**Kappa State History**

Source: A History of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society in Kappa State, Arkansas

From March 8, 1935 to December 31, 1958

Organized by Mrs. Norma S. Bristow, National President

Chartered: January 26, 1938

*(This entry to the archive is an exact reproduction of the information in the source. This editor will make clarifications where appropriate in italics which are not a part of the original entry to the source.)*

The year 1934 was eventful as far as the history of Delta Kappa Gamma in Arkansas is concerned, for it was at the convention of the National Society of Delta Kappa Gamma in Hot Springs, Arkansas, June 1934, that three Arkansas women were initiated into the Society. They were Dr. Flora M. Gillentine, Opal Albright (now Mrs. Pat Herrington), and Annie Griffey. These three served as the “hub” for the organization which was later perfected.

“Thirteen” has been a lucky number for the State of Arkansas and Delta Kappa Gamma, for on March 8, 1935, Mrs. Norma Smith Bristow, national president, organized Kappa State with thirteen founders—the real key women of the state. They were Frances Bailey, Mrs. Lelia Conte, Dr. Gillentine, Annie Griffey, Beryl Henry, Alma Keys, Willie Lawson, Constance Mitchell, Mrs. Bessie Moore, Edna Rudolph, Rosa Walker, and Pearl Williamson. Opal Albright was attending Columbia University at that time and was not present for the initiation.

The first year was of orientation with Annie Griffey serving as president. In June, 1937, Mamie Sue Bastian, national president, appointed Dr. Flora M. Gillentine as president of Kappa State.

The first annual convention was held in Little Rock, November 5, 1938, with Dr. Maycie Southall, national president, as guest. In this first year of active organization, four chapters were organized—Alpha at El Dorado, Beta at Texarkana, Gamma at Little Rock, and Delta at Hot Springs. By the close of the next year, with the convention being held in El Dorado, a fifth chapter was recognized—Epsilon at Pine Bluff. Miss Bernita Minkwitz, national treasurer, was the convention guest.

Mrs. Grace Bardelon Agate, national president, was guest of the third annual convention in Texarkana, March 8 – 9, 1040. At this convention Dr. Gillentine, in presenting her annual report, stated: “We have organized eight chapters during a period of two and one half years; namely, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta at Blytheville, Eta at Fort Smith, and Theta at Conway. We have now a membership of 166 – a healthy growth I think you’ll admit.”

“Our chapters have carried out the programs presented by the national organization plus programs of their own initiation. We have presented two flags to the national organization and one pioneer doll – Julia Ann Ethridge Lacy….”

Mrs. Mattie Bryant of El Dorado was elected president. During this term of office there was no expansion, but attempts were made at stabilization.

Dr. Emma Reinhardt, national president, was guest at the convention held in Pine Bluff April 11-12, 1941, and Dr. Annie Webb Blanton was the convention guest a Hot Springs March 13-14, 1942. It was at this convention that a government bond for $500 was authorized to be purchased from the Scholarship Fund. The first State Scholarship Committee was elected on a staggered term as follows: Mrs. Iola Field, 8 years (1950); Mrs. Minnie Hall, 6 years (1948); Edna Rudolph, 4 years (1946); and Mrs. Ida Reeves, 2 years (1944). Mrs. Claire T. White of Little Rock, was elected president.

War years—these were the years during the two terms of Claire White. Members spent a great deal of time giving first one service after another. Travel was almost an impossibility but during the four years, nine chapters were organized and two more made ready to go. They were Iota at Fayetteville, Kappa at Walnut Ridge, Lambda at Arkadelphia, Mu at Benton, Nu at Russellville, Xi at Batesville, Omicron at Newport, Pi at Jonesboro, Rho at Fordyce. Sigma at Brinkley, and Tau at Forrest City were organized in September, 1946, by Mrs. White since she has made all the arrangements before going out of office.

Two splendid conventions were held under the leadership of Mrs. White—one in Little Rock, April 8, 1949 (sic) *(1944)*, and second in Conway, May 11, 1946. Dr. Margaret Stroh, national president, was convention guest in 1944 and Mrs. Dorothea Meagher, national vice-president, was guest in 1946.

During the years 1942 – 1946 additional government bonds were purchased, the state history prepared, a page in the A.E.A. Journal was devoted to Delta Kappa Gamma News, and the first volume on pioneer women known as “Pioneers in Petticoats” was published. It was decided during this time that lists of women teachers qualified to serve as chairmen and members of A.E.A. committees should be sent to the A.E.A. officers. As a result of this, Delta Kappa Gamma has been well represented on committees from the year 1944 to date.

Two other important activities were carried on, one being the study of all scholarships offered at the many colleges in this state. This report was presented in the A.E.A. Journal as was the second study – that of a summary of a questionnaire on Teacher Recruitment presented to high school students. *(note: this information about the collaboration of Kappa State with Arkansas Education Association appeared to lead to early career teacher support and to the support of women educators across the state.)*

Mrs. Hazel L. Dabney, Pine Bluff, was elected president in 1946 and re-elected in 1948 when the convention was held in Little Rock, March, 1948, at which time Dr. M. Margaret Stroh, national executive secretary, was convention guest.

