

The Phi Society, 155 Years of Contribution to the Carolina Way of Life (1795-1949)

**John E. Giles, Speaker in 1947
October 29, 1949**

**It is a small society,
but there are those who love her.**

While the shadows of the majestic oaks fell across the lone building, a little band of students trudged into Old East bent on the serious business of forming a debating society. The air was warm for it was June 3, 1795, and the young campus was, save for the lone building, a vast forest encompassing the area now dotted with dormitories and buildings. A flurry of construction was going on outside and a passerby might detect that workmen were building the Dining Hall (located on the present site of Carr Dormitory) and the house for the President (located on the present site of Swain Hall). First-student Hinton James had walked from Wilmington only a short time before, and now there were some forty-one members in the student body. On this historic day the faculty drawn from Princeton and inspired these few to set up at Carolina a debating society patterned after the one at the older institution. When that first meeting adjourned, a tradition was established on the campus that was to effect to an untold extent the history of the University, State, and Nation.

The Debating Society as such had a brief life. Politics affected the tempers and thoughts of the organizers to such an extent that the national quarrel between Hamilton and Jefferson caused the followers of Jefferson, according to Dr. Battle in his "History of the University," to withdraw and found a new Society. The quarrel in the Debating Society was climaxed on July 2, 1795, when seven rebels walked out. On August 1, 1795, the seven met and named David Gillespie as the first president of the new Society, and ten days later the new group held their first regular meeting. Hinton James joined the new Society on September 21, 1795, and by the end of the year there were thirteen members. Until August 29, 1796, the minutes refer to the offspring as "The Society," but on that evening the members selected the handsome name Philanthropic, and thus a new Society was born.

The campus was isolated from the rest of the world in those early years, and the youthful debaters met by candlelight to concern themselves with such problems as "whether a man ought to marry for gold in preference to beauty." They decided in favor of gold. But news leaked into the young university and in the minutes of 1796 we find the Phi debating "whether the Americans ought to declare war on Britain" and on another night "whether the United States ought to declare war on the Algerians." There were exponents of atheism in the Society at that time, too, for one debate raged "whether the Bible ought to be believed or not." It was decided that the members should believe in the Bible.

As soon as Person Hall was completed in 1797, the two societies happily moved their meeting places from Old East to the larger assembly room in the newly finished building. But debating in 1797 was no easy task. Dr. Henderson in his "Campus of the First State University" described it vividly:

Bleak indeed must have been the meetings of the Literary Societies during the winter months, held in the single large room, which was without heat and swept by icy winds blowing in through many a broken window-pane. Only reluctantly

had the Faculty and Trustees, alarmed over the likelihood of fire from guttering tapers, granted the Societies the privilege of meeting in Person Hall; and then only on the strict understanding that "the clerks of each society carefully . . . extinguish every candle, fasten the windows and lock the door upon the adjournment of the society."

Aided by the rivalry of the new Phi Society, the Societies began to collect books and store them in separate cabinets for the use of their members. The rivalry of collecting books continued and as the years rolled by the Society libraries became far larger than the university library. Members went by custom to their Society library in preference to the University's. By 1837 the two Society libraries totaled some 7,000 volumes. At that time it was jokingly said that the University library was stored in the President's attic. When the University closed after the Civil War in 1868, the Phi and Di libraries together had about 20,000 books in them. Tragedy struck the Phi's magnificent collection when roving bands of negro troops sent to the University by Governor Holden splintered the doors of the Phi Hall in the Summer of 1869 to steal many, scatter and deface the rest of the fine collection. When the Phi reopened its doors in 1875, the rebuilding of its library became one of its main objectives. By spring of 1886, however, the libraries of the Phi and the Di each had amassed a total of some 8,000 volumes and were again the largest in the state. Each society were exercising rigid control over its books and stiff fines were imposed on the Phi librarian who allowed a member of the Di to borrow a book. Each library now contained needless duplication of books the other had, and sentiment was growing that the University was getting so large that it should have one consolidated university library. The matter of consolidation was presented to the two Societies by the Faculty, and the Phi voted on April 10, 1886, to consolidate its books with the Di. Later on May 1, 1886, in a heated debate the DI voted 42-30 to accept the plan. The consolidation had taken place, which formed the Library of the University of North Carolina. To this day, in token of the agreement the University then made, all library books bear the inscription "Library of the University of North Carolina as endowed by the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies."

