

# Toward A History

*The Fraternity is at the present time collecting the materials for a full history. One of the Founders looks back. Chapter histories continue.—The Editor.*

## AFTER TWENTY YEARS

There are few things that give me more real pleasure than thinking back twenty years of the dear old days at Howard University. Fate, it seems, decreed that Howard's campus be the seed bed of much that has since given flavor to our entire Negro life in America. Important among the influences which Howard has exerted over all American Negro life is the Negro Greek letter fraternity. Although our first fraternity came to life in the snows of northern New York, it was its first offspring, flourishing in the genial atmosphere of Washington, who saved the parent from experiencing an isolated insignificance if not utter extinction.

PHI BETA SIGMA, organized in 1914, found fields waiting for the harvest. From that day until the present the programme and spirit of our beloved fraternity have done much to quicken and inspire thousands of our racial group. Twenty years ago, though perhaps few of us fully realized it, Howard University was the testing ground upon which it was being decided whether the Negro fraternity would live. In this test PHI BETA SIGMA played perhaps the leading role with the result that by the end of 1915 the future of the Negro fraternity was brighter than it ever had been.

And now after twenty years of alternating storm and sunshine old SIGMA is still holding aloft the ideals and principles which the founders felt to be basic to the life of a fraternity and the perpetuity of a race. We who performed all the ground work from the first day of its conception to the happy hour of its birth as an authorized organization, cannot help looking back with a thrill as we review the rapid growth of our small beginnings.

My work has been for the most part far removed from the centre of Negro fraternity life,

but each day I have tried to exemplify all those qualities which are the life of our beloved SIGMA. Coming to the Gulf Coast in 1917 I have spent these eighteen years in Louisiana, Alabama and Florida directing schools and pastoring churches, using all my being to inspire thousands of bewildering men and women, boys and girls. The Gulf Coast from the Texas border to the east coast of Florida is dotted with successful physicians, nurses, clergymen, school executives, insurance officials, government employees, machinists whom I have inspired to climb. There are flourishing accredited schools here in the far Southland with new buildings and thousands of dollars worth of modern equipment that were doomed to be closed when I took charge of them. There are many High School and college graduates holding responsible positions whom I have fed, housed and clothed for periods from one to five years that our race might not lose their talent.

Thus in this humble manner I have tried to live PHI BETA SIGMA. I want to urge all Sigma men and women everywhere to continue the good fight. We have done well these twenty-one years, but there is still much more to do; still higher realms to reach, new values to be realized, greater service to be performed. Our race needs us now as never before. May we not fall short of our full responsibility, for the responsibility of being a Sigma man must always outweigh any honors such a distinction may carry with it.

Let us go to Atlanta in December with no better purpose than to contribute our finest and best to the making of a bigger and better, more enduring world of Sigma.

LEONARD F. MORSE, A.M., D.D.  
*Clearwater, Fla.*