

In New Mexico

Gamma Omicron Is Installed

In the scenic Old Southwest . . . land of sand, sun, and adobe . . . Kappa Alpha Theta installed a chapter March 13, 1948. What a thrill it was that day for Albuquerque Theta alumnae to see the happy expressions on the faces of the thirteen charter members of Gamma Omicron chapter at the University of New Mexico!

March 12, Mrs Grimm, Grand president, and Mrs Crawford, District president, arrived in time for the first installation week-end activity; an open house, given by colony and its pledges in honor of town and visiting alumnae. For entertainment, the girls presented a clever song skit briefly depicting the history of the Theta colony at the University of New Mexico.

The next day, just one year from the date that Theta alumnae met to lay the foundation for Beta Omicron chapter, these thirteen charter members were initiated: Lee Arnett, Yardley, Pennsylvania; Priscilla Brannon, Pasadena, California; Ann Christianson, Hammond, Indiana; Nancy Coles, Portland, Oregon; Bette De Witt, Phoenix, Arizona; Helen Halvorson, Clermont, Iowa; Carolyn Koch, Billie Verne Lowance, Sandy Huntington, Albuquerque; Patricia Maxwell, Hemet, California; Betty Singer, Brownsville, Texas; Joanne Watley, Webster Groves, Missouri; Barbara Hayes, Chicago, Illinois.

Later that night, Gamma Omicron's charter was presented by Mrs Grimm at a special combination initiation and installation banquet. The smile of approval from Dean Clauve, the flood of congratulations from Theta chapters, the happy smiles on the faces of the thirteen charter members of Gamma Omicron, made many an alumna's eyes mist and her heart swell with pride! At last the dream had come true! Working with the chapter had renewed old ties with Kappa Alpha Theta, brought a living interest into our lives, and gained for us firm friends, whom otherwise we might never have known.

The Albuquerque Theta club was so proud, that the next day, with the help of alumnae and visiting Thetas, it presented the new chapter to three hundred interested guests at an installation tea in the Student union building of the university. We're proud of Gamma Omicron! We hope Kappa Alpha Theta will be too.

MARY WHITNELL

Retrospect—The Undergraduate Angle

The nucleus of Gamma Omicron was formed in February, 1947 by a group of Kappa Alpha Theta alumnae who, with the help of two Thetas who were studying at the University of New Mexico, Virginia Van Soelen, Beta Gamma, and Nancy Morris, Alpha Delta, rushed and pledged Billye Williamson, Nancy Coles and Carolyn Koch. February 13, 1947 these five girls were introduced formally to Albuquerque Theta Alumnae club. After receiving official acceptance from Albuquerque Panhellenic, the college Panhellenic and the University administration, these five girls made rush plans. April 21, 1947 eight additional girls were pledged.

The spring of 1947 was full of wonderful surprises. The chapter of Kappa Kappa Gamma invited these prospective Thetas to its formal. The Theta colony took part in Greek day activities. Billie Verne Lowance was tapped for Mortar board. Carolyn Koch and Nancy Coles were tapped for Spurs. Theta chapters approved the colony as a future Kappa Alpha Theta chapter. The group was officially welcomed to the university in May by *Lobo*, college paper, and by Panhellenic . . . most exciting moments for all.

Fall rush plans began before the close of the college year. After a hectic summer of correspondence, alumnae, two Theta colonizers, Barbara Stryker, Rho, and Karin Wiese, Alpha, and the 11 girls of the colony gathered together a week before scheduled rush for necessary last-minute organization. The big moment came September 10, when the original colony girls were pledged officially to Kappa Alpha Theta. Rush began the next day. Mrs Brown, former Grand vice-president, came from Houston, Texas, to conduct the pledge service and to guide our first rush. After five days of worry, excitement and mix-ups we pledged thirteen wonderful girls.

Then work began in earnest. Seven of the original thirteen lived in a temporary housing unit which we called the "Theta Barracks." This unit became our meeting place and took the place of a house. We elected officers, and Panhellenic delegates, and, formally entered campus activities by giving a dance in October. Each week thereafter we had open-house for fraternities.

