddenly and with no fanfare in an issue of *The Record*, in the form of a letter of the kind routinely submitted by each chapter to describe its members, major activities and overall prospects. Tucked among the other chapter letters, the note from the members of Pennsylvania Delta is easy to miss, and does not acknowledge its own significance. "We, being a new chapter, of course, have very little

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

to say,” wrote the new secretary.<sup>48</sup> He and his brothers attended Gettysburg College—“a peculiarly unfortunate location for the first northern chapter,” noted an SAE historian in 1893.<sup>49</sup> A pair of brothers from the South had persistently written letters to the fraternity headquarters, until they won a visit from the vice president, who was sufficiently impressed by the brothers and their friends that he initiated them.

The existence of a Northern chapter, however, did not mean the question of Northern extension was settled. Pennsylvania Delta struggled to attract members (perhaps because SAE was too culturally Southern, Levere later speculated) and could not persuade skeptical Southern SAEs to support additional chapters in the North.<sup>50</sup> Within a year, the new editor of *The Record*, an alumnus of Georgia Beta, had published an article arguing that Northern extension required too many resources that might be better spent on updating the fraternity catalogue or investing in chapter houses. At the 1884 convention, the extension committee recommended revoking Pennsylvania Delta’s charter. Though the motion failed, it sent an unfriendly signal to the new chapter. Meanwhile, Delta’s chapter letters suggested the fraternity appoint an ambassador to Northern colleges to expand the number of chapters above the Mason-Dixon line. But the chapter grew less optimistic about its own prospects. “We have had a great many difficulties here ... We have received letters from only a few chapters. Why don’t all correspond?”<sup>51</sup> The failure of existing chapters to correspond with Gettysburg may be the clearest sign that Southern SAEs were hesitant to embrace a Northern chapter. Besides the conventions and issues of *The Record*, correspondence between chapters was the primary method of building fraternity cohesion. Too Southern to appeal to young men on its campus, and too Northern to win support from SAE at large, Gettysburg struggled and disbanded by the end of 1884.<sup>52</sup>

But after this strange false start at Gettysburg, the establishment of a chapter at Ohio’s Mount Union College, called Ohio Sigma, was greeted warmly. Brothers of Kentucky Chi (the Kentucky Military Institute) had helped start the chapter in April 1885, and in its July 1885 chapter letter Virginia Tau (Richmond College) lauded the extension. “See to it brothers that you Sigmatize the whole North,” the chapter secretary wrote, heralding the missionary zeal with which the SAE men of the New South would undertake fraternity nationalization over the next decade.<sup>53</sup> At the convention in Nashville later that year, a motion to restrict the fraternity to the South was trounced; just three out of 16 chapters present supported it.

The era of SAE as a strictly Southern fraternity was coming to an end. A member of Georgia Beta’s class of 1868 looked back at the early post-bellum years in a convention speech in 1899 and reflected, “In the South we had the right at that time to be sectional; and we have worked out through that happy sectionalism that preserved our manhood and our respect, I believe, a broader nationality that will help to carry along this Republic of ours to the great destiny that waits it in the immediate future.”<sup>54</sup>

The convention speaker described the fraternity's original sectionalism as essential to cultivating its identity. Springing forth from its cradle in the antebellum South, SAE would nationalize not by abandoning its past, but by simultaneously celebrating its progress and its legacy of Confederate service and Old South values. SAE embodied the New South mythology. Its success demonstrates the appeal of that mythology to the nation as a whole, and the potency of that mythology in shaping national memory of the Civil War.

## SAE IN THE NEW SOUTH AND THE NATION

William Danner Thompson graduated from Emory College in the spring of 1895, but he did not leave behind Sigma Alpha Epsilon. His younger brother, Albert, still attended Emory and was also a member of SAE's Georgia Epsilon chapter. William, working at a greenhouse in the brothers' hometown of Atlanta, inquired constantly about the success of the fraternity. "Write me soon and tell me who you got," William wrote in September 1895, eager to hear about the quality of the chapter's first pledge class since his graduation. Later that month, he urged Albert to "be careful about having any fights with Thetas – will hurt you," apparently concerned that the reputation of SAE at Emory could be damaged by disagreement with another fraternity. He continued, "Glad to hear you got six men, we are getting on top at Emory very rapidly." William was excited about the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in midtown Atlanta's Piedmont Park. December 28 was set aside as "Day of SAE," and he believed it would "certainly be a big thing for the fraternity."<sup>55</sup>

