

A History of the Vulcans: The University of Michigan's First Engineering Secret Society
(1904-2022)

Engineering Honors Capstone

Presented To

The Engineering Honors Program

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¹ Michiganensian. (1980). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

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Vulcan staring at their Society's Anvil symbol, circa 1949²

Introduction

The Vulcans, a senior engineering honorary society, was organized in 1904. In addition to social activities, the society raises money for scholarships for engineering students.

"VULCAN is a society consisting of juniors, seniors, and graduate students who have shown leadership and service to the College of Engineering and the University of Michigan. The purpose of the society is five-fold:

1. To promote comradeship among its members based on their mutual interests.
2. To develop cooperation between student organizations by promoting this friendship among their leaders.
3. To bestow private recognition upon those who are deserving by electing them to membership.
4. To provide service to the College of Engineering in situations where VULCANS has unique capabilities.
5. To maintain the decades of tradition on which our organization was founded."³

The society was named after the Greek god who first welded together iron and steel. The emblem is an anvil bearing the word "Vulcan" and the class year.

² Michiganensian. (1949). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

³ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library

Three kinds of membership were established: active, graduate, and honorary. Scholarship is not the sole requirement for initiation; a candidate must be popular and active in both scholastic and social affairs in the College of Engineering to be considered for membership. Junior students who fulfill these requirements are voted on by the active members and their initiation is conducted late in the spring. For eligible senior students who have been passed by in the spring, initiation is held in the fall. A full-length initiation ritual was leaked in 2017 on the website Imgur.⁴

No definite annual number of new members was set, but a limit of about twenty members a year has been established by precedent. Meetings were held in the Vulcan room in the tower of the Michigan Union every second Sunday evening. Shortly after the Winter 1995 initiation, the suggestion was made to select a Greek place name and assign it to each class. In 2000 the Vulcans lost their room in the Union and were displaced to hold their ceremony in College of Engineering rooms on North Campus. Since 2010, no written records from the organization have surfaced leading to a mystery as to their current whereabouts. A Vulcan scholarship, first established in the 1950s, is still offered at the University, although attempts to contact the organization via the scholarship have been unsuccessful.

Aside from providing its members with this form of fellowship and inspiration, the society's principal active function is to participate in student affairs of the College of Engineering and of the University as a whole, in cooperation with the other honorary societies on the campus. Engineering Deans and Professors are regularly offered membership and Google Cofounder Larry Page was one of the hundreds of Vulcan alumni making a difference in their respective engineering fields.

Initial Formation (1904-1911)

Starting in the late 1800s, the idea of student run societies began becoming popular on the University of Michigan's campus. Societies would form and disband within the decade and beginning in the 1900s this would begin to change. 1901 brought the foundation of Michigamua, a society aimed at improving campus life. This group recruited members on campus regardless of school or class rank. Despite this overarching society, smaller societies began to form to service their respective colleges. In 1904 the law school would found their own Honor Society, the Barristers and this same year, senior students in the College of Engineering banded together to create a their own Honors Society.⁵ The constitution of the organization, written the same year as the organization's inception, set out the Vulcan mission as the following: "To promote good

⁴ Imgur. (2017). *Vulcan Society*. Imgur. <https://imgur.com/gallery/c40jc>

⁵ *The University of Michigan, an encyclopedic survey ... Wilfred B. Shaw, editor.* (2022). Umich.edu. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/u/umsurvey/AAS3302.0004.001/1:3.3.1?rgn=div3;view=fulltext>

fellowship and bring about better acquaintance amongst the congenial members of the Senior Engineering Class of the University of Michigan.”⁶ The name of the group, “Vulcan” was meant to pay homage to the Olympic God of fire and light who was worshipped as an engineer and master artisan. The constitution outlined that 27 senior men in good standing should comprise the active members of the group, in addition to faculty members that could be elected into the organization as honorary members. Initially, 15 junior men were to be elected into the organization, and then once their senior year rolled around, they would elect into the organization 10 new members. New members were elected into the organization based on votes for their addition presented by current members. Current Vulcans would write down names of Juniors they felt should be offered membership, and the top ten most voted names would be added to the organization. A member could be expelled at any time by a 3/4th vote of the current active body. The officers of the society were to consist of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, with all positions being voted on prior to new members joining in the fall. The President’s role was to lead the organization’s meetings and sign off on funds being spent. The President created an Auditing Committee each year that checked the Treasurer’s financial books. The Vice President’s role was to chair the Entertainment Committee and plan events for the society. The Secretary kept meeting notes and inform new members of their addition to the organization within one week of their admission. The Treasurer paid out money for various causes when drafted a letter by the Secretary that was signed by the president to do so. The emblem of the organization was chosen to be an anvil bearing the word “Vulcan,” a symbol associated with the Greek god’s forging occupation. Amending the constitution required a 2/3rds vote by active members and regularly occurred throughout the coming years. The initiation fee was \$2 (~\$64 in 2022), although this was raised in 1908 to \$5 (~\$151 in 2022), and then raised again to \$7.50 in 1912 (~\$216 in 2022). This rise in cost was to help pay for “society fun.” The group posted its first member list and logo in the 1904 Michiganensian yearbook (Appendix A, Fig 1).⁷ The first Honorary member, Dean Mortimer Cooley, was inducted into the Society in 1904. This tradition of inducting sitting Deans continued throughout the organization’s history. At the first annual Vulcan banquet on June 2, 1904, new members were taken into membership. The original clubroom was on the third floor over a meat market on State Street, at 622 East Liberty Street. Banquets were catered and there were no “strong drinks” although one member brought a roulette wheel according to the recollection of events presented to the 1954 class of Vulcans by first Vulcan president, R. S. Flesheim.⁸

On April 4, 1905, the society received a new banner by members J. M. Bell and R. W. Detwiler to decorate the Vulcan meeting room. The initial meeting place of the organization was above a butcher on state street. The organization’s size was voted to be reduced from 27 to 20 members on October 3rd. On November 17th a new Committee was formed to look into creating a fund for the local hospital, and \$2 (\$64 in 2022) was taken from each member to help pay for

⁶ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library

⁷ Michiganensian. (1904). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

⁸ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

the first Vulcan banquet and to decorate the meeting room. The banquet became a staple of Vulcan tradition and was put on for faculty members as a way to give back. In May of 1905, the Vulcans addressed Engineering faculty expressing their desire for “a good hearty relationship between the Vulcans and the faculty.”⁹ This tenet of faculty involvement and comradery would remain a staple of the organization for the rest of its existence. The new banquet Committee decided on November 24th to push the idea to the Law and Liberal Arts Senior societies, the Barristers, and Michigamua respectively. By December 6th, the society voted on making more committees, to plan a social function at Joe’s for December 16th, reviewing the Society constitution and making new amendments. Another committee was also drawn up to “look up the math of decorating the (meeting) room.”¹⁰ The group changed its emblem to a crest, although this would not stick for years to come. (Appendix A, Fig 2).¹¹ This same year and the following year the group supported a fund to build the U-M psychopathic hospital.

By January of 1906, the group decided on a rebranded image for the Michiganensian yearbook. In February 1906, the society supported a petition for the Michigan Union and replaced the crest emblem (Appendix A, Fig 3). December of 1906 brought new 50 cent punishments for tardy members, and the hospital fund committee reported that no progress had been made. 1907 brought three new Honorary members: Marine Engineering professor Herbert C. Sadler (who went on to found the Naval Engineering Department and become Engineering Dean in 1928), Mechanical Engineering professor Henry C. Anderson (who would go on to be Mechanical Engineering Chair in 1917) and Department of Engineering Mechanics founder Charles J. Tilden. New imagery of the Greek god Vulcan forging a chain on an anvil was added to the Michiganensian (Appendix A, Fig 4).¹² Despite the prior 50 cent tardiness fine, members voted to enact a new 15 cent fine. On April 25th this was clarified to be a 50 cent fine for absence and a 15 cent fine for tardiness. By October the tardiness fee rose to 25 cents. 1907 brought the foundation of the Triangles, a Junior Engineering Honor Society meant to compliment the Vulcans. February 14th, 1908, the group would host its first keg party. April of 1908 brought financial issues for the society as they had unpaid rent leading them to pay off all debt and start looking for rooms to meet. Four days after reporting this issue, they hosted their first meeting in a new space. The rate per year of the new space per year was \$150 (\$4545 in 2022). In November of 1908, a committee was drawn up to review the possibility of having Vulcan meetings or dinners once a month in the Michigan Union clubhouse. January 21st of 1909 brought the first dinner at the Michigan Union clubhouse. That same year two new honorary members had been inducted: Civil Engineering professors Joseph B. David (founder of Camp Davis) and Gardner S. Williams (surveyor of the Huron River).¹³

The early 1900s also brought the foundation of other societies on campus, namely the Sphinx and Druids. The Sphinx were a Junior Honor society in the Literary College founded in

⁹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library

¹⁰ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library

¹¹ Michiganensian. (1905). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

¹² Michiganensian. (1907). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

¹³ Michiganensian. (1909). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

1906, while the Druids were the Senior counterpart and were founded in 1909.¹⁴ In April of 1909 the first Barrister, Vulcan, Druid (BVD) dance was brought up to encourage mingling between groups. The dance functioned as a way for different societies to socialize and build their network within the college. The dance would also function as a fundraiser for the various societies, and much work was put into planning and hosting them to draw large turnout. By the end of 1909 discussions were had regarding sharing rooms with the Druids. The following offer to the Druids was decided upon: The Druids must contribute \$20.50 (\$628 in 2022) of furnishings each month, pay half the rent, and tell the Vulcans at least one night prior that they are using the room. The Druids accepted the offer 5 days later. On January 6th, 1910, representatives from the Vulcans were drawn up to attend meetings with the College on the building of new rooms in the Michigan Union. That same day the Vulcans charged the Druids \$20 (\$587 in 2022) to redecorate their room. Later in the year, it was decided to get images of faculty members, Cooley and Williams, for decoration in the meeting room. By December of that year, a get-together of Druids and Vulcans took place to co-decorate the room. “Oh, you Druids” - 1910 Vulcan.¹⁵ January of 1911 brought Mechanical Engineering department chair, John R. Allen into the society. In April first discussions of a party, a Whitmore Lake with the Druids, Triangles, and Sphinx are mentioned and on May 6th the party commences. By November of 1911 meetings with Triangles and future dances between Vulcans and Triangles were established.



¹⁴ *The University of Michigan, an encyclopedic survey ...* Wilfred B. Shaw, editor. (2022). Umich.edu. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/u/umsurvey/AAS3302.0004.001/1:3.3.1?rgn=div3;view=fulltext>

¹⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library

New Traditions and Partnerships (1912-1930)

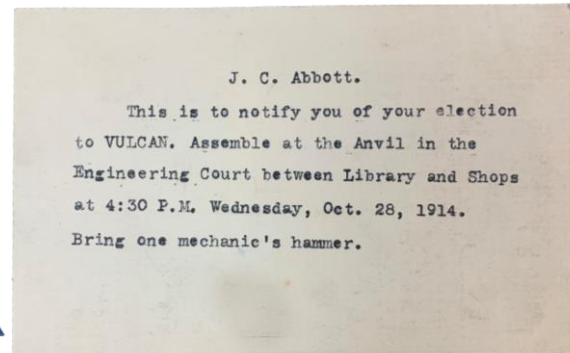
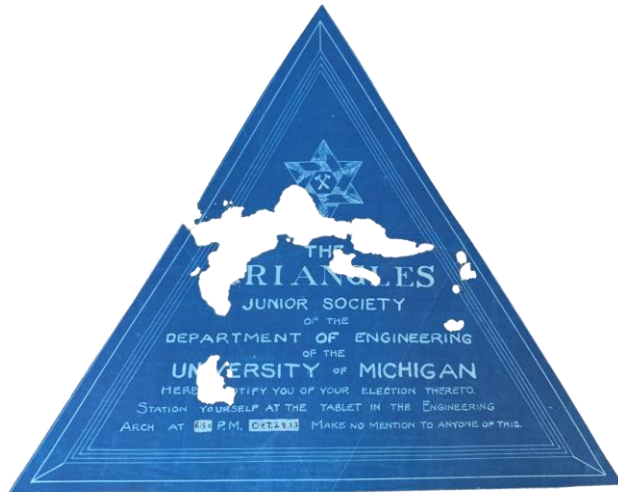
Going into 1912 the Vulcans continued their campaign to bring together other societies for joint projects and socials. Dean Cooley began having more influence in the Society and would use the group to get student feedback on ideas for the College of Engineering. Starting in March of 1912, Dean Cooley started suggesting Honorary Faculty members be added to the Society. In April Vulcan members started asking Cooley for changes in the system of grading within the College. A committee was drawn up to report on the new system of marking going forward. At the same time, a new “ritual” was outlined.¹⁷ On May 10th, the initiation committee was empowered to give members parts and costumes for the initiation ritual. In October, Vulcans made a statement to Michigamua expressing that a man cannot be in both organizations. Michigamua throughout the early 1900s had made it their mission to aid Michigan as a whole, but this task took up too much time members who also needed to help with Vulcan activities. Honor Society lunch at the Union was agreed upon as an effective way to meet with other organizations, and a Dance Committee was formed to draw up funds for future balls. Additionally, a Rooms Committee was formed to meet with members of the new Junior Engineering Honor Society, the Triangles. The Triangles and Vulcans would share the meeting room at South University Avenue going forward. A third committee was also drawn up to discuss member election procedures with Michigamua and the Druids. Initiation was to happen at the Vulcan’s anvil, a key initiation rite that would continue throughout the Vulcan’s history. In November the Vulcans would go on to plan the Barristers, Vulcan, Druid (BVD) dance to be held at the recently renovated former house of Mortimer Cooley, known then as the Union. The Triangles and Vulcans would also allow Phi Sigma Tau to use their meeting room, although just one week later they would reverse this decision. In December, the Vulcans host a party with the Druids. The imagery of the Greek god Vulcan would be replaced in the Michigamua yearbook for a more industrial building theme, reflecting the advancements in construction at the time (Appendix A, Fig 5).¹⁸

