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# Brief History of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi at the University of Rhode Island

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THE HONOR  SOCIETY OF  
PHI KAPPA PHI

celebrating

**One Hundred Years at the University of Rhode Island  
1913 – 2013**



compiled by Michael Vocino

## Rhode Island State College Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi



### 1913 Membership Roll

Alexander, Ralph Irving  
Barlow, Henry Newell  
\*Barlow, John – Prof. Zoology  
Burgess, Paul Steere  
Cargill, Rhobie Lucelia  
\*Churchill, Herman – Instructor, English and History  
Doll, Walter  
\*\*Edwards, Howard – Prof. Political Economy and Social Science  
Elkins, Dorothy Dearborn  
Elkins, Marguerite White  
Elkins, Miss Marion G.  
Field, Clesson Herbert  
Fiske, Herbert A.  
Gilman, Mr. Jean  
Hadley, Philip B.  
Harrall, Nellie A. – Instructor Physical Training  
\*Hartwell, Burt L. -- Prof. Agricultural Chemistry  
Lamond, John Kenyon  
\*Leighton, Virgil L. – Prof. Chemistry  
Lewis, Harry R.  
Rodman, Walter Sheldon  
Slater, Allae Cordelia  
\*\*\*Wales, Royal Linfield – Prof. Mechanical Engineering  
\*Webster, Samuel Harvey – Prof. Civil Engineering  
Worrall, David E.

\*Rhode Island State College faculty members.

\*\*President, Rhode Island State College

\*\*\*Dean of Engineering, Rhode Island State College

## **Brief History of Phi Kappa Phi at the University of Rhode Island**

From an undated and unattributed sheet found in the University of Rhode Island Library Archives:

### **Rhode Island State College – Phi Kappa Phi Chapter**

“During the latter part of the college year of 1911 – 1912, a movement was started by members of the student body looking towards the establishment of an honorary scholarship fraternity at the College. Dr. Burt L. Hartwell, a member of the Massachusetts Agricultural College chapter, was asked by the faculty to investigate and report on the matter, and this resulted in the establishment of the chapter of Phi Kappa Phi. Such members of the college faculty as were members of national scholarship fraternities were elected as charter members and the first initiation ceremonies were conducted April 25, 1913, by Professor Sidney Haskell of the Massachusetts Agricultural College.”

“The Society holds at least one public meeting each year, usually near the opening of college in the fall, at which time the aim and objects of the society are explained to the student body. As custodian of the Burchard scholarship cup, the Society each year awards this trophy to the fraternity having the highest scholastic standing during the year. At the close of the year a banquet is held for the initiates, members and friends of the society. Once each year it is planned to hold a public meeting which is addressed by some prominent personage upon some phase of education.”

\*

### **Original Student Council Request for a Rhode Island State College Phi Kappa Phi Chapter**

The original letter requesting formation of Phi Kappa Phi chapter at the Rhode Island State College was sent to Professor Herman Churchill by the Secretary of the RI State College Student Council Secretary, J. Russell Esty. The original letter including the envelope it was mailed in is dated March 20, 1912.

*To the Faculty of R.I.S.C.: It is the desire of a great many students that a national Honorary Fraternity be established at this institution. The Student Council requests that the Faculty take this matter into consideration or else recommend to the Student Council some feasible procedure whereby this purpose may be accomplished.*

*Respectfully Yours,*

*J. Russell Esty*

*Secretary of Student Council!*

\*

### **The First Entry into the Record Book by the Secretary, RI State College Phi Kappa Phi**

The first entry into a book of record kept by the secretary of the newly formed chapter of Phi Kappa Phi at the University (then called Rhode Island State College) was this:

#### **“Formation of the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi”**

“During the latter part of the school year 1911-12 a movement was initiated by members of the student body of the Rhode Island State College asking for an inquiry to be instituted regarding the possibility of securing an honorary scholarship organization at the College.

In line with this desire, Dr. B.L. Hartwell was appointed by the faculty to undertake correspondence looking toward the above-mentioned end. Accordingly, as Dr. Hartwell was already a member of the Amherst Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, he investigated the matter, and found out the conditions under which a chapter of Phi Kappa Phi could be formed at Rhode Island State College.

In accordance with instructions thus received, the faculty council of Rhode Island State College voted that those members of the faculty who were already members of national scholarship fraternities should constitute the necessary nucleus for organizing the new chapter. The following faculty members were thus appointed:

Dr. B.L. Hartwell, Sigma Xi, and Phi Kappa Phi  
Dr. V.L. Leighton, Phi Beta Kappa  
Prof. John Barlow, Phi Beta Kappa  
Prof. Royal L. Wales, Phi Kappa Phi  
Prof. S.H. Webster, Tau Beta Pi  
Prof. Herman Churchill, Phi Beta Kappa

Correspondence regarding organization continued until April 1913, when arrangements were completed for holding the initiation of charter members on April 25, 1913. Accordingly, on this date those concerned met at the Kingston Inn at 6:30 P.M. where the initiation ceremonies were conducted by Professor Sidney B. Haskell of the Massachusetts Agricultural College after which the company enjoyed a dinner at the Inn. Dr. Hartwell assisted Professor Haskell in initiating the other five member above mentioned.