The above correspondence reveals the centrality of the fraternity in its members' lives, a trend more publicly evident in chapter letters written to the *Record* editors describing preparations for banquets, furious efforts to recruit "select" men of high "social and intellectual status," and the need for all brothers to learn about SAE's history.<sup>56</sup> Even between biological siblings, at least between the Thompsons, Greek brotherhood dominated the conversation. But it was not enough for this brotherhood to simply exist—it had to be "on top." William Thompson was eager to see SAE rise above the other fraternities at Emory and project its strength and influence to society at large through events such as "Day of SAE" at the exposition. The brothers' exchange is also noteworthy for what it does *not* include. Here there is no handwringing over Northern extension. By 1895, SAE had chapters in Connecticut, Colorado, Michigan, Massachusetts, and New York, as well as Ohio and Pennsylvania.<sup>57</sup> The Thompsons' father, William S. Thompson, traveled frequently to New York for business, and by 1897 William himself would be attending law school at Columbia University and working in his spare time to strengthen the SAE chapter there, founded in 1895.<sup>58</sup> The Thompsons were focused on social and professional success on the national stage. They were thoroughly men of the New South.

But the New South had not forgotten the Old. At Emory's commencement in June

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

1897, the prizewinning junior oratory told of a “crystal current” flowing from the age of the Cavalier to the present: “It was shown in the deeds of Southern soldiers who fought so valiantly for a wounded honor. It breathed in the golden sentences of Henry Grady as he vindicated the Southern cause.”<sup>59</sup> A year later, a student not only praised Henry Grady – himself a brother of Chi Psi at the University of Georgia – but channeled him (or, less generously, copied him) for an entire speech, delivering “a modest message to Southern young men” that celebrated the New South while noting, “I do not come to make apology for the ‘Old South’ and her civilization, for I believe that all that is best in the South to-day is ‘native and to the manner born.’” Like Grady, he raised “the negro question” to answer it with the claim that the white South had given former slaves all they deserved.<sup>60</sup> For Grady, and for the young men so self-consciously identifying themselves with his ideas, the Old South should not be disowned.

The same held true in Sigma Alpha Epsilon’s lore: progress should be celebrated, but so, too, should the glorious Southern past. The young men of the New South embraced the fraternity’s nationalization as a demonstration of their own power and influence. Certain figures in particular pursued national extension with military zeal, seeking to conquer the whole nation for SAE and pointing to their own lack of sectionalism as a sign that the South had been made new, thanks to its own flexibility and magnanimity. A convention speaker in 1894 claimed that the same spirit that had led “the Southern planter to plow down blood-stained trenches in his cotton field, and begin to rear another social order, also animated Southern educators and collegians.”<sup>61</sup>

In other words, SAE brothers were part of the elite group forging the New South future. After his fraternity days, William Danner Thomson would become a high-profile Atlanta lawyer, bank president and member of Emory’s board of trustees.<sup>62</sup> More famous SAE brothers include the likes of William Yates Atkinson and Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar. Atkinson, of Georgia Beta, would receive a ringing endorsement in *The Record* when he ran for governor of Georgia in 1894. That endorsement opened by stating “No young Georgian in public life takes higher rank,” and ended, laudingly, “Mr. Atkinson stands for all implied by the phrase ‘New South.’”<sup>63</sup> He would achieve further notoriety five years later when he personally confronted a mob attempting to lynch Sam Hose, a black man accused of murder, urging them to turn him over to the authorities instead.<sup>64</sup> Lamar, a brother of the University of Mississippi chapter, served in the Confederate army but later became a US representative, senator and eventually Supreme Court justice.<sup>65</sup> Shortly after he was appointed Secretary of the Interior in 1885, *The Record* declared that his 1874 eulogy of Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner “did more perhaps to restore harmony between the North and South than any other one cause” and noted approvingly his position that “the prosperity of the south almost wholly depends upon the existence of friendly relations between it and the North.”<sup>66</sup> Later, the novels of William Faulkner, who was also a member of

the chapter at the University of Mississippi, were lauded in the pages of *The Record*.<sup>67</sup> The 1912 edition of *Who's Who in SAE* listed two current or former state governors, a lieutenant governor, 18 current or former state senators, a US senator, and six US congressmen, all from the post-war era.<sup>68</sup> As the New South elite rose, however, they held onto visions of the war as a crowning moment of glory for the South, and visions of the Old South as a place of beauty and goodness. The nationalization of the fraternity offered new opportunities to share those visions with young men from across the country.