After having occupied Person Hall for seventeen years, the Societies moved to South Building in 1814. The Phi occupied the east end of the second floor, and the Di occupied the west end. As students they lived on the first floor, debated on the second floor, and had their separate libraries on the third floor. In that Jacksonian era, the Phi and Di reigned supreme insofar as fraternal activities were concerned. It was the era when a young student names James Johnson Pettigrew debated in the Phi Hall and there were but five buildings on the campus--Old East, Old West, South Building, Person Hall, Gerrard Hall. New students were met on their way to the little village of Chapel Hill as far away as Hillsboro by the members of the Phi. On the long ride back by horse and buggy to Chapel hill, the Phi boys tried to persuade the unacquainted freshman that the Di had a bunch of soreheads in it and he would do well to join the Phi. As the buggy swung down Cameron Avenue, he Phi proudly pinned their colors on newly pledged student and ushered him into South Building with shouts of glee. Later when football came to the campus and University teams went out to represent the college, the famous University colors were chosen from the white badge of the Phi and the blue badge of the Di.

The University was growing and in 1837 the Phi petitioned the Trustees for a new hall. The Phi library was getting too large for its cramped quarters in South Building, and furthermore it was greatly endangered by some twenty-five open fires that burned in that building during winter. Moreover, the Phi felt slighted because it had a smaller hall than the Di. The Di also joined in the

request for new halls in 1838, but it was not until 1844 that the Trustees approved the remodeling of Old East and Old West. The remodeling was completed in 1848, and the two Societies moved into their new halls in that year. In consequence of that moving there arose an event which affected the choice of membership in the Societies for nearly a century thereafter. The Trustees decided that space in the three main buildings for the Societies would be settled by lot--one taking the eastern half of South Building and Old East, and the other taking the western half of South Building and Old West. The Phi was the winner in the lottery, and chose the eastern division. Thus arose the custom that prevailed down to the 1920s that a student from the eastern part of the state would join the Phi and a student from the western part of the state would join the Di. According to some historians, the Societies east-west division helped establish the state's east-west political division.

Now in their new quarters in Old East, the Phi began to furnish its halls with lavish carpets, chairs, and chandeliers. A letter from James Johnston Pettigrew in 1847 (then with the National Observatory in Washington and later Brigadier General who lead Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg) told his former brothers of the layout of the Congressional Library so that they might pattern the Phi library accordingly. Yet amid all their activities to make the place a hall of elegance, the hall was soon to be too small. The University was growing by leaps and bounds, and a student enrollment of 191 in 1849 was to jump to 461 in 1857. It was soon found by the Phi that rooming on the first floor of Old East, debating on the second, and reading in the library on the third, did not provide adequate space even with the overflowing rooming in the eastern half of South Building. The Di was experiencing similar difficulties with Old West and the western half of South Building. The next five years (1854-59) saw the two Societies waging a campaign among old graduates, Trustees, and the legislature for a building of their own. The campaign was effective and in 1859 the cornerstone of New East, home of the Phi, and New West, home of the Di, were laid. Both buildings were completed just before the full fury of the Civil War struck.

In June of 1868, the tragic aftermath of the Civil War swept down on the peaceful little campus to close the doors of the Phi and the University for seven long years. Vandalism ran rampant. Negro troops kicked in the doors of the Phi Hall, scattered furniture all over the building, and pillaged the library as previously referred to. Worse yet Professor Patrick looted the Phi Hall carrying off the velvet carpets and beautiful chairs. During these bleak years of inactivity, Col. William L. Saunders remained a true friend of the Phi by keeping the minutes, the constitution, and the initiation rites out of the hands of the carpetbaggers. It was a joyous occasion when Col. Saunders addressed the Phi on September 15, 1875, saying "I congratulate you upon this happy occasion and pray God's blessings for all time to come upon our beloved Society. I surrender into its hand the authority vested in me seven years ago," and thus revived, the Phi resumed its campus leadership.

The students were now on the scene who were to make history in the Phi as they later did in the state--Charles B. Aycock and Lock Craig. Together they began a drive, which ended in the obtaining of some twenty oil portraits of leading Phi alumni. Due largely to their efforts, the Phi portrait collection today number some forty paintings and is valued at roughly \$100,000, University authorities value the Phi's "James Dobbins Portrait" at \$10,000.