Following this organization of the Chapter by initiation of Charter Members, a committee consisting of Dr. Hartwell and Professor Churchill was appointed to draft Constitution and By-Laws, and officers of the Chapter were elected as follow:

President – Prof. John Barlow  
Treasurer – Prof. S.H. Webster  
Secretary – Prof. H. Churchill.

Congratulatory letters on organization were received as follows:

M.C. Fernald, Pres. Maine Chapter Apr. 16, 1913  
G.B. McDonald, Secy., Iowa State Coll., Chapter April 16, 1913  
Anderson MacKinnie, Secy., Mass. Ag. Coll. Chapter April 24, 1913  
J.S. Sterns, Registrar General, Mar. 17, 1913  
C.L. Crow, Univ. of Florida Chapter, April 3, 1913  
H.W. Hill, Pres. Nevada Chapter, April 12, 1913  
E.E. Sparks, Pres.-General, Apr. 12, 1913  
C.H. Gordon, Pres. Tennessee Chapter, April 7, 1913.”

\*



Lippitt Hall on the University of Rhode Island Kingston Campus as it may have appeared at the time of the founding of URI's Phi Kappa Phi Chapter – photo from URI Library Archives

**Centennial Officers of the University of Rhode Island  
Phi Kappa Phi Chapter**

*President and Treasurer* – Barbara M. Newman, Ph.D.

*Secretary and Communications Officer* – Sheila Black Grubman

*Past President* – James Tackach

**Centennial Induction Program Committee**

Barbara M. Newman  
Sheila Black Grubman  
James Tackach  
Richard McIntyre  
Michael Vocino

**Keynote Speaker**

Dean Lori E. Ciccomascolo  
College of Human Sciences and Services



**University of Rhode Island Library**

**Special Collections and Archives**

**Guide to the Records of the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi 1912-1993\***

\*This publication is an abridgement of a more fully developed publication by Prof. Sarina Rodrigues available through The Special Collections and Archives Unit of the URI Library in Kingston.

**Repository:** Special Collections and University Archives 15 Lippitt Road Kingston, RI 02881-2011  
Tel: 401-874-4632 email: archives@etal.uri.edu

**Creator:** Phi Kappa Phi. Rhode Island Chapter (University of Rhode Island)

**Title:** Records of the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi

**Dates:** 1912-1993

**Quantity:** 7 box(es)(3.5 linear feet)

**Abstract:** This collection contains materials related to the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi at the University of Rhode Island, which began in 1913. The records include general subject files and records kept by the secretary (including meeting minutes, letters of invitations and correspondence, and treasurer's reports.

**Identification:** Rec. Gr. 116

**Language:** English

**Historical note**

Phi Kappa Phi began in 1897 at the University of Maine as a student group dedicated to recognizing and promoting scholarship. A national organization was established in 1900 after the presidents of the University of Tennessee and Pennsylvania State College joined the president of the University of Maine in recognizing scholarship in all disciplines. Still active, Phi Kappa Phi can be found on the campuses of almost 300 colleges and universities in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. A brochure (See Folder # 46) contains more history about the Society.

The Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society was established at the University of Rhode Island in 1913. Members of the Society are undergraduates, graduate students and faculty elected from all fields of study. New initiates are honored annually at a banquet and also take part in the Honors Day Convocation.

**Scope and Content Note**

Records of the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi are arranged as a General File (1912-1993) with two sub-series: Secretary's File and Subject File. The Secretary's File (1926-1969) of the R.I. Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi include membership lists of both students and faculty, lists of eligible candidates from the Office of the Registrar, minutes, letters of invitation and other correspondence, and treasurer's reports. The folders in the Secretary's File are arranged in chronological order. The Subject File (1912-1993) is arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically within folders. The records contain information on Scholarship Cups, Honors Day Convocation, and Fellowships. There are also two bound volumes of minutes which contain some annual reports/scrapbook material from the years 1914-1956.

## **Restrictions**

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Preferred Citation**

Records of the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, Rec. Gr. 116, University of Rhode Island.

### **Acquisitions Information**

The records were transferred to the University Archives by Professor William D. Metz in 1977. The original accession was processed by Debra L. Cohen in 1981. In 1994, a new accession was given to the University Archives. The records are in good condition and open for research.

Abridged by m.vocino, april 2013