The name most often associated with SAE's aggressive national expansion throughout the 1890s is Bunting, for the four Bunting brothers of Tennessee – Frank, Will, Harry and George, who wrote the endorsement of Governor Atkinson mentioned above. The four brothers spent their college careers furiously writing letters to gather information about SAE's status on university campuses, strengthen existing chapters, and develop new ones across the country. Harry Bunting had joined SAE in 1886, after the establishment of Ohio Sigma, but worried about persistent wariness towards Northern extension. One brother, Tom Mell of Georgia Beta, had apparently had a traumatic childhood experience with a carpetbagger thief, and the Buntings feared more generally that “some misguided brother whose family had lost its slaves by the war” might oppose their work. But these worries did not come to fruition. The brothers mapped out a plan to “plant the banner of Sigma Alpha Epsilon from Plymouth Rock to Golden Gate.” Harry Bunting referred to his fellow expansionists as “expansion shock troops” and spoke of “the conquest of the Northland.” With time the Bunting brothers had planted chapters at Stanford, Pennsylvania State, Ohio State, Trinity College, Harvard, Purdue, Nebraska, Bucknell, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Bunting offered a high-minded justification for this militaristic expansion regime: his father had been a Confederate soldier, but he had three Union Army uncles and wanted to “obliterate sectional hate.” Not only were the Buntings eager to point to nationalization as evidence that SAE had transcended stereotypical Southern backwardness, they believed a fully national SAE could actually reduce the likelihood of another “fratricidal war.” “This patriotic motive added a sort of religious fervor to our passion for Northern extension,” Bunting reflected in 1937.<sup>69</sup> Similar rhetoric characterized convention speeches and *Record* articles throughout the period from 1885 to 1900. The fraternity celebrated its conquest of sectionalism and its power to enact national healing even as it paid special tribute to the South.

The healing of the sectional rift – with SAE itself serving as evidence of its completion – empowered Southern brothers to praise the Confederates and their ideology even as they celebrated their new nationalization. The first explicit mention of “The Lost Cause” in an SAE publication came in 1886 with the printing of a speech by W.E. Wooten at the At-

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

lanta convention that year. Wooten declared that “as southern citizens we will ever fondly cherish the belief that truth was on our side and that those principles which actuated our States to secede were those of right and justice. Through four long years did our heroes strive to gain what they considered their rights.”<sup>70</sup> The same issue of *The Record* reprinted the entirety of Grady’s famous speech at Delmonico’s in New York.<sup>71</sup> The New South was creating space for Southerners not only to proclaim a different future, but rewrite their past. Pleasant Stovall, an alumnus of Georgia Beta, wrote an essay praising the United States for producing both Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln, and urged his audience to recognize that “he who allows partisanship to interfere with history is not American.” He then flipped the typical narrative of the Civil War by claiming that it was the Union, not the Confederacy, that had been in rebellion: “It was the Lincolns who rebelled against the Lees ... Lincoln first declared that this nation could not exist ‘half slave and half free.’ Up to that time it had so existed – acknowledged by the Constitution.” Stovall declared himself pleased with the outcome of the Civil War, but implied that to assign wrongness to either side would be an unpatriotic partiality.<sup>72</sup>

For their part, Northern chapters seemed unbothered by this. Ohio Sigma invited her brothers to come up from Dixie, and pledged to reciprocate with visits to their institutions as well.<sup>73</sup> At the convention of 1887, a Southern brother offered a toast to “Our Northern brothers – once our foes, now our brothers, and much beloved in the Union.” A member of Ohio Sigma responded with a poem he had written, “The Blue and the Gray:”

Southern chivalry, undaunted  
Wrestled plaudits from the North,  
While fair Dixie’s veteran heroes  
Praised their victor’s noble worth.  
Greek with Greek in valiant conflict,  
Long dispute the pennant’s sway.  
Never Spartan hosts were braver  
Than the ranks of Blue and Gray.  
...  
So while toiling up life’s hillslope  
Hand in hand, both Blue and Gray,  
March we on in mystic kinship, bond of true *fraternity*.<sup>74</sup>

