

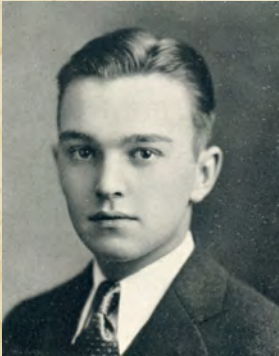
# EXCERPTS

from the **ARCHIVES**

Nicholas Kemper '06



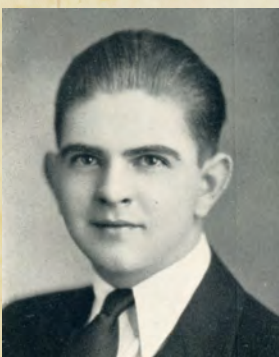
James McGinnis, SJ



Ambrose Lindhorst '31



John Brink '30



Robert Buchert '30

In most ways, the 1930 *X-Ray* is like any other St. Xavier yearbook. It contains a wide variety of images and information about faculty members, students, clubs, activities, and athletic competitions. But seventy pages in, nestled between the Library Association and Dramatics, there is a page unlike any other, detailing a group unlike any other: a secret society referred to as The Cabalistic and Clandestine Order of Xettres.

There are no photographs, and there are no names. In fact, the page is mostly blank, except for three very small paragraphs which we are told were “contributed in a most surreptitious manner” by “His Most Profound Profundity, the Official Scribe of the Order.” A few illuminating details are provided:

The first secret society ever organized at St. Xavier High School held its first meeting sometime during the month of April in the year 1930. This highly honored society is composed of the most active students throughout the school . . . Meetings are held in secret, and the business carried on is not published. The number of members, which, by the way, is exceedingly small, as well as the names of the members are withheld from the knowledge of the student body in general. The glamour of the secret society is expected to encourage all students to try to gain admission.

True to their word, no membership lists or meeting minutes were ever kept. Aside from being mentioned in the 1930 yearbook, no other school publication even mentions the Society's existence. Was it real? Or perhaps a clever ruse? It appeared as if the story behind this enigmatic and mysterious group would forever remain a secret, lost to history.

But then a chance discovery in the archives earlier this year changed everything: a Class of 1930 newsletter from December 3, 1996 divulged the secrets of the Order. John ‘Jack’ Brink '30, editor for the *X-Ray*, recalled the following:

To begin with, it was not a hoax or intellectual spoof . . . In April 1930, Mr. McGinnis S.J. called together a bunch of [students] into a hush-hush meeting on the 4th floor of old St. X Hi . . . He outlined plans to form this esoteric society of high achievers based on extracurricular activity points . . . [and] was never specific about the club mission or activity beyond that stated on page 70. To the best of my memory, we met only two or three times in April and May 1930. Our only accomplishment was discussion of details in producing a written constitution and bylaws.

Robert Buchert '30, another member, explained the strange name, *Xettres* “It is Latin and translates *X* (ten) *et* (and) *tres* (three),” or thirteen, the original number of founding members: five seniors, four juniors, and four sophomores. It was as simple as that.

So, what ever happened to the Cabalistic and Clandestine Order of Xettres? Shortly after the end of the 1930 school year James McGinnis S.J. left St. Xavier to continue his studies for ordination, and without his guidance and leadership, the fledgling secret society dissipated. Five of the original thirteen members graduated, and the Order was not resuscitated the following year.

Fr. McGinnis S.J. later went on to serve with distinction as an army chaplain in the Pacific during World War II. Following his return, he founded the Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House just outside of Chicago, which is still thriving to this day.

And to the best of our knowledge, no other secret society has ever existed at St. Xavier. At least one that we know of...

*Contributed in a most surreptitious manner,  
by His Most Profound Profundity, the Official Scribe of the Archives*

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Dedicated in loving memory to Karl Hauck, longtime St. X history teacher and archivist.