

THE FORENSIC

SERIES 8

NUMBER 3



OF
PI KAPPA DELTA

JANUARY, 1923

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LOCAL CHAPTERS

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Epsilon—Fairmount College—....., Wichita.
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THE MISSION OF THE DEBATER

(Speech delivered by Professor Alfred Westfall at the Convention Banquet,
Simpson College, March 1922.)

At the Colorado Agricultural College last year we completed a new building containing a little theatre. We who are connected with debating welcomed this addition to the campus because it gave us a better place to hold our debates. Heretofore we have been holding them in the college chapel, a large auditorium seating over a thousand. As we never have large audiences at our debates, the speakers were forced to face row after row of empty seats. With this smaller auditorium we shall not feel so embarrassed because of the size of our audiences.

At the Colorado Agricultural College last year we also completed a new grand stand seating five thousand people. This addition to our campus was urgently needed as the attendance at our football games had long since outgrown the seating capacity of our old stands.

This condition is not peculiar to our institution alone. From every state in the union come similar reports. Debaters put in months of arduous labor preparing a discussion on one of the vital questions of the day and deliver it to a mere handful of people. At the same time our huge football stadiums, one of them seating eighty thousand people, are unable to handle the vast crowds that clammer for admission.

It is easy to explain this condition. Anything involving intellectual activity is becoming distasteful to the American public. People are more interested in the exercise of their heels than their heads. The days of the old gladiatorial contests are returning. The public is demanding the spectacle of a physical combat, and with it an opportunity to work itself into an emotional frenzy and yell itself hoarse. We are grossly ignorant upon the vital questions of the hour and blissfully unconcerned about them. We refuse to give our time and attention to those educational, social, economic, and political questions, upon whose solution depend our own welfare and the perpetuation of our state and nation. This charge is more serious than it at first appears to be. It is against the educated public that we bring this indictment, the present college generation and the recent alumni.

This is the easy answer to our problem, but I am not yet willing to admit that it is the true one. It is based upon a slander of our own generation to which I am not sure we wish to be a party. If we can get an explanation of the present lack of interest in forensic contests, an explanation that we can tolerate, only by belittling our fellow citizens, then I am afraid we are not yet in an humble enough frame of mind to learn by experience. Ex-president Woodrow Wilson once said, "I am willing to play for the verdict of mankind." Our government is based upon the principle of the right of the majority to rule. And I, for one, have faith in this opinion of the majority, more faith, at least, than I have in the opinion of any subdivision of

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it. Let us assume for the purpose of our consideration that the public's estimation of our forensic contests as expressed by its refusal to attend them is correct. It may be that a reexamination of the facts in the light of this assumption will reveal some conditions which we have overlooked and enable us to make a better diagnosis of this present rather serious forensic malady and prescribe a surer remedy. It is sometimes necessary to bring to rather sharply as some undeniable facts show us the error of our reckonings.

I have heard people come away from intercollegiate debates with some such statements as the following upon their lips: "I feel more confused on this matter than I ever did before. I had thought I knew something about it, but this discussion has left me hopelessly befuddled."

This is a just criticism of many debates I have listened to. The audience is forgotten. No effort is made to enlighten it. The debaters are apparently free of any feeling of responsibility towards the truth. Each team, bent on winning, has endeavored to confuse the arguments of the other side. The discussion is carried on in a "realm where inconsistencies cease from troubling and logic is at rest." Truth has been absolutely disregarded, facts distorted, and one poor, feeble piece of evidence called upon to bear a load of conclusions which would break the proverbial camel's back. Assertions, which the speakers themselves do not pretend to believe and which, stripped of the verbiage, are absurd upon their face, are iterated and reiterated with increasing unction. He does violence to the truth who asserts that the public which does not attend such discussions as these is therefore not interested in intellectual questions. I do not blame any sane minded man for preferring the athletic field. If debating is nothing more than a game, let me go with the crowd to the football match. It is more spectacular and interesting to watch.

