

WYLIE BRANTLEY JONES

(1862 – 1919)

ALPHA CHAPTER · CHARTER BROTHER NO. 3
FOUNDING BROTHER OF GAMMA DELTA PSI FRATERNITY

DORSEY A. HOWARD

BETA ALPHA CHAPTER NO. 58

Easter Sunday has always been a joyful time of celebration. Not only are there faith-based reasons to rejoice, but Easter is at or near the season of nature's renewal and the promise of warmth and light that comes with Spring and Summer. Positive and uplifting expectations blossom during the Easter Season.

It was on Easter Sunday, April 13, 1879 that seventeen year-old Wylie Brantley (also spelled Brantly) Jones joined with three other young men, all of whom were his friends and fellow students at New Haven, Connecticut's Hillhouse High School, to found Gamma Delta Psi Fraternity.

The idea of forming a High School Fraternity came from Wylie's friend, Alexander Jay Wurts. Alex thoughtfully selected three of his best friends who he believed to possess the qualities necessary to become good Fraternity Brothers.

The four friends and classmates, Walter Rowling Dann, Arthur Henry Jackson, Wylie Brantley Jones and Alexander Jay Wurts, would spend the next year creating the beginnings of the traditions, rituals and ideals that have been passed down to us over the past 135 years.

They chose their pin numbers in Alpha Chapter alphabetically, with Dann being Charter Brother #1, Jackson #2, Jones #3 and Wurts #4 even though Wurts had been the primary creator of the Fraternity.

It was not until May of 1880 that they decided to expand the membership by inducting new members into their fraternal circle.

It has not been possible to determine to what degree the four Founding Brothers remained an active force in the life of the fledgling Fraternity.

Within two years of the founding, all four Alpha Chapter Charter Brothers had graduated and had moved on to other pursuits. Only Brother Jackson was to spend most of his life in New Haven.

Founders Dann and Jackson participated in Fraternity events in the early 1900's.

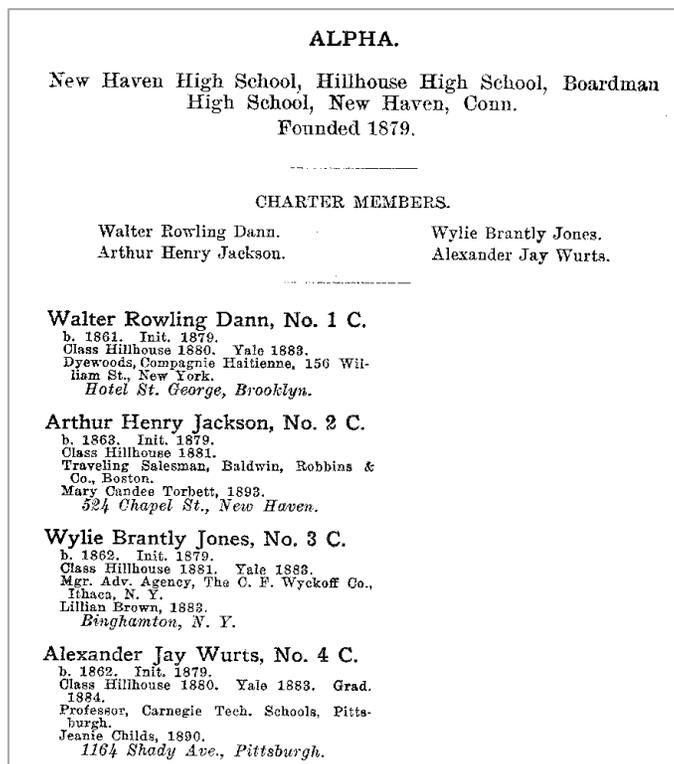
By 1883, Founder Jones was married and was pursuing a career in advertising.

He moved to Vermont in 1885 and to New York in the early 1900's and there's no record of him ever having returned to participate in any Fraternity events.



The only known surviving photos for two of the four Founders were published in a 1963 issue of the 'Garnet & Silver'.

*L-R: **Walter Rowling Dann** (Alpha Charter № 1), **Arthur Henry Jackson** (Alpha Charter № 2), **Wylie Brantley Jones** (Alpha Charter № 3), and Primary Founder **Alexander Jay Wurts** (Alpha Charter № 4). Individual photos of Founders Wurts and Jackson are in the Fraternity Archives.*



*The 1st National Catalog of Gamma Delta Psi
published in 1906 lists the Alpha Chapter Charter Brothers*

Little is known about the details of the earliest days of the Fraternity.

What we know comes to us in the form of handwritten letters from the 1940's that were exchanged between Founding Brother Arthur Henry Jackson and a young brother in Niagara Falls, New York named William Frank Buchanan (Alpha Eta Chapter No. 249), who was the National Secretary of the Fraternity at the time.

