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BLACK BADGE FRATERNITY, KAPPA CHAPTER, PAPERS

The collection includes minutes of the meetings, a catalog of members, a photograph of the members and the printed bylaws of this secret literary society, located in Lynchburg, Virginia.

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BLACK BADGE FRATERNITY, KAPPA CHAPTER

The Kappa Chapter of the Black Badge Fraternity was organized 23 December 1873, by "resident members" of the fraternity living in Lynchburg, Virginia. Those members included D. T. WALKER, J. B. BOCOCK, C. W. BOCOCK, J. P. HIX, and B. W. BOCOCK.

Meetings, held "each alternate Wednesday," included in the program an essay or original oration and a reading selection. A critic was appointed to "criticise the exercises and general conduct of the members."

Applicants to this secret fraternity were to be at least 18 years of age, of good character, "and of such health as not to be burdensome to the Chapter." Should a member divulge the name of a brother in the fraternity or "make known the business of the Chapter to any person not connected with the order," that member could be fined, suspended, or expelled from the Chapter.

Members were subject to fines in varying amounts for offenses against the fraternity. The more severe fines were for offenses such as "profane or indecent language (mild) \$2.50," "contempt of authority \$2.50," "leaving the hall without permission \$1.00," "absence from the anniversary meeting \$2.00," and "absence from funeral of a deceased brother \$2.00."

The Black Badge Society, the "first social fraternity," was organized at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, ca. 1859, and continued in operation until ca. 1882. The society offered an "annual gold prize medal...for superiority in oratory. The badge of the fraternity was "of black enamel, engraved with the letter Sigma, skull and bones, and crossed swords." The motto of the Society was "Be Invisible."

Other chapters were organized both in the State of Virginia and in other states -

- Alpha - Roanoke College, 1859
- Beta - Hampden Sidney College, 1869
- Gamma - Virginia University, 1871 (Univ. of Virginia)
- Delta - Bristol, Tennessee, 1872
- Episilon - Virginia Agricultural College, 1873
- Zeta - Salado College, 1873
- Eta - Baltimore Medical College, 1873
- Theta - Washington and Lee University, 1873
- Iota - King's College, 1873

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BLACK BADGE FRATERNITY, KAPPA CHAPTER
(Continued)

Kappa - Lynchburg, Virginia, 1873
Lambda - Galveston, Texas, 1874
Mu - Wytheville, Virginia, 1874
Nu - Marion, Virginia, 1874
Xi - Somerville Institute, Mississippi, 1875
Omicron - Lynchburg, Virginia, 1875
Pi - New Orleans, Louisiana, 1875

Although the minutes of Kappa Chapter end with 25 January 1876, two members of the Black Badge Fraternity delivered public addresses on 24 May 1876 at the Courthouse in Lynchburg.

Nothing further is known of this fraternity at present.

[Black Badge Fraternity, Kappa Chapter, Mss., MS1138, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, VA; Lynchburg Daily Virginian, 24 May 1876, p. 3 col. 1; William Edward Eisenberg, The First Hundred Years Roanoke College 1842-1942 (Salem, VA: Trustees of Roanoke College, 1942), pp. 429-431; William Raimond Baird, American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Society System (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1879), pp. 108-109; Letter, 3 May 1996, Audrey Marrinan, Reference Librarian, The Library of Virginia.]