By 1885 the Societies had achieved a unique position on the campus. A glance at the by-laws of the Phi as set forth in the Minutes September 26, 1885, shows this fact clearly:

- 1) All students shall belong to the Philanthropic or Dialectic Society, except medical, law and post-graduate students

2) Students not members of the Societies, with the above exceptions, cannot room in University buildings

3) If a member resigns or is expelled from his Society, the faculty will consider his case, and may expel him from the University.

On the night of September 12, 1885, the Phi set up a committee to confer with the faculty to stop hazing, and another step had been taken toward student government. Decorum was preserved by fines, and a list of fines as of 1889 provides some amusement:

1) Spitting on the stove	.25
2) Smoking or spitting tobacco juice in the Hall	.50
3) Striking a member in the Hall through anger	5.00
4) Refusing any office	1.00
5) Improper remark aloud	.25
6) Throwing paper balls or any other missiles in the Hall	.50
7) Interrupting a member in discharge of his duty by hissing, coughing, or otherwise	1.00
8) Throwing water on member from window	.25
9) Sitting on the step-ladder in the hall	.25
10) Applauding with feet	.50
11) Lying or sitting on the floor	1.00
12) Ringing gong while society not in session	.25

The initiation fee in 1889 was \$10 denoting that the members must have been relatively wealthy, since that amount would be equivalent to \$50 today.

By 1889 the professional schools of pharmacy, Law, and Medicine had been established at the University and the requirement of compulsory membership in one of the Societies was abolished in that year. A revolution in debating was taking place on the campus and all over the country.

The advent of football struck the campus in 1888, and soon thereafter the Saturdays that had been devoted to debating were spent in watching a ball-carrier weave his way through the line.

The Tar Heel began publication in 1893 sponsored by the athletic association. In 1900 the automobile brought a remarkable means of going home on the weekend. In 1920 the radio broadcast the election of President Harding, and a new means of expression had made an inroad on the old school for debating.

In 1926 Al Jolson sang "Mamie" to eager hearers witnessing the first "talkie." It was hard for the Phi celebrating its one-hundredth anniversary in 1895 to begin to adjust to these new conditions. For a time it experienced growth. In 1910, eighty seven members of the Phi and ninety-three members of the Di held a joint banquet at the Old Commons.

Three years later the Phi reached an all-time high under the leadership of Kenneth C. Royall (later Secretary of the Army). Its 1913 membership rose to a gigantic 197 active members. After that peak, statistics are interesting to watch. There were 170 members in 1914,

150 in 1915, 112 in 1916, 112 in 1917, 90 in 1918, and 77 in 1919. It is a tribute to the leadership, nonetheless, that the slide was so gradual in the face of modern living. Following Royall as President of the Phi were William B. Umstead in 1915 (later U.S. Senator), Robert B. House in 1916 (now Chancellor of the University), Albert M. Coates in 1917 (now law professor and head of the Institute of Government), and Lee Carr in 1918 (now Superior Court Judge).

Added to its other difficulties the phi almost had to be abandoned because of the Influenza in 1919. According to the minutes the Society pulled through the crisis in a commendable manner, someone saying on campus: "The Phi Society is the only organization on the campus that has kept up the Old Carolina Spirit."

World War I was over, and a new era began. On April 19, 1919 a special committee reported on making the Phi similar to the lower House of the General Assembly. In the fall of 1919 new procedure was adopted and the Phi Society became the General Assembly of the Philanthropic Literary Society. The first speaker initiated some forty-nine members, and the spring of 1920 the Phi was definitely going strong with 160 members. Old ways carried over, and it was not until 1922 that the Society changed procedure to call members "representative" and assign them to counties. The Society functioned smoothly until the fall of 1926 when the University began repairs on the Hall in New East. During 1926-1927 the Society moved its meeting place to the freshman law classroom in Manning Hall. It was in that year that Kay Kyser asked and received the cooperation of the Phi in making the "cheerios" successful as a cheering group. Athletics and football in particular received more and more of the attention of the Phi and the Society sent a letter of thanks to W.R. Kenan for the gift of the new stadium at their meeting on November 19, 1926.

The Society returned to its newly repaired Hall on October 11, 1927, and that night voted down a resolution that all freshmen wear dink hats. The Hall was now similar and faced east and west, instead of north and south as it formerly did. A tragedy had occurred. In the process of repairing, the University had removed the grand old chairs and the handsome (?) carpet. The Hall was (bare?) row by comparison with its former lavish state. 1928 saw a resolution on the floor of the society to abolish the honor system. The minutes state that old members were greatly shocked and that there was a great disturbance in the Hall. After much debate the honor resolution was defeated unanimously. That same year was athletic one for national politics, and Mayne Albright (recent candidate for governor) led the Phi to vote in favor of Al Smith.

