

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Delta Tau Delta Founders House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

211 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bethany

--- VICINITY OF  
CODE

54

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

West Virginia

COUNTY

Brooke

CODE

009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Trustees of Bethany College

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Dr. William Tucker, President

CITY, TOWN

Bethany

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia 26032

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Brooke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Wellsburg

STATE

West Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Delta Tau Delta Founders House probably dates from the early 1850s; its provincial Greek Revival style is generally in keeping with the period and place, being a composition of rectangular blocks placed in an "L" shape with trabeated openings, rather smooth wall surfaces and symmetry throughout. This detached dwelling that has housed commercial businesses as well as rental rooms and apartments, fronts the town's main street, its two-story, five-bay facade hiding a basement of stout limestone walls that underlies the entire building and becomes evident as the grade slopes toward the rear. Brick walls in a common bond (7/1) top the tapering foundation, and a medium-pitch gable roof caps both main section and ell.

A general restoration has retained a complimentary double porch with stair in the interior of the ell and replaced a bulky twentieth-century (c. 1912) block porch (with enclosed room at the north corner) with a small, open, at-grade entrance porch over the central bay. Each of these has chamfered posts, and that in the rear incorporates simple horizontal board rails. Window, door and chimney placement support general symmetry, there being openings above one another on each floor (except at basement level and at the rear of the second-floor center hall). There are no doors onto the second floor of the ell porch, however, and the chimney in the ell is between rooms, unlike the inside end chimneys in windowless gable walls of the front unit.

Despite a prevailing smoothness in wall surface, the exterior has an abundance of subtle detail. Doors are of a handsome four-panel design with that on the entrance facade featuring an eleven-light transom and sidelights, windows (basement excepted) have 6/6 sash arrangements set in thin, somewhat delicate, mullions, flush wooden lintels top openings, a projecting brick cornice is at the front, and chimneys have corbeled caps. The porch in the ell is especially attractive with its approach stairs from ground level leading to another series of steps between first and second floors. In addition, structural restraining and strengthening tie rods with star-pattern facade plates take on a decorative quality. There are two each between basement and first floor and first and second floors on the north end of the main portion and four between floors in the ell.

The interior follows a single-pile, center-hall floor plan, having two rooms in the ell. All major rooms (including those on the first floor of the ell which share a chimney that provides back-to-back fireplaces) are served by a fireplace that has a simple mantel, and this simplicity is carried through in trim, rail and balusters of the open-well, two-run stair, and floors. Paneled doors highlight good workmanship, however, and include hardware representative of the period of building (much of the character has been enhanced during restoration, including that of lighting with "period" fixtures).

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By 1975 when the house was transferred to Bethany College (Miss Luta Gordon, former owner, retains privileges of using an upstairs apartment), it had been altered to provide for needs of succeeding owners and uses. Changes to the rear of the ell included enclosure of double porch and construction of a frame addition; the front had been transformed by a long porch with block pillars and an enclosed room. Under direction of the Charlottesville, Virginia, architectural firm of Grigg, Wood and Browne, however, an attempt has been made to return the structure to the period of building and founding of Delta Tau Delta fraternity. Upon completion of research, it was decided to replace the newer front porch with a gable-roofed, pedimented cover over the entrance bay, to remove the rear addition, and to open the double porch and restore it with retention of as much of the original fabric as possible. The structure was reroofed with wooden shingles, chimney corbeling was repaired, and exterior walls were painted. Care was taken to use existing elements and glass of the windows, some doors were refinished, fireplaces were rebricked, and walls were stripped to the bricks and replastered (a foam insulation was incorporated in this step). Only landscaping and removal of a detached cinder block garage remain before restoration is completed and the house is fully readied for furnishing and reuse as low-traffic offices and museum in memorial to Delta Tau Delta's founding here.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1858-59

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Delta Tau Delta Founders House, located at the college community of Bethany, Brooke County, West Virginia, is significant because it was in a room here that meetings were held which culminated in the organization of that Greek-letter fraternity. In a broader sense, though, the fraternity itself is significant as the product of at least two movements: the growth in importance of literary societies in this nation's higher institutions of learning prior to the Civil War and a dynamism--instilled by Alexander Campbell, founder and first president of remote Bethany College--that helped promote an atmosphere supportive of growth among students as individuals and in groups.