1913 brought more collaboration and events, such as a Vulcan sleighing party and dance in January, as well as a Vulcan, Druids, Sphinx, and Triangle swimming/boating party at Whitmore Lake in June. The first evidence of a Vulcan invitation comes from class of 1914 initiate, John C. Abbott. He was first invited to join the Triangles in 1913 before Vulcan membership was extended in 1814. He received a card that notified him of his election into the Vulcans and asked that he met in the Engineering Court between the campus library and shops with a mechanics hammer.

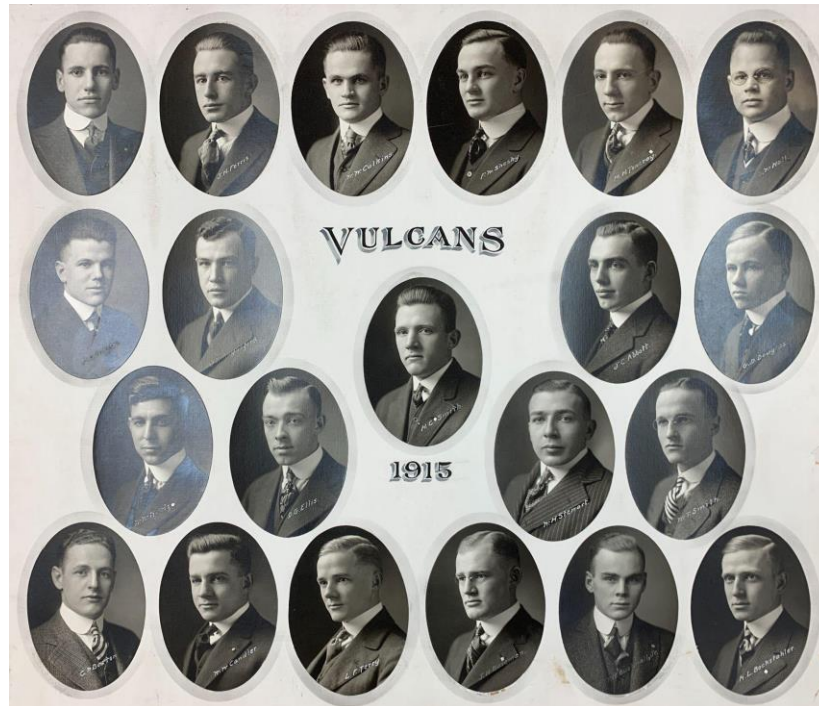
¹⁶ Michigamua. (1994). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

¹⁷ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library

¹⁸ Michigamua. (1912). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



John Abbott's election notifications for both the Triangles and Vulcans ¹⁹



John Abbott's Vulcan class of 1915 Senior Portrait ²⁰

In 1915 imagery depicting the Vulcans showcased them next to other societies, reflecting the cooperativity of the time (Appendix A, Figure 6).²¹ Photographs taken in 1916 give the first

¹⁹ Abbott, John Cyril. (1913-1914). John Cyril Abbott papers.

²⁰ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Oversize Folder UBimul F41, 1915, Bentley Historical Library

²¹ Michiganensian. (1915). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

glimpse of members after initiation, depicting them with black oil on their faces and skin. The oil gave the members a look like blackface, although the purpose of the black covering was meant to make members look like the Greek god Vulcan with ash on his face after a hard day of forging. The image also shows some members in robes, one wearing a Viking costume meant to depict Vulcan, and one dressed as a wizard. These roles are unknown although based on future initiation rites, these individuals led the initiation. The first Vulcan song's chorus was recorded next to the image and reads, "Toast, then, to Vulcan, we ring out loud and cheering Vulcan, the God of trades, father of Engineering. Vulcans, we of Michigan. Vulcans forever, Vulcans or never, Vulcan shall reign Supreme."²² In both 1915 and 1916 the group also supported the Goodfellowship Fund. The next image of the organization, taken in 1917 has no such costumes or face paint but retains the anvil as the centerpiece of the initiation ritual.



Vulcans in black face paint and Greek costumes

Circa 1916²³

²² Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Photographs of Official Composite Photographs and Description of their Present Locations, Bentley Historical Library

²³ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Photographs of Official Composite Photographs and Description of their Present Locations, Bentley Historical Library



Vulcans without initiation costumes and face paint Circa 1917 ²⁴

1919 would bring back the costumes with 8 existing members wearing wizard costumes, one wearing a toga, one wielding a paddle while clothed in a cloak, and one dressed in a Viking helmet depicting Vulcan. Initiates would wear regular clothes but cover their faces in oil like in previous years, although they would make face paint images using the oil to customize their look. This same year the group also voted to let active seniors that left to fight to in WW1 a spot back in the organization. This put their membership over the maximum twenty seniors per year, but the Vulcans felt the move necessary.

²⁴ Michiganensian. (1917). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



Return of costumes and facepaint after WW1 Circa 1919²⁵

After initiation of the group on November 2nd, the group had the first Vulcanalia dinner as a group. This idea was taken from the real-life Roman festival of Vulcanalia, an event meant to commemorate the god Vulcan by burning large bonfires. This would be repeated on December 2nd, 1920, after that year's initiation, and would take place in the newly constructed Michigan Union. The Vulcans moved their meetings to their new room on the 5th floor of the Michigan Union. This space would later be referred to as Mt. Aetna. In 1921 the wizard characters used in initiation were retired. The president of the Society would continue to be dressed as Vulcan, while current members would wear robes. Initiates would continue wearing oil on their face. In 1922, a tradition of having initiates bear an anvil symbol of the forehead would be established. The ceremonial roles of Vulcan and Prometheus were discussed at length and an Anvil committee was established to bring an anvil to the meeting room for initiation purposes each year.

²⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Photographs of Official Composite Photographs and Description of their Present Locations, Bentley Historical Library



Anvil painted on the forehead after initiation



Circa 1922^{26 27}

1923 brought newspaper publicity for the society with new members being listed for all to see. (Appendix B) This same year the Vulcans pledged their support to the Honor Code.



Vulcan annual picture

Circa 1923²⁸

²⁶ Michiganensian. (1922). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

²⁷ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Photographs of Official Composite Photographs and Description of their Present Locations, Bentley Historical Library

²⁸ Michiganensian. (1923). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



Vulcan annual picture

Circa 1925²⁹

1926 would also bring an update to the Vulcan forging a chain picture (Appendix A, Fig 7).

³⁰This same year a song committee was drawn up to write and produce a song for the Vulcans.

The final version was accepted by the society this same year although its lyrics were lost to history. In 1927, the Vulcans, Druids, Sphinx, Triangles and Michigamua gave the cheerleading team a silver megaphone to be handed down each year. This same year the Vulcans joined other students in wearing a cap and gown to graduation, a new tradition that would become a staple of most Universities. In 1930 the society commissioned a new water colored image of Vulcan forging for the Michiganensian (Appendix A, Figure 8).³¹ The group also began pushing for greater faculty involvement. Engineering faculty from all over campus started to attend meetings, and the Vulcans discussed chemical and electrical engineering curriculum, the role of student government, and other “college problems” at their regular meetings to make change alongside the faculty.

Initiation Overhaul (1931-1950)

Starting in 1931, the organization began calling new initiates neophytes, a name that would stick to the present day. Throughout the 30s the Vulcans overhauled their initiation ritual to contain 3 distinct parts. First, initiates would be “tapped”, then initiation would take place, and a banquet would follow.³² Tapping consisted of bringing a neophyte from their home to an undisclosed location with other neophytes. They would then be told they have to have anvil

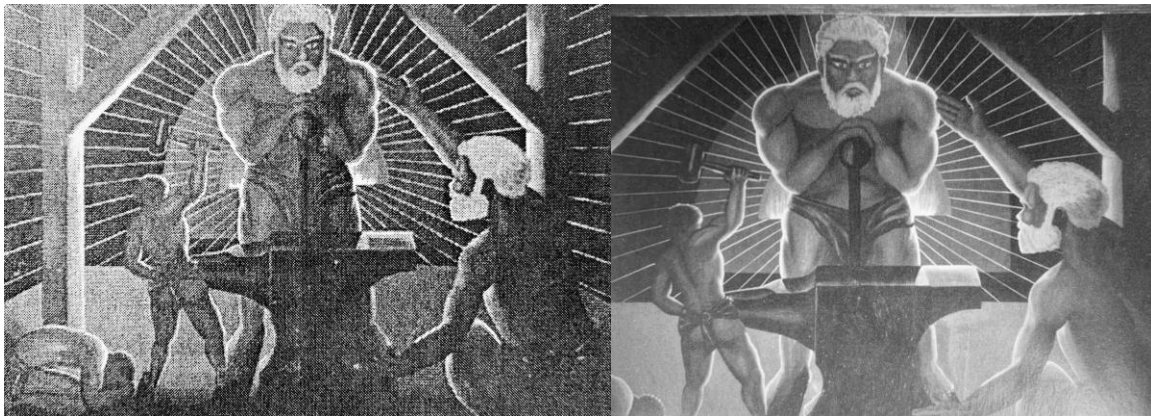
²⁹ Michiganensian. (1925). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

³⁰ Michiganensian. (1926). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

³¹ Michiganensian. (1930). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

³² Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

imprinted on their forehead for the next week and collect the signature of all active Vulcans on a paper anvil. The group of neophytes would then be given beer to drink at which point Senior Vulcans would leave them with an anvil to haul back to campus. After tapping, the neophytes would walk through the sweltering University steam tunnels, chained together, and covered in crankcase oil. While walking through the tunnels the initiates would learn about Vulcan history and the legend of Prometheus. The banquet would soon follow where neophytes become full Vulcans. As the Vulcans continued to gain notoriety on campus for their initiation ritual, they also became local targets. During 1932's initiation, Senior Vulcan members approached the Psi Upsilon fraternity house to bid neophyte William Jenney. Psi Upsilon fraternity members drenched the incoming Vulcans with water and fired blank rounds from pistols to scare them off. The anvil pounding and lampblack covering traditions continued, although elders began paddling initiates and dawning purple robes beginning in 1933. The BVD dance was put off in 1934 because Vulcans would rather have a beer party instead. This same year during initiation, Vulcan initiates were brought into the local police station for causing too much noise with their anvil pounding. The following year the Vulcans started moving part of their initiation to the basement of the campus library where rather than anvil pounding, they opted to start reenacting the legend of Prometheus. Following the reenactment, the initiates would be led through the scorching steam tunnels of the University to their Union room where initiate rites would conclude. (Appendix B) In 1935 following the depression, the Vulcans decided to let members pay dues late to help alleviate financial stress. The group also wanted to help employ artists following the great depression, so they commissioned a mural to be painted in the Vulcan office. The mural was a depiction of Vulcan and his apprentices and can be seen in the background of later Vulcan pictures. Charles Marschner, Vulcan class of 35' gave his memory of the mural at the 100th Vulcan reunion stating, "The room in the Union Tower which was assigned to Vulcans had a large painting of Vulcan on the wall. It was originated by the Big Man on Campus, Phil Singleton 35', and paid for by the classes of 35' and 36'. Phil was a true leader. He is deceased."³³



³³ Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

Center image of Vulcan mural ³⁴

Then in 1938 Senior Vulcans had the brilliant idea of having initiates wade through mud during the anvil banging ceremony. Additionally, going out for drinks at a local bar following initiation became a staple of Vulcan tradition. Beginning in the early 1940s, the Vulcans started generating new ideas for service projects. The society began circulating signup sheets for blood donations, and they also aided establishing a Slide Rull Ball. The group began an alumni newsletter called “The Anvil” and discussed creating a Vulcan monument on campus.³⁵ In 1941 the Vulcans began using Greek and Roman mythological God names to identify themselves. As the names were assigned, a corresponding seat in the Union room was given to each member. At the member’s seat there was a brass plate where all previous members under that God’s namesake had their names listed. Unfortunately for the Vulcans, their traditions would soon need tweaking. In 1942 neophyte Robert Fife caught on fire during initiation. Fellow members helped roll him on the ground to put out the fire and he was able to finish initiation.