Campus affairs took the spotlight in the Society in 1929 and 1930. A resolution in the Phi on January 22, 1929, led to the establishment of the "daily" Tar Heel. Until then the Tar Heel had been a tri-weekly. On the night of March 25, 1930, a most interesting resolution came before the Society. The Phi balloted on its choice for the next President of the University. While member John Wilkinson (recent candidate for Senator) advocated Frank P. Graham, Professor R.D.W. Connor won the support of the Phi. That same year (1930) the Phi voted to support Josiah Bailey in his race for the Senate. And on the social side, the Phi reinstated the practice of having its own dance as it had done in earlier days.

Coeds were a topic of concern for the Phi in 1930. The campaign for their admission in the Society was being waged again, and this time it passed by a 19-8 vote. The first coeds to be initiated were Beatrice Crisfield, Katherine P. Wells, and Virginia Douglass on the night of April 29, 1930.

The Depression had hit the University as well as the nation, and membership dropped rapidly in the Society. There are frequent notations in the minutes about extensions of credit for dues and fees. But the Society kept going as did the University. The sales tax, Hitler, NRA, athletic passbook transfers, and purification of the *Buccaneer Magazine* were the principal debates. In 1935 a resolution came to the floor prohibiting Dave Clark, N.C. industrialist and critic of Dr. Frank Graham, from speaking on the University grounds. It was defeated. The depression's full force had hit, and poor attendance and poorly kept minutes spoke pointedly of the low ebb the Phi had fallen to in 1936.

A resurgence took hold in 1937 and the Phi on March 16, 1937, sponsored a plan for the Student Legislature. They defeated a proposal of Dean Bradshaw that the Phi be a representative body on the campus in contrast to its traditional open membership policy, and the elected Ruth Crowell Speaker pro-tem, the first woman to hold office.

World events now overshadowed the campus. The Society debated the Suedatenland problem, the "cash and carry" sale of war supplies, and lend-lease, and Roosevelt's purge of Southern political leaders. But there were lighter moments too. On October 3, 1939, this occurred on the floor of the Society. A resolution was made to establish a date bureau to pacify the seven sad sirens and other disconsolate females. It was momentarily halted in discussion, due to the fact that one member was unfamiliar with the subject matter. When discussion finally became general, another member thought maybe it would be a good idea to see the sirens first, a second wanted to invite them to the Phi, and a third, admitting he disliked women, objected. Finally the third member was appointed to make a personal study of each of the sirens and give a report at the next meeting. He thereupon requested a bodyguard and the Society appointed two for his protection.

In 1940 the Phi launched forth to expanded activities. The Phi now went on the radio with Speaker Phil Ellis leading the first debate on "Should the NC sales tax be abolished?" The old school of traditional debate still had power in the Society though, and one debate raged on the query, "Does wine or women have greater effect on men." It was decided that women have more effect. To the controversial year of 1940 was added another first in Phi history--Marian Igo became the first woman Speaker.

World War II came and enrollment dropped gradually at first and then enormously. The war had a definite effect on the Phi, and its influence on the campus sadly waned in 1941, 1942, and 1943. At the end of the of the spring quarter in 1943, it was decided that the Phi could not go on, and for the first time since the University closed in 1868, the Phi shut its doors. The Art Department and the Geology Department began using the Hall for Classroom demonstrations. With the end of World War II and the return of veterans by the thousands to the University in the fall of 1945, *Daily Tar Heel* Editor, Robert Morrison led a reorganization movement to reopen the Phi. The liberals were in control of the DI at the time, and the conservatives welcomed the opportunity to become a majority group on the Phi. As a result of this, thirty-two of the most influential campus leaders, including Student Body President Charlie Vance, met on November 13, 1945 to reopen the Phi. After that meeting the Society again functioned, but it was faced with a difficult transition period before it regained its pre-war standing. The student body was older with veterans constituting a majority. A vast majority of the students were in a hurry to get an education and get out. Debating and parliamentary procedures seemed a waste of time to them. The Phi's leaders were caught in a rush of a gigantic swirl and the Society almost went down before it got its feet on the ground. It was extremely difficult to get bills that would compete with a football starved student body who wanted to discuss Carolina's chances of being number "1" team in the nation seven days a week. Charlie Justice was new to the campus, the Veterans Association was now, a dozen new organizations were springing up--the *Daily Tar Heel* was swamped with requests to plug this or that organization's topic for discussion.

