

Acacia Foundation

OF WISCONSIN



222 Langdon Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Ahoy Acacians Everywhere:

We bring glad tidings. The Acacia Foundation of the Wisconsin Chapter is celebrating its 60th anniversary on the Wisconsin campus in a new home at 222 Langdon Street, acquired January 4, 1966.

Before revealing the details of this acquisition, let us fill you in by relating some of the events leading up to this milestone in Acacia's illustrious history. We know you will all remember the age old admonition, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding."

Some of the details in the following account of our Chapter's march of progress through the years may be old stuff to some, and to others, a revelation or a review of forgotten lore.

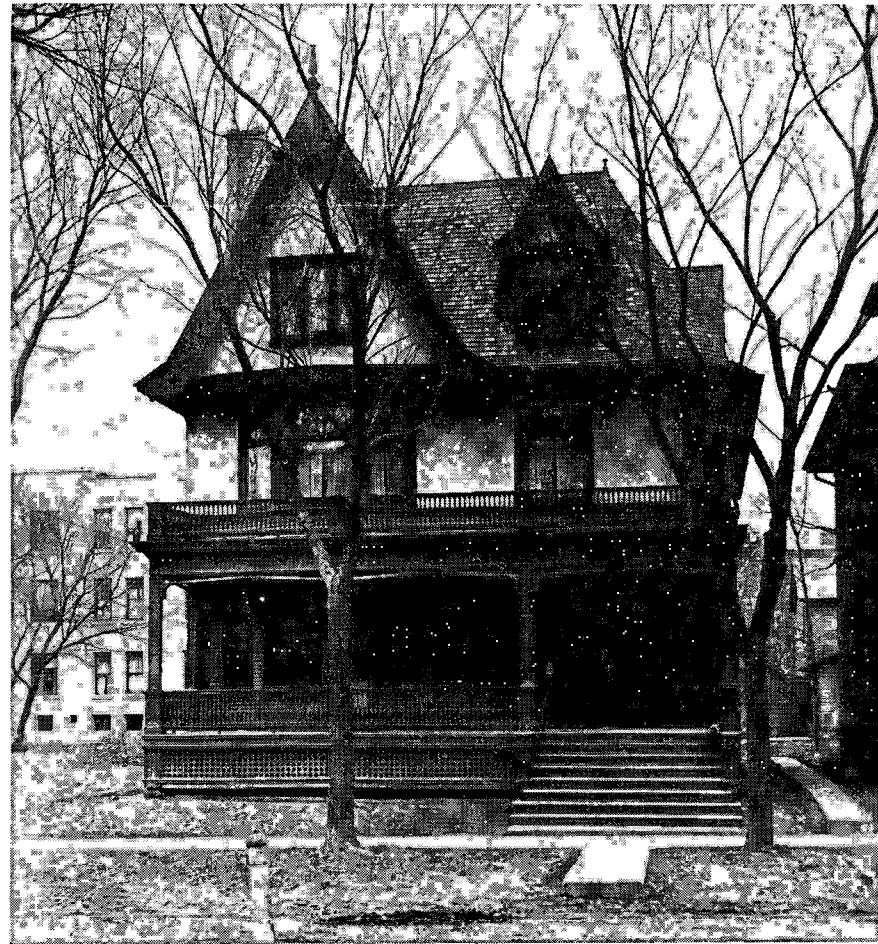
When our charter members organized *Lambeth* chapter in 1906, they set up housekeeping at 431 Lake Street.



431 Lake Street

The First University of Wisconsin Acacia House

Later the Chapter was temporarily housed at 901 University Avenue, now the location of the First National Bank — West Branch. In 1912, the fellows of Acacia acquired ownership of their First chapter house at 615 Lake Street, for the modest sum of \$12,500. To many senior members of our Alumni, the halls of Acacia at "615" brings to mind a flood of memories dear to their hearts beyond the comprehension of the uninitiated. The tenure at this residence lasted 11 years bracketing the difficult months of the World War I period. During these years, the Fraternity suspended operations for several months and the house was used as a barracks for the SATC.



