

Historically Speaking.....

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Will you please tell me about the 1910 General Convention? It's always fun to look back at early Conventions, especially one held 100 years ago. In those days, the Convention was hosted by a chapter. The 20th national Convention was held in Bloomington, Ind., August 23-30, 1910, hosted by the Delta Chapter. At that time, as today, this chapter was the Fraternity's oldest continuously active chapter, and its members hoped many Kappas would "avail themselves of this opportunity not only to enjoy the inspiration of the Convention, but also to see the place where much of our early history was made."

Trains brought the Kappas to Convention and were met by local Kappas. Juliette Hollenbach, *Adelphi*, wrote in the October 1910 issue of *The Key*, "I think the fun of Convention began when, after many dusty, cindery hours or days of travel, we were whirled through the streets of Bloomington catching glimpses of large tissue-paper fleur-de-lis, and golden keys, prominently displayed in shop windows. Apparently the whole town had hospitably draped itself in double blue in our honor." Very soon they reached the end of the journey and were deposited in cheerful automobile-loads at the Student Building to register. Then they were escorted across the picturesque campus to their rooms in the dormitory or in one of the fraternity houses. The men's houses had been scrubbed, vacated and loaned to the Kappas for the week.

After unpacking, the Kappas went to the chapter house, which was decorated with strings of colored lanterns for the informal evening reception. There were joyful cries and wild dashes toward each other when old friends saw each other. New friendships began that evening, too. The Kappas forgot their travel-weariness, and the eager delegates even stopped worrying, for a little while, about the terrifying oral reports that were to be given in the morning.

Wednesday morning found the black gowned officers and delegates waiting solemnly outside the door of the big gymnasium where business sessions would be held. Promptly at 9 a.m. the long line filed in, looking properly dignified and impressive, and the business of the Convention began. Seven business meetings were held during the week, usually from 9 a.m. to noon and a second from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday evening, the Kappas dressed in their "next-best gowns, their grandest being reserved for the banquet," gathered in the gym to enjoy a musical program arranged by the chapter and then went to the large auditorium for a formal reception for Kappas and the townspeople.

The women attended a campus dance Thursday night. The rumor was that there would be plenty of men at the dance, but the women knew "in a university town, men like oysters, are out of season in August." However, the chapter members had recruited men to dance with the guests, although the chapter members were not allowed to dance with the men.

After the morning alumna session Saturday, the Kappas climbed onto a special train, which had big double blue streamers tied to the engine, for an afternoon ride to French Lick and West Baden, two famous resorts not far from Bloomington. There, they "walked, drove, gingerly sampled various odoriferous mineral waters, explored caves and bought picture postals." After dinner in the dining room, the women wandered about in the huge rotunda under "the biggest dome in the world" and danced until it was time to leave for the train.

Sunday, some of the Kappas went to church while others slept in. In the afternoon, everyone attended a special vesper service and heard an address by Indiana University President William Bryan. The day came to an end with the Convention attendees gathered at the chapter house to sing fraternity songs. The conclusion of Convention came only too soon, and the Kappas began getting ready for the final banquet. "The relative merits of cornstarch and talcum-powder were discussed heatedly as well as the advisability of assuming rouge and patches."

Tuesday morning found the Kappas at the station with their bags, perhaps not quite as joyful as they had been the day they arrived when the fun of Convention was ahead of them. When the train arrived, goodbyes were said, and trunks, bags and Kappas were hastily assisted on board. Off they steamed to talk of Convention in steadily diminishing groups. No more impromptu snacks in the dormitory, for Convention, with all it meant of joy and inspiration, was over and had become just one of that long list of happy "Kappa memories that last our whole life through."