



BETA
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Beta Chapter

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
528 Beacon Street
Boston, Mass.

By Alden W. Miller 1921
(Supplemented)

The establishment of Beta Chapter was brought about by Park Valentine Perkins, a Theta Chi from Norwich University, who had transferred to Technology in 1901, entering there as a freshman. A detailed account of Perkin's activity is given in Part I of this volume and to avoid repetition will not be repeated here.

The official installation of Beta was held December 13, 1902, in the home of Charles Johnson, the ritual being exemplified in his cellar. The following men, comprising the charter members of the chapter, were received into the fraternity: Clarence E. Lasher, Patrick J. Kennedy, Jr., C. Hale Sutherland, Charles M. Hutchins, Roland E. Page, Paul B. Webber, Charles E. Johnson, Henry D. Loring, Edward R. Hyde, Burton W. Kendall and Ralph O. Reed.

The new chapter was then organized with Perkins as first president and Lasher as secretary. A banquet was held in honor of the new chapter at the United States Hotel on January 3, 1903, at which Alpha and Beta Chapters and large numbers of the alumni assembled. E. Wesson Clark as Toastmaster offered toasts to "Theta Chi, crowned by successes," to The Beta Chapter, The Ladies, The Bachelors, The Army, representing the military character of Norwich, and to The Engineers, representing Technology.

The new chapter during the first few years maintained itself with considerable difficulty owing to lack of previous organization. In fact only three men were initiated up to 1906. Nothing but self-sacrificing devotion of some of the early members permitted the chapter to continue. During this period, 1902-06, the chapter met at the homes of

the different members in and about Boston. The lack of a fraternity house was a handicap to rapid growth and with the election of Patrick J. Kennedy, Jr., to the presidency, in 1906, the chapter began a more regular and normal growth. During those years the chapter began to devote more attention to undergraduate activities, and reached a stable condition which insured permanent success. During the period, ending in 1908, Beta advanced to the point, financially, of being able to rent an apartment to be used as club and meeting rooms.

In 1909 the first chapter house was secured at 26 Cumberland Street and from that time the chapter expanded and developed rapidly. Under Foster Russell as leader, the chapter took in sixteen new members that year. The next two years were also spent on Cumberland Street at 20 and 29 respectively, each year seeing a corresponding growth.

In 1912, under the leadership of Harold M. Rand, Beta leased a large house at 1049 Beacon Street. In so doing, the chapter slightly overreached itself because the house was larger than the chapter could support. Nevertheless, it was retained and during the first year in that house the chapter reached an influential position in undergraduate activities, securing the Captain and over half of the cross country team in addition to a host of other campus positions.

In 1916 a smaller house at 916 Beacon Street was leased, which was more suited to its needs. This house was much nearer to both the old Technology on Boylston Street in Boston, and the New Technology across the Harvard Bridge, in Cambridge. The fraternity at once began to increase in size and influence. The two Ford brothers ran the Musical Clubs; James A. Tobey and Ralph V. Tiffany, chapter presidents in 1916 and 1915 respectively, held several class offices, and others represented the chapter in the honorary societies. The initiation of fifteen men brought the chapter to a very prosperous condition and was largely due to the comforts of the new house. The Spring of 1916 saw the dedication of the New Technology and the whole chapter joined in the festivities and ceremonies of the dedication, at the same time opening the house to the numerous alumni who had come back for their reunions.

In the Fall of 1916, the chapter started with a rush when they initiated eight men in a bunch. With the house full, and William Mack Angas at the head as a capable leader, Beta Chapter became prosperous both internally and externally. Professor H. P. Hollnagel, Beta, '06, from the department of Physics at the Institute, was a valued adviser for the chapter, throughout these years. The shadow of the war was caused many of the members to take courses during the Summer in anticipation of future service. During the early Summer the chapter was incorporated as "Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity" under the laws of Massachusetts with the charter dated June 6, 1917.

September, 1917, found the lease on 916 Beacon Street expired, so the fraternity leased a larger house at 161 Bay State Road. The new house was still nearer the Institute, the back of the house facing Technology across the beautiful Charles River. The interior was likewise more conveniently arranged so that the move was a real improvement. Besides maintaining considerable representation in the Institute activities, the chapter easily won the trophy awarded to the fraternity with the best scholastic record. The chapter also began to give dances more frequently in the chapter house. It became easier to secure the class of men worthy of the Fraternity on account of the new house and the prosperous condition of the chapter. At the close of the year in June, 1918, many of the members entered the service, while the class due to graduate in 1919 worked intensively through the summer to be graduated in the Fall of 1918. The organization of the Students Army Training Corps, with its ban on fraternities, and the fact that every member was in some kind of active service, made it necessary to close the house until December, 1918. This apparent setback was really a blessing in disguise for with the return of several men from the service, and the close of the S.A.T.C. after the armistice, the chapter reopened the house in January with a large and intensely active chapter, and in a strong financial condition due to the efforts of R. P. Warriner, who alone had guided the chapter through the dormant period. The chapter also had several new members, who had been initiated after the armistice at meetings held in the home of Professor Hollnael.