With the onset of WW2, Vulcan members became scarce and in 1944, Vulcans considered ending the organization altogether. Membership dropped to 3 members, but the remaining Vulcans vowed to not let the organization end with them. The U.S Navy wouldn’t permit “foolishness” such as painting anvils on neophytes’ foreheads.³⁶ The initiation tradition was scaled back during the war and tapping was done via mail. All social functions were halted. When the war ended in 1945, the Vulcan’s resilience paid off and their membership quickly recovered to 17 members by 1946. At the end of initiation in 1945 the active members smashed their drinking glasses on the anvil, and then left a note as they walked out to the current initiates informing them to clean up the mess. Social functions resumed; beer parties, dances and hayrides became organization staples. During the late 1940s the idea for casting an Anvil for the organization was thrown around and started being put into action. First, small bronze anvils were cast in the campus foundry (located at that time in the East Engineering building) and given to each member along with Dean Bursley. In 1949 initiation rites began including streaking through female dormitories, although the group would be billed for cleanup. The following year the group went streaking through Martha Cook as the girls were dressed for their 1950 formal. Initiate Joe Crawford of that year recalled, “Girls in formals were in the main reception area when we came streaking through, dripping sooty oil. They screamed - and also sent Vulcans a bill for the cleanup.”³⁷ Throughout the 40s and 50s the members also weren’t strict on their new usage of Roman and Greek names so the tradition faded in and out of use throughout these years.

Vulcans since their inception never meant to be entirely secretive, often having Newspaper articles written about their initiation events and members each year. For the first

³⁴Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

³⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

³⁶ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

³⁷ Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

time in Vulcan History, Davis Crippen, a writer for the Michigan Daily was given unprecedented access to follow the Vulcan ritual process and write an entire article about the society's unique initiation.

Crippen wrote:

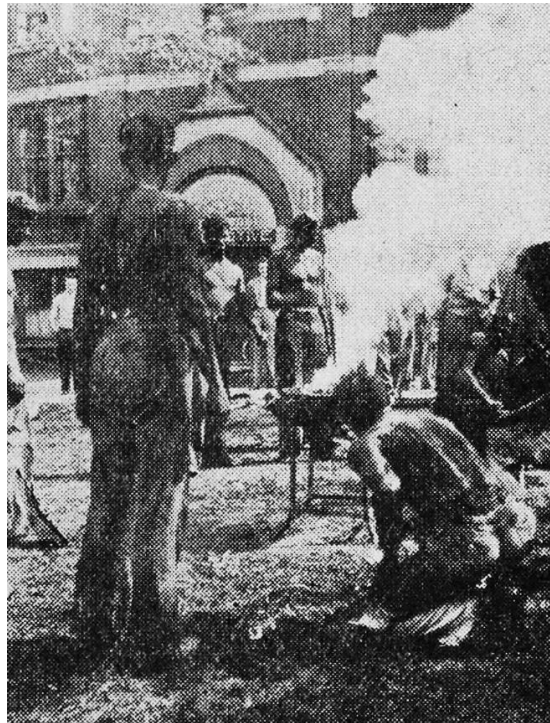
More than hot air sometimes blows through the University steam tunnels which criss-cross in all directions under campus. Vulcans, senior honorary engineering society, proved this again Friday night when they forged underground to put the finishing touches on their initiation and their initiates in the tunnels. These arteries, in addition to their semi-annual use by Vulcans, transport heat from the University heating plant at the back of TCB to buildings on all parts of campus. They stretch... all over hell. The honorary society makes use of them because of their intense heat. We get the neophytes all warmed up outside first with a few brisk canters around campus, and then we take them down into the ghastly heat of the tunnels, one of the Vulcan actives confided. Just how hot it really is down in the underground corridors is a moot point. Some Vulcan estimates run as high as 150 degrees Fahrenheit. The Guide assigned by the University authorities to accompany the group was non-committal on the subject. Claiming in one breath that it wasn't too hot in the tunnels, in the next, the man admitted that a thermometer placed in them had blown its top because of the heat. But whatever the temperature it, along with certain maneuvers deviated by the Vulcans, takes its toll.

After the neophytes completed their journey from the substation hard by Waterman Gym to the basement of the Union they were far from chipper. One, however, was still able to muse on the covering of oil and bone black which had been caked on them. We were plastered just like these English Channel swimmers he murmured. Then, considering that, he added, You know, that was just about the only thing they didn't make us do down there. Exactly what goes on in the tunnels is a deep fraternal secret. Discussing the whole idea of tunnel initiations after the excursion, the guide from the University labeled them as ok. After all, he said, they have to have their fun don't they? At this point, a neophyte in the background laughed bitterly and tried to dig some oil out of his hand with a grimy hand.³⁸

Continuing with this openness about activities, the Vulcans sent a short article on their origins and ideals to the Engineering council. One anonymous member recalled,

³⁸ *November 08, 1949 (vol. 60, iss. 38) - Image 2.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756279/288>

Prospective new members had the paint an anvil on their forehead for the initiation period... maybe two weeks. They also had to carry around a cardboard anvil about 12 inches long and were supposed to get the signature of all current numbers on it. The initiation involved crankcase drainings (obtained by us) being poured on the initiates. I seem to recall initiate's being chained together and being chased around campus and generally being harassed. Sometime after initiation, we received small brown anvils in return for contributing our own (gathered from a junkyard). I still had mine. We also engraved our names in brass plates attached to the meeting table in the meeting room in the Union Tower.³⁹



Beginning of Vulcan initiation on 5/26/1935 next to the same location in 2022 ⁴⁰

³⁹ *November 08, 1949 (vol. 60, iss. 38) - Image 2.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756279/288>

⁴⁰ *May 26, 1935 (vol. 45, iss. 175) - Image 1.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives.



First mention of Vulcan “Mudders” -1938⁴¹



Vulcans group picture in 1946 ⁴²

⁴¹ Michiganensian. (1938). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

⁴² Michiganensian. (1946). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



Vulcans neophytes begrimed with bone black and crankcase oil walk chained through the University steam tunnels^{43 44}

Return to Service (1950-1962)

Despite the improvements in initiation events and publicity, the Vulcans strayed away from their founding mission of aiding the College of Engineering. In 1950 the group needed a way to raise funds for College of Engineering projects. The group had fallen deep into debt and had been focusing on helping run labs for the engineering open house instead of raising funds.

⁴³ Michiganansian. (1955). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

⁴⁴ *November 08, 1949 (vol. 60, iss. 38) - Image 2.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756279/288>

Their solution was to sponsor special trains to run from New York Central to Michigan over the Winter Holiday. They also gave students an economic saving, helped train companies fill their cars, and offer relief from the “drudgeries and frustrations of seat hunting on crowded trains.”⁴⁵ Michigan Daily writer Tony Palermo wrote of their contributions, “Other student honorary societies should follow the lead of the Vulcans and look for concrete opportunities to serve University students. Such organizations should thrive on future service and not past achievement for their fame.”⁴⁶ The group ended up earning \$1400 in profit from the train sales and they unanimously continued with the operation going forward. They would continue to use these profits to pay for future installments of rent. They would also throw lavish parties at Silver Lake in western Michigan, courtesy of their newfound riches.

Later that year the Vulcans established a scholarship program open to all Engineering students. The scholarship amount was \$75 (\$883 in 2022) to be distributed annually based on scholarship, extracurricular activities, character, and needs. This scholarship is still in operation to this day. Additional funds were used to install a permanent brass anvil on the traditional initiation ground. The anvil had been floating around the engineering building each year but in 1951 the Vulcans finally had the funds to purchase a suitable block to mount the Vulcan anvil. Originally the society planned to replace the brass anvil with a newer steel one that produces superior sound when struck, but sentimental attachment prevented this. The anvil was hollow so to mount it to the block concrete was placed inside, but this rendered the anvil “virtually noiseless” (Appendix B). Rather than neophytes striking the silent anvil, they instead began polishing the Anvil each year as part of their initiation right. By the end of the year, the Wolverine Club had taken notice of the Vulcan’s financial success and asked the group for a \$300 loan, to which the Vulcans agreed (Appendix C.) Then in 1952, the Sphinx Honor Society came to the Vulcans also in need of a loan. (Appendix C) Other student groups like the Engineering Council, Honor Council, and Triangles also took notice and quickly reached out for funds. Due to their continued contributions to other groups on campus, the Vulcans questioned if they should have a greater role in making policies in student government (Engineering Council). They decided to be open to discussing policies and ideas for change, but they would not take any direct action to change such policies. The Vulcans did however decide that since they were helping fund various organizations, they should manage the funds of those borrowing from them.

Unexcused absences were no longer tolerated, and 3 members were expelled from the organization in 1953. Then the following year, the Vulcans began naming their members using Greek names and using Roman numerals, bringing back the tradition established in 1941. Further moves to reconnect with their roots were initiated by reaching out to past Vulcan alumni such as the first president R.S Fleshiem. The train ticket sales kept improving the society’s

⁴⁵ *January 04, 1950 (vol. 60, iss. 71) - Image 4.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756279/528>

⁴⁶ *January 04, 1950 (vol. 60, iss. 71) - Image 4.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756279/528>

image and funds to the point where members confided in meetings about the necessity to keep their true net profits a secret from any outsiders. One Vulcan wrote, "Student trains are handled by Vulcans in cooperation with the New York Central for Christmas and spring vacations. This is a good deal for Vulcans not only that we make money for our existence and for parties, etc. but also publicizes our organization to our fellow students. Further, by working together and having something definite to do we make our society more than a prosaic honorary. This deal should be mothered and handled with care so that we may keep it. The amount of money acquired from this should be a closely guarded secret for if it were known we would stand a good chance of losing our concession. For this reason, the Vulcans should not sponsor a train with another organization. Beware of the S.L., for they could end our train dealings with ease if they learned the facts about our revenues."⁴⁷ Months later, financial troubles began to accumulate as the Vulcans found themselves barely breaking even on certain trains. To fix this issue the group canceled all but 2 trains, refunding those who bought tickets from them. They then focused their efforts on producing dozens of advertisements. (Appendix D) The group also doubled down on collecting funds from their annual BVD ball to further bolster their funds. (Appendix C) In 1954 the organization realized they were straying from their initial mission to aid the College of Engineering by focusing so much on the train sales. During the train-ticket era, the group established scholarships for freshmen/sophomore students, donated televisions, and radios to the University Hospital, continued helping with the Slide Rule Ball, and advertised the Engineering program at local high schools. Even with all these initiatives, the group felt more could be done if the train sales were forgone. At this time, members began to become upset that their contributions were not being appreciated. The group had donated money to renovate the West Engineering lounge, but their call for a plaque to be built in their name for their contribution fell on deaf ears. The leftover funds from their train ticket profits were spent supplying the University Hospital with movies to watch. Then in 1958 the group added ringing a ceremonial bell during initiation to bring back the noise that had been removed when their Anvil was filled in 1951. They stood behind the Engineering Honor Council, providing the Council with funding to buy Honor Code booklets. Alumni relations became more important to the group and a new newsletter was planned for Vulcan alumni. A form was introduced to record Vulcan alumni information and alumni would be invited to the annual banquet going forward. (Appendix C) A tardiness fine of 25 cents was also brought back from its introduction in 1907.⁴⁸ They also sent a letter to Life Magazine proposing a photo story on their initiation. Going into 1963 the Vulcans were on top of the world with successful fundraisers, steady membership, and a revitalized initiation ritual that drew spectators from all over Ann Arbor. They also increased their scholarship fund from \$75 to \$200 dollars. At this time in-state tuition was \$590 a year and out of state tuition was \$1,860.