The Civil War was being transformed from fratricidal slaughter to fraternity bonding opportunity. And the war provided a literal bonding opportunity when conventions were held near battlefields. The fraternity members toured the battlefields around Atlanta

in 1891, causing one Alabaman (a young man born after the Civil War) to muse, “Once we fought there, now we meet there in brotherly love.”<sup>75</sup> The next year, the convention was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the group toured Lookout Mountain to visit a war relic stand and carry home souvenirs; *The Record* declared the scene an example of the “beneficent influence of college fraternities.”<sup>76</sup> During the dedication of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park in 1895, the Chattanooga Alumni Association organized an event for visiting SAE. The *Chattanooga Daily Times* covered the event and wrote “the very fact that a fraternity of purely Southern origins should make such a record in Northern institutions is itself an unmistakable indication of the amity existing between the two sections. Indeed it has been a powerful force in cementing together the people of the once disrupted nation.”<sup>77</sup> What the Thompson brothers hoped for was taking place: SAE was winning praise from the broader public for not just overcoming a sectional divide, but also for actively closing it.

Meanwhile, both Northern and Southern SAE brothers continued to romanticize the Old South and employ indulgent stereotypes about Southerners. One convention speaker, *The Record* reporter opined, gave a welcome speech in Nashville “of the eloquence which only men of the South can use to effect.” The speech itself described Alabama as a land “where the sun shines a trifle warmer and clearer, where the magnolia and the violet grow,” employing familiar motifs about the landscape of the Sunny South.<sup>78</sup> At fraternity events in the North, such as Founder’s Day banquets or conferences, it was common for a brother to present a toast to the South. “Oh for a beaker full of the warm South,” swooned one New England brother. The Province Beta convention, which comprised the mid-Atlantic states, included a toast to “SAE in the South,” as did a Founder’s Day celebration in California.<sup>79</sup> No other region is consistently toasted or mentioned by brothers at their regional events. Joining SAE meant embracing a certain way of thinking about the South, and men all over the country were happy to sign up.

Similar rhetoric, rituals, and praise for the fraternity’s capacity to transcend sectional divides would remain a staple of SAE culture for decades. SAE celebrated the Spanish-American War in 1898, the nation’s first major military conflict since the Civil War, as a strong showing of national unity. *The Record* published lists of brothers in the service, newspaper clippings, and first-hand accounts of veterans’ experiences abroad. One lengthy account by Champe S. Andrews, who had served as a delegate to nearly every convention of the 1890s, focused on the historical irony of completing training for this American foreign war near the Tennessee battlefields where members of his father’s generation had slaughtered each other. His company comprised 114 men, and from 96 he collected information about their fathers. Of those 29 were the sons of Federal soldiers, 52 of Confederates, and the rest of foreigners or non-combatants. “I can remember well how strange it seemed



## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

at first to be camped alongside of the men from the Green Mountains on a battle-field, where, thirty five years before their forefathers and ours had poured out their life's blood in a conflict as fierce as only a fratricidal conflict can be. But now what a change!" he wrote. The soldiers from Vermont and Tennessee visited each other in the camp, he observed, and seemed more eager to spend time with each other than men from their own states. He credited "the benign influence" of SAE and other national fraternities with this change.<sup>80</sup> The Civil War was now an even more valuable part of the SAE self-narrative: it had been a crisis in which SAE brothers proved their valor and manliness on the battlefield and afterwards their magnanimity and patriotism by helping to rebuild the nation.

It is a sign of how essential the Civil War was to SAE lore that it did not lose its central place in the fraternity narrative even after the Spanish-American War – which was most impressive to Champe Andrews and, apparently, *The Record's* editors, when viewed through the prism of the Civil War – and later World War I. Brandon, who announced his "surrender" at Chicago in 1914, was a veteran of the Spanish-American War, having served as a captain and major of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alabama Volunteer. Yet the Civil War, which ended three years before he was born, and past sectional conflict loomed larger in his mind than the national unity displayed by the war in which he had actually fought.<sup>81</sup> The persistence of the Civil War in fraternity memory helped preserve SAE's Southern distinctiveness, even as the fraternity trumpeted its progress and national outlook. Further, the story of Confederate valor and righteousness ensured that SAE went national on its own terms – Northward expansion was not a capitulation to Yankee values nor even, as Brandon claimed with a rhetorical flourish, a kind of "surrender." Northern expansion was a way to "Sigmatize the North" and obtain recognition of the legitimacy of the Confederacy and the traditions of the Old South. For white men across America, the "Sigmatization" was another plank in the indomitable structure of their legally and socially enshrined dominance over women and minorities.

