

An Imperfect Mirror: the Origins of the Modern American Social Fraternity

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The purpose of this essay is to serve as a brief introduction to the socio-cultural climate of early American education in which the modern Social Fraternity was born. It does not aim to provide an exhaustive history of the era or processes which lead to the development of these student organizations, but rather to provide a general overview of the topic according to three key lines of argument – Student Life, Classical Education, and Socio-economic Class – and the respective influences those areas had on the early Fraternal movement. This essay is explicitly crafted to offer a number of prospective starting points (along with key bibliography) to support further and more in-depth research along any of these lines of argumentation.

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April 9th, 2015

The Torch of Zeta Psi

I. Prolegomena

Any normative history¹ of American social fraternities begins with the founding of Phi Beta Kappa (ΦBK) at the College of William & Mary in 1776. The first student organization in the colonies to adopt a Greek-letter name, ΦBK is the earliest group on record to blend Masonic practices (secrets, a password, a handshake, an initiation, etc.) with many of the social elements that we now readily identify with “Greek Life” (e.g. chapters at various colleges). A few historians will note the differences between ΦBK and the current iteration of collegiate fraternal organizations (ΦBK permitted only upperclassmen, while modern groups often recruit even first year students) and look to the founding of the Kappa Alpha Society at Union College in 1825 – some 50 years after the birth of ΦBK – as the watershed moment for the birth of the American Fraternity, but even these thinkers recognize the importance of ΦBK in shaping the practices and perspectives of all subsequent groups.² The period of time, then, between the Revolution and the end of the Jacksonian era marks the beginning of collegiate social fraternities in America.

This paper does not aim to dispute the importance of either of these key developments, but rather to propose an alternative reading of the history – one that focuses on a more systemic understanding of the environment in which the seeds of the modern fraternal movement were planted and cultivated, well before either of the above events took place. In particular, it seeks to address the roles that pre-revolutionary

¹ The ubiquity of this perspective is, I believe, obvious when one recognizes that even the Wikipedia page for American Fraternities begins its history here. To provide just a single source among many, interested parties may refer to the brief history of the American Fraternity system found at the beginning of the book in William Raimond Baird, Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities: a Descriptive Analysis of the Fraternity System in the Colleges of the United States with a Detailed Account of Each Fraternity, ed. James T. Brown, 9th Edition (New York: James T. Brown, 1920) 4-11.

² e.g. in Baird 4-6.

collegiate life, a Classical education, and socio-economic class played in the founding and development of the first student organizations present on early American college campuses. Constraints of time, resources, and space necessarily limit the investigation herein, therefore the object of this paper will be the presentation of a breadth of information intended to provide a holistic picture of the issues at hand, rather than an in-depth analysis of any individual component. It is the author's belief that viewing such a puzzle from a distance – where the overall nature of the thing might be realized – is of more profit to Zeta Psi's current position in historical scholarship than an intense study of any single piece.

I. Student Life in Colonial America

Compared to college campuses today – teeming with students from all backgrounds and walks of life engaged in hundreds of different organizations and programs (many sponsored by the institutions themselves) – student life at a pre-colonial college was a positively drab affair.³ Fifty to one hundred students, ranging in age from approximately sixteen to twenty-two⁴ and more or less all coming from the same geographic location⁵,

³ James Garnett, a student at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), gives a good indication of the state of affairs in a letter home to his mother, Mary, dated 18 July, 1812. "I have just begun to translate Greek today. I find the study somewhat easier as I go on, but it affords very little entertainment; indeed geography is the only study of our class in which anyone can take much pleasure" in James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules: American Student Societies in the Early Nineteenth Century," The University in Society II: Europe, Scotland, and the United States from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century, ed. Lawrence Stone, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) 466.

⁴ An excellent series of tables and graphs regarding the demographics of early New England colleges that substantiates this conclusion can be found in David F. Allmendinger, Paupers and Scholars: the Transformation of Student Life in Nineteenth-Century New England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) 129-38. It should be noted that this age range (16-22) represents the average age of students attending the colleges during the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federalist periods. In reality, the age range of students at any given institution could be much broader, including individuals as young as 12-14 and as old as 28-30.