⁴⁷ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

⁴⁸ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1904-1926, Bentley Historical Library



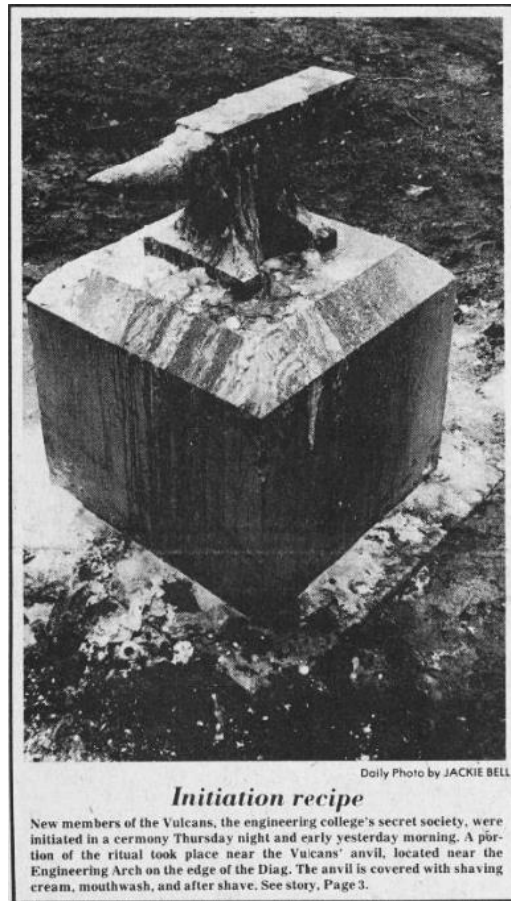
The first image of the new Vulcan Anvil Circa 1951 ⁴⁹



A student resting on the anvil block Circa 1968 ⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *April 19, 1951 (vol. 61, iss. 134) - Image 8.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756295/352>

⁵⁰ *Old school: U-M in History | The University Record Online.* (2012). Umich.edu. https://ur.umich.edu/1213/Nov12_12/4079-old-school-u-m

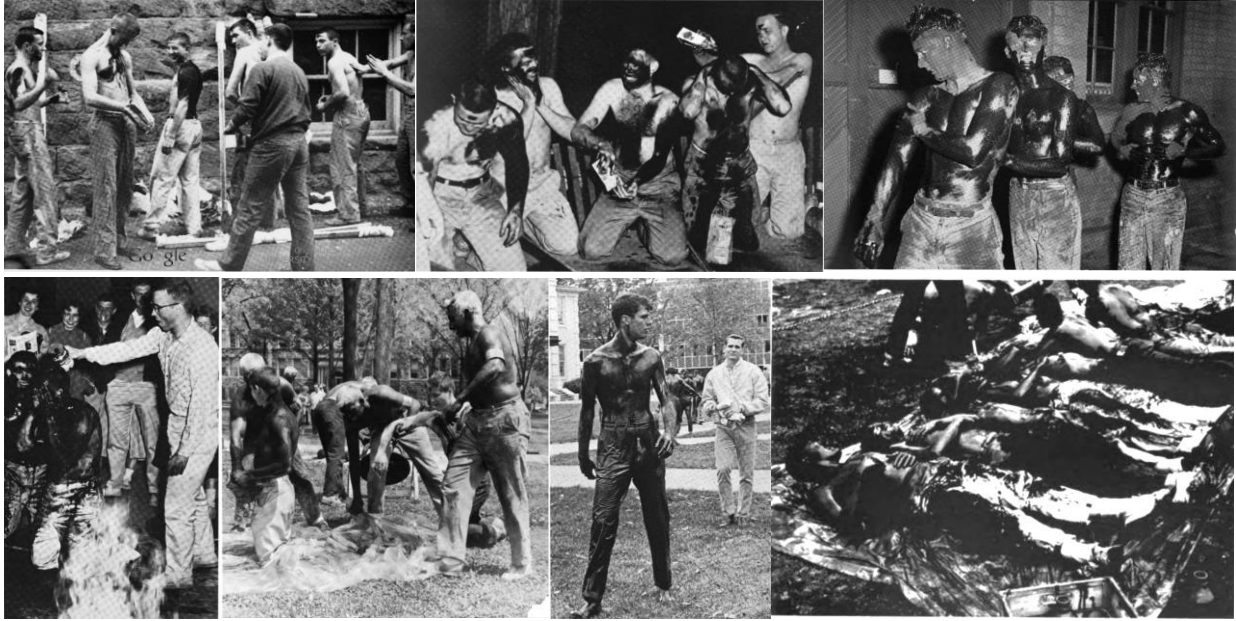


Anvil after sliming during initiation, prior to cleaning Circa 1981



Last image of the anvil on Central Campus Circa 1987 ⁵¹

⁵¹ Michiganansian. (1987). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



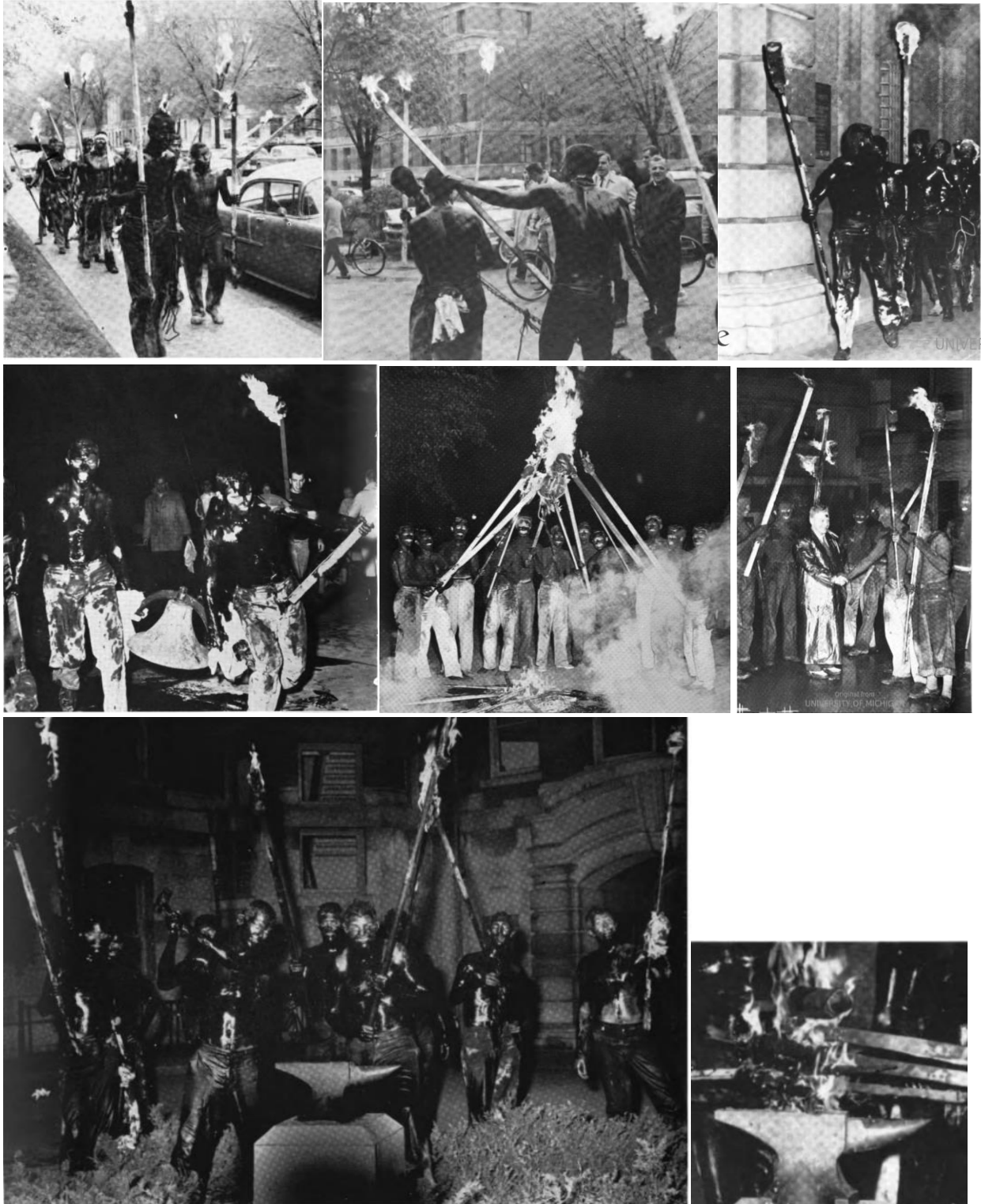
Vulcan members preparing for initiation by covering themselves in crankcase oil and ash on University of Michigan's central campus ⁵²



Neophytes wait blind folded for Anvil Shining ⁵³

⁵² Michiganensian. (1949-1959). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

⁵³ Michiganensian. (1951). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



Vulcan's initiates mimicking the trials of Vulcan by holding torches to represent Vulcan's fire and wearing "ash" to pay homage to Vulcan being the god of volcanos⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Michiganensian. (1949-1959). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



Top of Vulcan Anvil showing marks from initiation banging



Vulcan Class of 1960 & 1961 ⁵⁵

Selectivity and Inclusivity (1963-1989)

Due to the successes of the Vulcans in the past decade, the group felt comfortable making membership harder to acquire. No new initiates were brought into the group in 1963 because the Vulcans felt there were no good men in the college. This same year the Vulcans suggested having a drinking contest (“duel of consumption”) with Michigamua to improve commodities

⁵⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Oversize Folder UBimul F41, Group Photograph 1960-1961, Bentley Historical Library

between the societies.⁵⁶ The initiation ritual was also fully documented allowing unprecedented insight into the society's initiation order of events. The list from 4/29/1963 reads as follows:

New tapping procedure

1. No more night rides
2. Torches will be used. One left at each house.
3. Black poster paint used
4. V's to also be blackened
5. Greek names are given out

Neophyte procedure:

1. Bow before the blackened torch
2. Remove excess clothes
3. Wet with a wetting agent
4. Use black paint
5. Read ritual
6. Leave gunpowder V on the sidewalk

On the diag:

1. 11:30-1 Anvil shined
2. When finished sit in a circle around the anvil
3. V's black up, torch up, moved to neophytes. All march to Diag, neophytes lies on the ground. Neophytes are blackened. Lie down again. Oil is placed on neophytes by Vulcans. Then chained in a line. Start march to Union. Blindfolded at Union.
4. Ceremony in the Union room⁵⁷

Vulcan meetings were formal with members wearing business suits and planning events both between campus societies and for philanthropic work within the College of Engineering. The group also inducted its first black member in 1968. Just 4 years later the Vulcans would admit their first female member. They set a landmark precedent for societies at the university and did so before Title IX. Other societies would go on to refuse female membership until their eventual end. The society known as Pheonix (and later Adara) was formed for women in LSA after Michigamua repeatedly refused to allow female members. In 1970 the group would host its first (and last) hotdog picnic for faculty.⁵⁸ The picnic was advertised to all Engineering professors and was put together for the sole benefit of comradery between Vulcans and Professors. This connection would later aid the Vulcans as they would begin asking Professors for help identifying good candidates for membership (Appendix E). Despite their prestige on campus, potential members often wouldn't join due to the time necessary for helping with Vulcan events (Appendix E). The group also had a hand-drawn membership page made for the Michiganensian, paying homage to their 1904-1930 predecessors although this did little to

⁵⁶ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1958-1974, Bentley Historical Library

⁵⁷ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1958-1974, Bentley Historical Library

⁵⁸ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1958-1974, Bentley Historical Library

improve enrollment (Figure 9, Appendix A). The president of the Vulcans reached out to Engineering Professor Leland Quakenbush to help revitalize the organization and draw new members. Quakenbush quickly took the role of advisor for the group and helped the Vulcans redesign their initiation ritual due to the closure of the steam tunnels that same year. Leadership, integrity, responsibility, and respect became core Vulcan tenets once again, and these were the basis for membership going forward.