At the time of the founding of most fraternities in the mid-1800s, colleges and universities were so homogenous that there was no need to officially exclude non-white men. By the early 1910s, that was changing. Jews and small numbers of women, African-Americans and Asian-Americans matriculated at the nation's universities, and American fraternities responded by codifying whiteness, maleness and Christianity as prerequisites for membership.<sup>82</sup> SAE was certainly no exception, and convention minutes show that the brothers were concerned not only with keeping out the wrong sort of men, but also with establishing standards of exclusion that had some scientific validity. This was more difficult than they anticipated. At the same convention at which Brandon declared surrender – but was actually celebrating a victory for the South – the brothers debated whether their constitution should limit membership to "the Caucasian race" or "any white man." Unable to

find any friend, acquaintance or credentialed expert who could say precisely what constituted “the Caucasian race,” the constitution committee turned to the records of the United States Congress. They found an exchange in the Senate in which a member had argued that “white man” was a perfectly good standard because, although no one is technically white, “White man has well defined meaning in the minds of the people of the world and therefore that phrase would be a most certain and definite guide.” The statement had never been challenged, so the brothers of SAE decided to adopt it for their own constitution. “It doesn’t sound very sentimental, it doesn’t have a very learned twang about it,” a committee member admitted, “but it means what it says.”<sup>83</sup> The story of the Civil War as a triumphant moment for white American manhood, rather than a reckoning that demanded America rethink its racial hierarchies, surely helped convince the fraternity of the legitimacy of their whites-only policy – even when the evidence of its absurdity was right in front of them.

As the decades passed, the Civil War gradually became a less dominant motif in SAE discourse. But the war and its memory are embedded in the organization’s DNA and enshrined in its headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, the Levere Memorial Temple. Built in the late 1920s and dedicated in 1930, the building housed offices for national fraternity administrators, America’s only fraternity library and museum at the time, and a chapel featuring stained glass windows depicting the history of America and the history of SAE’s participation in America’s wars. Today, there are panels for the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War. There is a plain window where, someday, the fraternity will place a panel to commemorate the brothers who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the center of the chapel stands the DeVotie or Peace window, the largest image in the room and impossible to miss, just behind the altar. The window depicts Jesus standing in between a Union and Confederate soldier. Underneath the window are the words “Pax Vobiscum” – peace unto you.<sup>84</sup> It is an image that celebrates reconciliation of long-lost brothers, now united in fraternity by Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Generations of SAE brothers and alumni have taken it in as part of their cultural inheritance, and accepted its narrative of shared sacrifice and shared valor. But that narrative is not a neutral one. It is the product of careful work by SAE members during the early days of national expansion to ensure that as the fraternity spread, so would its reverence for Confederate heroes and the Old South. Brandon was able to speak of “surrender” in 1914 because he actually surrendered nothing at all. In the decades after the Civil War, the nation’s white college men welcomed SAE’s Southern pride with open arms.

## NOTES

1. William Raimond Baird, *Baird’s Manual of American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Fraternity System in the Colleges of the United States*. 7th ed. (New York: James T. Brown, 1912), 119, 279-

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

283. DKE was founded at Yale in 1844 and boasted 17,600 members by 1912

2. William C. Levere, ed., *Who's Who in SAE: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable living Members of the Fraternity*, (Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1912), 32.

3. V.O. Barnard, “The Social Side of the Convention,” *The Record* Vol. XXXIII, No. 1 (March 1913): 14.

4. T. Gibson Hobbs, “The Chicago Convention,” *The Record* Vol. XXXV No. 1 (March 1915): 4.

5. Raymond Watson, “The Convention’s Leisure Hours,” *The Record* Vol. XXXV No. 1 (March 1915): 16.

6. William C. Levere, *A Paragraph History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon*, (Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1916), 3-5, 29-30, 50.

7. Baird, *Baird’s Manual of American College Fraternities*. 7th ed. 1912. 12; 279-283. For the purposes of this paper, I define “the South” as those states in which the fraternity had established chapters before 1883, when it realized “Northern Extension” by opening a chapter at Gettysburg College. Those states are, in the order they gained an SAE chapter: Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

8. Jake New, “Deadliest and Most Racist?” *Inside Higher Education*, March 10, 2015.

9. O.K. Quivey, *Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pledge Manual*, 1942. 17.

10. William C. Levere, *A Paragraph History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, From the Founding of the Fraternity to the Present Time*, Ed. Eric A. Dawson. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1929. 4, 11.

