



Our Founders

In 1867, 12 bold, courageous young women established the sisterhood that would become Pi Beta Phi. Since then, more than 350,000 members have joined the bonds of wine and silver blue.

The Women Who Established Pi Beta Phi

The founders of Pi Beta Phi created the Fraternity to cultivate sincere friendship, establish real-life objectives and promote happiness.

JENNIE NICOL, M.D. (1845–1881)

Jennie was a pioneer among physicians, becoming one of the first women to study medicine. Her devotion to Philanthropic Service to Others led her to a career in medicine, and it is said that “no woman ever entered the profession with a nobler purpose.”

After her time at Monmouth, she attended the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania from which she received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1879. Upon completing a year as an intern in the New England Hospital, Jennie spent some time in learning German and then went to Switzerland to take advanced



work at the University of Zurich. It was her intention to return to Illinois to practice medicine, but on March 28, 1881, after an illness of a few days she died of meningitis. Her body was brought back to America

and lies among the friends of her youth in Little York, Illinois.

The former Health Center, the Jennie Nicol Memorial Hospital, at the Settlement School in

Gatlinburg, Tennessee, was named after her and served the health care needs of Gatlinburg residents, as well as their neighbors in nearby smaller communities, for 43 years.



LIBBIE BROOK GADDIS (1850–1933)

The youngest founder, she established Pi Beta Phi's second chapter at Iowa Wesleyan University. Of Sincere Friendship, she said, "for while there are deeper and holier relations than that of ... Pi Beta Phi, still nothing purer or lovelier graces the name of friendship."

After leaving college, she spent some time in California to sightsee and teach, a year in Kansas teaching in the public schools and four years teaching in Illinois. She married and had three children, two of which were daughters and Illinois Deltas, and even attended the initiation of her granddaughter in 1929. The Pi Phis in the neighboring towns organized the

Libbie Gaddis Alumnae Club and after Libbie became unable to attend meetings elsewhere, several pleasant ones were held in her home.

Throughout her years, she attended many conventions where she endeared herself and was an inspiration to younger and older Fraternity members alike. Her first convention was in St. Louis in 1904 and the last one she attended was in Pasadena, California, in 1929. She suffered a stroke in 1931 and after that was confined to her home, but to the end she kept her keen interest in affairs of national importance, and particularly in Pi Beta Phi.



CLARA BROWNLEE HUTCHINSON (1850–1931)

Gentle and shy, she was Emma Brownlee's younger sister and the second youngest of the Pi Phi founders. She lived the ideals of splendid womanhood which she helped to establish the Fraternity.

After graduating from Monmouth, she was married in 1872 to Mr. Alexis Hutchinson, who died in 1920. Clara

lived to be 81 and attended many Pi Phi conventions and events. After her last convention in Pasadena, California, she was not feeling well and had developed cataracts, but that didn't stop her from being the cheerful, smiling self. On January 3, 1931, she had a sudden, severe heart attack and died on January 4. Around 40 Pi Phis attended her



memorial service in Monmouth, Illinois, including the entire Illinois Alpha chapter, six members from Illinois Beta-Delta and alumnae from Monmouth, Burlington, Carthage and Springfield, Illinois, Alumnae Clubs.

Clara was survived by two children and four grandchildren. Before her death, she was able to witness her granddaughter, **MARION JANE TORNQUIST'S** initiation into Illinois Alpha. Throughout her life, her keen interest in every phase of the

Fraternity, her understanding of its problems and organizations and her pride in its accomplishments were made evident by her support of its projects, and her generous gift to the Pi Beta Phi endowment.



ADA BRUEN GRIER (1848–1924)

A teacher and minister's wife, she formed friendships in Pi Phi that lasted her entire lifetime. When Ada entered Monmouth College in 1866, she was roommates with Libbie Brook Gaddis, whose "friendship was one of the brightest spots of her memory and its warmth has remained through all the years."

When Ada's college days were finished, she taught in the schools of Monmouth until her marriage to minister Dr. James A. Grier in 1874. He was a pastor in Washington County Pennsylvania for nine years, served in Mercer, Pennsylvania, for three years and then was called to

the Pittsburgh Theological society and later was named president of that institution.

They had four children. Her son, the Reverend James Harper Grier, became president of Monmouth College. After the death of her husband, she took home with her daughter in Philadelphia and became involved with the alumnae of Pi Beta Phi. Due to her health, she seldom attended meetings, but her interest never waned, especially in the work of the Settlement School. After a long illness, she died on March 25, 1924, and laid to rest in Pittsburgh beside her beloved husband.



