

January 10, 1899. Three young men rapidly converging on a rooming-house where two younger men were awaiting them. Rapidly, because January 10 in the climate of Central Illinois does not lend itself to strolling. By the perpetual calendar it was Tuesday, if that be important.

We do not know what kind of night it was; whether cloudy, snowy, or one of those calm, crystal-clear nights when every star in the heavens blazes in splendor. But there were no portents either in the heavens or the earth, prophesying that the birth of a great Fraternity was impending. There were no blazing comets, showers of shooting stars, earthquakes or other cataclysms. The heavens and the earth were as unconscious of the importance of the coming event as were the five young men themselves.

This leads to the inquiry why these five young men were meeting on this 10th day of January, 1899, at the room occupied by Clarence A. Mayer and James C. McNutt. Let us first answer in the words of an early initiate, Lester H. Martin, who knew well the men and the organization.

Lester says: "The notion...first originated in the mind of J.L. Settles. The idea, as it struck Brother Settles was, not a fraternity in the usual acceptation, but an organization for the development of men to fit them to cope with the world when their school days were over, and they would be forced up against the stern realities of life...that did not place an exclamation point after Society."

And so these five men, Joseph Lorenzo Settles, Owen Wilson Truitt, Charles Roy Atkinson, Clarence Arthur Mayer, and James Carson McNutt met at 504 East Locust St. in Bloomington, Illinois to found the Knights of Classic Lore. We are all well aware of the story of its transformation into Tau Kappa Epsilon, and our emergence into the world's largest International Fraternity.

And so here we are, over 100 years later living in the wake of our Founder's vision for a Fraternity "to aid college men in mental, moral, and social development." On this Founder's Day let us remember those brave young men, those who have come before us, and to prepare for the road that lies ahead for Tau Kappa Epsilon.

In our chapters, our homes, and our lives we must strive to be guided by Charity, Esteem, and Love in our fraternal relations throughout our lifetimes. We must become more than our Founder's dreams...we must become their reality. Take time to think about what you have in common with the Founders, and pause for just a brief moment to remember that day when something very special in our lives was born. For it is the doom of all men that they forget.

*-Frater Steve Steven R. MacLaughlin  
Gamma-Kappa 858*