11. William C. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, Vol. I*. (Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1911), 45, 192.

12. Nicholas Syrett, “The Company He Keeps: White College Fraternities, Masculinity, and Power, 1825-1975,” (doctoral dissertation, the University of Michigan, 2005), 196.

13. Ibid 37, 57 – 59, and Robert L. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 146.

14. Ibid, 32, 33, 37

15. E. Merton Coulter, *College Life in the Old South*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1928), 45.

16. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity*, Vol. 1, 26.

17. Thomas C. Cook to Martin Fleming, letter, Nov. 4 1856. Printed in *The Record*, Vol. XIX No 4 (Dec. 1899): 372-373. The editor explains Fleming was granted his petition to start a chapter by February 1857.

18. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity*, Vol. 1, 31.

19. Cook to Fleming, March 31, 1857. Printed in *The Record*, Vol. XIX No. 4 (Dec. 1899): 375.

20. “Roll of Chapters, in the Order of their Establishment,” *History and Catalogue of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity*, Compiled and published by members of Pennsylvania Sigma Phi. (Harrisburg, Pa: Meyers Printing House, 1893), vii.

21. James Turley Van Burkalow, “Fraternity History” in *History and Catalogue of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity*. xx.

22. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education*, 241-242.

23. William Raimond Baird, *American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Society System in the Colleges of the United States*, Vol 1. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1879), 110-111.

24. Michael David Cohen, “Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War,” (doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2008), 45- 46. For information about post-war University of Georgia, see Walter B. Hill, *College Life in the Reconstruction South: Walter B. Hill’s Student Correspondence*,

*University of Georgia, 1869-1871* ed. G. Ray Mathis. (Athens: University of Georgia Libraries, 1974), 10 – 11.

25. Walter Palmer, “Sigma Alpha Epsilon’s History (A Review by Walter Palmer, appearing in the September Scroll of Phi Delta Theta),” *The Record*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4 (Dec. 1913): 507 - 507.

26. Van Burkalow, “Fraternity History,” xiv.

27. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon*, Vol. 1, 128.

28. *Ibid*, 233-234.

29. Cohen, “Reconstructing the Campus,” iii-iv.

30. “Roll of Chapters,” *History and Catalogue*, 1893. Vii.

31. R.H. Wildberger, “Salutary,” *The Record*, Vol. I, No. 1 (March 1880): 1-3.

32. “Noble Leslie DeVotie,” *The Record*, Vol. I, No. 2 (May 1880): 1-4.

33. *The Record*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Jan. 1882); 16, 49-50.

34. *The Record*, Vol. LII, No. 2 (May 1932): 300. Other than biographies of the founders, the latest biography or obituary focused on an otherwise rather unremarkable brother’s Civil War service was published in 1932, about William Townes Boyd, one of the founding members of the Virginia Upsilon chapter at Hampden-Sydney College. Most of the chapter’s members fought in the Confederate Army, and *The Record* notes that the 89-year-old Boyd is the “only one who can tell us of those perilous days and beautiful friendships which were cemented by the bonds of SAE seventy-two years ago.”

35. *The Record*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Jan. 1882): 1-2.

36. W.J. Maxwell, comp., *General Catalogue of Sigma Alpha Epsilon* (Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1918), 218.

37. Burgess Smith, “The Song of Sandy Bacon,” *The Record*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (June 1884): 95 – 101. Biographies of Stephens, Toombs and Hill: Chad Morgan, “Benjamin Hill, (1823 – 1882),” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Dec. 12, 2013. Online. and “Alexander Stephens, (1812 – 1883),” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Oct. 12, 201. Online; George Justice, “Robert Toombs, (1810 – 1885)” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Sept. 16, 2014. Online.

38. Cohen, “Reconstructing the Campus,” 187. The average tuition at 85 Southern institutions in 1870 was over 120 dollars. A decade later, the average cost of 112 Southern colleges had dropped to 43 dollars.

39. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity* Vol. I, 250.

40. W.E. Edmondson, “Speech of W.E. Edmonson, of North Carolina Xi, Class of 1885,” *Phi Alpha*, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (February 1913): 68.

41. Van Burkalow, “Fraternity History,” xxi, xxv.

42. William Raimond Baird, *American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Society System in the Colleges of the United States*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Frank Williams, 1883), 137.