Founder Jackson was in his late 70's. All of the other Founders were deceased by that time. His memories returned slowly over the course of several exchanges of letters. He wrote that the early meetings were held in a corner room on the top floor of Hillhouse High School.

He gave full credit to Brother Alex Wurts for being the prime mover and catalyst behind the formation of the brotherhood. Unfortunately, he wrote very little about himself and Brothers Dann and Jones.

Wylie Brantley Jones was born on August 15, 1862 during the American Civil War. Records do not agree as to his birthplace with some saying Oxford, New Haven, Connecticut and others saying Hartford, Connecticut.

His father was John James Jones and his mother was Martha Chatfield Jones.

Little is known of his father's ancestry but his mother's lineage could be traced back to the earliest settlers in New England. The family lived at 89 Wooster Street in New Haven.

Brother Wylie graduated from Hillhouse High School in the Class of 1881 along with his fellow Alpha Chapter Founder, Arthur Henry Jackson.

Brothers Dann and Wurts graduated in the Class of 1880. The *Yale University Pot Pourri*, Volume 16 – Page 42, lists Wylie Brantley Jones as being enrolled in the Sheffield Scientific School during the 1880-1881 school year.

In 1884, Brother Wylie Jones married Lillian Emma Brown of New Haven. They had two daughters, Florence M. Jones (Mrs. John C. Clark) born in 1885, and Dorothy Jones (Mrs. Robert B. Hoadley, Jr.) born in 1892.

The Jones family moved to Burlington, Vermont in 1885 where Brother Wylie worked for the *Wells & Richardson Company*.

Wylie Jones' talents in the field of advertising and sales were soon recognized and he was promoted to the position of advertising manager. His primary responsibility was in the field of patent medicine advertising.

This was a profitable and very competitive field since patent medicine advertising and sales were totally unregulated until 1906. After 1906, the U.S. Government required manufacturers and retailers to provide evidence for contents and beneficial health claims.

The Wylie Jones family moved to Hartford, Connecticut and Buffalo, New York, where Brother Wylie worked in advertising before finally settling in Binghamton, New York where he founded the *Wylie B. Jones Advertising Agency* in 1904.

Under his skillful management the agency became a large and successful international business with offices all over North America and in the United Kingdom, France and Australia.

Brother Jones became widely recognized as one of the foremost advertising authorities. In 1918, the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper named him to head a panel of eight experts in an examination of the state of the advertising industry.

Little is known about Founder Jones' personality other than a short statement written about him by Hamilton Sullivan Peck in the 1919 *Connecticut Journal of the Society of Colonial Wars*.

Author Peck would have known Brother Jones quite well since Wiley Jones had been very active in that organization, having served as Secretary of that Society in 1899–1900 and Lieutenant Governor in 1901.

Peck described Jones as being “by nature aggressive and forceful”.

It is through comments published in Brother Jones obituaries that we learn that he was very active and generous in support of charities in the Binghamton community.

Being too old to serve in the military during World War I, Brother Jones launched several fundraising campaigns in support of the war effort and soldier-related projects.

He also was instrumental in assisting a clergyman by the name of Harry C. Meserve to obtain an officer's commission in the U.S. Army. Chaplain Captain Meserve officiated at Brother Jones' funeral service.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Founder Wylie Jones were set out in detail in the 1919 *Connecticut Journal of the Society of Colonial Wars*.

Brother Jones died on January 27, 1919 while being driven by his chauffeur on a business trip to New York City.

He left his home in Binghamton before noon and became ill shortly afterward. The chauffeur drove him to the nearest doctor in the town of Hancock, New York but he died before he could receive medical attention.

The funeral service was held at the home of his daughter Florence M. Jones Clark in Binghamton.

The Clark residence was described as having been “filled to overflowing” with friends and representatives of numerous Civic and Fraternal organizations from the area.

A large representation of the Masonic Lodges were present as Brother Jones was a Mason. The arrangements of memorial flowers were described as being “hundreds in number”.

Following the funeral service, Founder Jones' body was taken to his native New Haven where he was buried in that city's Evergreen Cemetery. Founder Jones was 56 years of age at the time of his death.



*Founding Brother Wylie B. Jones is buried in the plot located at 111 Central Avenue in the Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven, CT beside an as yet unidentified relative, possibly an older sister.
(Photo courtesy of Mr. John Schatzlein, Masonic Historian in New Haven)*

It is doubtful that Founding Brother Wylie Brantley Jones could have ever imagined the magnitude and scope of the impact that Gamma Delta Psi Fraternity would have on so many of us who have lived in the 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries.

Sometimes it's the subtle events in life that take root and expand far beyond our ability to comprehend.

Such was the case with the four young men who met on Easter Sunday, April 13 1879 in New Haven, Connecticut to form Gamma Delta Psi Fraternity.

May they Rest in Peace.

Once A Brother, Always A Brother.