That debating has fallen into its present deplorable condition is due, to my mind, to the fact that all of us, public and debaters alike, have been regarding debating as a kind of a game. We have permitted it to be regarded as a form of intellectual calisthenics for a few students with glib tongues. We have forgotten that the true purpose of all argument is to arrive at the truth. Persuasion should be used only to guide people along the path of right action. The present lack of interest in intercollegiate debating is proof that our recent forensic contests have permitted the misuse of both argument and persuasion.

The mission of the debater during the coming few years should be to correct this error. He must get back to fundamentals. He must find in debating something more than a game and provide the audience with something better than entertainment. May I venture to offer some suggestions as to how he may do this?

First of all, the debate must be considered from the standpoint of the audience and planned for the benefit of those who will hear it. Putting this suggestion into practice will result in several changes.

They will begin with the selection of the question itself. Questions will not be selected because they are evenly balanced. That will become a secondary matter. Those questions will be discussed which are of the most vital concern to the people who will be expected to make up the audiences. Questions that are not evenly balanced will be discussed, even tho those on the weaker side have no chance to win, for the function of the debate will be to show the audience which is the weaker side of the question. The effort will be to present whatever of truth there is on either side, that the public may be able to judge and act accordingly.

This will do away with the importance of winning. When this is done, we can exalt the truth and approach the discussion of any public question with

a greater regard for its sanctity. We must accept as the fundamental purpose of debating the dissemination of information. We must be able to say to those who attend, "Here, in condensed form, are some of the most important facts bearing on this question. Every effort has been made to safeguard the truth. Nothing has been added or withheld. We have disregarded any questionable evidence and have not drawn any unwarranted conclusions. You may accept the information offered in this debate as trustworthy and base your thinking upon it. We have presented it here to enlighten you upon one of the vital questions of the day. You, as a citizen, must help to decide this question by your vote. As some of the things we say here may influence you in your voting, we feel how sacred are our responsibilities in the matter."

Nor will this conception of debating be any handicap. After all there is nothing more compelling than the truth. A successful debater must be able to win the confidence of his audience. Sincerity alone will do this. It is not so much what he says that counts as it is what his auditors accept. The man who makes unsupported assertions and draws unwarranted conclusions weakens his own case. It isn't the speaker who makes the most extravagant statements who is the most convincing. We place the most confidence in the man who shows the highest regard for the truth and an unwillingness to go further than the evidence allows.

Already there are evidences that this theory of debating is at least to be given a trial. The decisionless debate has been tried by a number of institutions and with good results. This past year Montana University and Montana State College arranged a worth while experiment. They were to discuss a question of importance in the state election before the commercial clubs of eight of the larger towns of the state. These were forensic contests of the highest merit. Their purpose was to help the voters of the state. The majority of crowded business men do not have time to read the literature and examine the evidence on such questions. Surely no one who listened to an enlightening discussion of one of these questions by trained college speakers who had taken the trouble to prepare themselves adequately would question the value of the debate.

In England the whole audience votes. The vote is not to determine which team has given the best forensic exhibition, but to show which side of the question the audience believes in. I commend this method as a step in the right direction.

Let the truth prevail. The man who supports the weaker side should not attempt to confuse the case of his opponents. On any subject of enough importance to become a public question, there is bound to be enough evidence on both sides to make some sort of a case possible. The public should know these facts. The debater should not attempt to make them prove more than they do. To do that in an attempt to win is to be dishonest and to forfeit his right to the confidence and respect, he as a debater, should command.

At the same time we must educate the public as to what it can expect from a debate. If our fellow citizens expect to listen for an hour and a half and thereby find a solution of one of the questions of the day, they will of course be disappointed. Debaters should not attempt to give a solution of the national problems nor should the public expect to receive one from a discussion between college students. If our state and national questions could be solved that easily, they would not be questions. For over a century we have been discussing the tariff. Although the greatest statesmen of our country have devoted, many of them, the best years of their lives to a study of this question, no one would assert even today that it is settled. The debates on the tariff which have been published in the Congressional Record alone would line one side of a moderate sized room. While all

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this discussion has not settled the question, it has not been in vain. At least it has resulted in better tariff laws than we would otherwise have had.

And so it is with our intercollegiate debater. A little reading of pamphlets and magazines, a little hurried writing with pen or pencil, fifteen minutes of rapid oratory dissected with appropriate gestures and spiced with biting sarcasm, does not justify him in the sweeping assertion that the United States should or should not enter the League of Nations. But all of this study and all of this thinking, if done in an effort to find the truth rather than to win a debate, should insure more accurate and logical conclusions in regard to this question.

