

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 09 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House
other names/site number Illinois Beta Chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon

2. Location

street & number 211 E. Daniel Street (E61 on MPD key map) N/A not for publication
city, town Champaign N/A vicinity
state Illinois code IL county Champaign code 019 zip code 61820

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Fraternity and Sorority Houses at the Urbana-Champaign
Campus of the University of Illinois
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
[Signature] Date Dec. 15, 1989
Signature of certifying official
ILLINOIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENCY
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Beth Boland 2/22/90
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Education-related housing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Education-related housing**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/CraftsmanPrairie School

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls brickroof asphaltother stucco; limestone**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Craftsman-Prairie School influenced Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House is situated in a campus residential neighborhood of dwellings similar in size and type. The building, located on the southwest corner of Daniel and Third Streets, defines the northeast corner of Washington ("Frat") Park, and is across Daniel Street from Kappa Sigma Fraternity House (NR listed). A low-pitched gable roof with wide eaves and exposed rafters extends over the length of the T-plan building, with flat roofs covering the two extensions which create the cross-bar of the "T" on the facade. Constructed of vitrified brick with unusual stucco window framing, the Sigma Alpha Epsilon House's Craftsman and Prairie elements make it unique among other fraternity and sorority houses which were typically built in the revival styles. Except for minor interior changes to meet building code standards, the structural and historic integrity of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House has been retained.

Exterior

The facade of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House is divided into three bays in a symmetrical arrangement forming, along with balustraded terraces at each end, the cross-bar of the T-shaped plan. The central entrance bay is distinguished by a dominating porch. Four corner piers extend above the flat porch roof which has exposed rafters and a wide overhanging eave. Brick piers, solid rails, and stair walls are capped in limestone. The central entrance bay rises a story past the two end bays, and is topped with a stepped parapet wall concealing the end of the low-pitched gable roof behind. The fraternity crest is in limestone relief at the attic level. The end bays, two stories tall, have pier-like extensions beyond the roofline at the corners. Windows, originally wide one-over-one double hung, have been replaced with casements, but original openings and unusual wide stucco framing remain unchanged.

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The east and west elevations are nearly identical in composition with terraces, enclosed by wooden balustrades and brick piers capped with limestone, extending the facade at the ends of the two story section of the cross-bar of the "T." Canvas awnings cover the terraces. The terraces are accessible from stairs extending to the south on the east and west elevations, or from the interior. More of the basement level is exposed on the east elevation, with direct exterior access to the lower level on this side. The second story of the cross-bar extension is topped by a flat roof with a wide overhanging eave and exposed rafters like the entrance porch. Most of the windows have been replaced with one-over-one double hung sash as the original windows were. The three story "T" stem is constructed of brick with a stucco third floor, punctured by evenly spaced double hung windows. The low-pitched asphalt shingled gable roof extends with exposed rafters under the wide eaves.

The rear (south) elevation replicates the parapet on the facade, and is broken with nine double hung windows, three narrow bays wide. A narrow iron fire escape runs the length of the central bay.

Interior

The main entry vestibule opens onto a large paneled (modern) reception hall. The living room, directly south of the entry, occupies the majority of the "T" stem. Bands of casement windows with window seats below, line the east and west walls. Craftsman influence is seen in the window seat bases which have wide bands of oak with 3 large dentil-like blocks at each post between the seating units. At the south end of the living room is a wide fireplace constructed of green glazed Roman brick, reflecting a mix between Craftsman and Prairie styles. The ceiling of the living room is hipped, as it is in all first floor spaces. Structural steel I-beams, made evident from fire damage, are encased with wood as they were originally. The beams run north-south on the first floor, and east-west on the second floor.

To the east of the reception hall is the library with its built-in bookcases flanking a window and window seat on the north and a fireplace of green-glazed Roman brick on the south. A multi-light door framed by paired windows, leads to the east terrace. On the west end opposite the library is the billiard room, now used as a television room. This room mirrors the library except for the fireplace with bookcases, and also has a multi-light door

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framed by paired double hung windows leading the west terrace. Both rooms have wide oak woodwork dividing the wall horizontally two-thirds of the way up.

The basement contains two bedrooms in the cross bar of the "T" and the dining room with kitchen behind in the stem. The dining room retains the original oak baseboard and two-thirds height woodwork, in addition to the oak trim surrounding the beams. Additionally, the fireplace remains intact, with a heavy, narrow horizontal oak piece with dentil-like blocks beneath, creating a mantel. The room is well lit with natural light from numerous windows. A door on the east leads to a sunken patio area.