⁵ The noteworthy exception to this reality was the College of New Jersey, which drew students from throughout the colonies, especially from Virginia to New England. Interestingly, the student organizations on campus were frequently divided along geographic lines. Regarding this, Ashbel Green comments in his 1841 *Autobiography* "Those students who came from the eastern part of New Jersey and from New York and New

lived and studied in close quarters. The college itself was often comprised of only a handful of buildings, and at some institutions (e.g. the College of New Jersey) a single edifice served all of the school's needs. Students of the same class year shared a common schedule, common courses, and common assignments, since the "elective course" and the "major field of study" – concepts that would transform American education during Reconstruction – were still one hundred to two hundred years away. Moreover, the colleges themselves offered little to no extracurricular engagement for the student body, often from the belief that any "free" time was meant for studying and further academic pursuit rather than socializing or relaxation.⁶ Even the libraries at colonial colleges possessed extremely limited holdings and were very often off-limits to the undergraduates due to the expensive nature of the books, the limited hours of the librarian (himself a student or lecturer), and the fear of fire (a constant issue for these schools)⁷ caused by the use of candles to read at night.

To meet their non-academic needs, students at all of the colonial colleges banded together early on, forming student clubs to share the costs of necessary expenses (similar to the Eating Clubs at Princeton University today), provide access to important materials

England almost uniformly united with the former [Well Meaning club] and those from West Jersey, Pennsylvania and the southern states joined the latter [Plan Dealing club]" as cited in Jacob Newton Beam, The American Whig Society at Princeton (Princeton: The American Whig Society, 1933) 139.

⁶ The adage that "idle hands are the Devil's workshop" was without doubt a consideration here. Unfortunately, often enough the students (as young men are wont to do) found themselves engaged in less productive uses of their non-academic hours, see e.g. the history of the College of New Jersey where students were chastised for their public drinking, brawling, and – in one fascinating incident – rolling a cannon ball up and down the halls of Old Nassau, much to the chagrin of the people attempting to sleep in their chambers on the floors below, as reported in Thomas Jefferson Wertebaker, Princeton 1746-1896 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946) 136.

⁷ The frequency and prevalence with which colonial colleges burned down is startling to the modern observer. The College of New Jersey alone suffered three major fires in its first 75 years, see Beam 61. Due to these fires, much of our knowledge about life at early colonial colleges is reconstructed from alumni testimony and other sources, since the original records (often kept by the clubs themselves) were almost all destroyed in the flames. See e.g. Ashbel Green's Whig History (Beam 59-65), James Carnahan's History of Whig Hall (Beam 168-76), etc.

for study and learning, and to foster an atmosphere of companionship that helped the students bond and cope with the strict demands of colonial college life. The earliest student group on record was founded in 1719 at Harvard University for religious purposes, and was shortly followed by similar organizations dedicated to philosophy (Spy Club, 1721) and poetry (Philomusarian Club, 1728).⁸ Subsequent groups both at Harvard and the other colleges, and especially those founded between 1740 and 1776, focused on providing their members with opportunities for personal development in social and academic contexts.

The social roots of modern fraternities lie in the fundamental charge common to all of these early student organizations – to provide a space for their members to engage one another on issues of significance in an extra-curricular setting. The lack of support for non-academic student engagement on colonial college campuses left students, especially younger students away from their homes for long periods of time, in need of avenues for engagement and companionship in their new educational environments. Students naturally responded by establishing their own organizations that could provide them with the opportunities to explore non-academic pursuits with their peers. These groups were founded with key values in mind and procedures and processes to support the development of those values in the groups' membership. Subsequent Greek-letter organizations would follow in the footsteps of these early student societies by providing their members with a "home away from home", often quite literally in the physical form of a shared house and living resources, opportunities and spaces to socialize, and a core set of shared values and perspectives to guide members' behavior both within the organization and in the broader world.

⁸ Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936) 61-2.

II. Classical Education in Early America

The single curriculum of study followed by all students at an early American college was deeply rooted in the Classics. Preparation for college was focused almost entirely on the development of students' faculty in both Latin and Greek, with any other subjects and disciplines being addressed through a classical lens. The standards for matriculation at a colonial college at this time testify to the extent that competency in the Classics was valued, as is evident in Harvard's requirements from the 1750s, which stipulated that any incoming student should already be in possession of a firm grasp of Latin and well on his way in Greek.⁹ The heavy emphasis on proficiency in Latin and Ancient Greek, almost to the neglect of other subjects of study, was the common factor for admission to *all* of the early colleges. Indeed, a student's ability to function in these two languages was for several years the only real requirement for entrance.

