

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Volume 20

November-December, 2000

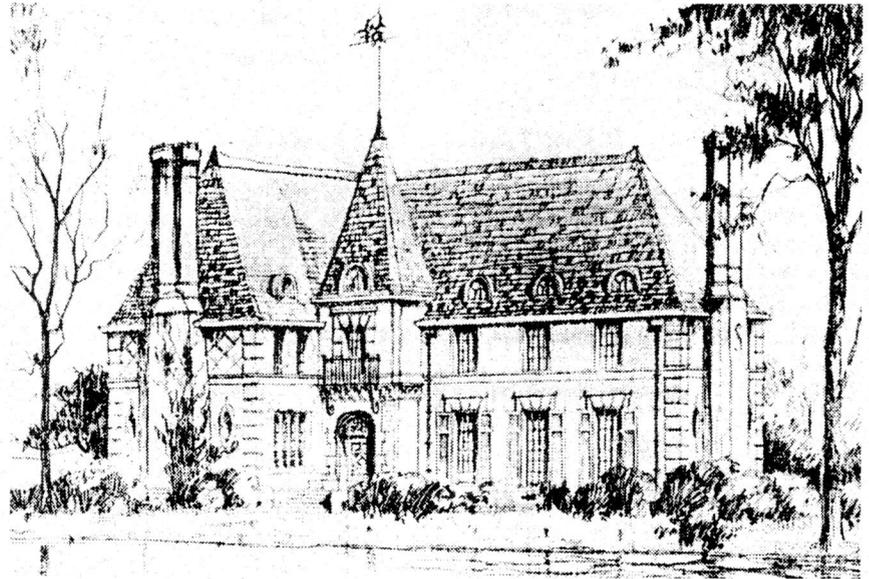
Number 6

Focus On: Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity

Alpha Rho Chi is considered a professional fraternity of architecture and allied arts students. Professional fraternities are the same as social fraternities and sororities except that they focus their membership recruitment on students studying a particular profession.

Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity was founded on April 11, 1914, with the merger of the Arcus Society of the University of Illinois and Sigma Upsilon of the University of Michigan. The union of these two architecture student organizations formed the first national architecture fraternity. The Arcus Society was formed secretly in the autumn of 1911 by a group of 15 men; formal approval for the group was given in the fall of 1912 from the Council of Administration and early in 1913 the Society was recognized by the faculty of the University of Illinois. During this time, the organization's meetings were held in the Y.M.C.A. building at the University, but a house was secured during the first semester of 1913-1914. Faculty members of the Society were Dr. Nathan C. Ricker, L.H. Provine, and A.H. Kimball.

A desire for a national organization emerged in 1913 and Arcus member W.M. Wadsworth was delegated to write to various universities throughout the country and inquire whether other architectural societies might be interested in forming a national fraternity. As a result of this correspondence, Leo M. Bauer of Arcus at Illinois and Chandler Cohagen of Sigma Upsilon at Michigan began formulating the basis of a national architecture fraternity. Two organizations at Cornell University, L'Ogive and Gargoyle, were initially interested, but the Cornell organizations quickly lost interest. Bauer and Cohagen met in April, 1914 to discuss the particulars of a national fraternity. On April 11, both delegates declared the name of the new organization to be "Alpha Rho Chi" and then went on to discuss other matters such as a constitution,



Rendering of new Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity House as drawn by the firm of Royer, Danely & Smith in 1927. The house is located at 1108 S. First Street, Champaign.

by-laws, rituals, charter and certificate designs, emblems and articles of association. A general outline on each matter was prepared, but the individual tasks of writing or designing each section was divided between the two charter groups, Arcus and Sigma Upsilon.

The name "Alpha Rho Chi" was chosen at the suggestion of Professor Ricker, as it was taken from the first three letters of the Greek word for architecture. Also at Ricker's suggestion, chapter names were chosen from prominent architects from ancient Egypt, Greece or Rome. The Arcus Society became the Anthemios Chapter on May 22, 1914; Anthemios of Tralles was a notable Greek architect and mathematician who planned and built the famous Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople around 532 A.D.. Sigma Upsilon of Michigan became the Iktinos Chapter on June 6, 1914, named after the Athenian Iktinos who was involved in building the great public works of Athens. He was principally active about 450 to 430 B.C. and designed the Parthenon with Kallikrates.

Anthemios Chapter of Alpha Rho Chi

As one of two founding chapters, the Anthemios Chapter had a great influence on the development of the national Alpha Rho Chi fraternity. Members of Anthemios drafted the national constitution and by-laws, designed the fraternity's official badge, revised the design for the coat of arms, and drafted the charter forms. The fraternity motto, "Fidelitas, Amor et Artes," was a combination of the mottos of Arcus Society and Sigma Upsilon.

University of Illinois faculty members played a large role in the founding of Alpha Rho Chi and in its development. Dr. Ricker and Prof. Allen Kimball are singled out for recognition by the fraternity. Not only did Ricker suggest the name of the fraternity, "Alpha Rho Chi," and a system for naming chapters, but also suggested its motto, and many of its underlying principles. He first served as a faculty advisor of Arcus, and later helped Bauer and Cohagen work out the details for forming the new fraternity. His name is constantly mentioned in correspondence between the two student