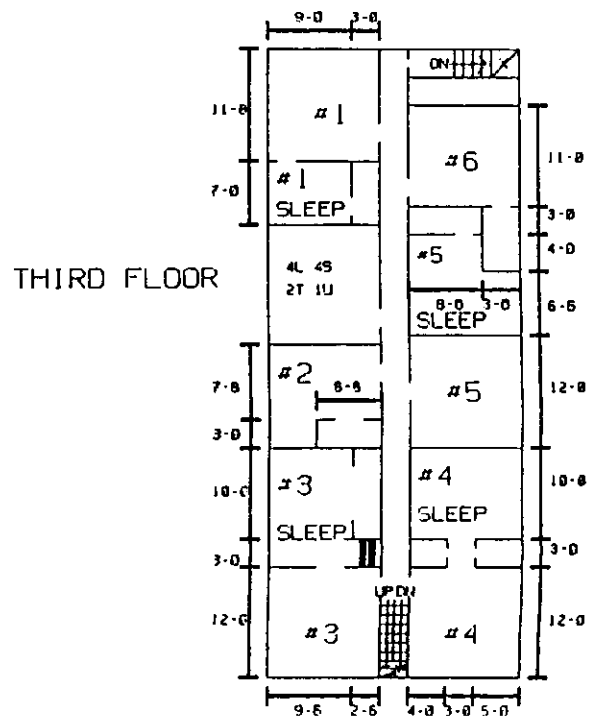
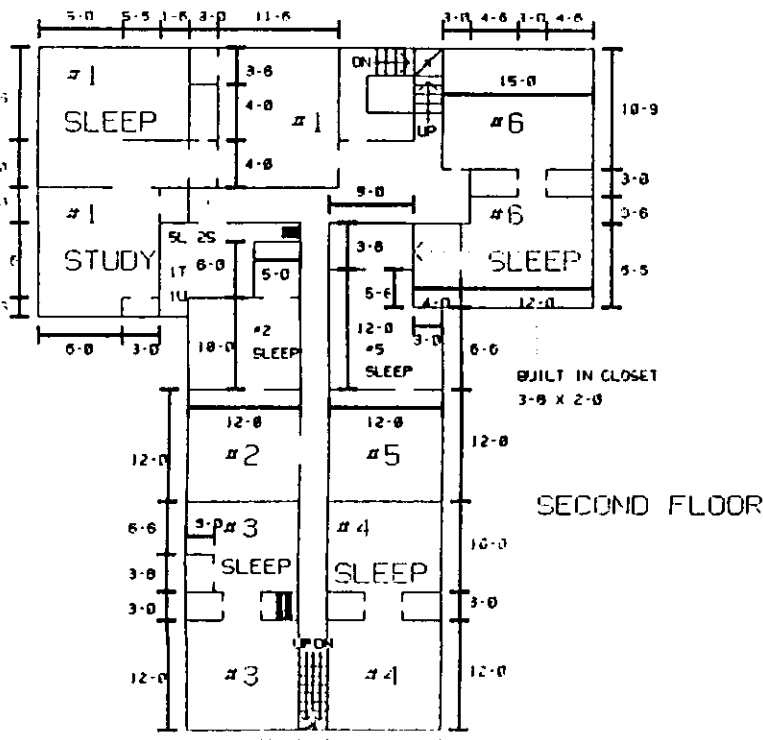
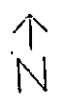
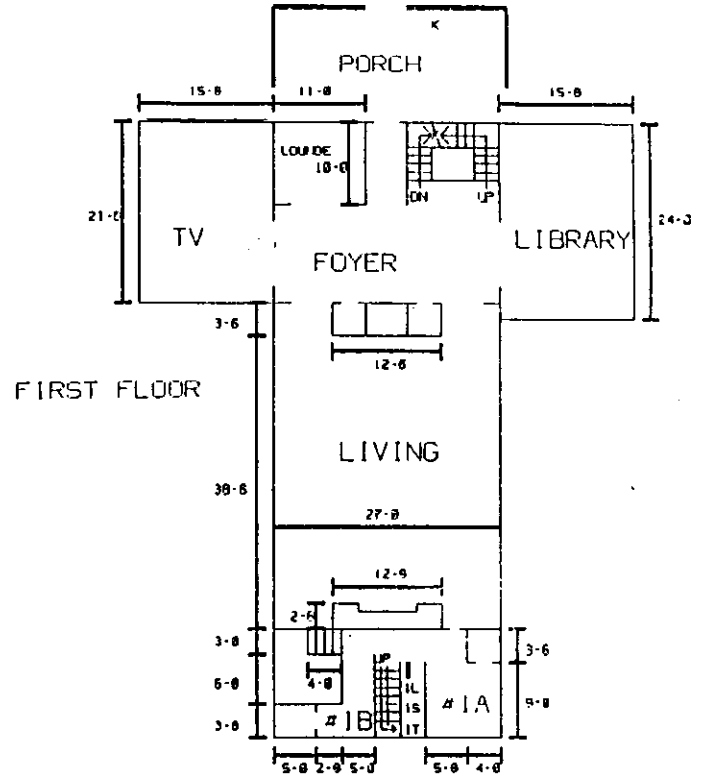
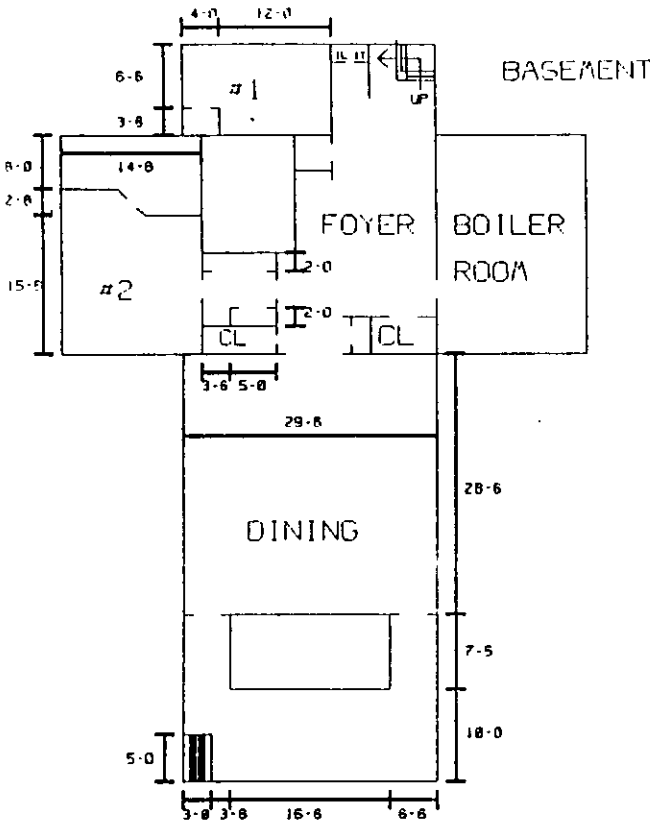
The staircase retains its original Craftsman style posts with caps and elaboration, and several doors and frames with unique wood wedges at the corners. The stair balusters, narrow, deep oak slats with center grooves, appear to be original, but the stair rail has been reconfigured into a more typical sloping form rather than the original tall sectional configuration (see historic photo). This appears to be an early alteration, perhaps a result of the 1929 interior work. On the second and third floors are two-room study/sleeping suites. At the landings of both floors, the stairwell has been fireproofed with the addition of glass firewalls and doors.