Once a student enrolled at an institution, he then began a course of study lasting between two and four years on average. His primary focus was still directed toward the careful study of the Classics, though various amounts of Theology, Natural Philosophy, Mathematics, Moral Philosophy and even other languages (most commonly Biblical Hebrew) were offered depending on the institution in question. Courses were almost entirely presented in lecture format, with a primary emphasis placed on drills and exercises to improve facility with the languages. Students would attend class five to six

⁹ He should, in particular, be able "extempore to read, construe, and parse Tully, Virgil, or such like common classical authors, and to write Latin in prose, and to be skilled in making Latin verse, or at least in the rules of the Prosodia, and to read, construe and parse ordinary Greek, as in the New Testament, Isocrates, or such like, and decline the paradigms of Greek nouns and verbs." These requirements in fact represent a far less stringent approach than the early standards of Harvard College, which also requested that the student arrive on campus with a well-developed ability to speak Latin as illustrated in Carl J. Richards, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1995) 19.

days per week, from sunrise to sunset, year round, with very little repose. Declamations, oral presentations and compositional works also featured prominently in the curriculum.

Unlike courses at college today, programs of study in the colonial period were explicitly moralizing, and the formation of youths with strong character and good values was one of the primary goals of early American higher education. The Classics, filled with their tales of Greek & Roman virtue (Cincinnatus) and vice (Julius Caesar) and accompanied by overt discussions of morality and ethics (see, e.g., Cicero's *de Officiis*), blended strongly with the Christian ethic that pervaded much of colonial intellectual life.¹⁰ The consequence of this reality was an educational experience concerned not just with students' development as thinkers, but as actors in a community and their behavior as such. To that end, life on a colonial college campus was governed by a student code of conduct much more broad and severe than those employed by most institutions of higher education (save, perhaps, the US Military Academies) today.

Early student groups at colonial American colleges actively sought to address not only the social needs of their members, but to help develop them academically as well. Many of these organizations had the study or development of academic disciplines at their core (esp. the "debating clubs" at the College of New Jersey) and went to great lengths to enhance their members' abilities in these areas via additional assigned homework, mentorship programs, public speeches, debates during meetings, and a host of other programming efforts.¹¹ These undertakings were supported and encouraged by access to

¹⁰ Harvard College was founded explicitly with the intent of offering theological training to ministers in the colonies on a level comparable with the Oxbridge seminaries of England. Of the major colleges founded prior to the Revolution, the Academy and College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) stood alone as the only school founded as a non-denominational institution.

¹¹ Their efforts in this regard were, it appears, well rewarded. F.A.P. Barnard, as President of Columbia University, once remarked: "No part of my training at Yale College seems to be to have been more beneficial

the societies' private libraries, which were often much better and more broadly provisioned than the colleges' own holdings.¹² Further resources were available to help students' academic achievement in the classroom, including opportunities for assistance and tutoring offered by older members and, for those less scrupulous individuals, collections of "ponies" – interlinear Latin/Greek texts with English translations which the students used as an aid in preparing for lectures and recitations.¹³ Some societies even went as far as developing their own internal certification and licensing programs to demonstrate competency in different skill sets, awarding certificates and prizes to members upon their graduation from the college.¹⁴

The reach of many of these organizations extended beyond providing their members with purely academic opportunities in a social environment and moved to address the moral and ethical behavior of their membership.¹⁵ Most organizations enforced strict rules for the behavior of their members both during meetings and in public, and often subsidized their other activities with funds earned from the fines imposed upon members

than that which I derived from the practice of writing and speaking in the literary society to which I belonged" from Alexandra Robbins, Secrets of the Tomb: Skull and Bones, the Ivy League, and the Hidden Paths of Power (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002) 37. Matthew Mitchell, "Federal Adelpi," The Encyclopedia Brunoniana, Electronic Encyclopedia (Providence: Brown University Press) notes other common activities with these same ends in mind, and Morison 183 makes particular mention of mock trials at Harvard's Hasty Pudding Club.

