

**Mu-Missouri**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: April 15, 1909
* Location: Columbia, MO
* Region: 5

**History:**

In 1839, the Missouri Legislature passed the Geyer Act to establish funds for a state university. It would be the first public university west of the Mississippi River. To secure the university, the citizens of Columbia and Boone County pledged $117,921 in cash and land to beat out five other central Missouri counties for the location of the state university. The land on which the university was eventually constructed was just south of Columbia's downtown and owned by James S. Rollins. As the first public university in the Louisiana Purchase, the school was shaped by Thomas Jefferson's ideas about public education. In 1870 the institution was granted land-grant college status under the Morrill Act of 1862.

In 1908 there were two women’s fraternities at Missouri: Kappa Kappa Gamma and Pi Beta Phi. A group of women was interested in affiliating with a Fraternity, but due to competition between the two established Fraternities and apparent mismanagement of the Fraternity system on campus, the women longed for a different solution. They believed that fraternity women should be leaders and helpers in all student activities and organizations, and that organizations should be democratic.

These women decided they did not want to organize publicly or in any way attract attention as they did not want to have any name if it could not be Delta Gamma. From the first chapter letter, published in the July 1909 *ANCHORA*: “‘And why,’ you ask, ‘did we hope to ‘make’ Delta Gamma?’ After long and weighty deliberations over well-thumbed copies of Baird’s Manual and Ida Shaw Martin’s Sorority Handbook, we concluded that if Delta Gamma would have us we would aspire to Delta Gamma.”

They chose five patronesses who consented to chaperon the chapter once it obtained a charter. These patronesses were Mrs. O.M. Stewart, Mrs. Philbrick, Mrs. Scoggin, Mrs. Hedrick and Mrs. Gordon. Miss Denny, Mrs. Gordon’s sister. Miss Breed was their constant friend and adviser. Later, President Hill and Professors Manley, Loeb, Fairchild, Pickard and Brown were consulted. Doctor Stewart and Professor Philbrick were fraternity men and were of unfailing help and comfort in all the periods of stress. Not until they were positive that a committee was coming to investigate did they tell others of the organization.

In April 1908, Irene Scrutchfield wrote to Grace Telling, Sigma-Northwestern, a friend of Miss Breed, for information and advice. At her suggestion, the women wrote to Council, then convened at Chicago and gained the promise of Miss Smith that delegates would visit us in the fall.

Margarethe Sheppard, Sigma-Northwestern, Grand Treasurer, and Grace Abbott, Kappa-Nebraska, Editor, came in November, December and January. Finally on January 4, 1909, Miss Sheppard and Harriet Hughes, Omega-Wisconsin came. They were entertained at Read Hall and met secretly at various places. The women were examined, but because it rained the entire time they were there, the women did not know whether to feel encouraged after the investigators left.

On April 15, 1909, came the telegram; “Charter granted. Love and congratulations from Grand Council.” Delta Gamma had never granted a charter in so short a time and no local sorority at Missouri had ever affiliated with a national sorority without first being a local group.

Installation of Mu chapter of Delta Gamma Fraternity was held May 7-8, 1909. Rose Smith, Upsilon- Stanford, Grand President, and Margarethe Sheppard Ferris, Sigma-Northwestern, were in charge of the ceremony, and were assisted by Grace Clow, Villa Sprague and Ethel Emerson of Iota-Illinois. Installation was at the home of Mrs. Stewart. The 10 upper-class women were initiated the first evening. The next day, Mrs. Helen Lovel Million, Xi-Michigan, and Vera Hoagland, Phi-Colorado, arrived, and that evening the other six women were initiated at Mrs. Philbrick’s home. Afterward, and Installation Banquet was held at The Gordon. The women chose Mu as it stood for Missouri University, and for Margarethe Sheppard.

It was publicized in 1914 that the first fraternity chapter sweetheart was Mary Percival of Mu. She was elected Pi Kappa Alpha Sweetheart.

For the first 11 years, the chapter lived in rented homes. Then in 1920, a beautiful white colonial home which held 22 girls was purchased. In 1926, it was remodeled to house 36. Then on the day the Christmas vacation started in December 1932, “the dear old colonial house on Providence Road” caught on fire, and only the walls were left standing. The girls and the chapter both suffered heavy losses. However, by the beginning of the second semester, the alumnae association had procured a lease on a practically new fraternity house across the street. Here the chapter lived while waiting for the new home. The plans, the financing, and the construction occupied most of the free time of the alumnae corporation board and its building committee for about four years. On January 1, 1937, the house was completed, and a group of 42 excited girls moved in.

In August 2017, Mu moved into a brand-new chapter house. Although the previous house was much beloved, the new house is better equipped to suit the needs of the chapter.