

INTER FRATRES ALL ARE OUTPOSTS

Seth R. Brooks, *St. Lawrence '22*
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A letter came to me recently saying, "We hope you'll visit our Chapter for we are an outpost." The writer's statement can be understood. Here was a chapter which geographically was far away from the center of our Broad Domain. One sensed a feeling of being "way off here," or isolation.

There are no outposts in one sense. Each chapter is joined to the other chapters in its District and to the 97 other chapters. Each District is joined to the other 24. No Beta is really alone. He is part of a chapter and part of the entire Fraternity.

On second thought, yes, each chapter is in a different sense an outpost. It is the representative of the Fraternity on its own campus where it stands on its own merit. It is an outpost of all the other chapters, but in that it has a commonalty with all chapters (for *each* is an outpost).

The outpost idea has to be looked at again. Travel through our 97 chapters and what strikes one? Their difference and their likeness. Each has its own history, traditions and membership. Each also has the same letters B Θ Π. Each has the same Ritual, Badge, songs, *Magazine*, grip and password.

We have diversity among unity. There are the boys of Maine, Florida, British Columbia, Texas and Miami. There is also the oneness Beta Theta Pi gives.

The amazing thing about the Beta picture is that an idea could spread to 97 different campuses and retain its own uniqueness. The richness of our experience is the different contributions our various chapters make.

The opponents of Fraternities never grasp the unifying principle of a far-flung association of college men. They do not understand how thousands of men over more than a century have found a larger experience through fraternal ties and bonds.

Miami, our Alpha Chapter, was the first outpost of Beta Theta Pi. That was in 1839. The Beta idea was carried to Cincinnati, which became the new outpost. In 1952 when we installed the Western Ontario Chapter that became our latest outpost. So the history runs.

We would do well to think of each chapter as an outpost, but as a part of the whole. Each Beta would be wise to think of his life as an outpost of our ideals, but related to the entire membership.

There are no outpost chapters as such. Paradoxically, all chapters are outposts. To grasp that in terms of *standing out front* is to add progressive leadership and creativity to Beta Theta Pi.