Although without the guidance of a senior class, Beta Chapter increased its membership, and again made the highest fraternity scholastic rating. The Chapter at this time began a determined attempt to keep Beta alumni better informed concerning the doings of the actives, and as part of that attempt sent out numerous copies of the "Button," the weekly paper of Beta Chapter. The "Button" which was first published in 1916, has ever since tried to live up to its motto- "No man can be without one." During the Spring the chapter took much greater interest in social affairs, and besides the dances, gave a house party during Junior Week. The large number of men making up work lost due to the war kept the house open during the Summer and permitted the chapter to complete its "rushing" by November.

This fast start placed the chapter in better financial and physical condition than ever before, encouraged a marked spirit of unity in the chapter and started it on the road to its present aggressive and successful condition.

The initiation of a number of substantial men into the chapter about this time coupled with the afore-mentioned conditions, resulted rapidly in an increase in Institute activity interest. The former record of scholastic superiority was maintained and the prominence of the house in the affairs of the undergraduates at Technology, was growing continually.

The same spirit which caused the majority of the men in the house to become leaders in activities was evident in the affairs and interests of the house. A general feeling that Beta Chapter had grown above and beyond her now meager situation at 161 Bat State Road, began to develop.

This idea was by no means a new one when it finally materialized in the Spring of 1922. The chapter was at this time graduating an exceptionally large and strong Senior Class most of whom had seen the chapter before and since the era of its interest in activities. These men were particularly influential in the action which the chapter was to take. In addition to this, the Spring elections had brought the chapter the General Managers of both The Tech and The Tech Engineering News, four class officers, and twenty-one our of the

twenty-eight active men, not graduating, had five point jobs or better. These men, too, realized the condition of the chapter and were among the initiators of action for a new house. The result was a logical out-growth of such conditions. Very near the end of the Spring term, it was decided to buy a new house, "The best at Technology." With this for a background and a very level head, an avowed purpose to do the biggest thing for the chapter in his power and unlimited ability and ambition, Francis P. Squibb, who was then head of the house, set about to get the house.

By a whole summer of tireless effort on his part and the aid of one or two other brothers, Squibb picked out the present 528 Beacon Street, paid the first payment, organized the Theta Chi Trust, made the second payment, helped float the third mortgage bond loan, and then took leadership over the chapter in its new home in the Fall of 1922.

Only the logical result came from the chapter being in one of the best houses at Technology. The new home, beautifully furnished, together with the influence of Mrs. Knowles, the House Mother, caused the development of an air of refinement and polish which had never before been attained. The rushing brought out the best men in the Freshman class. The chapter was tied for first place in the Interfraternity Conference for scholarship. It led the whole field in total points of men in activities and men in honorary societies. The unity of spirit and fraternal feeling of the members had never before reached such perfection.

The last four years 1923-27 have seen the chapter honorably upholding its reputation as one of the leading fraternities at Technology. During this period the chapter has participated practically one hundred per cent. in undergraduate activities, not a year having passed that one or more of the so-called "ten point jobs," (class presidency, general managership of an activity) has not been held by a Theta Chi.

Scholastically the chapter has retained its front rank position among Tech fraternities.

Financially the chapter is on a firm foundation due in no small measure to Paul Webber and William E. Drummey who have so

wholeheartedly served as Treasurer of the Theta Chi Trust and Alumni Adviser respectively. In 1926 one of the alumni, Barron P. Lambert, a nephew of the manufacturer of that well known product, Listerine, announced that he would match, dollar for dollar, every bond turned back. Five thousand dollars worth of third mortgage bonds were turned in and these he matched and added five thousand more for good measure, thus wiping out fifteen thousand dollars of the outstanding bond issue. The bonds were burned amid great rejoicing at the annual banquet held in the Fall of the year.

The death of Mrs. Knowles, Beta's house mother, in the Summer of 1926, left a gap which it will be hard to fill for it was she who was largely responsible for the homelike atmosphere and the air of refinement and polish which has distinguished the chapter during the past few years.

Since 1902 Beta has contributed the following members to the Grand Chapter: Paul B. Webber, 1908-09, 1913-14; Herman W. Mahr, 1908-09, 1911-12; Roland E. Page, 1908-09, 1909-12, 1914-15; Robert T. Pollock, 1909-10; George R. Martin, 1910-11; Harold C. Faxon, 1910-11; Hubert W. Flaherty, 1910-12; Herbert P. Hollnagel, 1912-13.

Statistics

Number of members initiated to September, 1927: 254.

Average size of chapter: Thirty.

Name and frequency of chapter publication: Button, monthly.

Part of members room and take meals at the chapter house.

Chapters owns its own home, value \$45,000.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the foremost engineering schools of the country, officially opened its doors in the

city of Boston October 2, 1865, on a site granted by the State by an Act of April 10, 1861. After occupying for fifty years its original location the Institute moved to a new site on the Charles River Basin, now the City of Cambridge, where it still remains, except for the Department of Architecture, which is located in the Rogers Building in Boston. The Institute is co-educational but the number of women students attending is very small indeed. During the school year of 1926-1927 the male attendants numbered 2650. Military training is mandatory. A very interesting thing concerning the Institute is that it has no football team. There are twenty-nine national social fraternities at Massachusetts Institute of Technology of which Theta Chi was the fifteenth to be established.

Cambridge, the present home of the Institute, is a city of 110,000 people located just across the Charles River from Boston.