Our Christmas holidays were saddened by the death of Virginia Van Soelen, Beta Gamma, who had been our inspiration, as a Theta chapter at the University of New Mexico was her dream from the moment she came on campus.

Next came February rush, this time Theta pledged 14 girls. February 10, Mrs Crawford, District president, paid us an official visit to plan for the installation of Gamma Omicron chapter.

Finally, the big day arrived, March 12.

For the rest of the semester, we were in the clouds.

We had another wonderful surprise just before college closed. At a dinner, given for us by the Theta alumnae club, they announced that Gamma Omicron had a house. Now our happiness is complete.

Our success can be attributed to the untiring efforts of loyal Theta alumnae, whose earnestness and devotion during eighteen months should be an inspiration to every Theta.

BARBARA LOU HAYES

Retrospect—The Alumnae Angle

Albuquerque has been called a pioneer's paradise! So it was natural that some of the first Theta alumnae to come to this part of the country would be eager and daring enough to want to stake a claim for a Theta chapter on the University of New Mexico campus.

When Betty Lewis Thomas, Beta Beta, almost ten years ago, saw the beautiful campus of the University of New Mexico, and no Theta chapter, an idea took root in her mind that she never forgot: the idea—a Theta chapter on New Mexico's campus. She began contacting other Theta alumnae, but it was a long, slow job. However, one by one Thetas drifted across her path and through the Theta state chairman, Betty found a few Thetas in Albuquerque. In fact, twenty-one in all!

Betty, enthused with the idea of a Theta chapter here, became an authority on the fraternity system at the University of New Mexico. She went regularly to City Panhellenic meetings. Soon fraternity women, realizing her leadership abilities, elected her president of the City Panhellenic. In the meantime, Betty kept in close contact with Grand council, reporting regularly on the increasing number of Thetas in Albuquerque; of the dream of all of them to some day have a chapter at the university. To

carry on the spirit of the fraternity, the small but active group of Albuquerque Thetas decided to have a Founders' day banquet in 1947. Publicity for this event brought more Theta alumnae into the fold. As the number grew, so did the enthusiasm for a chapter.

Time and much correspondence resulted in Theta officers becoming interested in the possibility for Theta extension in New Mexico. Mrs Higbie, then Grand president, included Albuquerque in a fraternity trip, and we proudly showed her the University. The Dean of women approved the suggestion of a Theta chapter colonization at the university. Kappa Alpha Theta chapters, in due procedure, approved the undertaking. That was all Albuquerque Thetas had been waiting to hear, so they hurried to get to work.

March 13, 1947, the Albuquerque Theta alumnae club was established.

Then in the following fall, almost miraculously it seemed, two more Thetas transferred to the university: Barbara Striker from Rho, and Karen Wiese from Alpha.

Rushing began, and because the Thetas-to-be were living in a barracks, they gratefully accepted the invitation of Pi Kappa Alpha to use its house for the four days of rush. At the end of rush week, Kappa Alpha Theta had twenty-three pledges.

Campus activities kept the girls busy, and the girls managed to keep the Theta alumnae busy too. Not to be forgotten are the many hours that alumnae on the Advisory board spent in explaining duties and ideals. Millie Schroer patiently conducted pledge meetings. Mary Lee McCutchen helped plan open houses and parties. Patty Bates passed on to the new group, Oklahoma rush tactics and experience. Tireless were the efforts and encouraging words of Mrs Korn as Scholarship adviser. Supervising the Board's work and measuring each problem was Aleen Mikkelson, chairman. Theta alumnae club gained much inspiration and pleasure from the Advisory board's reports.

While activities went on within the colony, there was great activity also within the Theta alumnae club. Aply directed by Alice Rankin, club president, it began to plan for installation. As we look back, we know that such a big undertaking only could be achieved when there was a wise and tireless person such as Mrs Rankin, at the head of a group.



BIG MOMENT: MRS GRIMM PRESENTS GAMMA OMICRON'S CHARTER TO THE CHAPTER'S PRESIDENT, BETTE DE WITT

BETA OMICRON INITIATES RELAX AFTER DINNER

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Guests (left) and women, Susan, (right) at
dinner at the dining room (A. B. Carter, 1940)