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8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education _____

Architecture _____

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dean and Dean

Stoolman, A. W. (builder)

Period of Significance

1907 - 1939

Significant Dates

1907

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House is significant as one of the early facilities exemplifying the Greek Letter Society movement which contributed much to the broader patterns of higher education on the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University of Illinois (Criterion A). The Illinois Beta House is additionally significant under Criterion C, representing a good and rare use of Craftsman and Prairie School elements among Greek Letter Society housing at the University of Illinois. Designed by Dean and Dean of Chicago, this house breaks from the popular use of the revival styles of architecture for this type of housing. The exterior remains virtually unchanged with the exception of window replacement, which was done largely in the original one-over-one patterning. The interior, despite a fire and modifications made to accommodate new building code and life/safety requirements, continues to retain many original Craftsman and Prairie influenced elements. As an active fraternity on the University of Illinois campus, the significance of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House continues through 1939, the arbitrary 50-year cut-off date.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon

Established in 1899, Sigma Alpha Epsilon is one of the oldest fraternities at the University of Illinois. Its chapter house, designed by Dean and Dean, and constructed by prominent local builder A.W. Stoolman in 1907 at a cost of \$25,000, is among the earliest structures built at the University of Illinois as a fraternity house and is one of a small number of fraternities and sororities at the University of Illinois campus to have been the sole occupant of a particular house.