¹² "To those of us who graduated 30, 40, or more years ago, books, outside of the textbooks used, had no part in our education. They were never quoted, recommended, nor mentioned by the instructors in the classroom. As I remember it, Yale College Library might as well have been in Weathersfield or Bridgeport as in New Haven, so far as the students in those days were concerned. *The College Societies, however, supported and managed wholly by the undergraduates, had good libraries, and here was where the students, and the professors besides, found their general reading*" in James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules" 472. The italics are my own.

¹³ Caroline Winterer, The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greek and Rome in American Intellectual Life 1780-1910 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) 41.

¹⁴ James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules" 480-1.

¹⁵ See, e.g., the motto of the American Whig Society, founded at the College of New Jersey on 24 June, 1769: "ad Amicitiam, Literas, Mores" (tr. "toward Friendship, Learning, and Morals") James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules" 457.

for breaking the rules laid out for their behavior.¹⁶ Other groups would assign writing and declamation tasks designed to address perceived flaws in their members' characters or comportment.¹⁷ Though there is limited evidence to support the conjecture, it seems likely that even the early student organizations were founded with an established set of core values that members were expected to both abide by and embody in their person.¹⁸

The emphasis these early organizations placed on academic success and character development – a natural product of the combination of a Classical education in the light of Christian intellectual tradition – represents the greatest sphere of influence these societies have had on modern collegiate Greek-life. The idea that such a student group should direct its attention not just to the social and extra-curricular well being of its members, but should look after their personal development and growth holistically, guiding them to become gentlemen-actors in their communities, is the hallmark of the modern American Fraternity system. Many of the character traits identified by these early student groups (e.g. Virtue, Honor, Fellowship, the pursuit of Truth, Academic Excellence, etc.) persist almost unchanged as the objectives and 'core values' of fraternities and sororities today.

¹⁶ Some of the American Whig Society's list of fines in 1814: talking, 20¢; laughing during a speech, 25¢; not returning a book, 10¢; staying too long away from a meeting, 15¢; out longer than one hour, 100¢; laughing, 20¢; impropriety, 20¢; putting in an improper Debate, 80¢; walking across the floor without permission, 6¢. from James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules" 449-94.

¹⁷ For examples of such assignments posed at the College of New Jersey, see James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules" 481; for similar examples of assignments set by societies at the College of Rhode Island (now Brown University) see Matthew Mitchell, Philandrian Society, Electronic Encyclopedia (Providence: Brown University Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Contemporary conjectures about the names of secret societies like F.H.C. at William & Mary suggest as much, e.g. in Jane Carson, James Innes and His Brothers of the F.H.C. (Charolettesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1965) 7. or Robert W. Storm, "In Token of Friendship: Early Fraternity Medals at the College of William and Mary," Tirage à part des Actes du 8ème Congrès International de Numismatique (1973) 663.

III. Colonial Socioeconomic Classes & Education

The student body of a college in eighteenth century colonial America was a homogenous group of individuals. Almost all were wealthy, white males from the best land owning and mercantile families on the continent. They received a large amount of private education from early childhood onward, frequently at the hands of teachers with extensive training in theology or philosophy¹⁹, and entered College on average between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Students most often attended the college nearest to them geographically, with the noteworthy exception of the College of New Jersey. The explicit goal of attending college during the colonial period was vocational. The schools were designed to train and produce students who would be successful upon their entry into one of the four key fields – Law, Medicine, Theology, or Politics – dominated by the American intellectual elite.

Viewed from a socioeconomic angle, a key function of colonial systems of education was to produce a homogenized governing class with a shared set of values, perspectives, and intellectual tools that would foster a common ‘language’ with which members of said class could both identify peers and engage with one another.²⁰ The development and

¹⁹ Many of the most influential educational leaders in America during the colonial period were, both intellectually and academically, members of the Scottish Enlightenment, having received their training in Theology or Philosophy at either St. Andrew’s or Edinburgh. Thomas Jefferson was first trained under the Reverend William Douglas, James Madison was a student of Donald Robertson before he undertook his studies at the College of New Jersey under the guidance of the famed Reverend John Witherspoon, whose leadership as President of the college led to a reform in the curriculum modeled after those at Scottish universities.