43. “Editor’s Note,” and J. Hagood Armstrong, “On Extending the Fraternity,” *The Record*, Vol. I, No. 1 (March 1880), 21 and 102.

44. *The Record*, Vol. II, No. 1 (March 1881): 88.

45. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity* Vol. I, 385.

46. W.E. Edmondson, *Phi Alpha*, Vol. XXII No. 1 (Feb. 1913): 68.

47. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity* Vol. I, 419-420. Levere quotes letters between alumni of Alabama Mu, Georgia Delta and Sewanee discussing how Southern men attending Northern universities might establish SAE chapters. K.S Tupper, Letter to the Editor, *The Record*, Vol. I, No. 4 (Oct. 1881): 155. Tupper wrote that he was in favor of Mitchell’s resolution on Northern extension. “We can find as good material no doubt in the North as in the South, and it is now time that we should forget all sectional

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

enmities.”

48. *The Record*, Vol. III, No. III.
  49. Van Burkalow, “Fraternity History,” xxx.
  50. Levere, *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity* Vol. I, 428-430.
  51. *The Record*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (June 1884): 1 – 2, 49 and Vol. IV, No. 3 (Sept. 1884): 22.
  52. Van Burkalow, “Fraternity History” 322.
  53. *The Record*, Vol. V, No. 2 (July 1885): 16-17.
  54. S.F. Wilson, Speech at 1899 convention, *The Record*, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March 1899): 16-17.
  55. William D. Thompson to Albert D. Thompson, letter, Sept. 22, Sept. 25 and Oct. 22, 1895. Albert Danner Thompson Family Papers, 1883-1960. Emory University Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Manuscript Collection 716. Box 3, Folder 5.
  56. *The Record*, Vol. III, No. 2, May 1888, 86, 94; Vol. III, No. 3, Nov. 1888, 106-107.
  57. *History and Catalogue*, 1893, iv.
  58. Nina Thompson to Albert D. Thompson, letter, Oct. 7, 1895. Ibid. William D. Thompson to Albert D. Thompson, letter, Jan. 6, 1898. Ibid. Box 3, Folder 9.
  59. R.H. Hankinson, “Chivalry,” *Emory Phoenix*, June 1897, commencement issue. 122. Ibid. Box 3, Folder 15.
  60. M.M. Murphey, “Dux’s Speech,” *Emory Phoenix*, March 1898. 205 – 208. Ibid. “Greeting Grady: the Ovation which met him on his return,” *Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 25, 1886.
  61. *The Record*, Vol. XV, No. 1 (March 1895): 119-120.
  62. William Danner Thomson papers finding aid, biographical note, page 2.
  63. *The Record*, Vol. XIV No. 2, May 1894, 2.
  64. Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: Lynching in Black America*, Random House, 2002.
- 10.
65. Howard P. Nash, Edward H. Virgin and William C. Levere, comps. *The Sixth General Catalogue of Sigma Alpha Epsilon*, (Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1904), 218.
  66. *The Record*, Vol. V No. 1, April 1885, 41.
  67. “From the Bookshelves of SAE,” *The Record* Vol. LII, No. 4, Dec. 1932. 409.
  68. Levere, *Who’s Who in SAE*. The governors were John Creppe Wickliffe Beckham of Kentucky and Albert Waller Gilchrist of Florida. Additionally, Thomas C. Barrett was lieutenant governor of Louisiana. The US Senator was John Hollis Bankhead of Alabama.
  69. Harry S. Bunting, “Saga of the Bunting Brothers of Sigma Alpha Epsilon,” *Phi Alpha*, Nov. 1937. 3 – 15.
  70. W.E. Wooten, “Heroes Die; Heroism is Immortal. Prize oration delivered by W.E. Wooten of Chapter Georgia Beta, in front of Atlanta Convention of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1886,” *The Record*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Dec. 1886: 163.
  71. Henry W. Grady, “The New South,” *The Record*, Ibid. 149.
  72. Pleasant Stovall, “Lee and Lincoln,” *The Record*, Vol. V, No. IV (Dec. 1887) 6 – 11.
  73. *The Record*, Vol VII, No. 6 (March 1887): 246 – 267.
  74. John H. Focht, “The Blue and the Gray,” *The Record*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (March 1888): 23 – 24.
  75. *The Record*, Vol. XII, No. 3 (Dec. 1892): 35.
  76. *The Record*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 (March 1893): 27.
  77. “Chickamauga Park Dedication,” *The Record*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4 (Dec. 1895): 327.
  78. “The National Convention,” *The Record*, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March 1899): 7 – 8.
  79. “Initiation at Auburndale, New England,” Ibid. 334. “Province Beta Convention,” *The Record*,

Vol. XXXVI, No. 1. (March 1896): 22. "Founder's Day: California," *The Record*, Vol. XVII, No. 2. (May 1897): 150.

