

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Order Receives Important Historical Document *Report Card Connecting Spiritual and Practical Founders Found*



At age twenty-two when he was initiated into the K.A. Fraternity, Samuel Zenas Ammen had already seen and done much more than many brothers have at that age. He

had survived the country's most devastating war as a veteran of both the Confederate Army and Navy. Any frivolous ideas of a carefree youth were long ago stripped away by the harshest lessons that life has to offer.

While at Washington College he must have heard of Robert E. Lee's dream for our nation – to take the discipline, courage and commitment that had been learned by the destructive nature of war and use it to gather the best our culture had to offer and to build upon that foundation. Lee's dream must have found fertile ground in Ammen as he set about the task of elevating the young organization he had entered, to make it a tool for the accomplishment of the dream he shared with Lee.

One year ago, Robert C. Hill III (Kappa '84), who was working on building a business that sold rare antiquities, was thumbing through a list of manuscripts and happened to notice, almost by chance, that a man in Pennsylvania was selling a Washington College report card signed by Lee. As he glanced at the description of the card's condition and content he saw that it listed the student as none other than "S.Z. Ammen."

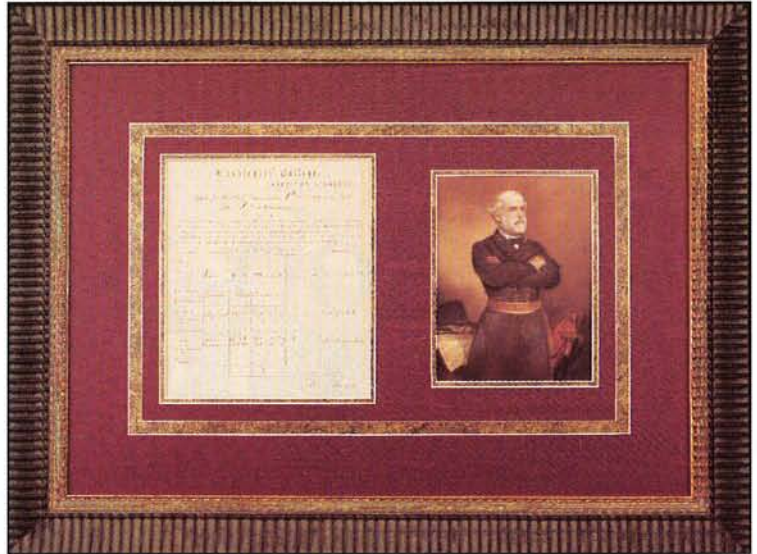
Amazed and excited, Hill immediately informed the National Administrative Office of the card and events were set in motion for KA to

bring the document home. As good fortune would have it, Kappa Alpha Order Educational Foundation Trustee William E. Dreyer (Alpha Delta '57) learned of the historical document and agreed to purchase it so that all brothers

could enjoy it. This beautifully framed document, that links our two most influential ancestors, now hangs in the National Office for all brothers to admire.

When Lee signed this document, he must have been well aware of the brief history of KA and that the student, whose card was now before him was involved in the brash, young society. He must have thought well of the Order as he gazed down through his spectacles, and noted the perfect marks Ammen had accumulated. What must Lee have been feeling as his hand signed this very page, knowing that this young man, whose grades he was now reviewing, was laying the groundwork for an Order that would positively affect so many? We can only wonder. We will never know for sure.

As Ammen began his work with the small fraternity, he always stayed focused on his purpose at college: to receive an education. You can tell by the marks he received and the word "Distinguished" by every class, that Ammen was committed in all of his



endeavors. In fact, it was at this moment, February 8, 1868, in the very week that this document was penned, that Ammen's influence would reach next door to the Virginia Military Institute and see to the founding of Beta chapter.

How the report card got into the hands of the dealer is a mystery. Former Knight Commander Idris Traylor had heard of the piece existing years ago and had tried to purchase it from the Ammen family, but it was to no avail.

If you have the opportunity to visit the National Office and gaze upon this historical document or as you look at here upon this page, be reminded that you are looking at a moment frozen in time. A flash in time when the lives of two extraordinary men, who would leave behind their legacy to mold those who would pay heed, merge. You are looking at what Longfellow referred to in his *Psalm of Life* as "footprints in the sands of time." This moment, reflective of their legacy, is now ours to cherish and to pass on.