Initiation went from a three-step to a four-step process. The first step, Dry Tapping, involved blindfolding students in class, dragging them out to a room while singing and dancing, and then letting them know of their invitation for membership. The second step would be the initiation ritual where neophytes would learn and sing songs around a fire representing the shining light of Vulcan placed on students. The neophytes would then be “slimed” during a process known as the “Wet Tap.” Initiates were to be “slimed” with “ashes”. Ashes consisted of raw eggs, salad dressing, jello, mud, baking powder, vinegar, and other assorted items. In later decades the neophytes would slime the anvil. The third step was cleaning the anvil the morning after initiation. The final step was a Formal Night in Mt. Aetna where new members would be formally initiated. Around the late 1960s campus climate across America began to reflect the growing Civil Rights and counterculture movements. Students across Michigan’s campus began calling out instances of racism, classism and elitism found at the University. Due to the rapidly changing climate of campus, and the negative view of other societies starting to foster within the student body as they function as a vessel for elitism, and the Vulcans felt they should have their initiation rituals be secretive instead of public attractions like the old initiation ritual was.

In the mid-1970s Quakenbush and the Vulcans decided that the group as a whole needed to plunge into secrecy, not just the initiation ritual. Members started wearing black robes and hoods and the President began going by Grand Imperial Vulcan (GIV). Although the choice for the name isn’t certain, the use of pointed hoods, “ash” coverings and torch processions during initiation, and “Grand Imperial” as their president’s title is heavily similar to Ku Klux Klan clothing, black face, cross burnings, and the leadership title of Grand Imperial Wizard. They also started fundraising without attaching their name to the collection of funds to further conceal their group. The society started selling the Engineering Class Ring to students graduating and would use this opportunity to make money for public service projects. In the mid to late 1970s the society started hosting an annual Spring Picnic at Delphi Metropark. Alumni were invited to attend and shared food and “golden elixir” (beer) over conversations on how the organization was doing.⁵⁹ During one drive to the park in 1978, 2 teenage girls driving on Huron River Drive swerved into the river. Vulcans quickly jumped in and rescued the girls, and the day was dubbed “Vulcans’ Finest Moment.”⁶⁰ The issue of declining membership would come to a head when in 1977 the Vulcans began allowing the GIV to hold office for multiple years. Around this same time, other societies such as the Sphinx and Druids began to fade into obscurity as their membership and activity fell. To prevent this issue, in 1979 the Vulcans proposed joining with

⁵⁹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1975-1979, Bentley Historical Library

⁶⁰ Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

Michigamua and the Pheonix to create a larger, all-encompassing society known as the “Tower Society.”⁶¹ This would fail as the societies wanted to maintain their autonomy.

Membership would be less of an issue going into the 1980s. Starting in the early 1980s the group inducted President of the University and Dean of Engineering James Duderstadt, as well as associate Engineering Deans Robert Goetz and Bruce Karnopp, restoring the society’s connection to administrative power. The Vulcans also began an annual newsletter, The Aetna Times. The group would go over Vulcan history and brought back the use of Greek God names for each member starting in the mid-80s. The list of appropriate names was revised to only include Gods and Goddesses equal to or lesser rank than Vulcan. Only the president was allowed to bear the name Vulcan and it stayed as the only Roman name allowed to stay in use. An email list called “saxa” was started by Vulcan Michael Stewart and became the official virtual link connecting alumni and current Vulcans.⁶² Around this same time, Vulcans met with Dean Duderstadt to establish a separate Engineering Graduation ceremony, a move that would eventually be passed and stay campus tradition to this day. In 1986 Quakenbush retired but was replaced by Ann Monterio. The group decided to move their anvil to North Campus in 1987. The anvil can now be found in front of the Electrical Engineering building on North Campus, while a plaque of the anvil can be seen in front of West Hall on Central campus where the original anvil once stood (Appendix F).



Vulcan Meeting in Union Room

⁶¹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1979-1984, Bentley Historical Library

⁶² Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1984-1990, Bentley Historical Library



Vulcans with new metal bell

Circa 1970 ⁶³



First Black member, Elijah Sansom⁶⁴



Co-ed Vulcan meeting ⁶⁵

⁶³ Michiganensian. (1970). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

⁶⁴ Michiganensian. (1969). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

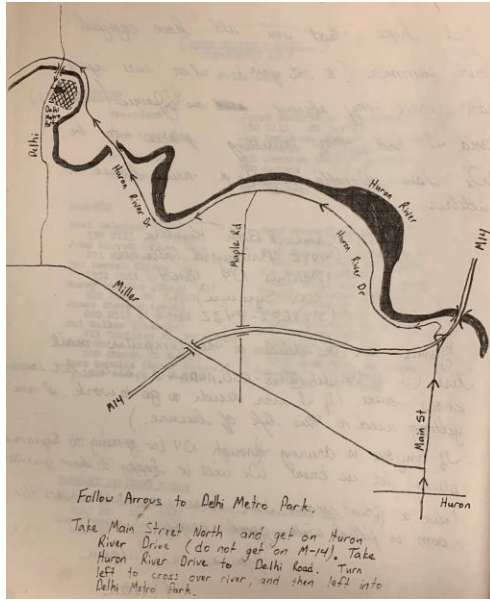
⁶⁵ Michiganensian. (1979). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.



First color image of Vulcans and their Union room

Circa 1980⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [2], Oversize Folder UBimul F41, Group Photograph 1980, Bentley Historical Library



Hand drawn map to Annual Spring Picnic ⁶⁷

Vulcans at Delphi Park⁶⁸



Vulcan Anvil at its current location in front of the EECS building

Circa 2022

⁶⁷ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1979-1984, Bentley Historical Library

⁶⁸ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1979-1984, Bentley Historical Library

Establishment of Modern Tradition (1990-1994)

Starting in 1990, Senior Vulcan members began playing intricate roles in their initiation ceremony. During initiation, neophytes would be driven to various locations on campus. The driver of the vehicle would be referred to as “Keeper of the Reigns.” Once at the Vulcan anvil, initiates would be led blindfolded by the “Keeper of the Path.”⁶⁹ Neophytes would be repeatedly told to sing various Michigan songs such as Hail to the Victors. The Vulcan leading the songs was referred to as “Song Master.” Three “Neophyte Nabbers” were chosen to speak, give gifts, and brand-new Neophytes throughout the night.⁷⁰ The photographer was the “Keeper of the Flash”, the videographer was “Sister Cyclops”, and the secretary was the “Keeper of the Scribe.”⁷¹ Initiation would start at around 7 pm with neophytes meeting in the Michigan Union lobby to be given their first clue. The neophytes would be led throughout the night to various campus locations with Vulcan significance. The final clue would lead them to the original Vulcan room on 622 E Liberty Street. From there a Vulcan would lead the neophytes to the Union room, dubbed Mt. Aetna. Brother Vulcan then leads the initiates to food before them on University of Michigan history and the 4 attributes that make a Vulcan a Vulcan. The neophytes would then play games before being driven to the Forge Ceremony. The location of the ceremony varied by year but in 1990 was held at Island Park. The final member rites were read to them in the EECS building on North Campus.

Initiation became a large part of the Vulcan meetings each year. Robes for senior Vulcans to wear during initiation ceremonies were handmade, as well as the blindfolds that neophytes were to wear throughout the forge ceremony. Membership was extended from just Juniors to Seniors and Graduate students as well. Neophytes would be tabbed via email and the Vulcan would use only initials when communicating with potential members to maintain secrecy. Members were also prohibited from emailing neophytes in public spaces such as the Engineering Council office. This same year, Vulcans helped plan and implement activities to celebrate Martin Luther King Day. The society organized speakers, movies, cultural programs, and displays for the University to partake in. All of this was done through other student groups on campus so that the Vulcans could remain hidden. In 1992 there were two “chariots” (cars) used for initiation.⁷² However, since this was before cell phones, it was hard to communicate between the two. Hence, when one chariot broke down, members of the broken-down chariot had to chase the other chariot in a robe to gain their attention and get help. In 1993 a new forge site was completed and was located behind East Hall on central campus. Additionally, a plaque was placed where the old Anvil once stood on Central Campus. This same year Brother Vulcan began going by “THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY GRAND IMPERIAL VULCAN.”⁷³ Neophytes stopped being blindfolded in the public Union lobby and instead were blindfolded in

⁶⁹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷⁰ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷¹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷² Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷³ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

the more discrete Union elevator. Around this same time, Vulcan members began questioning whether they had strayed too far from their original mission to aid the College of Engineering by focusing instead on initiation. One Vulcan, Brother Salinas of the 1993 Vulcan class said, “Why is Vulcans here? To serve the college and as an instrument for discussion, but also to serve as a tool for us to grow through the nomination process. The two are in no way mutually exclusive. We should continue to reassess through twice a year nomination, and we should try to serve the College of Engineering better.”⁷⁴ Further controversy arose this same year over the Vulcans having a ratio of 3:1 graduate students to undergraduate students. The Vulcans framed their statement of purpose and hung it inside Mt. Aetna (the Union 5th floor). In 1994 the initiation tradition of “Wet Tapping” (also called sliming) or drenching the initiates in a liquid substance was called into question by current members for being humiliating. When discussing amongst themselves what aspects of initiation were enjoyable or necessary, the idea of wet tapping neophytes was brought up more than any other initiation rite. Most Vulcan members felt it was a necessary tradition that made all Neophytes “equally low” and made them show humility to the full Vulcan members (Gods and Goddesses).⁷⁵ Gods and Goddesses would routinely ask neophytes if they were okay throughout the initiation and Vulcan members liked the reflection part of the initiation process. Along with wet tapping, dry tapping was also called into question due to the negative perception it gave the Vulcans on campus. Dry tapping was when potential neophytes would be blindfolded and dragged out of class, marched to an unrecognizable room, and made them read a letter with additional directions. They were universally reported as a negative experience as people had a bad feeling after going through them, and friendships were strained when people saw their friends chosen but not them. The idea to receive a letter in advance was thrown around, while other Vulcans argued that the dry tap process was necessary for building trust. This was challenged by Vulcans who felt building trust would be more effective by talking to potential neophytes instead of scaring them. The final decision was made to call Neophytes between dry and wet taps to establish communication and use a letter to recruit new members. New terminology was also adopted to distinguish cabinet members from the other Gods and Goddesses: The Vice President would go by Baby Grand Imperial Vulcan (BGIV). The group also established the Vulcan Teaching Award to be awarded annually by the College of Engineering. This was done in conjunction with the 90th anniversary of the Vulcan’s founding. The award was given out starting in 2000 after collecting funds for 6 years.

A GIV from this time period agreed to let me interview him about the group. He told me that during the late 80s and early 90s the group mainly functioned as a networking and social club rather than a service organization. The focus each semester was tapping new members from the various Honor Societies on campus. Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Eta Kappa Nu (HKN) and Tau Beta Pi almost always had their board members as Vulcan initiates once they reached their senior year. Alumni would leave business cards on the door of the Union Tower room to further build the Vulcan connection network. The GIV also said there was virtually no contact

⁷⁴ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

with the other two societies, Michigamua and Adara. The Vulcans would run into their members in the Union Tower stairwell, but they did not have any interaction outside of that. There was a ground rule at the time that once you graduate from Michigan, speaking about Vulcans was allowed, but while you were a current student, you were to remain secretive about your membership. Most students did not know of the group when he was a student, and he was not surprised that this hasn't changed since then.