Home of Acacia 1912-1923
615 Lake Street

After the war, many men who were Masons returned to the campus, and the Fraternity had a period of rapid growth.

The Acacia fellowship outgrew its facilities in the early 20's; so a committee was formed to search out a new home site with aspirations to build a chapter tailored to fraternity living. We found the ideal location at 112 Langdon Street — the Burr-Jones house with land extending from Langdon Street down to the lake. This property was acquired for \$35,000. The house at 615 Lake was sold shortly thereafter to Alpha Theta Pi for \$21,000. Then, Acacians proceeded to build our new home on the shores of Lake Mendota. In the meantime, the house and lot on Langdon Street was sold to Alpha Delta Pi for \$35,000.

The building of the new, magnificent Acacia Home at 108 Langdon was completed in 1925. In 1937, misfortune overtook us, as it did so many other entrepreneurs and business enterprises in the great depression. We lost our house to our creditors.



108 Langdon Street

In 1950 after a number of precarious years of existence interrupted by World War II, we finally got ourselves established again by repurchasing the house and two lots at 112 Langdon for the sum of \$45,000. This home has served us for 15 years, but not as elegantly as many Acacians would wish. Depreciation and obsolescence finally dictated that we take positive action to acquire new facilities.



112 Langdon Street Home

Many of you know through recent communications about the valiant efforts made by members of the Board to tear down and rebuild a new modern home at 112 Langdon. The barriers to this venture for various reasons proved insurmountable, but the members of the Board of the Acacia Foundation were undaunted. During this past summer the decision was reached to sell our house at 112 Langdon, and the transaction was completed September 30, 1965 for the princely sum of \$110,000. Thus, we reactivated in 1950 with a gross deficit of \$9,000 and we closed out in 1965 for a gross sum of \$110,000. Presently, our net worth approximates \$80,000.

Our next letter, to follow shortly, will give you a full account of our acquisition of 222 Langdon, a description of the property, present status of the active chapter, and an expression of our hopes and aspirations for the future.

Fraternally yours,

Board of Directors

John C. Ellis, Jr. — 54	Richard W. Massey — 55
Neal E. Anderson — 59	Dean T. Massey — 54
John E. Carey — 54	Arthur L. May — 32
Norvin Knudson — 53	Earl C. Reistad — 51
Norman E. Hansen — 58	William H. Wood — 52
David B. Lund — 59	Henry H. Bakken — 22



New
Home
Of

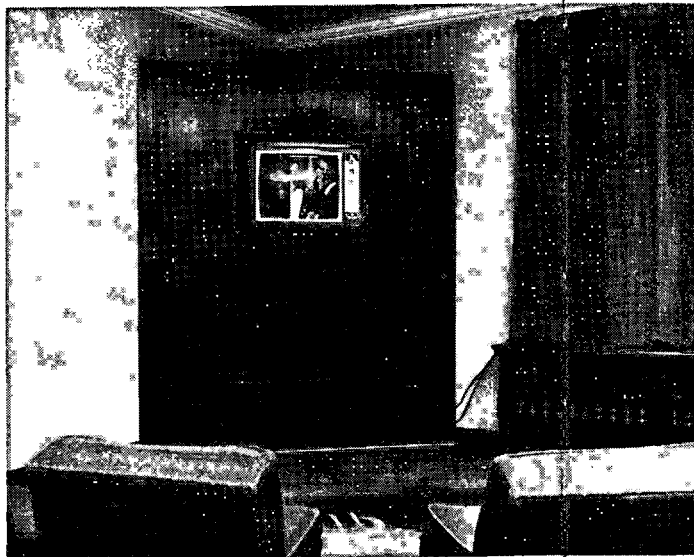
Acacia

Fraternity

222 Langdon
Madison,
Wisconsin



Fireplace in Living Room



TV Room

Dear Brother Acacians:

Two, Two, Two Langdon! That's our new address, Fellows, and it is one rich in the lore of Madison past. The land on which our house now stands was first acquired from the Government by James D. Doty and Steven T. Mason in 1837. The 70th entry on the abstract indicates that John C. Freeman acquired title in 1888.