During the four years of this administration, Teacher Legislation and Selective Recruitment served as the main center of interest. Dr. M. Margaret Stroh, spent two weeks in Arkansas in March, 1949, speaking before professional and lay groups, high school and college students in the interest of Selective Teacher Recruitment. This did much to place Delta Kappa Gamma to the front throughout the entire state.

Kappa State sponsored a bill to increase the number of school days of attendance from 100 to 150. This became our first piece of legislation. During this time the chapters were studying the School Laws of Arkansas and making recommendations for certain changes or revisions. Much interest was observed as this study went on and as the result a cash prize was presented to Chi Chapter for the most interesting report of the study made by the chapter.

Chapters were urged to organize F.T.A. Clubs *(Future Teachers of America)* in their High Schools as a part of the Selective Recruitment program. There are today 45 F.T.A. clubs sponsored by Delta Kappa Gamma chapters. To further the interest and to recruit more young people to enter the teaching profession a $50 award was made in the spring of 1950 to the most outstanding F.T.A. club member in Arkansas. The State Executive Committee of the F.T.A. and a Committee from A.E.A. Future Teacher Committee and Delta Kappa Gamma set up the rules and regulations for this award.

During Mrs. Dabney’s administration a long anticipated State Scholarship became effective. A State Scholarship for the amount of $150 was offered for the first time in the spring of 1948 to Lillian Barton of Pi Chapter in Jonesboro. Miss Barton began work on her Masters Degree at St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri.

In 1949 two scholarships were awarded – making it possible to help two members. The $150 scholarship, known as the Flora M. Gillentine Scholarship, was awarded to Chrystobel Pullen of Glenwood, a state member. She attended Henderson State Teachers College at Arkadelphia doing undergraduate work. Mrs. Bess Townsend of Lambda Chapter at Arkadelphia was awarded a $100 scholarship. She attended North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, Texas, where she worked on her Masters Degree.

Upon recommendation of the State Scholarship committee, a third scholarship of $100 was set up to be awarded to an outstanding college student in her junior or senior year and planning to teach in Arkansas. This scholarship has been named the Annie Griffey Scholarship and was awarded for the first time in the spring of 1950.

District Conferences, authorized at the 1946 convention, were held for the first time in the spring of 1947. Five conferences were held at Fort Smith, Forrest city, Newport, Little Rock and Prescott with 200 in attendance. In 1949, conferences were held in Magnolia, Walnut Ridge, Little Rock, Harrison, and Marianna, with a record attendance of 230.

The year 1948-1949 saw the first printed KAPPA STATE NEWS with Mrs. Eva Fearnside and Miss Katye Lou Russell of Gamma Chapter serving as co-editors. The NEWS was well received and it was recommended that it be continued. The 1949- 1950 KAPPA NEWS was edited be Mrs. Ethel Teach and Mrs. Tula Toney of Chi Chapter as co-editors.

Kappa State is a member of the Arkansas Legislative Assembly and of the Council of Status on Women.

During the years of 1946 – 50 the following chapters were organized: Upsilon at Prescott; Phi, a Pulaski County Chapter; Chi at Harrison; Psi at Camden; Omega at Marianna; Alpha Alpha at Helena; Alpha Beta at Magnolia; Alpha Gamma, as southwest Arkansas chapter; Alpha Delta at Hope; Alpha Epsilon at Marked Tree; Alpha Zeta at Wilson; Alpha Eta at North little Rock.

Membership has increased to 884 with 31 chapter.

The 1950 convention, which marks the fifteenth anniversary of Kappa State, was held in Pine Bluff, April 29 – 30, with Miss Birdella Ross, national president, as convention guest.

At the 1950 convention of Kappa State Mrs. Gladys E. Johnson, who had served as state treasurer for six years, was elected president. She was re-elected at eh 1951 convention held in Fort Smith in April. Because of the change made by National, state officers were now to be chosen in odd numbered years and national officers in even numbered years and Mrs. Johnson’s first term was for one year only.

The sponsoring by Kappa State of a foreign exchange student and thereby enabling the Society to become a member of the Board of the Foundation for the international Exchange of Students at the University of Arkansas was begun about this time and continued through the next biennium. These exchange students were invited to attend both chapter and state-wide meetings—making great contributions and in turn receiving much from their contacts with members of Delta Kappa Gamma in Arkansas.

In 1951 Delta Kappa gamma of Arkansas was invited to participate in the National Citizenship Conference held in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Gladys Johnson first represented the organization at this conference. In the ensuing years Kappa State was represented by the following: 1952 by Christine Poindexter; 1953 by Mrs. Lois W. Thomas; and Mrs. Mildred Williamson; in 1954 by Mrs. Hattie Lewis and Willie Price; in 1955 and 1956 Mrs. Ida Ruth Reeves has represented the society. Citizenship programs were given and Citizenship or Constitution Day was celebrated in many communities sponsored by Delta Kappa Gamma over the state.

