

History of 'K-Hill' Involves Most College Engineers Since 1920

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Remember the first time you came through Manhattan? You were on your way to Topeka, or Kansas City, or perhaps K-State was your destination. Whatever your purpose was, long before you reached the city, you saw in the distance a mammoth "KS" on the west slope of Mt. Prospect. You soon discovered that those two letters identified this as the location of Kansas State College.

Since then, you've learned to be proud of the "KS" and the rising spirit of K-State that it stands for. You have a right to be proud of it.

To many of you, and to thousands of alumni, the two giant letters bring up associations of a thoroughly down to earth nature. Maybe you have a pair of khakis that are well splattered with whitewash as a memento of the day you helped clean up the "K". Since the idea was first conceived, the financing, construction or maintenance of these symbols has, at one time or another, involved almost every engineer that has attended this school.

The story of the project goes back to several years before the construction of the "K" was actually begun. Students talked about it until finally one class built a "K" of loose rock on Bluemont hill. This didn't last long, so the next best idea was a reinforced concrete letter. In 1921, the Civil Engineering Society took the lead in promoting such a permanent letter. The General Engineering Seminar voted funds sufficient to build it, and classes were dismissed when everything was ready to go. The Engineers marched out to the hill, led by a brass band, and by the end of the first day's work, it was nearly completed. The next day, the finishing touches were put on. This first letter is at a 40 degree slope, and is anchored by cables and concrete lugs. Such a letter would cost over a thousand dollars to build at present prices.

Everyone was in favor of the immediate addition of an "S", but nobody did anything about it until 1930. Sigma Tau members organized a committee to promote the second letter, and the General Engineering Seminar soon decided that they would do the work, if the rest of the school would furnish the finances.

Five hundred dollars was pretty big money in the thirties, so that turned out to be quite a problem. After sponsoring tag day, movies, boxing matches, and promoting donations from faculty, business men, and \$125 from the Seminar treasury, they finally suc-

ceeded in raising enough cash.

This section of the hill required considerable preparatory work, and a day was spent clearing and leveling it off to the slant of the hill. On May 10, classes were dismissed and the Engineers started in on the "S". Rain halted the work at noon, so the crew went to the Manhattan Community House for barbecued sandwiches. The rain soon stopped, and by six p. m., the job was completed. An army searchlight was spotted in on the hill, and the chairman of the committee presented the letter to the College and the city of Manhattan in an appropriate ceremony. Dr. J. T. Willard represented the College, and Mayor Hurst Majors, the city.

The latest chapter of this story was begun when it became common knowledge that the property on which the letters are located had changed owners several times. No clear cut agreement assuring the Engineers the right to maintain the letters could be found, so a movement to acquire title to the land was begun.

Sigma Tau took this on as a project in 1937 and several solutions were attempted. Funds were not available to buy the entire 28 acre tract, so proceedings were begun to have the section set aside as a park. This was not successful, and a practical solution was agreed upon only last spring.

In exchange for a 220 foot strip of land, including enough area for the "C" plus easement rights permitting entrance at any time, Sigma Tau members agreed to survey and subdivide 30 acres of property for the land owner. This was completed before the end of the '47 school year, after many Fridays and Saturdays of hard work involving every member of the honorary fraternity.

In an all-school assembly on October 16, 1947, the deed was presented to the college by Prof. L. V. White, faculty sponsor of Sigma Tau and consistent promoter of this project for over 10 years. President Eisenhower accepted for the College.

Funds from the Engineering Council and Sigma Tau financed lighting of the freshly whitewashed "KS" the night before homecoming this year. An army searchlight was played on K-Hill from the top of Sunset Hill.

According to tradition, Freshman Engineers have the important responsibility for cleaning and whitewashing the letters each fall semester. All of those who have had some part in maintaining or building the "KS" can be proud that they have helped build a very real part of Kansas State's tradition.