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Sigma Alpha Epsilon has prided itself in participation in campus-wide activities throughout its history. During the early period of occupancy of the chapter house (1907 to 1912), Sigma Alpha Epsilon's participated in varsity football and served in the position of president of several clubs and organizations including the junior class, Glee Club and English Club. Sigma Alpha Epsilon actives also served in management positions for the Illio (business manager), Scribblers magazine (editor-in-chief), the Daily Illini (manager), and the Siren (business manager).

Avery Brundage brought honor to the Sigma Alpha Epsilon house with his inductions into the Phoenix junior honorary society in 1908 and Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honorary, in 1909. Two men, Harold Hill, 1912, and classmate Howard Green, provided the fraternity and the University with some of its best traditions. Hill and Green wrote the words and music for "Violets" and "Hail to the Purple," two well-known songs within the fraternity. For the university, "Hail to the Purple" became "Hail to the Orange," part of the university song. In 1912, a small newspaper, "The Lion Tattler," was developed by chapter actives to generate interest in the activities of the fraternity among members no longer active on the University of Illinois campus.

During the World War I years, many Sigma Alpha Epsilon members served in the Army Student Training Corps. The house was used by the U.S. Military services in 1917-18 and again in 1942-45 to house service men training at the university.

The twenties and thirties brought further activity and honors to the Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter house. Fred H. Turner (class of 1922), who would go on to serve his fraternity as a member of the Supreme Council and as national president, brought Sigma Alpha Epsilon into the Dean of Men's Office where he was employed as a clerk for Thomas Arkle Clark. Participation in campus athletics and organizations continued. James Reeder, a 1940 graduate, was named All-American as an Illinois football star.

Architecture

Architects and brothers George and Albert Dean designed the only Greek Letter Society house among 86 at the University of Illinois which utilizes Craftsman or Prairie School influences. The Deans were members of a group known as the "Eighteen," which met once a month at the old Bismarck Restaurant in Chicago during the late 1890s. Other members of this group included Frank Lloyd Wright, James Gamble Rogers, Hugh Garden, Richard E. Schmidt, and Howard

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Shaw. In general, members of this group, with the exception of Garden, Schmidt, and Wright, were more conservative designers and did not completely abandon reference to historical styles. In his book The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries, H. Allen Brooks notes that the Deans "flirted with the new movement for several years, but were unwilling to make a full commitment." Perhaps the Deans greatest "flirtation" was the ingenious T-shape planned Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity House at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. The building, completed in 1905 and long since destroyed by fire, was constructed with a high limestone basement, brick first floor, and smooth plaster second floor, and had a variety of wide double hung windows, some with unusual wide brick frames. The striking interior featured finely crafted woodwork and custom-designed furniture.

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House, in its materials, design elements, and horizontality, represents a more restrained design effort from the Deans, combining Craftsman style and Prairie influence, but still refraining from the use of traditional stylistic elements. The T-shaped plan, use of brick on the lower floors and stucco for the top level, and use of wide window framing was similar for both houses, but the symmetrical facade arrangement and window placement create a more refined composition in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon house. Wide eave extensions; piers extending beyond the flat porch roofs; and limestone caps on piers, columns, and solid porch rails/walls give reference to the Prairie style. Porch roofs, terrace extensions, and recessed window frames with bold flat arches hint at a horizontal emphasis, yet the overall composition of the building does not achieve horizontality. The prominent exposed rafters along the gable roof and flat roofed terrace extensions maintain a Craftsman influence.

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter house received a great deal of attention among the active chapters of the fraternity. The book "The Chapter Letters of the Seventy Active Chapters of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity," 1908, devoted eight pages with six photographs of the Illinois Beta chapter house exterior and interior, as opposed to typical two page coverage with no photographs. The finely detailed interior included extensive bands of woodwork, beams, window seats, fireplaces of glazed Roman brick, and staircase detailing which was similar to the Cornell building. Much of the interior detailing remains intact today. The light fixtures and furniture, however, no longer

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remain. The Illinois Alumni News, July 1929, reports that the Sigma Alpha Epsilon house "is being entirely redecorated inside and new fixtures are being placed in the kitchen and bathrooms," which could have resulted in the removal of light fixtures and furnishings.