The Freeman family in those days belonged to the so-called "Langdon Street Aristocracy." When William Ellery Leonard, the Campus Poet, came to Wisconsin early in this century, he mingled with the upper crust that inhabited this section of the "Venice of the West." He made 222 Langdon, the Freeman home, his residence from 1906 to 1910. The impressionable poet was attracted to the vivacious daughter of his landlord, and counter to the advice of his intimates, he married her (the first of four wives) in 1909. This marriage ended in tragedy. Charlotte Freeman Leonard committed suicide in May, 1911.

This melancholy incident precipitated a chain of events that plagued Prof. Leonard all the remaining years of his life, and coincidentally set the stage for the authorship of two outstanding works in American literature — "Two Lives" and "The Locomotive God." Many of you who were on the campus in the era 1912-1944 may remember this colorful personality sauntering across the lower campus on his way to Bascom Hall. He was not likely to be seen elsewhere, for he was confined to a mental prison, six square blocks in area, by chronic neurosis. This fear of the Locomotive God was called "spatial phobia," the reverse of claustrophobia. William Ellery Leonard acquired part interest in 222 Langdon as an heir to his wife's estate. He promptly sold his right to Max Mason in 1913, who in turn transferred title to the Lake Lawn Realty Co. the same year.

On January 10, 1921, the Zeta Beta Chapter of Phi Mu Sorority acquired 222 Langdon from the Lake Lawn Realty Co. and lived in the old house until they made the decision to build a new one — the year was 1926. Among their number was a daughter of the noted Madison constructor and builder, Mr. C. B. Fritz. It was quite logical that the Fritz Company was selected to build their new home, and legend has it that Mr. Fritz took great pride in building one of the finest fra-

ternal structures in the Latin Quarter. He used only the best materials, the most skilled workmanship, and the latest architectural design of that time to accomplish his purpose.

The house was built on a lot which measures 246 ft. in length and 56.33 ft. in width or approximately 50% larger than the land area we had at 112 Langdon. The house is a three-story structure of brick, steel, and cement measuring 68' in length, 40' in width, and 55' in height. There are 38 rooms in all, classified as follows: 14 double, 4 single, a T.V. den, the Housemother quarters, chapter, kitchen, dining, living, several storage, furnace, large attic for ceremonials, and for good measure, an office for the Acacia Foundation. The house was purchased furnished.

To continue relating the history of this storied house, the Phi Mus lost possession to J. Raiman Feldman in 1941 because they failed to meet an \$8,000 obligation. Mr. Feldman sold the house to Phi Delta Theta and this fraternity went off campus in 1962. It was later reorganized as a local fraternity under the name Phi Delta. In 1965, Phi Delta threw in the sponge, because of the anti-discrimination clause. In view of these circumstances, the Phi Delta Theta Association decided to put their house on the auction block.