EMMA BROWNLEE KILGORE (1848–1925)

Emma was a true leader and the first president of Pi Beta Phi. She was a child of pioneer parents, as two of her grandparents settled on farms near Little York, Illinois in 1833. She was married to Dr. J.C. Kilgore in 1870. She was always keenly interested in the history of Pi Beta Phi and other founders

looked to her to tell the many details of the early days of 1867.

Thirty years after the founding of Pi Beta Phi, Emma attended convention in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1897, and told the story of Pi Phi's founding. She eagerly attended every convention she could and



even had all her plans made and her wardrobe picked out to attend the convention at the Bigwin Inn in 1925 when she passed away.

It was decided by Pi Beta Phi the coat of arms would be derived from the Brownlee family crest since Emma was the first president. The

Brownlee sisters spent their lives in Warren County and only lived a few blocks apart in Monmouth. They never separated but one year during their lives and learned to depend on one another. They do not claim to have done anything remarkable but they always speak with pride when

they tell the younger generation, "I was one of the founders of Pi Beta Phi and we think the Brownlee Eagle on our Coat-of-Arms must ever spread its protecting wings over every Pi Phi. That is our wish."



FANNIE THOMSON (1848–1868)

Fannie was one of the most enthusiastic members of the new secret society, being one of the biggest advocates for extension. In her passion for extension, she wished for all New Members to always uphold the values of Honor and Respect held by the 12 founders. She said, "Our object ... is to send out into the world women who will ever be an honor and a blessing."

The first Pi Beta Phi Convention was held at her house in Oquawka, Illinois, in August 1867.

Fannie attended Monmouth College for two years and then stopped to teach in order that her sister might attend college. She taught school in Oquawka and was engaged in that work at the time of her death from typhoid fever in 1868. Radiating happiness, with a beautiful voice, in her short years of membership, she was a faithful and enthusiastic member. Her remains rest in the little cemetery in Oquawka, Illinois.



MARGARET CAMPBELL (1846–1939)

After graduating from Monmouth College in 1867 and serving as Pi Beta Phi's first treasurer, she taught for one year at a country school in Monmouth, Illinois, and then spent the next 30 years devoted to helping run the family home.

Her Personal and Intellectual Growth led her to become interested in the lack of education available to young Black children.

As an outgrowth of her awareness of the need, and because of her deep conviction to philanthropic work, she went to Chase City, Virginia, in 1903 where she spent 21 years, two of these in teaching domestic science at the Thyne Institute, one of the only high schools at that time for Black students in the county.

After her resignation, her and her sister **AGNES CAMPBELL MURRAY**,



who was an I.C. at Monmouth in 1873, returned to Monmouth to make their home. They lived two blocks from the campus, and Margaret visited frequently with the collegiate

members of Illinois Alpha. In recounting the early days of Pi Beta Phi, Margaret told of the girls banding together for two reasons: "first, for good times, and

second, because they intended to help an extremely poor family of Monmouth, and felt they could do so much better if they were organized."



JENNIE HORNE TURNBULL (1846–1932)

Quiet and charming, she planned her life around her work as a minister's wife and Pi Beta Phi. She married Rev. Thomas B. Turnbull in 1874 and moved to Aledo, Illinois, where they had five children. They then moved to Argyle, New York, and lived there for 15 years and had another son. Two of her daughters, **KATHERINE** and **MARJORIE TURNBILL**, became Illinois Alphas.

In New York, she was not in reach of any college where Pi Beta Phi had a chapter, so *The Arrow* was a welcome visitor. In 1900, they moved to Philadelphia where she learned of a Pi Phi alumnae club being organized where she attended regular meetings and wore her original I.C. pin.

Jennie was actively engaged in all types of church work and served as president of the local Missionary Society in Philadelphia. She was greatly interested in the Pi Beta Phi Settlement School and through the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Alumnae Club gave an annual contribution for its support. She attended the Asbury Park, New Jersey, Convention in 1931, and though in poor health at the time, displayed keen interest in the affairs of the Fraternity and followed closely its work. She passed away peacefully on November 4, 1932, and several Pi Phis attended the funeral. Her vision of what Pi Phi would become characterizes her quiet and charming nature. "The founders dreamed dreams as to our future ...



words fail to express the pride the founders felt in the work, as we all should."



ROSA MOORE (1849–1934)

Rosa was born near Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and was the only founder of Pi Beta Phi whose parents were not living in or near Monmouth, Illinois. She had come to Monmouth to visit an aunt and her short stay was a great favorite with her intimate friends and entered

wholeheartedly into the founding of a new society.