In 1986 a new group was formed called the Epeians. The Epeians were formed out of ex-Vulcans that felt the group was too political in who they gave memberships to. The Epeians were a society that copied many of the Vulcan initiation rituals and presented themselves as a more open, less secretive take on the Vulcans.⁷⁶ Although upset at first, within a couple of years the Vulcans accepted the Epeians existence. Then in 1995, the Vulcans ran into further trouble when an initiate labeled "kp" refused Vulcan membership twice for the "KKK" appearance of the robes and hazing. The Vulcans responded to this incident by discussing it at their weekly meeting, ultimately deciding to give up trying to recruit kp. The aerospace department also had a bad view of the Vulcans, seeing them as drunken partiers from their 1980s reputation. The Union management then found alcohol in Mt. Aetna and warned them that if alcohol was found again, they would lose the space. Alcohol was quickly banned in Mt. Aetna as it was a violation of university policy. The proposal was signed by the current Gods and Goddesses. This same year the Grand Imperial Vulcan role was altered to remove the "one complete term before holding high office" rule.⁷⁷ A rubber anvil stamp and Virginia license plate reading "MT AETNA" were added to Mt Aetna.⁷⁸

Dry tap revision was brought up and new protocols were passed. No longer would dry taps involve dragging students out of classrooms, instead, members would announce that one student in the classroom has been selected, and then a private meeting would convene sometime after. The Vulcans also started being cordial with the Epeians, ending their initiation parties and throwing in votes for potential Epeians nominees. Then at the end of the year, the Vulcan hoods had their points removed to further distance themselves from KKK imagery. The group also discussed having open membership and removing secrecy entirely. The first initiative to demystify the society was publishing a description of the group in the 1995 College of Engineering Handbook.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷⁷ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷⁸ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁷⁹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library



Plaque in front of West Hall where the old anvil once stood

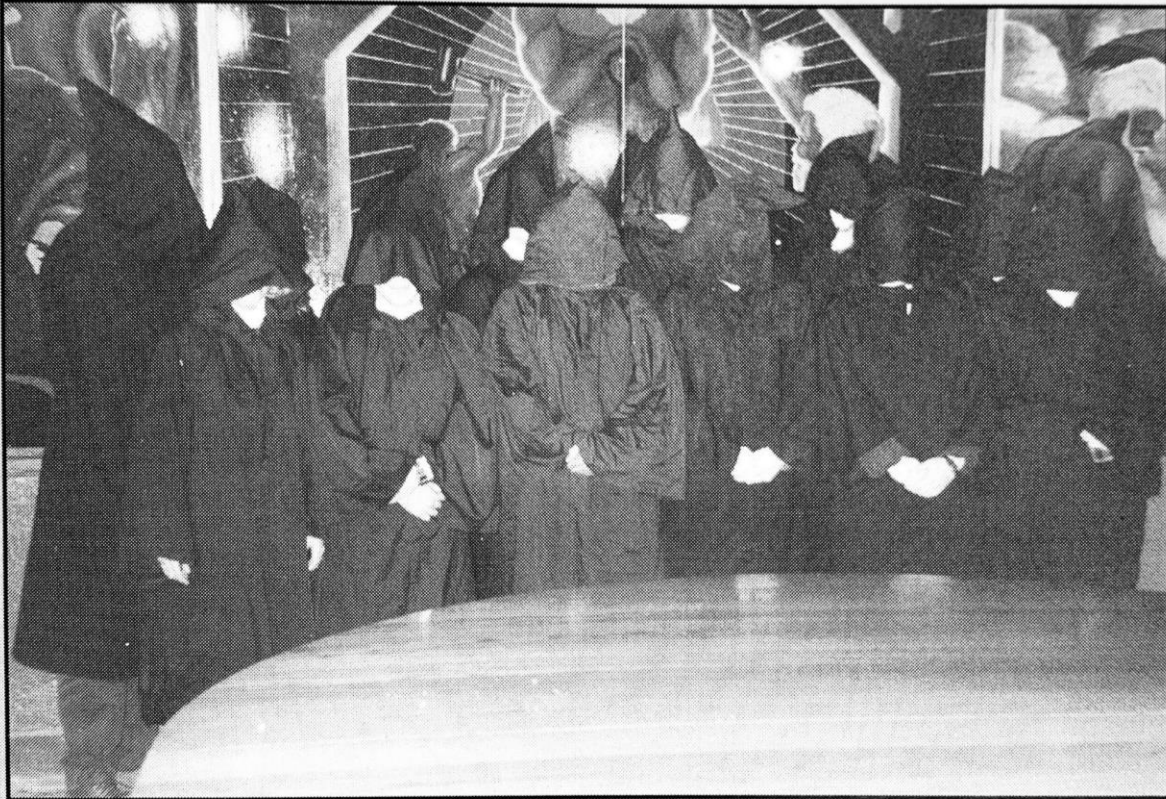


photo courtesy of the Vulcans

Names and identities have been withheld to protect the strict secrecy of Vulcans.

Vulcans in Mt. Aetna

Circa 1994 ⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Michiganensian. (1994). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

The Prometheus Covenant (1995)

On January 31, 1995, the Vulcans encountered their first serious adversary, The Prometheus Covenant. The Baby Grand Imperial Vulcan had received a call from the Epeian president informing them that someone sent had sent a 4-page letter *exposé* of the Vulcans and their members to the Epeians and possibly other College of Engineering student groups. The letter was titled, “The Prometheus Covenant, or Almost Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about the Vulcans But Were Afraid to Ask.” Included were Vulcan facts about how they founded the Honor Code and Honor Council, initiation rites, meeting times, and the controversy of tapping. The letter ended with the Latin phrase “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes” or “Who watches the watchmen” in English.⁸¹ The Vulcans' first move was to make sure the Epeians stay quiet, keep acting as normal, generate a list of suspects, and make changes to initiation. The Prometheus Covenant quickly released a new letter claiming that the Vulcans control the University Honor Council and called the votes on the Engineering Student Government elections. The letter was distributed to two more non-Vulcans, and the prevailing solution was to ignore the letter and have the Honor Council become more visible in the college.

The situation came to a head on April 18, 1995, when during a Vulcan meeting, loud banging could be heard on the door. A new Prometheus Covenant letter was delivered and detailed the weekly Vulcan meetings and alcohol violations. The society quickly began thinking of insider suspects before they received another knock at the door from a figure in a green robe and hood. This figure claimed to be a representative of the Prometheus Covenant and challenged the Vulcans to a bowling contest. The Vulcans quickly unmasked the perpetrator and found out that it was non-other than a winter initiate. The Prometheus Covenant was a fake society run by current underclass Vulcans. The Gods and Goddesses learned from this experience how easy it is to be overheard and have information leak, so going forward they vowed to not let down their guard.⁸²

Controversy and current activity (1996-2022)

Previous Vulcan history had been riddled with internal strife, lack of membership, and a bad University reputation. Although the society tried to be more open to outsiders following the Epeian split and open up dialogue towards no longer being a secret society, these changes would come too little too late. In 1996 the society got wrapped in controversy with the other societies left on campus, Adara and Michigamua. In a letter written to the Michigan Daily on April 23, 1996, one Michigan student shared the sentiment that many on campus had been feeling. The letter published in the Daily read as follows:

⁸¹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁸² Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

To the Daily: It has been found that 3 secret societies exist in the tower of the Michigan Union. I hope to convey to the university community that the existence of these societies shames the university and eviscerates fundamental values of humanity. Michigamua claims to be the top twenty-five men on campus, Adara the top 25 women on campus, and the Vulcans to be the top 25 engineers. These groups have a rich history of racism, sexism, and elitism. They use Michigan facilities, are secretive, claimed to be the creme de la creme of the university, and are supported by the administration of the University. Considering that the roots of racism, sexism and other genocidal tendencies are born when a group or an individual thinks themselves better than the next, the implications of the existence of these groups are frightening. The University's support for these groups is inexcusable. The history of various oppressive leaders, including Stalin and Hitler, among a host of others, not only held this philosophy but applied it to inflict torture on fellow humans. By the best 25 men or women on campus, these groups imply that its members are morally more important as human beings than others.⁸³

The society chose to ignore the article and instead clearly define the roles of the society, giving new insight into how the organizational duties were divided up amongst officers (Appendix F). Each class would adopt a class name starting this year with the class of 1996 dubbing themselves "Delos."⁸⁴ The Winter initiates of 1995 retroactively named themselves "We-13" after the number of initiates for that year (13).⁸⁵ The Fall 1995 initiates copied this tradition dubbing themselves "We-10." Then in 1999 another Daily article titled "Secret societies waste University resources" was published. The article read as follows, "To the Daily okay doesn't anyone get the point? The fact that Michigamua and Adara are co-ed doesn't matter for squat! They still represent the petty, self-congratulatory views of traditional elitism which have traditionally drawn lines between groups based on the "high quality" of their "leadership and character." Michigamua, Adara, and Vulcan are a net cost to the campus. Based on some arcane contracts with the university during the construction of the Union, these organizations get to control the fifth, sixth, and seventh floors of the Union - the Tower! How many other organizations could use that space for some good other than shouting and playing drums Monday nights before heading off to Rick's? The rationale for their control of the Tower (based on the words of a Michigamua alum who will remain nameless, of course) is that the members of the organization represent the cream of the campus crop - that they are a better class of people, in whom the

⁸³ *April 11, 1996 (vol. 106, iss. 111) - Image 5.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071754951/893>

⁸⁴ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

⁸⁵ *April 11, 1996 (vol. 106, iss. 111) - Image 5.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071754951/893>

university should invest more resources - after all, they're the campus leaders.”⁸⁶ With growing opposition to secret societies on campus, the Vulcans quickly found their administrative allies turning against them.

On August 26th, 2000, the Vulcans, Adara, and Michigamua vacated their rooms in the Michigan Union. Although the groups acted independently throughout their history, all three groups represented the largest remaining elitist secret societies on campus. The move came after mounting student pressure on President Lee Bollinger. The society Michigamua had long used Native American relics and racist imagery in their initiation ceremonies and events. Native American students took a stand in 2000 and broke into and occupied the Michigamua Union room for 37 days in February and March of that year.⁸⁷ Bollinger spoke to media outlets on his decision saying, “Consistent with the principles of fairness and access expressed in the panel’s recommendations, I have decided that it is not appropriate to continue any special tenancy in the [Michigan Union] tower space for Michigamua, Phoenix, and Vulcan. But I also believe it would run afoul of these same principles if those groups, who have relied on their special tenancy for many years, were not allowed a stable transition. Therefore, we have made arrangements for those three groups to have transitional office and meeting space in another location for a period of two years. If they choose to apply for office and meeting space after this transitional period, they will do so as part of the general process of student space allocation.”⁸⁸

The Vulcans, Adara and Michigamua moved to a temporary space on 109 East Madison Street. The space given to the society was able to hold initiation supplies and small photos, but the society ended up renting a storage room near north campus to hold the mural, table, chairs and other large-scale items.⁸⁹ Meetings were held in the Lurie Engineering Center. The Vulcans continued to find themselves concerned with internal matters, often having their meetings be brainstorming sessions on how to improve Neophytes’ relationship with the Gods and Goddesses. The Wet Tap was voted to be removed from initiation permanently as it could be seen as a form of hazing. Around this time, an interested university student, Robert Goodspeed, took up researching the Vulcans and posting his findings on his personal website. Many internal documents were leaked to him from disgruntled ex-members. The following excerpt on this time period comes from a blog post on his website and reads as follows:

“The “temple” they speak of is apparently on North Campus, and the ceremony includes activities in the Lurie Bell Tower and the Dow Building. Other activities planned for the weekend include a “Sunday Morning Anvil Cleaning” and a “Monday Formal Night” where members signed up for the Scavenger Hunt, Ashley’s, Charlie’s, Old Anvil Site (presumably

⁸⁶ *April 19, 1999 (vol. 109, iss. 120) - Image 4.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071755016/972>

⁸⁷ *March 14, 2000 (vol. 110, iss. 96) - Image 1.* (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071755024/631>

⁸⁸ *Recommendation on student space; three groups to be relocated.* (2000, July 20). University of Michigan News. <https://news.umich.edu/recommendation-on-student-space-three-groups-to-be-relocated/>

⁸⁹ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 2000-2004, Bentley Historical Library

Central Campus), Starbuck's, and Mt. Aetna Site. The engineers seem to have updated their ceremonies to take into consideration new buildings and (perhaps) a new "temple" space, which this document suggests is on campus, which would be in violation of the agreement the University announced at the conclusion of the 2000 Tower Occupation where administrators said all organizations would be treated the same when it came to university facilities. (Perhaps the "temple" is held in a student organization cubicle in Pierpont Commons!) Given the plausibility of this document, let's move to another correspondence I've received. A 2003 electrical engineering graduate writes to me that he was "disgusted by the elitist Vulcans" as a student and offers what he claims to be a script from their induction ceremony, which seems to explain why the anvil must be cleaned the Sunday after the initiation!"⁹⁰

Vulcan alumni were not as happy with the tower removal as students on campus were. One Vulcan alumni from the class of 1957, Jack Lousma, wrote, "As I recall, some politically correct malcontents and whiners were permitted to drive us out a few years ago. We should retake that hallowed ground, surround it with a high fence topped by sharpened concertina wire, post a sentry with a mad dog, and dare those wimps to approach it."⁹¹

Other Vulcans felt it was ok moving locations. One Vulcan who wished to remain anonymous told me that he was okay with the removal from the Union tower because engineering was on North campus. He did think it was cool that they shared the space with other societies and their own private room with a "secret" stairwell that led up to it, but he felt it was so distant from the engineering classes and buildings its move was fine.