A broken tradition and a group of leaders struggling to weave the lost fabric of an organization constituted the Society in January 1946 when I came to Carolina. The Phi was discontented with the efforts of Speaker Jim Lackey to reinstate the Society to its pre-war status. An election was held in February of 1946. A. B. Smith became the new Speaker and the Society's ship of state lurched forward by spurts of energy and then lapsed into periods of despondency over the lack of interest by the campus and members. The one bright hope was the nucleus of new members. Their energy carried the Phi.

In the fall of 1946 the elected speaker, Jim Taylor, had entered law school, and the Phi in a spirited election named Robert Morrison as its new Speaker. Thereafter, due largely to the

unusual administrative and organizing ability of Morrison and his tireless energy, The Phi rose steadily under his leadership. He was elected Speaker three times in succession by the Society, a rare honor in phi history. To coordinate the efforts of the members Morrison instituted supper meetings in the Carolina Inn every Thursday evening. The membership of about twenty grew to know one another, and friendship became an integral part of the Society. The Phi was rebuilding and the campus began to feel its influence.

During the fall of 1946 and the spring of 1947, Society debates featured a number of guest speakers due to the fact that most of the members were still freshmen. The guest speakers got the argument rolling and the less experienced debaters then continued the argument. During this period debate topics were keyed to the sensationalism to stir campus interest. The Phi debated Communism, foreign policy toward Greece, labor unions, Jim Crow laws, raising veterans subsistence allowances, and the student registration system. A debate on the Carolina Magazine during this period was particularly important. The 104-year Magazine lost a vote of confidence in the phi, and several months later it was abolished in a campus referendum by the close vote of 504-500.

A movement got under way in the spring of 1947 to refurnish the Hall, the draperies were old and in tatters. The paintings, hung years before, gave a drab sameness to the Hall. The Society wanted new draperies, a carpet, desks, and chandeliers. It was a result of this movement to refurnish the Hall that one of the most unusual incidents in phi history occurred. During the summer session of 1947, Speaker Morrison decided to conduct a raffle of a Kaiser automobile to secure money for the Phi to refurnish the Hall. Notwithstanding the express disapproval of the State Attorney-General when consulted on the matter, the Speaker and the Speaker pro-tem Zum Brunnen went ahead with the raffle. When pressure was brought on these two Society officers by Student Body President Tom Eller and the Student Council, the raffle was called off and the phi sustained a \$65 loss. Morrison and Zum Brunnen subsequently reimbursed the phi for the loss in April 1948.

In the fall of 1947, I became Speaker of the phi, an honor I still cherish. The spring before the Phi had re-instituted the tradition of holding banquet. Chancellor House and State Auditor Bridges had addressed the members and their guests at the two spring banquets. The fall banquet was held in October and Gubernatorial candidate and State Treasurer Charles M. Johnson spoke to the Society. A second banquet was held in December when Senator Broughton gave an excellent address before the Society. The refurnishing of the Hall began in earnest with the installation of beautiful red draperies that fall, and the Phi secured office desks and a filing cabinet. Mrs. Albert Coates was of great value to the Society during these days of refurbishing. The portraits were rehung under her direction, and plaques containing biographical sketches were placed under the portraits. Debate raged over socialized medicine, public housing, price control, and the anti-lynching bill.

Speaker Zum Brunnen took over control of the Society in the winter of 1948 after one of the most colorful elections the Phi had had in years. Zum Brunnen beat Ernest House for the Speakership by one vote. A war scare caused the Society to debate heatedly universal military training and selective service. The admission of Negroes to the University was debated with passion and prejudice. But while the debates themselves went on, the Phi itself seethed under the administration of Zum Brunnen. As the end of his term approached, charges growing out of the automobile raffle were brought by the Society against both he and Morrison. They matter was settled to the satisfaction of all of their paying of the Phi's \$65 loss.