Thomas Edison deplores the slowness of the progress of truth and knowledge. This "lag" he calls the greatest menace to our democracy. Years pass after knowledge is discovered before it is very universally accepted by the people. The right course of action is pointed out years before it is adopted. Prejudice and indifference must be overcome. This period of latency in the reaction of society to the stimulus of the right idea retards the progress of civilization and saddles humanity with crushing yet unnecessary burdens.

Let me illustrate this in another way. I have read the assertion that at one time every seventh death in Europe was due to small pox. The discovery of vaccination has so revolutionized conditions that fatalities from this disease are now so rare as to attract attention. But suppose only a few people knew about vaccination. We can see how necessary it would be that they use every method within their power to spread this information. Think of the preventable deaths that might occur if they took twenty years to do this when they might be able to do it in one. We can see how vital this period of latency would become. This thing is going on about us today. Infant mortality has been rapidly decreased in the past few years. The methods which have accomplished this are simple. It is largely a matter of education. And yet the training of the present generation in this matter is heart-rendingly slow. There are still mothers who know nothing of the germ theory and who still believe that beer and coffee are proper constituents of a baby's diet.

It is the opportunity of the debater to decrease, to cut in half, to annihilate this period of latency between solution and reaction, knowledge and acceptance. Our leading economists, sociologists, educators, and statesmen are studying the vital problems of the day and offering practical and sound solutions for many of them. But prejudice, narrow mindedness, bigotry, and ignorance do not yield readily. Perhaps half the woes that now beset us could be eliminated could we obtain the most available information on the subjects and act as that information dictated. The mission of the debater is to study the question, get that information, and present it so persuasively that he will prevent opposition and bring about its speedy acceptance.

Take our labor question. It is a difficult question in itself, but its difficulty is magnified by the fact that the two parties to the controversy do not understand each other. The struggling business man who is trying desperately to stretch a none too large income to cover operating expenses and pay a fair return on the investment is apt to have an intolerant opinion of the labor union, which is seeking to secure higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions for its members. The laboring man, on the other hand, who is trying to support a family and keep up a home on modest wages, and who sees the years of his productive toil passing without being able to accumulate a reserve for the lean years when he is bent and broken, is apt to regard the employer who refuses his demands as a social parasite. It is the business of the debater to remove this misunderstanding. He must show the employing class that there is undoubtedly much that is reasonable

and just in the demands of the five million members of our labor unions, and he must at the same time, present the problems of the employer to the laboring group so that employes will realize that it is not selfishness alone that makes the employer deny their demands. All members of society are actuated by more or less rational motives. An acceptance of this fact will bring about a higher mutual respect and lead to a quicker understanding.

Nothing has impressed me more at this convention than the frank and sincere attacks against economic injustice. Debater after debater, orator after orator, has pictured the unjustifiable conditions that exist in some of our industries today. The twelve hour day, the seven day week, and the less than living wage that exist in the steel industry have been condemned time after time. To me this is a hopeful sign. These conditions and their resulting degradation can be eliminated only by a public that will not tolerate them. We can not legislate them out of existence until the majority of the people have been aroused upon this subject.

Here is one practical thing that the debater can do. When he can educate the American people to hate that thing as he hates it, he will drive it out of the country. Perhaps the public is partly to blame in its demands for cheap steel. But when our whole citizenry rises up to say that such conditions are unjustifiable and we will not support them or contribute to them in any way, directly or indirectly, then and only then will they pass away. Already agencies are in operation to eliminate these conditions. They have passed in most of our industries. They are becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain as more people understand them. I have no doubt that the publicity which has been given through our intercollegiate debates has helped to crystalize the sentiment which is making such undemocratic conditions impossible. This is an achievement in which debating can claim some share and in which it should take no little pride, for the reports exposing those conditions would have remained largely unknown had not thousands of debaters given them the publicity they deserved. And because I have faith in the ultimate goodness of my fellow men and the power of the intercollegiate debater and the other agencies working for the amelioration of these conditions, I dare venture the assertion that within three years the twelve hour day will be unknown in the steel industry.

