9-23-2005

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Interview Participants

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**Description**

Professor of History and Dean of Gettysburg College Charles H. Glatfelter was interviewed on September 23, 2005 by Michael J. Birkner. This interview focuses on the Lutheran roots and influence at Gettysburg College. He discusses in particular the changing nature of Lutheranism at Gettysburg from its founding to the 1960's and 70's.

**Length of Interview:** 95 minutes

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**Keywords**

Gettysburg College, Glatfelter, Lutheran, Schmucker, Henry W.A. Hanson, Michael Jacobs, Edward Korte, Walter Langsam, Harvey McKnight, John Morris, Frederick Muhlenberg, Willard Paul, Edgar Smith, Samuel Sunderman, John, Vannorsdall

**Disciplines**

Christian Denominations and Sects | Higher Education | History | History of Religion | Liberal Studies | Oral History | United States History

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This is September 23, 2005, I’m Michael Birkner. I’m sitting in the study room on the fourth floor of Musselman Library with Charles H. Glatfelter, Emeritus Professor of History at Gettysburg. We’re going to continue our series of conversations about Gettysburg College and we’re going to focus as least some of our conversation today on Gettysburg and the Lutheran connection.

**Birkner:** Charlie, I would like to ask you this question going back to the early days of the college. It’s clear that Gettysburg College was meant to serve the German constituency in Pennsylvania. Benjamin Rush had this very much in mind. Dickinson [College] didn’t quite fulfill his hopes in that regard. I think he would have been happy to see Pennsylvania College founded. Clearly the founding father [Samuel Simon Schmucker] was identified as a Lutheran pastor and theologian. How do you as a historian put your emphasis when you try to describe Gettysburg College or Pennsylvania College in the nineteenth century? Is it a German college? Is it a Lutheran college? What would you call it?

**Glatfelter:** The college of liberal arts and sciences. When David Potts was here during the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Samuel Simon Schmucker, he delivered one of the last lectures. Do you remember that?
Birkner: I do.

Glatfelter: He said there’s something interesting about the charter which Schmucker wrote for the college. And he was asked to write it as far as we know. Dave said that the charter of Gettysburg College is distinctive among those of colleges founded before and during that time by emphasizing the liberal arts and sciences in a way that he did not find in other charters. Now, the charter does say that it was to function chiefly among the German population of Pennsylvania. But the instruction of the college from the start was in English, not German, and in line with charters or half a dozen or more colleges before 1832. The charter of Gettysburg does not mention the word Lutheran as I recall. And it does say that religious tests shall not be imposed on students or faculty and I believe also trustees. So I hesitate to call Gettysburg College a German college. It was a college to serve German youth but until the 1850s, German was not a required subject. Until the Synod in the Eastern part of the state insisted that the students who came here from a very heavily German part of Pennsylvania would have to take German. So, if I called Gettysburg a German college I would have to explain it along lines that I just have. And if I called Gettysburg a Lutheran college, I would also want to explain that. That as Schmucker said it
was to be primarily under Lutheran influence and control. But, a number of the first trustees were not Lutherans from Gettysburg who had joined him in 1831 and providing local support for the college. Does that help you?

**Birkner:** It's very helpful. Of course you can't divorce Schmucker from his deep interest in things Lutheran and his battles over the meaning of Lutheraness if you will, and the fact that he becomes embattled in his fifties over the whole question of what kind of Lutheranism Gettysburg College might in fact represent. So, I accept what you say. I'm just thinking we need the conversation going to what degree Lutheranism influenced proceedings at Gettysburg College. The President is a Lutheran and the President is going to teach some kind of a course where fundamentals of Lutheranism are in fact retailed, right?

**Glatfelter:** I'm not sure it's accurate to say fundamentals of Lutheranism. I think more than that it's the fundamentals of philosophy that you associate with the last year of undergraduate education. Now, I'm satisfied that Samuel Simon Schmucker knew the difference between a college and a seminary. And to me that's crucial for understanding the first half century or more of this institution. He did not look upon Gettysburg College as a place which was to prepare students for the Seminary and nothing else. They
were to be prepared for their professions and for business. He knew the difference. I would say that over and over again. There were some Lutheran Colleges in the Midwest which I think were more strongly orientated toward Lutheranism than Gettysburg was. Now having said that, almost all the professors until we get into the twentieth century were Lutherans. And until we get into the twentieth century most of the students were.

**Birkner:** In fact you could amend that to say that until you get to the twentieth century a very high percentage of the students are Lutheran. Perhaps in the first fifty years, upwards of 80 to 90%.