80. Champe S. Andrews, "Waiting for Active Service," *The Record*. Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March 1899): 148 – 152. Champe Andrews biography in Levere, *Who's Who in SAE*, 12.

81. *Who's Who in S.A.E.*, 32.

82. Syrett, "The Company He Keeps," 285.

83. Minutes of the National Convention at Chicago, Dec. 21 – 23 1914. Sigma Alpha Epsilon Headquarters, Evanston, Chicago. Bound volume. 174 – 176.

84. *The Record*, Vol. LI, No. 1 (March 1931): 32, description of the Memorial Chapel. I observed the other war panels when I visited the Levere Memorial Temple from Nov. 20 to Nov. 24, 2015.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Baird, William Raimond. *Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Fraternity System in the Colleges of the United States*. 7th ed. New York: James T. Brown, 1912.

— — —. *American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Society System in the Colleges of the United States*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Frank Williams, 1883

— — —. *American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Society System in the Colleges of the United States*, Vol 1. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1879

*Emory Phoenix*, June 1897 and March 1898. In Albert Danner Thompson Family Papers, 1883- 1960. Emory University Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library.

*General Catalogue of Sigma Alpha Epsilon*, compiled by W.J. Maxwell. Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1918.

"Greeting Grady: the Ovation which met him on his return," *Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 25, 1886.

*History and Catalogue of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity*, Compiled and published by members of Pennsylvania Sigma Phi. Harrisburg, Pa: Meyers Printing House, 1893.

Hill, Walter B. *College Life in the Reconstruction South: Walter B. Hill's Student Correspondence, University of Georgia, 1869-1871* ed. G. Ray Mathis. Athens: University of Georgia Libraries, 1974.

Levere, *A Paragraph History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon*, Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1916  
— — —. *The History of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, Vol. I*. Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1911.

— — —. *Who's Who in SAE: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable living Members of the Fraternity*, ed. William C. Levere. Evanston: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1912

## “ONCE OUR FOES, NOW OUR BROTHERS”

Minutes of the National Convention at Chicago, Dec. 21 – 23 1914. Sigma Alpha Epsilon Headquarters, Evanston, Chicago. Bound volume. Unpublished.

*Phi Alpha*, Vol. XXII. Accessed at Sigma Alpha Epsilon headquarters, Evanston, Ill.

Quivey, O.K. *Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pledge Manual*, 1942. Accessed at Sigma Alpha Epsilon Headquarters, Evanston, Ill.

*The Record*, Vol. I – LII. Accessed at Sigma Alpha Epsilon headquarters, Evanston, Ill.

Thompson, Albert Danner Family Papers, 1883-1960. Emory University Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library.

Van Burkalow, James Turley. “Fraternity History” in *History and Catalogue of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity*. Compiled and published by members of Pennsylvania Sigma Phi. Harrisburg, Pa: Meyers Printing House, 1893.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Chad, Morgan. “Benjamin Hill, (1823 – 1882),” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Dec. 12, 2013. Online.

— — —. “Alexander Stephens, (1812 – 1883),” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Oct. 12, 2015.

Cohen, Michael David. “Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War,” (doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2008)

Coulter, E. Merton. *College Life in the Old South*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1928.

Dray, Philip. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: Lynching in Black America*, Random House, 2002.

Geiger, Robert L. *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014

Justice, George. “Robert Toombs, (1810 – 1885)” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Sept. 16, 2014. Online.

New, Jake. “Deadliest and Most Racist?” *Inside Higher Education*, March 10, 2015

Syrett, Nicholas. “The Company He Keeps: White College Fraternities, Masculinity, and Power, 1825-1975,” (doctoral dissertation, the University of Michigan, 2005)

## TITLE IMAGE

Portrait of the original founding members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity in 1856 at the University of Alabama. Digital image. MailOnline. Stanford.edu, 11 Mar. 2015. Web. 11 June 2016. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2989195/Fraternity-racist-video-roots-antebellum-South.html>.