After the removal of the Vulcans from the Union tower the current Vulcan class realized their alumni records were inaccurate or missing which made informing alumni of the move out of the Michigan Tower nearly impossible. To remedy this, the group created the Vulcan Alumni Association in 2001. A board of 9 alumni directors were selected and set to serve two-year terms. The goal of the association is to maintain the alumni database, assist with the annual newsletter and help plan Vulcan events. In 2003 the large-scale items would be moved into a College of Engineering trailer, and the Vulcans would found the North Campus Community Building Council (NCCBC) in hopes of sponsoring College of Engineering events. The group continued to be involved in MLK day events and helped host other activities around North Campus to bring together students such as breakfasts.⁹² In 2004, the 100th anniversary of the Vulcans took place and the class of that year took the name Vulcanius, a fictitious name meant to celebrate the occasion. A history of the organization was compiled, and that text was used to help write this

⁹⁰ Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

⁹¹ Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

⁹² Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 2000-2004, Bentley Historical Library

modern piece. The group also redefined their purpose to include “To maintain the decades of tradition on which our organization was founded.”⁹³

Large-scale reforms to initiation also took place. An article on Vulcan history was given to Neophytes prior to initiation so they could learn more about the organization before joining. Additionally, the Neophytes would be shown the “chariots” prior to being put into them blindfolded to lower the fear during initiation. The loss of Mt. Aetna meant that “Formal Night” (induction of new members) took place on North Campus.⁹⁴

In 2009 the Black Student Association contacted the Vulcans about the use of motor oil during initiation appearing as blackface. The Vulcans, like many times throughout their history, chose to remain silent rather than address criticism⁹⁵ The group discussed using the Engineering Research Building for initiation as they were banned from using Lurie facilities after damaging the space. The Vulcans issued an apology to try and use the space again, but this did not help their cause. They ended up using the Engineering Research Building and Gerstacker and taps were conducted in the Environmental and Water Resources Building. The Vulcans continued meeting with the Epeians for their initiation and started looking into using the Lurie Biomedical Building. This is where the written records available to the public end for Vulcan history, but more details about their current whereabouts would appear in 2017. A document was uploaded to the website Imgur detailing the full initiation process, songs, and traditions.⁹⁶ Thousands downloaded the document, and this same year a new Michigan faculty member would start as the Vulcan’s advisor. Dr. Jason McCormick of Civil and Environmental Engineering would be the Vulcans advisor from 2017 to now (2022) as I am writing this article.⁹⁷ The current Alumni Board is run by Dr. Chris Kurkea, class of 05’, Karen Albrecht, Spring class of 72’ and Jason Kramb, Fall class of 00’.⁹⁸ In 2021 both Michigamua (now called Order of Angell) and Adara (formerly Pheonix) disbanded leaving the Vulcans the only remaining secret society on campus. When speaking with current Vulcans, they did not know of this news and were shocked. One Vulcan mentioned that he was not surprised of Michigamua disbanding due to their controversial background, but Adara was unexpected as their network and connections helped many women in Engineering. When asking Vulcans why they think their society remains, the common thread among all the answers was that engineers want to help others and form strong bonds that can’t be broken, their devotion to student groups and service kept their group alive while other societies fell around them throughout their history. The Vulcan alumni email is still active with members receiving initiation updates, but no mention of service is included.

⁹³ Goodspeed, Robert. (2000). Robert Goodspeed papers.

⁹⁴ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 2004-2007, Bentley Historical Library

⁹⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 2007-2009, Bentley Historical Library

⁹⁶ Imgur. (2017). *Vulcan Society*. Imgur. <https://imgur.com/gallery/c40jc>

⁹⁷ *VULCAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION :: Michigan (US) :: OpenCorporates*. (2001, February 2). Opencorporates.com. https://opencorporates.com/companies/us_mi/800852993

⁹⁸ *VULCAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION :: Michigan (US) :: OpenCorporates*. (2001, February 2). Opencorporates.com. https://opencorporates.com/companies/us_mi/800852993

All that remains of the Vulcan image are the groups the Vulcans helped start (Engineering Honor Council and Engineering Student Government), the scholarship in their name, and a loan inconspicuous anvil resting outside the EECS building. A constant reminder on my daily walk to class that if tradition does not change with the times, it remains a relic of the past.

Appendix A⁹⁹



Figure 1. Original Vulcan Icon, 1904



Figure 2. Vulcan Crest Emblem, 1905

⁹⁹ Michiganensian. (1904-1977). Ann Arbor, Mich.: Senior literary, law, and engineering classes.

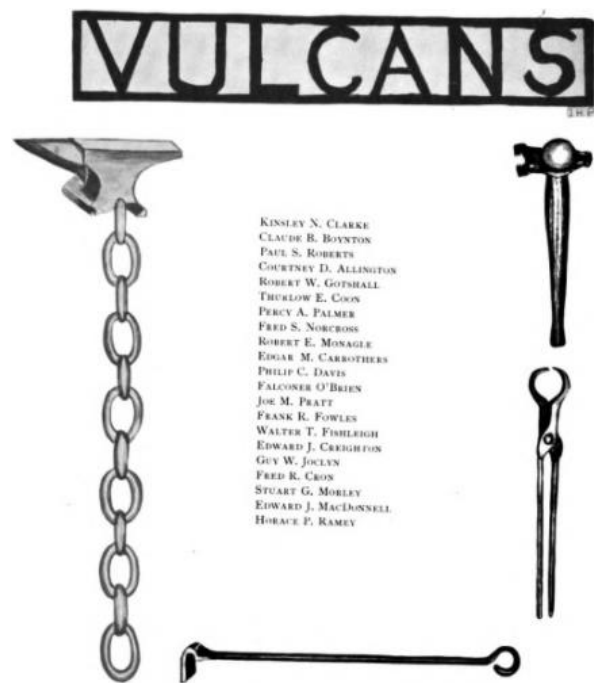


Figure 3. Vulcan Tool Emblem, 1906



Figure 4. Vulcan Drawing, 1907



Figure 5. Industrial Vulcan Drawing, 1912

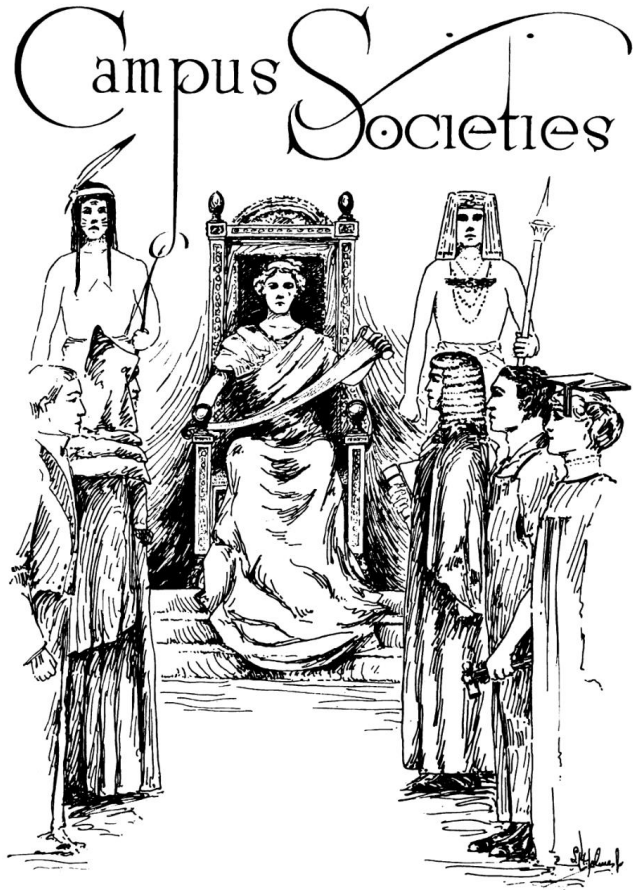



Figure 6. Various Honor Societies, 1915

VULCANS
SENIOR ENGINEERING HONORARY SOCIETY



HONORARY

H.C. Anderson	C.T. Johnson
J.H. Cissel	H.E. Riggs
M.F. Cooley	H.C. Sadler
H.H. Higby	S. J. Zowski
G.S. Williams	

ACTIVES

W.H. Arnold	W.H. Heath
C.H. Beardsley	W.H. Herrnstein
R.D. Buick	W.W. Levi
W.T. Colman	R. Likert
R.L. Comb	H.W. MacDuff
J.N. Dunning	V.W. Owen
R. Earhart	J.P. Vose
F.N. Eaton	Q.W. Wellington
C.H. Will	

Figure 7. Updated Vulcan Drawing, 1926

V U L C A N S

HONORARY VULCANS

H.C. Anderson	H.E. Riggs
J.H. Cissel	H.C. Sadler
M.F. Cooley	G.S. Williams
H.H. Higbie	S.J. Zowski
J.C. Parker	J.S. Wobley

VULCANS of 1930

George L. Beard
Phillip J. Cochran
Harry H. Coll Jr.
Ludwig Emde
Richard F. Gretsich
Isadore E. Grodzky
Robert N. Grunow
Neil E. MacDougall
Robert S. McCoy
Edward R. Nell
Charles R. Waddell
Theodore Will
Charles R. Wood Jr.




Figure 8. Watercolor Vulcan Drawing, 1930

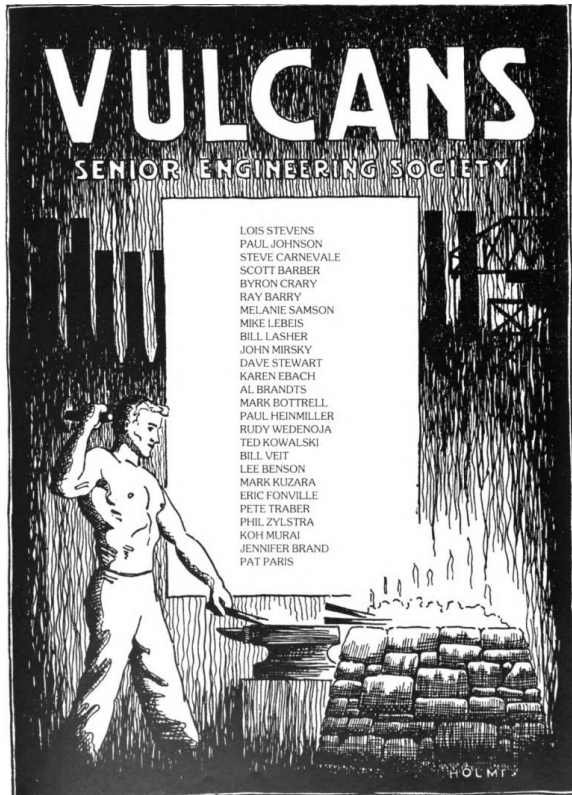


Figure 9. Drawn Vulcan membership list

Appendix B^{100 101 102}

Vulcan, Fire God, Returns To Earth

Vulcan, god of fire and of the forge returned to earth when Vulcans, senior engineering honorary society initiated yesterday summoned by the insistent clamor of ringing anvils. When the God appeared, the rhythmic beating ceased, the hammers fell from the nerveless hands that had been wielding them for four hours, and ten engineers trembled under the stern and silent gaze of the divinity. It was the answer of the god to their helpless pleas for him to join them. With him they journeyed to the underworld, even to the depths of Hades where in the home of Vulcans itself, they received the tokens that made them followers of Vulcan.

Like Aeneas they braved the dangers of the underworld, the snarling Cerberus and Hydra, like Aeneas they crossed the river Styx, rowed by Charon, boatman of the river of Death. Here they met Prometheus, benefactor of the whole human race, here they saw strange and terrible things, here the following ten learned the secrets which rendered them forever immortal as followers of the forger of Jove's mighty thunderbolts: John Briscoe, Calvin Campbell, Richard Krause, Milo Oliphant, William Kratz, Frederick Kratz, Thomas Edwards, John Kearns, and Irwin Stegmeier.