George Robinson Dean (1864-1919) was born in Satara, India, and graduated from Doane College in Crete, Nebraska in 1885. After practicing with several firms and studying in Paris, Dean returned to the United States in 1893 and joined the Chicago office of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge. He went into private practice in 1895, served as President of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club in 1895 and 1896, and went into partnership with his brother, Albert, in 1903. The Deans' Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House remains as a significant example of the use of the Craftsman style and Prairie influence among Greek Letter Society housing at the University of Illinois.

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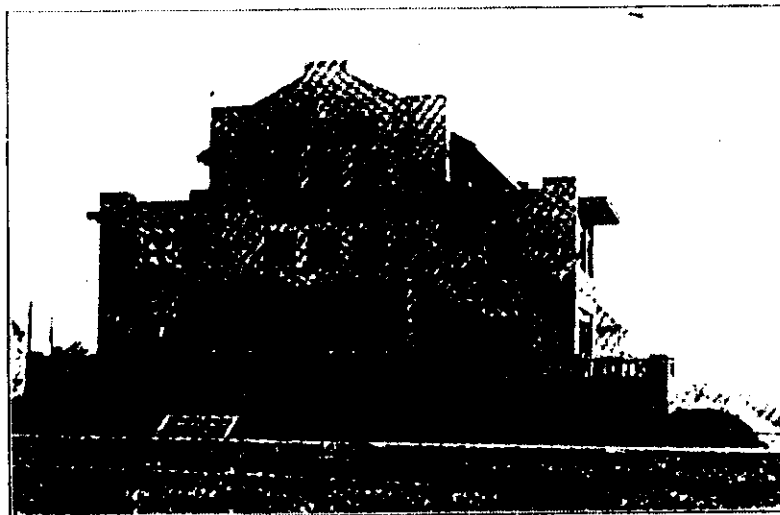
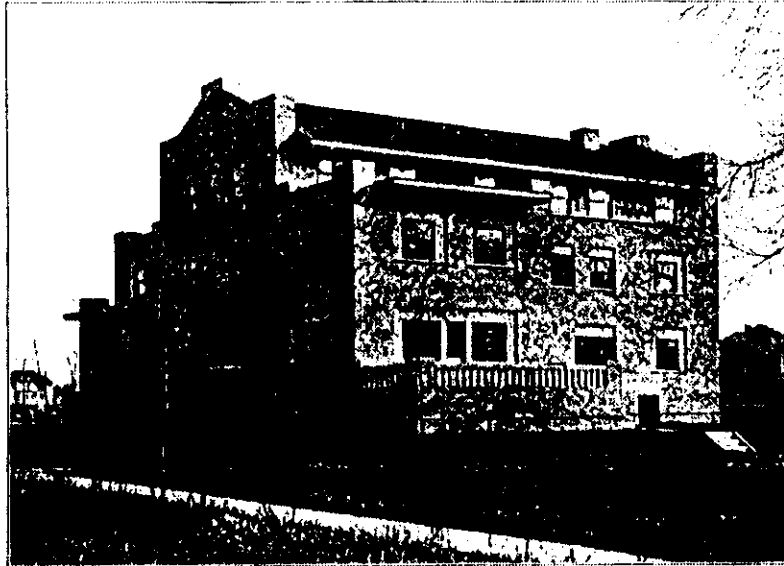
CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT DATES
Sigma Alpha Epsilon

- 1856 Sigma Alpha Epsilon founded at the University of Alabama by Noble Leslie De Votie.
- 1899 Illinois Beta of Sigma Alpha Epsilon founded at the University of Illinois.
- 1903 Organization and incorporation of Illinois Beta Association.
- 1904 Chapter house at 201 E. Green Street.
- 1905 Purchase of two lots in Fairland Place Subdivision.
- 1906 Chapter house at 33 E. Green Street.
- 1907 Chapter house constructed at 211 E. Daniel Street in Fairland Subdivision.
- 1909 Beta chapter member Avery Brundage graduates. Becomes one of "nation's greatest builders." An advocate of amateur sports, serves as vice president (1945-52) and president (1952-1972) of the International Olympic Committee.
- 1922 Beta member Fred H. Turner graduates. Serves as Dean of Men (1932-43) and Dean of Students (1943-66) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- 1956 National Interfraternity Conference Gold Medal for distinguished service of American youth awarded to Fred H. Turner.