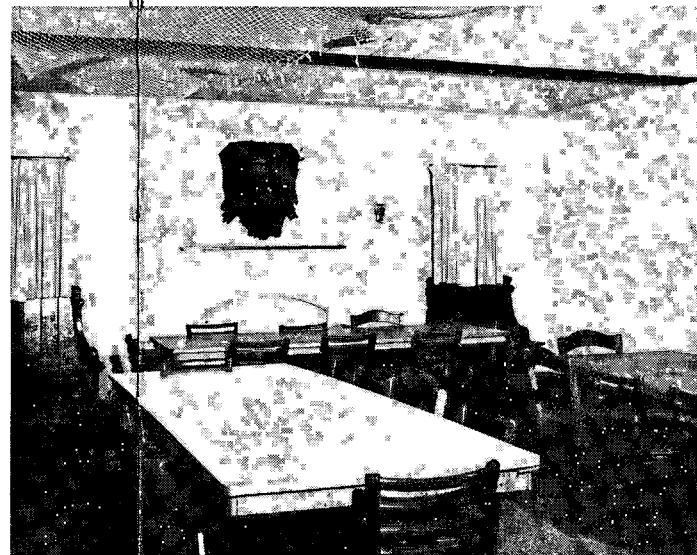
Your Board of Directors learned about this decision via the grapevine. Thereafter, we met early in October in special session to discuss the desirability of acquiring another Acacia home. At that meeting, we authorized the officers of your Foundation to attend a meeting of the Phi Delta Theta Association, and to explore the possibility of buying the property. The members of the Phi Delta Theta Association rejected all offers at this meeting on October 23, 1965, but they authorized their officers to sell the property on a sealed-bid basis.

Again the Acacia Board convened in special session on November 6 to consider the purchase of the Phi Delta Theta property and to give the Foundation officers authority to submit a sealed bid. In the meantime, members of the Board inspected the premises, appraised its value, and the possible means of financing the project.

The simple average of all the independent appraisals (\$160,100) was determined and used as a basis for submitting a sealed bid. When the bids were opened on November 10, Acacia had the topmost bid of



Living Room



Dining Room

the five contenders, and was declared the buyer. Throughout the remaining days of November, and during the month of December, officers of the Phi Delta Theta Association and your Foundation were preoccupied in arranging the final details of the Transaction and on January 4, 1966, the transfer of ownership was consummated giving Acacia title and deed to 222 Langdon.

Early in the fall, *Calvin O. Hultman*, Traveling Secretary for the National Chapter, visited the campus for the purpose of aiding the Active Chapter in the Fall Rush. Considering the handicap they were under, we believe the boys did moderately well in their recruitment of pledges. Our main concern, however, was to impart the idea that the Acacia chapter was still on the campus, and full of vim even if it appeared to be only on an attenuated basis. When the second semester rolled around, not all our actives were able to get a release from their room and board contracts normally entered into at the beginning of each academic year, but six of the boys achieved this objective. In order to set up housekeeping in our new home at the beginning of the second semester, these six active members formed the Nucleus. We learned that our next door neighbors — ATO's — were planning to raze their house during the semester, and to build a new one ready for occupancy in the fall. We had an empty house; so we offered them our hospitality, as good neighbors should, and arrangements were made for the cohabitation of Acacia and the ATO's from February to June. Presently, 222 Langdon is occupied by six Acacians and 16 ATO's.

We have high hopes that the active chapter (currently consisting of 7 actives and 3 pledges) will be able to take over all facilities when the academic year 1966-67 opens in September. Let us assure you that the collegiate community is aware of our presence on the campus. On March 16, the Executive Commission of the Interfraternity Council made its semi-annual announcement relating to scholastic performance. It acknowledged and granted financial awards and plaques to the

following fraternities for their scholastic achievement during the second semester 1964-65:

Psi Upsilon overall grade point average to both actives and pledges — \$40.00; Acacia — most improved — \$25.00; Acacia — Pledges over all average — \$25.00.

Plans are presently being made to utilize our house to full advantage during the summer session. If any of you know summer school bound students looking for pleasant quarters, near beautiful Lake Mendota, we would appreciate your advising them to write or pay us a visit at 222 Langdon. Another newsletter will follow shortly.

Fraternally Your Board,

John C. Ellis, Jr. — President

David B. Lund — Vice-President

John C. Carey — Secretary

William H. Wood — Treasurer

Norvin Knudson — Finance Comm.

Neil E. Anderson

Norman E. Hansen

Richard W. Massey

Dean T. Massey

Arthur L. May

Earl C. Reistad

Henry H. Bakken — Chairman,
Finance Committee