²⁰ The language metaphor was often quite literal. In several instances articles or editorials published in public newspapers were written in Latin explicitly with the intention of limiting access to their contents to individuals from the proper educational and social backgrounds. One such article “Exemplum Partus Difficilimi” (tr. “An Example of an Extremely Difficult Birth”) states this explicitly in a footnote to the title: “Cur hæc dissertatio Latinè tantum publicetur, rationes omni lectori docto satis patebunt.” (tr. “The reasons why this article is published only in Latin will be obvious to every sufficiently educated reader.”) As printed in M.W., “Exemplum Partus Difficilimi,” American Museum or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces, &c. Prose and Poetical 1788: 82-84.

implementation of this cultural 'language' in the lives of colonial college students was consistently reinforced in the activities of their student groups, to which the majority of the college's student body belonged.²¹ The shared perspectives of race, class, and gender allowed students involved in these organizations to develop a homogeneity of perspective and values that would ultimately drive a significant portion of the argument for both the Revolution²² and, subsequently, federation under the Constitution.²³

The common socioeconomic background of colonial college students, as well as their awareness of their collective future working in a small set of career fields, motivated their campus organizations to extend their efforts beyond their current membership to engage with and solicit support from alumni members. Many of these requests are preserved in the letters exchanged between students and especially illustrious former-members of their societies, and often seek support for their groups' efforts on campus from a variety of avenues – financial and otherwise.²⁴ Indeed, the established network that these groups

²¹ For sample demographics regarding the wide spread nature of participation in student societies at Yale University, consult Robbins 36. Similar numbers of students engaged in these organizations at the College of New Jersey, as reported in James McLachlan, "The Choice of Hercules" 474. Noteworthy is the relatively elite character of student groups at the College of William & Mary in Virginia, where – contrary to developments at the more northern colleges – only a handful of elite students participated in these organizations as observed in Storm 662 & 665.

²² References to Classical sources in debates, discussions, and epistles abound, not the least of which include the adoption of pseudonyms of Greek/Roman origin by many of the key members of the group that would one day be named the 'Founding Fathers'. Classical references appear less overtly as well. Patrick Henry's famous quotation "Give me Liberty, or give me Death!" is in fact a paraphrase of a line from Joseph Addison's play *Cato*, which depicted the final days of Cato the Younger's life in Utica prior to his committing suicide rather than live under Julius Caesar's dictatorship. George Washington cited Addison's play as among his favorites, and defied a Congressional ban on public officials attending plays during the Revolution to put on a version of *Cato* for his men at Valley Forge (Richards 58).

²³ The influence of the Classics on the Federalist Papers is apparent. The discussions of mixed-governmental theory (first addressed by Polybius), the analysis of the Greek confederations, and even the pseudonym with which all the letters are signed ("Publius" in reference to the founder of the Roman Republic, Publius Valerius Publicola) represent some of the more famous examples and were used to place the theoretical conversation about ratification of the Constitution squarely in the realm of the highly educated upper classes.

²⁴ Alumni also contacted one another regarding support for their organizations, e.g. in a letter dated 12 June, 1778 F.H.C. alumnus Col. James Innes wrote to fellow alumnus St. George Tucker: "our once darling F H C is at

provided, especially when taken into consideration with the close geographical proximity of most members (undergraduate and alumni) to their colleges, was one of the strongest benefits afforded the individuals who joined. Membership in the most famous student societies (F.H.C. at William & Mary, Cliosophic or Whig at the College of New Jersey, etc.) represented a veritable “Who’s Who” list of colonial, revolutionary, and federalist leaders.

Perhaps the greatest benefice that many of these organizations provided their members was simply the lifelong bonds of friendship that they developed via participation in their societies.²⁵ Because members entered as students from highly similar backgrounds, engaged in a common curriculum of study aimed at developing a single sort of individual, pursued similar career paths, and tended to live in the same geographic region as their *almae matres*, members of these groups found themselves bound together as if by some invisible cord through some of the most tumultuous and trying times in American history. Their reliance upon the academic learning they gained in college, the skills to deploy that learning that they developed in their student societies, and the established social network of individuals with a common cultural ‘language’ to support and assist them throughout their careers was a significant contributor not only to the successes achieved by noteworthy members individually, but a testament to the influence that these student groups exerted on the entirety of American culture during the early years of the Republic.