Generous and sensitive to the needs of others, her Philanthropic Service to Others was realized through her days in social work and missionary endeavors. Soon



after her graduation, she returned to Pennsylvania and then New York City where she did social work and worked for a newspaper for many years. She passed away on July 4, 1924, and the funeral services

were held in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, where many relatives and Pi Phis had gathered.

She is remembered her famous expression: "The one word out of my

heart to every other heart is—give all that you are and have, and this consecration will restore all that has been lost to you, to others and the world—forevermore."



NANCY BLACK WALLACE (1845–1918)

Nancy was Pi Beta Phi's first secretary and an enthusiastic extensionist. Her vision of extension was not daunted by the custom of discouraging women from becoming self-reliant. She expressed the opinion that, "one had to maintain a sort of 'sorosis' air to keep one's courage up," and went out to install Pi Phi's third chapter at the Seminary in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

She married Robert Stewart Wallace, and they lived in Chicago until 1885. During the time her children were being educated, she lived in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, where she served four years on

the United Presbyterian Women's Board of Missions, as secretary of woman's work. For many years, she was located far from any group of Pi Beta Phis, but her interest in the Fraternity continued throughout her life.

In 1917, Nancy moved to Salem, Oregon, with her son and was engaged in various activities in the church and city. The next summer, while visiting her former home in Sewickley, she was taken to the hospital for an operation and was later removed to the home of her sister, where she died on September 23, 1918.

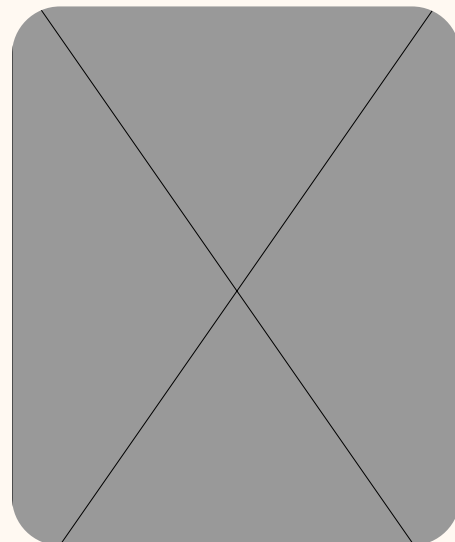


INEZ SMITH SOULE (1846–1941)

A tiny woman with a ready wit, she set a standard of loyalty and Lifelong Commitment. Inez was educated in the public schools of Monmouth, Illinois, and entered college in 1865, graduating with the class of 1868. One year later she was married to Melville Cox Soule and had eight children. They lived in Monmouth until the fall of 1901 when they moved to Tacoma, Washington, with their youngest

children. She established a long Pi Phi legacy through a Pi Phi daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter.

Inez was known personally to thousands of Pi Beta Phis who had the wonderful privilege of meeting her at conventions in Charlevoix, Michigan, Estes Park, Colorado, Breezy Point, Minnesota, and the Easter Conference in Washington



and at Yellowstone Park and Pasadena, California, in 1929. A member of Pi Phi for 73 years, she had the joy of seeing and keeping in touch with many young people who organized into collegiate and

alumnae groups from coast to coast, as well as Canada.

She was the embodiment of what was so dear to the hearts of the founders—*independence*. She maintained her own apartment

where she greeted friends with her ever wit and friendliness, and she unconsciously “set a standard of loyalty, independence, interest, friendship and activity” worthy of being followed by every Pi Beta Phi.



FANNIE WHITENACK LIBBEY (1848–1941)

When Fannie was 16, her parents moved to Monmouth, Illinois, so she could attend college and still be at home. It was on her father’s porch where she and the other founders had their vision of I.C. and Pi Beta Phi. She married Mr. Howard Libbey in 1871 and moved to Coffeyville, Kansas, where they had seven children.

Throughout her life, she demonstrated her Lifelong Commitment to Pi Beta Phi by maintaining membership in an alumnae organization, continuing her interest and support for Pi Phi philanthropies and attending many conventions, where she often spoke.

“In keeping with our aim, I like to think that each one gives out something of gladness, of friendship and of service.” She also wrote into *The Arrow* and shared, “My hair is white, but my heart is still young, though it is 56 years since the day I first wore the golden arrow. I trust the companionship and friendships formed in your college may prove as sweet and lasting as those of us girls of 1867.

Fannie was one of the five founders who attended the re-establishment of the Alpha chapter at Monmouth College in 1928. On May 21, 1941, the surviving one of the 12, she passed away. It was she who saw the



Fraternity through a longer cycle of time than any other member, having lived into the beginning of the Fraternity’s 75th anniversary year. ✨