There is much that the debater can do. And because I know him, I feel sure he will measure up to his opportunity. In fact he is already doing it. Debating is now on the upgrade. Interest is reviving. There are more debates being scheduled now than ever before. America has gone to England and next year England will come to America. Teams are crossing the nation. The East and the West are meeting on the platform. The size of the audiences is increasing. Debaters have caught the spirit of service. We are having better debates than ever before. For all this improvement Pi Kappa Delta can claim no little share of the credit. We have but to press resolutely forward. It is our mission to discover truth and to give it to the public; with no other thought in mind than the service we can thereby do our fellowmen.

Professor F. B. Ross, who last year was at Southwestern College, Kansas, is this year coaching debate at the Kansas State Normal at Emporia. The debate coach this year at Southwestern is Dr. J. Tohmson Baker. Southwestern plans a debate trip in the spring when she will meet the University of Tulsa, Phillips University, Northeastern Normal, and the Oklahoma A. & M. In addition, she expects to meet at home Simpson, Morningside, Parsons, Kansas City University, Park. The usual women's triangular with Washburn and the College of Emporia will be held.

PRO AND CON

(Note: The Editor received recently an interesting letter from a well known Middle West debate coach with regard to certain features of the debate trip. He asked an equally well known Pacific Coast debate coach to present the other side of the question. Their views are to be found in the letters that follow.)

Dear Mr. Macarthur:

I have had a mind to write you for some time, but the last request for a bonus of \$50 towards the traveling expenses of a college, which wishes to send a debate team to the coast at some one else's expense, determined me to express my mind. I think it is time that P. K. D. put some kind a quietus on this growing tendency. We have answered requests from some ten or twelve colleges for bonuses ranging from \$96, from a college in California going East, to \$50 from Eastern schools going West. To test the mutual, reciprocal character of this craze, we have offered to take on several of the applicants on the bare condition that they reciprocate to a like amount. In every case they declined the "honor." Beloit College has finally done what we call the fair thing. They will stop here and debate us for local expenses only. It seems to me that this is all any college in P. K. D. ought to ask of another. I should certainly like to know what other chapters in the society think about this.

If a debate were a paying proposition, this mutual financing of trips might become a fine thing. But everyone knows that the best debate ever held would not net in receipts anything like \$50. With us it would not net \$5.

It seems to me, and the local chapter agrees with me heartily, that if any college wishes to broadcast its debating fame, it is up to that college to finance the advertising scheme. We are expecting to send a team on a short trip as far as Wisconsin, but our chapter expects to pay every cent of the traveling expense.

Now, I hope that I am not the only "grouch" in this honorable body of Pi Kaps. But if you have had to turn down as many brazen calls for help in the financing of pleasure excursions for duets and trios from various parts as I have, you may have come to the same state of mind. It may be an honor to get beaten by a team of experienced semi-professionals, but who would wish to pay for such honor?

Hence, I move that the next number of the Forensic ask that all members, in planning debate itineraries, ask no more from colleges along the way than local expenses—entertainment and judges. That seems to me enough of a boost.

What do you think about it?

Yours fraternally,

Middle Western Debate Coach.

Editor of The Forensic.

May I have space to say a word concerning one of the recent developments in intercollegiate forensics, namely the transcontinental debate tour? In 1921 an enterprising college in the Mississippi Valley undertook a trip to Southern California and the Pacific Northwest, travelling over 5,000 miles and debating five times enroute. This tour aroused considerable interest in debating circles, and suggested to other colleges in different parts of the country the great advantages of these sectional contests.

A very few colleges have planned, or have thought of planning, such trips for this season. The number of colleges, however, which can carry out such plans is not large, for the greater part of the expense must be met by the col-

lege making the tour, as the small guarantees received for the debates scheduled actually defray but a very small part of the expenses.

There seems to be undue alarm on the part of some persons who have been asked to give contests to travelling teams, and guarantee a small amount therefore, that the whole idea is a mercenary scheme to gain a pleasant trip without any financial outlay whatever. The writer is familiar with the details for a number of these proposed trips, and he does not know of a single instance where a college has attempted to secure guarantees sufficient to cover the entire expenses of the trip.

