

Alpha Psi - Mississippi House

Commonly referred to as the “Dream House” when it was first built, the Alpha Psi-Mississippi house was a long-awaited dream for those of our earliest members, some of which were still alive to see it when it was dedicated in 1938.

Lillie Hudson Wohlleben, Psi I-Lewis who served as Fraternity President from 1881 – 1883 wrote of the house’s completion, “Our dream house is here, shining in the bright winter sunshine, so stately in its beautiful surroundings. I love it.” And how fitting to share today that she also said, “I hope every Delta Gamma will be able to see our Dream House someday.”

But it wasn’t always a positive relationship for Lillie and other early members of Psi I-Lewis and Delta Gamma Fraternity. 1888, when leaders of the Fraternity decided to investigate and ultimately close the chapter at Lewis School, due to inadequate recruitment numbers, finances and not following all protocols, the earliest members and Founders were upset.

The consequences of the closing of Psi chapter were long-lasting. Delta Gamma lost almost all contact with Psi members and as a result, became disconnected from its early history. Contact was finally reestablished by Blanche Garten, Kappa-Nebraska, who served as Fraternity President from 1902-1905. Through her efforts, a piece of wood from Lewis School was acquired and fashioned into a gavel that has been used to open every Convention since 1905. It would take more than another two decades for Delta Gamma to return to Oxford.

Founders Mary and Eva as well as Minnie Wohlleben Carter, Psi I-Lewis School, who served as Fraternity Vice President from 1881 - 1883, attended the 1926 Convention at Mackinaw Island, Michigan, and asked that they might “bring Delta Gamma home” and establish a chapter once again in Oxford. On May 21, 1927, Alpha Psi chapter of Delta Gamma was installed at the University of Mississippi.

In 1937, the Alpha Psi-Mississippi house was built, and this marked the first time a sorority on campus was allowed to live in its own housing. To honor the Founders, it was named the Memorial House.

Throughout the years, there have been a variety of expansions and remodels. In 1976, a devastating fire destroyed around 75 percent of the house. Many important documents and sentimental items of chapter members were thankfully saved.

Consider the following questions and discuss them with your tour group:

- Mary and Eva asked the 1926 Convention to “bring Delta Gamma home”. Why do you think this was important to them?
- What does this homecoming weekend celebration mean to you as a Delta Gamma?