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Two Views of the Illinois Beta Chapter-house

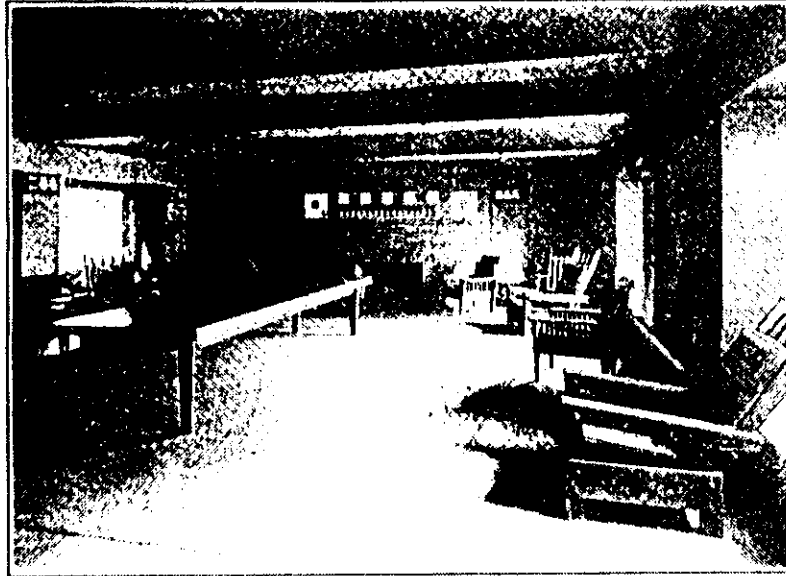
The Chapter Letters of the Seventy Active Chapters of the
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity
1908

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Living Room



Dining Room

The Chapter Letters of the Seventy Active Chapters of the
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity

1908

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Library



Looking from Hall into Library

The Chapter Letters of the Seventy Active Chapters of the
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity

1908

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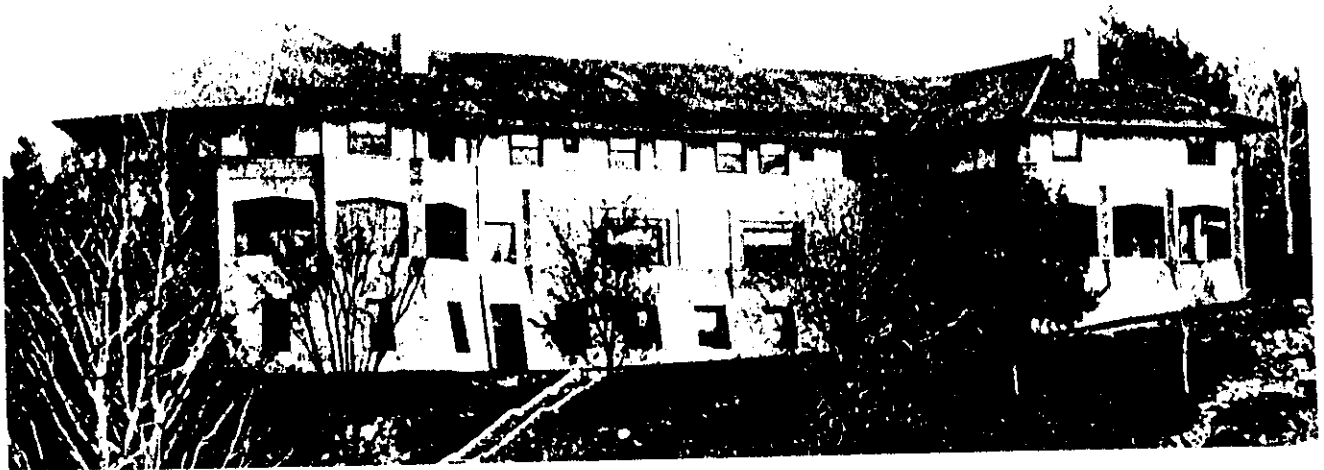
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Entrance Hall. Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity House, Cornell University.
George R. Dean, Architect



South Elevation. Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity House. Cornell University.

from The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries
by H. Allen Brooks

