

**Phi-Colorado**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: June 12, 1886
* Location: Boulder, CO
* Region: 7

**History:**

On March 14, 1876, the Colorado territorial legislature passed an amendment to the state constitution that provided money for the establishment of the University of Colorado in Boulder, the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, and the Colorado Agricultural College in Fort Collins. Two cities competed for the site of the University of Colorado: Boulder and Cañon City. The consolation prize for the losing city was to be home of the new Colorado State Prison. Cañon City was at a disadvantage as it was already the home of the Colorado Territorial Prison.

On June 12, 1886, with the assistance of Omega-Wisconsin, Phi chapter of Delta Gamma was installed at the University of Colorado with seven charter members, becoming the second sorority on the CU campus.The seven charter members were: Wilburtine Teeters Worden, Carolyn “Carrie” Sewall, Jennie “Jan” Sewall, Hortense Whiteley Hellems, Maimie Johnson Pease, Margaret Johnson and Ella Tyler Whiteley. It was a venture for the Fraternity to expand into the “far west” and Boulder was seen as a frontier town. At the time, there were no chapters between Phi and Sigma-Northwestern.

The first Phi chapter president was Jennie Sewall, daughter of the first University president. A charter member recounted their Initiation, noting for the first time in Fraternity records that initiates were clad in white: “white flannel, elegant, but warm in June heat.”

The 15th Fraternity Convention was hosted by Phi chapter in Boulder in April 1907, and chapter members took a week off school to coordinate its success. It rained the entire time, except when it was snowing. Visitors were housed in the Beta Theta Pi and Sigma Alpha Epsilon houses and teas were held by nearly all of the fraternity and sorority houses for attendees.

During the 1930s, spring formals were held in the house – with carpets rolled up to make room for a dance floor. In the 1940s, before World War II, formals were held in the ballroom in the Citizens National Bank building.

War service was of great importance to Phi chapter. One of the most significant contributions made by Phi was the establishment of the Delta Gamma House in Holland for orphaned and sick children during World War I, founded by Jessie Roberson Kingery, Rho-Syracuse, Phi affiliate. The house stayed open for orphans through World War II. At the time of Delta Gamma’s 50th anniversary, Kingery also directed the endowment campaign, which made the Delta Gamma Student Loan Fund what it is today.

National officers of Delta Gamma Fraternity ascended on Phi chapter for its March 19, 1958 Founders Day. Perhaps it was the draw of the beautiful Phi chapter house and its newly acquired annex, but President Helen Million Preston, Xi-Michigan; First Vice-President, Margaret Richardson Hay, Upsilon-Stanford; Second Vice-President, Maisie Clugston Groves, Alpha Phi-British Columbia; Laura Betram Dillon, Zeta-Albion, Secretary; Helen Bradford Anderson, Mu-Missouri, Treasurer; and Executive Secretary Roberta Abernathy, Epsilon-Ohio State all attended and praised Phi for its project of recording books for use by blind students. Any book needed was recorded in Denver by Phi members and loaned to the student for use, free of charge, for as long as was needed.

By 1955, the chapter was holding formals in hotels and country clubs in Boulder, Denver or in the Eldorado Springs dance hall.

In the fall of 1960, Phi was the first National Panhellenic Conference chapter to host an Austrian student for a year. Receiving free room and board, chapter members welcomed Miss Roswitha Stoeckl as a houseguest. They introduced her to the American way of life and learned from her the way of life of the people of Austria. She was sponsored through the International Education program of the Delta Gamma Foundation, started in 1945. Continuing the tradition of “adopting” a Foster Parents’ Plan child, Phi members once again adopted a young girl in 1961. This child was 9-year-old Lee Suk King from China. The chapter’s $15 a month payment for a year provided Suk King with a cash grant for her school fees plus food, clothing and medical care.

Chapter retreats were popular throughout the years, and during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the chapter held retreats at Camp Cheley in Estes Park.

On April 29, 1994 Phi chapter made a $30,000 gift in memory of a sister. It was established as the Amanda McDonald Memorial Scholarship. In 2011, the chapter established the Patricia Fosdick Thinger Honorary Scholarship, in honor of the 1957 initiate of Phi.

In 2008, the Phi House Corporation contributed to the renovations of the Fraternity Executive Offices in Columbus, OH.

In 1986 Phi celebrated its Centennial. On October 23, 2011 the chapter celebrated its 125th anniversary at the University of Colorado.

Phi chapter has received numerous accolades and awards over the years, including Fraternity awards like the Parnassus, Outstanding Chapter and the Patricia Peterson Danielson Award. Today, Phi continues the work and vision of the seven young women, who, in 1886, set forth to establish a chapter of strong, intelligent women who would go into the world and serve as role models and to others.

In 1901, the east side of the Fulton Terrace was rented for Phi chapter, becoming the first residence for the chapter. The chapter first held its meetings in a room in Old Main, and later upstairs in the First National Bank building. Chapter housing moved two more times; once in 1904 with the rental of a house at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Street, and again in 1906 to a larger house at the corner of Twelfth and College Ave. Phi at last was able to purchase its current chapter house from Dr. Walter H. Nichols, a UC faculty member, in the fall of 1908.

The original house faced east on Twelfth Street and only had five bedrooms, but that was sufficient housing for the 14 members in the chapter. Over the years, the house has been remodeled more than nine times, expanding as membership grew. The most significant remodel occurred in 1931 when the main entry was relocated to the other side of the house, changing the address to its present-day 1128 Pennsylvania Avenue.

The husband of an alumna Vera Allison Huntington, Glenn H. Huntington, donated his services as an architect and drew the plans. Other alumnae husbands assisted in the large remodel – Fred Folsom, husband of Mary Elwell Folsom, contributed all legal work in forming the first “house corporation”; John McKenna, a banker, husband of Olivia Cleveland McKenna, advanced the “house corporation” $3,000 without interest. These three women plus Jessie Fitzpatrick and Jessie Wharton Roberson Kingery (initiated at Rho but a transfer to Phi and graduate of CU) made up the first House Corporation.

The house was remodeled in the Tudor Revival style and went from two stories to four and was referred to as “the newest and finest Greek letter house…on the University of Colorado campus.” In the fall of 1933, a fire caused severe damage to the interior of the house, but thankfully all 40 members were safe.

In 1936, when Phi celebrated its 50th anniversary, four of the original seven charter members were present to see the house in its full glory, including Jane and Carolyn Sewell, Wilbertine Teeters Worden and Mary Johnson Pease. Neighboring properties were purchased over the years as annexes to the house for the ever-growing membership. In 1952, Phi purchased property adjacent to the chapter house onTwelfth Street. In 1983, Phi purchased a second annex on Twelfth Street, adjacent to the other annex. In 2002, this property was sold.

With opportunities for chapter members to enroll in the university’s Semester At Sea program, and many senior women desiring to live out, Phi found itself in a position of closing the second Annex for a semester. Ultimately House Corporation decided it was prudent to sell this Annex and use the funds to improve the infrastructure of the historic 1128 Pennsylvania house. Phi chapter’s house is Delta Gamma Fraternity’s oldest continually occupied chapter house.

In June 2008 Phi celebrated its 100th anniversary of the chapter house on Pennsylvania Ave.