On the other hand, why should not a college be expected to pay something toward the expenses of a debate contest held on its own platform? What is wrong in paying a small guarantee to a visiting team? In the early days of intercollegiate debating, when the single debate was the rule, the entertaining college paid all the expenses of the debate, INCLUDING THE TRAVELLING EXPENSES of the visiting team. No college should expect to enter into a contract for a single debate without agreeing to pay something toward the expenses of the team which has made the contest possible. Usually debates with teams from distant states are financially successful, for such contests arouse considerable local interest and the door receipts frequently amount to considerably more than the amount guaranteed the visiting team.

The writer believes that these inter-sectional debate contests should be encouraged. They afford an excellent opportunity for comparing the debating style and methods of the different sections of the country. Pi Kappa Delta chapters should, in so far as their local conditions will permit, cooperate with other chapters desiring to arrange debate tours.

Respectfully,

A Booster for Intercollegiate Debate.

THE PROVINCE CONVENTION

(Southwestern Collegian)

Representatives of three states will pit their forensic prowess against each other when the first regional forensic tourney of Pi Kappa Delta is held at Southwestern college, March 15 to 17. Fifteen colleges and universities are eligible to membership and according to Chairman Ross of Emporia, every school has responded favorably, and drawings for the first round of the tourney debate have been made.

Although made by a lot the drawings are exceedingly fortunate in that the strong contenders of Kansas will be matched against the best in Texas and Oklahoma. Southwestern will meet Alva Normals of Alva, Oklahoma. Washburn will tangle with Southwestern University of Texas and Kansas State Normal will debate Oklahoma A. and M. Kansas Aggies drew a bye in the first round and will meet the winners of the S. C. Alva clash in the semifinals.

Additional details as to the "extemporaneous debate" which will be one of the chief features of the entire meet were announced. Southwestern has challenged any college to a debate on a subject announced just twenty-four hours previously. Prof. Summers of Park College, Missouri, will choose the contestants as several have accepted the challenge of the locals. The question will be selected by Mr. Westfall, national secretary of Pi Kappa Delta. The question will be sent sealed to Prof. Ross in charge of the meet here and he will break the seal and announce the subject twenty-four hours previous to the actual debate.

Men's and women's oratory will also have a prominent place in the meet together with round table discussions and business meetings among the representatives.

Dr. J. Thompson Baker, debate head of Southwestern, is in receipt of a let-

ter from Prof. F. B. Ross of K. S. N. announcing definitely the program and drawings of the tourney.

The schedule of the first round of debates as announced is Washburn vs. Southwestern University, Texas; Kansas State Normal vs. Oklahoma A. and M.; Kansas City University vs. College of Emporia; Ottawa University vs. Kansas Wesleyan; Pittsburg Normals vs. Fairmont College; Baker University vs. Tulsa University; Southwestern College vs. Alva Normals; Kansas Agricultural College, Bye.

The complete schedule of events as announced by the letter is:

Thursday evening, March 15—Men's and women's oratorical contests.

Friday morning, March 16—First round of tournament debates.

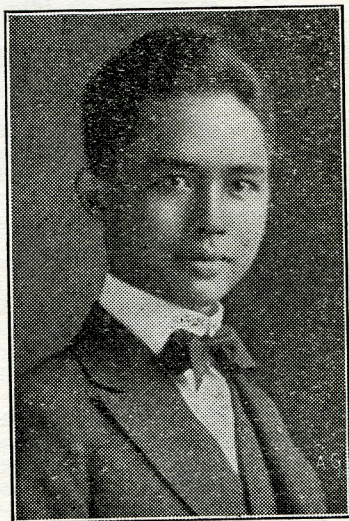
Friday, 1:30 P. M., March 16—Business meeting.

Friday, 3:30 P. M., March 16—Second round of tournament debates.

Friday, 8:00 P. M. March 16—Extemporaneous debates.

Saturday, 8:00 A. M., March 17—Semi-final round of tournament debates.

Saturday, 10:00 A. M., March 17—Final round of tournament debates.