The informal part of its initiation, conducted around a huge fire in front of the engineering clock tower, is a colorful spectacle. The initiates, stripped to the waist and blackened, brawl about the forge fire, blowing and pounding on the anvil.

Later, in one of the remote rooms in the basement of the library, the legend of Prometheus is reenacted. Vulcan, the god of fire, is implored to take in the new members, but he is reluctant and has to be assured by Prometheus that they are worthy. Prometheus then relates the story of how man first was given fire and has used it. Finally Vulcan gives his assent, and the initiates are led through the appropriately warm steam tunnels to the Union, where the initiation is completed in private session.

Vulcans Add Brass Anvil To Campus Landscape

A new relic has been added to the welter of fraternity founder's benches, memorial rocks and class fountains which now dot the campus landscape.

The brass anvil of the Vulcans, senior engineering honor society, lying firmly embedded in a gleaming concrete block, now graces the barren ground northwest of the engine arch.

THE ANVIL was put in its present resting place just before spring vacation, according to Bob Brungraber, '51E, Vulcan, president. Its placement marked the final flowering of a plot which has



VULCAN'S ANVIL

been considered at Vulcan headquarters for several years, he said.

The anvil itself has been floating around the engineering building as long as the current generation of engineers can remember. Lack of a suitable block to mount the Vulcan symbol held up the project for several months.

The monument, which commemorates the founding of Vulcans in 1904, is constructed to withstand the most pernicious of pillagers, Brungraber reported. The anvil, which was formerly hollow, is filled with cement, with iron supports extending into the concrete block on which it rests.

The block itself, he said defiantly, is anchored firmly to the ground by long rods.

At first, the plan was to replace the present brass anvil with a steel one which would ring impressively when struck. Then Vulcan pledges could spend their initiation period pounding a noisy chorus with sledge hammers, as was the custom in days of yore, Brungraber recalled.

However, nostalgic attachment to the brass anvil caused the scheme to be dropped. The cement filling in the present creation renders it virtually noiseless, he mourned. "We'll have to be content with making the neophytes polish it."

Tead To Address
Honor Students

¹⁰⁰ May 18, 1923 (vol. 33, iss. 167) - Image 1. (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071755735/1627>

¹⁰¹ May 26, 1935 (vol. 45, iss. 175) - Image 5. (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071755974/509>

¹⁰² April 19, 1951 (vol. 61, iss. 134) - Image 8. (2022). Michigan Daily Digital Archives. <https://digital.bentley.umich.edu/midaily/mdp.39015071756295/352>

Appendix C ¹⁰³

Vulcan's Honor Society

Gentlemen:

At the close of the academic year of 1949-50 the Wolverine Club had a deficit of \$327.53, due mainly to our unsuccessful venture with record albums. However, this deficit did not show in our books owing to deposits from the Army game trip. We were able, nevertheless, to plan our budget for this year so that we would come out with a small surplus. Unfortunately, several unforeseen expenses have arisen during this year which have left the Wolverine Club in its present predicament.

We would like to request a \$500 loan from Vulcans, to be paid back in full at the beginning of the academic year of 1951-52. Please let me know if any further information is desired, or if you would like one of the Club's officers to discuss the matter with you at one of your meetings.

Sincerely yours,

Edmund M. Gibbon

Edmund M. Gibbon

President

¹⁰³ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

It is agreed that Vulcans Honor Society will underwrite the Wolverine Club debts for an amount not to exceed three hundred dollars (\$300.00) from May 4, 1951 to September 25, 1951. Vulcans Honor Society is completely absolved from all responsibility after September 25, 1951.

Edmund M. Gibbon
 Edmund M. Gibbon
 President, Wolverine Club

Robert Brungraber
 Robert Brungraber
 President, Vulcans Honor Society

organization	total	amm. payed	amm. owed
13 Barristers	52.00	25.00	27.00
10 Vulcans	40.00	<u>80.00</u>	
7 Druids	28.00	20.00	8.00

Sorry this is so late men but you know how it goes. As you can imagine the Vulcans are regaining their capital and would appreciate some sort of action from you. Any questions you might have I'll be glad to answer.

(REVISED FORM B)

FRATERNITY OF PHI GAMMA DELTA

RECEIPT No. _____

DATE *Jan 8, 51*

RECEIVED FROM *Brungraber* \$ *79.39*
Seventy nine and 39/100 DOLLARS

IN CASH
 CHECK
 MONEY ORDER

RMB

TREASURER

Vulcans Honorary Society:

As of May 1st, Sphinx was in fair financial shape with \$55.00 balance in the treasury.

However, Burr Patterson sent us a bill which somehow or other was delayed in getting to us. We should have received it last spring. The bill was for badges amounting to \$67.20. We are in debt \$12.20

We have also paid bills amounting to \$28.04 for the last year's Sphinx class. Now this was above the balance which they left us.

Our project this year will cost around \$50.00 but has not been decided upon definitely yet.

Our only source of revenue is \$10 initiation dues and two members have not been able to pay this. We hope however that we will be able to get the coat checking job for I.F.C. Ball. This will net us approximately \$50.00

Consequently we find ourselves in dire need of financial support and we are sincerely hoping that Vulcans will be able to help us out in this respect. The members of Sphinx realize the situation and are anxious to do all they can to improve it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Neale Traves

Neale Traves, Treasurer

organization	total	amm. payed	amm. owed
13 Barristers	52.00	25.00	27.00
10 Vulcans	40.00	<u>80.00</u>	
7 Druids	28.00	20.00	8.00

Sorry this is so late men but you know how it goes. As you can imagine the Vulcans are ^{interested in} regaining their capital and would appreciate some sort of action from you. Any questions you might have I'll be glad to answer.

VULCANS WHO'S WHO

We are planning to publish a newsletter for Vulcans alumni. Please fill in this form to help us get started.

Name in full _____ Class _____

Occupation _____ Firm _____

Business Address _____

Residence Address _____

Years at U of M _____ Course _____ Degree _____

Offices Held in Vulcans _____ Year _____

Starting salary when you graduated \$ _____ Year _____

Are you a registered professional engineer? _____

Married? Yes _____ No _____ Wife's maiden name _____

Wife's college _____ Number of Children _____

What civic or elective offices have you held? _____

Special honors, books published, etc. _____

Clubs or other business interests _____

Remarks - Use other side.

Our annual banquet will be Sunday, May 10, 1959. This will be a wonderful opportunity to get together with other alums and old pros. If you are interested in attending we will send more information. Am interested Unable to come

Thank you

Appendix D¹⁰⁴

Return Trip Tickets for
Vulcan Special
 will be available
 at the Administration Bldg.
 TODAY 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon
 1:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.
 FRIDAY 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon

Vulcan Trains

- Save up to \$8.47
- Reserved Seats
- Modern Air-Conditioned NYC Trains
- Sales Monday thru Friday
- Administration Building
- 1 - 4:30 P.M.

AVOID THE RUSH!
 Buy your
**Vulcans reduced rate
 train tickets now!**

	reg.	Holiday	save
NEW YORK	48.47	40.00	8.47
ALBANY	41.69	35.00	6.69
BUFFALO	23.02	19.00	4.02
CHICAGO	19.15	16.00	3.15

All Fares Round Trip, Including Tax
 and All Points East
SAVE UP TO \$8.47
 SALE MONDAY THRU FRIDAY
 ADMINISTRATION BLDG. 1-4:30 P.M.

Save MORE in '54
VULCAN TRAIN VALUES

	Reg.	Holiday	Save
NEW YORK	\$48.47	\$40.00	\$8.47
ALBANY	41.69	35.00	6.69
BUFFALO	23.02	19.00	4.02
CHICAGO	19.15	16.00	3.15

Fare round trip incl. tax
Save up to \$8.47
 Sales Monday thru Friday, Administration Bldg. . . . 1:00-4:30

R I D E T H E V U L C A N
T R A I N S

¹⁰⁴ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1926-1958, Bentley Historical Library

Appendix E¹⁰⁵

Robert De Caro
513 South Main #A1
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Department Chairman
Engineering College
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Dear Sir:

The Vulcans are now accepting nominations for new members for Winter Term, 1973.

Vulcans is an upperclassman (Juniors and Seniors) engineering honorary that recognizes an engineering student's participation in extracurricular activities and organizations, especially in those connected with the Engineering College.

If you are aware of a Junior or Senior that is active in the Engineering College and that you think merits an invitation to join Vulcans, I would ask that you send his or her name and address and a list of the activities in which he or she is involved to me by Monday, February 12, 1973.

Thank you for your cooperation.

November 18, 1974

Dear Grand Imperial Vulcan,

I thank you for your invitation (although not its manner of delivery) to join Vulcans. I am very honored by your offer to join your society and have given it serious consideration. However, at this time I find myself extremely short of time and I feel I could not do Vulcans nor myself justice by accepting membership. Meaning no disrespect to Vulcans, I have decided to decline your offer.

I hope you will accept my decision and I wish continued success for your organization. Once again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,
Karen Bilal

¹⁰⁵ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1958-1974, Bentley Historical Library

Appendix F¹⁰⁶

Grand Imperial Vulcan (GIV) i.e., the President.
Current: Sister Vulcan - Cathy Ruf

Duties:

1. Plan the meetings.
2. Run the meetings.
3. Coordinate with officers, especially during nomination meetings, neophyte selection voting, initiation, and officer elections. GIV cannot vote, except to break ties.
4. Handle crises where appropriate.
5. You get the cool speaking parts during initiation - but you can't speak during Dry Taps, nor while in the chariots or at the Temple.

.....

Baby Grand Imperial Vulcan (BGIV) i.e., the Vice President.
Current: Stewart Blacklock - Brother Apollo the Ancient

Duties:

1. Plans, coordinates, directs all aspects of nominations, voting, and initiations. Involves lots of time planning, typing of information sheets, delegating (begging?) people to help, and making sure all the bases are covered. THIS IS A LARGE TIME COMMITMENT DURING NOMINATIONS, VOTING, and INITIATIONS. Does not vote during neophyte selection.
2. Handle crises where appropriate.
3. Handle crises where appropriate.

.....

Treasurer:
Current: Bill Cohen - Brother Dionysis

Duties:

1. Plan and coordinate all aspects of Ring Sales - and beg people to sell rings.
2. Handle buying mugs and having them engraved for initiation.
3. Obtaining and distributing copies of keys for new members.
4. Collect dues from members, both new and old.
5. Keep the office stocked with assorted snacks and beverages, especially on meeting nites. Includes getting above items up to office and returning empties for deposit.
6. Maintaining the ledger books and checking account; Planning and keeping us on budget. Disbursing funds for expenses such as copying or initiation activities.
7. Coordinate sales of sweatshirts, to local members and to alumni (via the newsletter).
8. Coordinate sales of duplicates of initiation photos.

.....

Secretary:
Current: Tammy Rice - Sister Artemis the Younger

Duties:

1. Take minutes at meetings. Type

¹⁰⁶ Vulcans (University of Michigan) records, 1904-2012, Box [1], 1990-2000, Bentley Historical Library

2. Print certificates for initiation. them and send them out over e-mail and file printed copies in the minutes book.
3. Collect student ID numbers from new members and arrange for Vulcans membership to appear on their transcript.
4. Maintain and periodically distribute the local and out-of-town address lists.
5. Assist GIV or BGIV with unusual secretarial type needs.
6. During the Winter semesters, the Secretary will coordinate the Vulcan Scholarship. This involves arrangements with our advisor, Sister Athena (Anne Monterio), making and coordinating publicity for request for applicants. Then, you coordinate the discussion meeting where we choose the recipients.

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 Faculty/Alumni Director
 Laura Sebesta - Sister Demeter

Duties:

1. Coordinate, solicit and collect articles, edit and publish the newsletter. Coordinate the duplication. Coordinate the folding/stapling meeting, and arrange for the completed copies to be mailed at a low cost.
2. Maintain the database of all past members and coordinate with College of Engineering Alumni Services.
3. Maintain relations with the faculty members; Beg for them to participate and/or help out, especially during initiations.
4. During Fall Semesters, organize the Homecoming Party, including publicity to alumni within a few hours drive.
5. During Winter semesters, organize the picnic in April, including getting people to bring assorted foodstuffs, beverages, barbeque supplies, paper goods, sports equipment. Publicize to all members in local area. Give driving directions to picnic.
6. Coordinate any unusual alumni/faculty events, such as meeting with distinguished alumni who visit, faculty awards, etc.