The district meetings of 1952 were held in Conway, Jonesboro, and Magnolia. One of the scholarship awards of 1952 went to Mrs. Lillian Sorrels, state parliamentarian. The $200 was used to d graduate work in library science at Peabody College for Teachers. The other scholarship of $150 was awarded to Minnie Foster, Zeta Chapter who worked toward the requirements for the Bachelor’s Degree at Arkansas State College, Jonesboro.

The first and second annual workshops of Kappa State were held at Hardison Hall on Petit Jean Mountain in August of 1951 and 1952 respectively.

Mrs. Gladys Johnson, president, and Mrs. Hazel Dabney, Executive secretary represented the state at the National Convention held in Chicago, August 11-18, 1952.

Chapters added in 1951-1953 were Alpha Theta, Franklin and Logan counties; and Alpha Iota, Marion and Baxter counties.

The 1953 Kappa State Convention was held in Little Rock and Mrs. Lois W. Thomas, Lambda, was elected president. Dr. M. Margaret Stroh was a guest at this convention. The chief project adopted was the raising of the Silver Anniversary Scholarship Fund. As a result of the undertaking Arkansas raised $1267.50 as her quota. The 1953 workshop was held on Mt. Magazine with Mrs. Maria Pierce, National President, as guest. This year the Southeast Regional was held in New Orleans and Kappa State had present Mrs. Lois Thomas, Mrs. Gladys Johnson, Willie Wilson Price, and Mrs. Ova Reynolds.

Russellville, Blytheville and Hot Springs were hostess to the 1954 district meetings. During the year Alpha Kappa Chapter was organized by Delta of Hot springs on April 10, 1954. This was the year of the Silver Anniversary Convention in Boston and Mrs. Lois Thomas and Mrs. Gladys Johnson attended from Kappa State. Willie Wilson Price was chosen as recipient of Arkansas Silver Anniversary Scholarship which was $1350. She began work toward her doctorate in 1954-55. The summer’s workshop was held at Mather Lodge, Petit Jean.

Pine Bluff was hostess to the state convention on April 22 -23, 1955. National President, Mrs. Edna McGuire Boyd, was guest and spoke at the banquet. The same state officers were elected for the Biennium except the Treva Duncan of Eta was chosen to replace Willie Wilson Price as vice president.

Mrs. Lois Thomas and Mrs. Gladys Johnson together with five others attended Southeast Regional Conference held in Charleston, South Carolina. At this meeting invitations were extended to Regional to meet in Hot Springs in 1957. J. Elizabeth Jones, Regional Director was a guest at the summer workshop held at Mather Lodge Petit Jean. The project chosen for the year 1955 was raising money to build Headquarters Building in Austin, Texas, and Arkansas raised her quota of $2.50 per member.

District meetings were at Little Rock, Marianna, and Camden in the spring of 1956. During this year the Headquarters Building was completed and Mrs. Lois Thomas and Mrs. Gladys Johnson attended the dedication ceremony. It was in this year that the term “National Convention: became “International” because of the expansion program. On August 6-10, 1956, the first International meeting was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, with Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Johnson in attendance. Nine others from Kappa State were also present.

Mrs. Helen K. Henderson, Kappa Chapter, was elected president when the streamlined state convention was held in Little Rock on March 29-30, 1957. Mrs. Elizabeth Buck was elected first vice president and Julia McKemie was second vice president. Recording secretary was Mrs. Mildred Pemberton; treasurer, Mrs. Robbie Burkett; Parliamentarian, Mrs. Lottie McCracken; and executive secretary, Mrs. Lois Thomas.

Chapters added from 1953 – 1957 were Alpha Kappa, Polk County; Alpha Lambda, Jefferson County; Alpha Mu, Little Rock; Alpha Nu, Ashley County; Alpha Xi, Searcy and White County; Alpha Omicron, Benton County; Alpha Pi, Fort Smith (a division of Eta); and Alpha Rho, Van Buren and Crawford Counties.

In 1950 Kappa State had 884 members with 31 chapters. In 1957 there were 1250 members and 40 chapters.

One of the outstanding accomplishments of Kappa State was a successful regional conference in Hot Springs on August 7 – 19 (sic) 1957, when 422 women from 20 states met to promote the work of Delta Kappa Gamma. Miss Madge Rudd, regional director, attended. Convention chairman was Mrs. Gladys Johnson.

The publication of the book PIONEER WOMEN TEACHERS OF ARKANSAS *(published 1955; copy in the state archive)* was directed by Mrs. Ida Ruth Reeves, alpha Chapter, who gave many years to the gathering of the material and served as chairman of the committee on Pioneer Women Teachers. She was assisted in editing by Inez couch, Mrs. Eva Fearnside, Mrs. Turner, and Mrs. Helen Henderson.

During 1957 Mrs. Gladys Johnson joined the staff of International Headquarters at Austin, Texas, as International Treasurer.

This is the second attempt at compilation of a history of Kappa State. Work has been done by a committee appointed by President Helen Henderson. Members of the committee were Mrs. Irma Adair, Margie Ellison, Mrs. Lottie McCracken, Mrs. Mary McClendon, and Chairman Julia McKemie. They were assisted by Mrs. Margarette Martin, Mrs. Mildred Pemberton, and Annie Ruth Sample.