In the spring of 1948, the Phi elected an energetic and able leader in Ernest House. The spring with young man's fancies lightly turning to love is traditionally a difficult quarter to maintain interest in debating, but Speaker House kept the Phi on an even keel though the sailing was at times rough. He instituted a policy of bringing in more fraternity men, and the Phi benefited greatly. During 1946 and 1947 the number of fraternity men in the Phi was [last line of page 15] speakers provided the most exciting debate of the quarter. Poise and skill among members became more noticeable as a definite majority and minority group came into being in the Phi. A number of the old members were rising seniors, and the Phi had ten members out of Carolina delegation of twenty-four in the State Student Legislature in Raleigh in may 1948.

The Phi chose Robert Coulter as its Speaker for the fall of 1948. Coulter had brought honor to the Phi in the spring winning the Wiley P. Mangum debating medal. Campus issues were shoved aside temporarily while advocated and opponents battles over momentous questions evolving: Strengthening the Berlin Blockade, Civil Rights, and Is there a god? The argument over the existence of a God was the most heated Phi debate of the year. The Hall was filled with a large number of visitors and it was most difficult to preserve order. Questions from the floor rained down continuously upon the speakers as they tried to present their arguments. When the tumult died, two votes were taken. The Phi voted down a motion "questioning the existence of God." But by a vote of the entire audience, the motion passed.

With Speaker Sharpe at the helm, the winter quarter of 1949 began with an excellent debate on the expulsion of Tar Heel columnist Bill Robertson. The Phi agreed that he should be kept off the Tar Heel staff. Two other keen debates were on: Should publications be financed by subscription, and should the tuition at UNC be raised to \$150. The Phi defeated both. Speaker Sharpe re-instituted the traditional Phi-Di debates with one in the Phi Hall on February 8. Chancellor House, Dean Weaver, and Dean Wells served as judges with the Societies squaring off on the liquor question. The Phi upheld prohibition and won the decision of the judges 2-1. The state was absorbed in Governor Scott's campaign for two hundred million road bond issue as Bill Duncan took over the Speakership of the Society in the spring of 1949. The bond issue passed the Society by a close vote after much debate. The quarter marked the beginning of a new award on the campus--the Phi-Di Award to North Carolina's Outstanding Citizen. Phi members with their customary taste for food flocked to a joint banquet of the Societies. Senator Frank Graham became the first recipient of the award.

The fall of 1949 found the Phi in excellent condition. Before an audience that could not jam its way into the Phi Hall, R. Mayne Albright, the Speaker of 1930, inaugurated the New Speaker Graham Jones. The next five meetings had remarkable attendance, which filled the seventy-five seats in the Hall, and large attendances seemed likely to continue during the remainder of the quarter. Careful work and planning by the new Speaker and Critic Herman Sieber during the summer had paid off. But the real reason for the new enthusiasm displayed in the Phi seemed to lie in the incoming freshman class. Forty-one new members had been initiated. The vast majority of them were not veterans of a war, but eager students fresh from high school debating. With their advent came a new spirit to the society and new power recognized by the Daily Tar Heel with banner headlines "Phi Votes Against Tarnation Appropriation." The University was even considering a proposal to place a bronze plaque at the entrance of New East commemorating the 154th Anniversary of the Phi. But with the autumn of 1949 came the end of another era in pi history. Graduated were Emily Baker, Charles Britt, Robert Coulter, Bill Duncan, Winfred Ervin, and Ernest House. They had come into the Society in a period of transition when the Phi was

fighting for its very existence. They had grown with the Society and as their campus leadership became recognized so did the Society's stature increase.

EPILOGUE

It is one of the joys of an older member to tell the younger members of the historic past of the Society, then see their faces beam as they learn in this Hall the history of the University, watch them go through their initiation rites and receive the handshake of friendship from their fellow members, make their first nervous speech almost hiding behind the rostrum, display their first knowledge of parliamentary procedure, attend their first Phi banquet, engage in their first Phi party, stride down the campus paths proudly wearing their Phi pin, and then watch them handle questions from the floor, become skilled in their arguments, get their first minor office, and finally climb in the eyes of the Society until they become Speaker.

The training ground that originated in 1795 has had a river of students passing through it. It humbles one to look back at that great sparkling river, but it gives courage too to know that no river is ever dammed for long, for if it is, it will burst forth to new power and sweep all before it. So is the Phi Society.