The significance of leveraging student groups for networking, career support, and establishing lifetime friendships during the college years would not seem out of place to a

present in such a Situation as to require the exertion of every aid & effort its Friends can possibly bestow” from Carson 100.

²⁵ Examples of the enduring bond felt by members of F.H.C. at the College of William & Mary can be found in their own words in Carson 100, 102-5, 159. Similar records regarding the American Whig Society at the College of New Jersey are available as well, e.g. in Beam 3, 29-30.

member of a modern fraternity. Despite a great number of changes over the intervening years, these things not only remain essential concerns of today's Greek-letter organizations, but perhaps have become even more important in the contemporary educational and career environments that are far more diverse and competitive than those of the colonial period. The emphasis that today's fraternities place on the value of establishing and maintaining close relationships among members is self-evident in both their names²⁶ and the appellations by which their constituents address one another ("brother"), and recalls much of the testimony from members of the colonial student societies about the importance their organizations placed on fostering strong relationships among members.

IV. Conclusion

To trace the origin of the modern American Fraternity to the early student societies at the colonial colleges is, in many ways, to gaze into an imperfect mirror. Even a cursory examination of these student groups at colonial colleges projects, to anyone intimately familiar with today's fraternities, an eerily familiar image – something at once readily identifiable and yet oddly foreign. The cultural, political, and educational circumstances that provided the foundation for those groups set the stage for many of the essential pieces present in the modern Greek-life experience. Despite the adoption of the German university model in the Antebellum period, the death of Classics as a core curriculum during Reconstruction, and the rise of technical-vocational education models after the Second World War, the exigent needs of students on college campuses continue to drive them to

²⁶ The term fraternity traces its etymology to the Latin *fraternitas* "brotherhood".

create and participate in values-based organizations designed to support their social, extra-curricular, academic, and career development.

The noble origins of the goals and undertakings of many modern fraternities notwithstanding, the broader climate of American higher education (and American culture) has in recent years become increasingly hostile to the Greek organizations that it views as a liability. In such a climate, a thorough understanding of the history of these organizations by their members is not simply a luxury; it is an imperative if they wish to survive. As Thomas Jefferson, a member of the F.H.C. at the College of William & Mary, once observed: "History by appraising [the people] of the past will enable them to judge of the future".²⁷ Perhaps the surest path toward a sustainable future for contemporary Greek organizations in America can be found in the very origins of their own history – the student societies of the colonial colleges.

V. Epilegomena

The roots of the modern American Fraternity - often traced to the Jacksonian period (Kappa Alpha Society, Union College, 1825) or the revolutionary-era founding of Phi Beta Kappa (William & Mary, 1776) - extend much further back than common conjecture permits. Buried deep in the culture of pre-revolutionary collegiate life, nourished by the values of a Classical education, and firmly mired in the perspectives of the colonial upper classes, the seeds of modern American fraternalism grew uninhibited for decades prior to their surfacing in the development of what today is called "Greek Life". Any attempt, therefore, to comprehend the history of the American Fraternity must begin much further back than the appearance of the organizations themselves if it is to prove satisfactory.

²⁷ Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1788) 159.

That history would address the systemic influences present in colonial and post-revolutionary education, political-economy, and culture that informed and prompted the growth of student organizations independently in the colleges, as well as the aims and intentions of their founders, and the undertakings of the organizations themselves as they developed in both size and scope. It would, in short, move to situate the birth and growth of the American Fraternity within the broader context of the country's cultural and social development from the establishment of Harvard College (1636) to the founding of the Kappa Alpha Society (1827), in order to illustrate the myriad of forces that combined to provide fecund ground in which this new idea might grow. Such a history is, sadly, beyond the limits of our efforts in this paper. We hope, however, that our work here might serve as both guiding light and inspiration for others who would take it upon themselves to contribute to that history – one that desperately needs writing. It is to those brave and inquisitive souls that we pass on this Torch.

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²⁸ I have intentionally formatted my citations for this paper as a "works consulted" rather than a standard "works cited" in order to include a number of resources which, though not directly employed in this paper, were formative in my thinking regarding the topics discussed in it and which I hope might serve other interested individuals in their own research to explore topics related to those discussed herein.

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