ENRIQUE SOBREPENA

Minnesota Alpha—Second Place in State Oratorical

THE FORENSIC OF PI KAPPA DELTA

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J. R. MACARTHUR, Editor

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JANUARY, 1923

Number 3

PI KAPPA DELTA'S OPPORTUNITY.

This number should reach our chapters just as the debate season enters its fullest activity. We are presented with many opportunities. We can put into practice the forensic ideals for which Pi Kappa Delta stands. We can bring our Order to the attention of colleges with worthy academic standing and forensic tradition and induce them to join our ranks. Our better organization secured through the centralizing of details in the office of the new National Secretary-Treasurer is strengthening us tremendously and enabling us to do more effective work. Not only are we now the largest forensic honorary society in the country but it seems as though we should soon be much larger. Inquiries looking towards applications for charters have come in unusual numbers this fall from institutions whose standing is everything that we can desire. The members of Pi Kappa Delta have a right to be proud of the great chain of institutions possessing chapters and to feel that this growth and strength bring with it the obligation to work for the furthering of the cause. Let us cover the land with a network of Pi Kappa Delta chapters whose aim shall be to promote sane and sound forensic activity and to train men and women for leadership and better citizenship.

WELCOME TO THE PROVINCE CONVENTIONS

In other portions of this issue attention is called to the newly arrived Province conventions, the result of recommendations to the Fourth Biennial Convention of the Committee on the Good of the Order. Professor Veatch, the Chairman of that Committee, is certainly to be congratulated upon the success of his suggestion. At least three Provinces have organized and are to hold conventions for which elaborate programs are in preparation. We expect great things from these gatherings. Their influence upon Pi Kappa Delta as a whole will be exceedingly good and far reaching.

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FINES

At the Third Biennial Convention held in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1920, the fraternity gave its national officers the right to fine chapters that did not reply to official communications, especially when these official communications requested information necessary for the fraternity good. This power was not used until this past fall.

The last of September a questionnaire was sent to the chapters asking for the names of the chapter officers, the names of the active members in school, and for other information which would assist the national officers in their efforts to serve the chapter members. To each questionnaire was attached a notice that a fine would be assessed against the chapter if this questionnaire was not returned properly filled out. A reasonable time limit was set for the reply.

Nineteen chapters failed to reply. A second notice and a second questionnaire were sent to these chapters. Two of them disregarded this notice. A third letter brought a reply from one of these but the other has not yet replied. A total of twenty-one dollars in fines has been assessed in getting replies to this one questionnaire.

The national officers wish to make clear one thing in regard to the fines. They do not like to resort to this method of securing the co-operation from the chapters which they must have if they are to conduct the business of the fraternity. Although this money goes into the general treasury and is used in carrying on the work of the fraternity, they would prefer the willing and prompt co-operation of the chapters to this revenue.

Who should pay these fines? The local officers. Such fines should not be paid out of the local treasury. That a chapter is fined is the fault of the local officer and he should bear the expense. His failure to reply cuts off the chapter from the national. Unless the national officers can get the names of the local officers and of the members in school, they can not keep in touch with the local members. No man is required to accept an office in a local chapter, but once he does accept an office, he has assumed an obligation to the chapter. Unless he performs his duties the whole chapter suffers. The welfare of forensics in his institution demands that he discharge his duties or resign.

Give the national officers the co-operation which will make the fine unnecessary.

EXCHANGES

We have a remarkable record in Exchanges this year. The following states have a hundred per cent representation from their chapters: California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The following chapters are NOT sending us their college paper in exchange for THE FORENSIC: Des Moines University, Morningside College, Simpson College, Kansas State Agricultural College, Kansas Wesleyan University, Baker University, Colby College, Westminster College, Central College (Mo.), Montana Wesleyan, University of Tulsa, Oklahoma Baptist University, Oklahoma N. W. State Teachers' College, Wofford College, Dakota Wesleyan, Yankton, Sioux Falls College, Tusculum College, Southwestern (Tex.), College of Puget Sound. We are receiving fifty-five exchanges.

HISTORICAL NUMBER

We had hoped to celebrate with this number the decennial of our order. It has not been possible to collect all the material necessary for a complete history of Pi Kappa Delta. In the near future, however, we expect to do this.