Greek-letter social fraternities on college campuses have been, at times, both noted and notorious, praised and tolerated. Origins of these organizations are somewhat cloudy and more complex than often realized, but it is known that the first, Phi Beta Kappa, was formed at the College of William and Mary in 1776. It was not until the mid-1820s, however, that their numbers started to increase rapidly, and when Delta Tau Delta was founded there were nearly twenty such groups, some having chapters at several schools. What is more, growth nearly stopped about the time of Reconstruction, the period of Bethany's contribution having been the high point of the movement.

Bethany College was chartered in 1840 and admitted its first students in 1841. Its location in the hills of northwestern Virginia was isolated, requiring virtually all those in attendance to seek room and board with the help of the school and among townspeople. Shortly after construction of the subject house in the early 1850s, it was apparently opened in part to students, and at this place in 1858 one Jacob S. Lowe had taken lodging. Lowe was a member of the Neotropean Literary Society, a prominent college organization through which he became associated with a faction of students seemingly dissatisfied that members of Bethany's chapter of Phi Kappa Psi were controlling society functions. And so it was on the occasion of trying to counteract the influence of one fraternity that eight students (Richard H. Alfred, Henry K. Bell, William R. Cunningham, Alexander C. Earle, John L.N. Hunt, John C. Johnson, Jacob S. Lowe and Eugene Tarr) met in the room of Jacob Lowe where they decided to draw up a constitution and bylaws for the organizing of what became, in 1859, Delta Tau Delta. From this beginning--and despite the fact that the Bethany chapter was inactive from 1895 to 1966--the fraternity has grown to more than 75,000 members comprising

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in excess of 200 undergraduate and alumni chapters. As one so often calls birthplace home, Founders House has become a symbol, and more, for it is a physical memorial (as the building of actual founding) unique to Delta Tau Delta among the early Greek-letter fraternities.

Lowe, as so many others, was a short-term resident of this dwelling that has a history of its own even after those important events of 1858 and 1859 had transpired. Over the years renters of rooms have included numerous other students and travelers, the college Raccobite Club which eventually became a chapter of Phi Kappa Tau, and a woman named Kate Morris who used part of it as The Grey Bonnet Tea Room from the late 1930s until 1942. What might easily be overlooked, too, is the place of its current resident--Miss Luta Gordon, registrar of Bethany College from the mid-1950s until 1970--whose family owned the property from 1920 until 1975. She in many ways typifies a long relationship with the college shared by this building, a relationship that began when John Low purchased the lot in 1850 from Alexander Campbell, school president, town developer, and prime mover of the Disciples of Christ (Christian) Church.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Charleston, W.Va. Archives and History Division, West Virginia Department of Culture and History. Delta Tau Delta Birthplace highway marker file.

Knox, Leslie L. "The Founding of the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity." Bethany, W.Va., 1976. (Typescript on file at Bethany College, Bethany, W.Va.)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/6 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Bethany, W.Va.-Pa.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 537670 4450420  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is on a town lot, number 68, in Bethany, The lot measures 60 feet across the front and is 120 feet deep.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James E. Harding, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Unit  
 Dept. of Culture and History

DATE

January 13, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

The Cultural Center  
 Capitol Complex

TELEPHONE

(304) 348-0244

CITY OR TOWN

Charleston

STATE

West Virginia

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Clarence Morrow

3/26/79

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Knox, Leslie L. "A Duty to Fight," Rainbow (publication of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity), 1978, pp. 7-10.

Robson, John, ed. Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities.  
18th ed. Menasha, Wisc.: George Banta, Inc., 1968.

Wellsburg, W.Va. Brooke County Courthouse. Deed Books 17,18, 23, 50,  
107 and 202. Deed of Trust Book 4.

Woolery, W.K. Bethany Years. Huntington, W.Va.: Standard Printing  
and Publishing Co., 1941.