Written by John E. Giles, Speaker 1947

October 29, 1949--completed

NOTES

1. The original minutes for the years 1795-1797 do not disclose that the Phi was called anything other than "the Society" until the night of August 29, 1796 when members voted to adopt the name 'Philanthropic Society.' Dr. Battle in writing the 'History of the University,' according to prof. R.D.W. Connor did not have access to these first minutes. However, Dr. Battle refers to the Society as the "Concord Society" until it changed its name to the "Philanthropic Society."
2. A fiction has grown up around Thomas Benton who was expelled from the Society in 1799. It is stated that when Benton was asked for his portrait by the Phi he used harsh language in refusing their request. But Benton was re-instated in the Society in 1826 after he became a United States Senator, and when the Society wrote him asking for funds, he wrote back a most pleasant letter. The letter reprinted in part seems to indicate that there is no truth to the alleged violent refusal.

Senate Chamber
December 18, 1832

Gentlemen:

I have the honor to state that it will give me pleasure in contributing to the laudable object of your Society, say about \$20. Wishing you and the gentlemen of the Society every prosperity, I have the honor to be

Yours truly,
s. Thomas Benton

3. I reprint the letter of Vice-President William Rufus King because a part of it has at one time been used in the initiation rites of the Society. At the time he was a United States Senator.

Washington City

4th April 1838

Gentlemen:

I write you from a sick chamber having been confined for some time by some indisposition from which I am but slowly recovering. This will I trust satisfactorily account for my not having returned an answer to your kind and flattering letter. The estimation in which I am held by the members of the Philanthropic Society, as evidence by their request, will ever be to me a source of pride and gratification. To ascertain the honor and advance the prosperity of that Institution, constituted at one period of my life, the strongest feeling of my nature; it entwined itself around every fiber of my heart, and stimulated all my energies. Time and diversified pursuits have weakened, but have not extinguished that feeling. I still exult in the success of the white Badge; nor even in the balmy days of Rome's power and grandeur did the 'I am a Roman citizen' command more confidence and respect than 'I am a member of the Philanthropic Society' does for me. It has been, is and I trust ever will be a source guaranteed of honor and moral worth.

I comply with great pleasure with the request of the Society, shall sit at the artists home, and so soon as the painting is finished shall transmit it by the most secure conveyance which can be obtained.

With the highest respect
I am Gentlemen your
Obedient Servant
s. William R. King

4. An interesting motion was made on the floor of the Phi in 1842. It was moved that permission from the faculty to go hunting be not a valid excuse for absence from the Society.
5. The Societies petitioned the Trustees for a ballroom in 1846. Dancing was frowned on then, and being politically astute they suggested that a place was needed for meetings of the newly founded Alumni Association. The Trustees approved the idea in 1849, and Smith Hall (now Playmakers Theatre) was erected in 1851.
6. These fines listed in the bylaws of the Phi in 1866 had been stricken from the list of fines of 1889

Going to the stove without permission	1.25
Electioneering	20.00
Whittling in the Hall	.50
Declaiming with stick in hand	.25
Improper vote	.25
Making signs to another	.25

7. When Charles B. Aycock was President in 1877 he appointed a three-member committee to write letters soliciting the twenty portraits which the Phi obtained during that period. The committee composed of F.D. Winston, John M. Manning, and Robert H. Davis. A listing of the Phi portraits which the Society now has is included in the minutes of November 7, 1946.
8. It was a matter of interest to me that Josephus Daniels, Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of the Navy and great North Carolinian, became a member of the Phi on June 3, 1884.

9. The agreement which the Phi and the Library made at the time of the donation of the Phi Library to the University is contained in the minutes of the Society for the month of April 1886. One provision stipulated that all library books would contain a label denoting the gift.
10. Governor J.C.B. Ehringhaus greatly cherished his membership in the Phi, and he once told me with great pride that he was President of the Phi in 1900.
11. The first resolution for the admission of coeds to the Phi was placed on the floor on September 28, 1926. It was debated in the second reading on October 5, 1926 and defeated 26-19. A resolution was passed that night to allow coeds to witness the initiation of new members.
12. The interesting explanation for the University's action in reducing the Phi Hall (and likewise the Di Hall) in size in 1926 may lie in the personal animosity of the President. Professor Linker, who was once a member of the Di, says that President Chase took an unfavorable attitude toward the Societies.
13. The present Phi pin was designed by member James S. MacNider, Jr. in cooperation with the Balfour Co. in 1946. MacNider's father was a member of the Society in the early 1900's, and he loaned the Society his pin to design the new one. MacNider Jr. was also a member of the ATO fraternity and that accounts for the resemblance of the Phi pin to the ATO pin.