**Glatfelter:** I would agree.

**Birkner:** And then it becomes a little bit more ecumenical among Protestant denominations, right?

**Glatfelter:** Particularly when you get to the presidency of [Samuel] Hefelbower.

**Birkner:** Which is the twentieth century?

**Glatfelter:** Yes, indeed it is.

**Birkner:** So for purposes of going to college I'm not an expert of any of this but I'm guessing that Lutheran pastors have some influence among young, white people in these little hamlets, and villages, and towns throughout Pennsylvania and perhaps into Maryland and New Jersey. And
they are alerting these bright young people that they have an opportunity to go to Gettysburg College. They’re not sending them to Franklin and Marshall because that’s a different religious tradition. And they’re not sending them to Dickinson because that’s a different religious tradition, right?

Glatfelter: That’s true.

Birkner: Brethren or U Reformed Church, the Methodists in the other instance. But they’re not necessarily going to Gettysburg College for training in religious precepts. They’re being trained for whatever the next step is in their lives.

Glatfelter: I come back to the liberal arts and sciences.

Birkner: All right. Let’s take a case of a faculty member or two. I realize some of this is more hypothetical since you haven’t had personal conversations with these people. But if you take faculty members like Michael Jacobs or Martin Luther Stoever, who are prominent faculty members in the period before the Civil War and into the Civil War. What is their approach as faculty members? Are they primarily in the classroom as you and I have been ourselves to teach subject matter as opposed to mold characters and shape good Lutheran citizens? How do you describe their roles?
Glatfelter: I think, but I’m not sure, that first of all Michael Jacobs taught science. But I don’t think Michael Jacobs could believe that his job was finished if he did not try to mold character. In fact, I don’t think my job was ever finished. It was simply to teach history. But in the way I tried to behave towards students, I think I was helping to mold their character by showing them an example which I hoped was a good example. It did not mean that they had to be Lutherans. It did not mean that at any time did I ever try to persuade a student to become a Lutheran. And consider the fact that Michael Jacobs was a Lutheran pastor. That for a time he functioned as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, not as a fully committed ordained pastor. But faculty members and seminary members took turns until the 1890s to function as pastors of Christ Lutheran Church. Now, Martin Luther Stoever was not an ordained pastor. And at the same time I suspect that his outlook was about the same as that of Michael Jacobs.

Birkner: Well, let me just push one step further. I grasp your point about not simply feeling satisfied that you taught any given subject matter. There is simply more to life in a residential liberal arts college. What I’m expressing is that your teaching of subject matter is your explicit responsibility and purpose. There’s something
implicit in the way you carry yourself, the values you express and the counsel you offer or give and take you have with students about these character issues. Would you say that is a parallel to Jacobs and Stoever and other faculty members at Pennsylvania College or that they were more focused and explicit on this character molding or religion side?

Glatfelter: I don’t have enough evidence, Michael to be more explicit.

Birkner: OK. But what you’re saying is that it was part of what they were about. And in the case of Jacobs, he actually had responsibilities at Christ Lutheran. Stoever edited Lutheran publications, right? So Gettysburg is in the universe of denominational colleges in the 19th century and that’s where the action really was for much of the time. Gettysburg was a Lutheran College, a liberal arts institution and we don’t have to make the Lutheranism be the heavy color and the liberal arts institution be a light color that’s overwhelmed by the heavy color, right?

Glatfelter: We don’t and we shouldn’t. There’s another thing about Michael Jacobs. As you know he was one of the persons who founded the Gettysburg Gas Company. And gas was introduced into the White House [when it was built] in 1860. Here was something which you would not expect from someone
who was a Lutheran pastor, first, last and always to bother himself with. He probably would not have been the first person to write a booklet about the Battle of Gettysburg.

**Birkner:** Multi-dimensional is what we're talking about here.

**Glatfelter:** Yes.

**Birkner:** He is the father of the Henry Eyster Jacobs?

**Glatfelter:** Yes. And you're aware that the presidency of Gettysburg College was first offered to somebody who was a Congregationalist or Presbyterian.

**Birkner:** And who was that?

**Glatfelter:** I'm old enough to plead ignorance on grounds of approaching senility. His name might have been Robinson. I say a good bit about him in the history of the college.

**Birkner:** Well, I'll go back to it. That's very interesting and it's worth noting. I want to connect now to some of the issues and I find them opaque or difficult sometimes to fully understand. Again, some of the issues have to do with the meaning of Lutheranism as it connects to Gettysburg College. Just to take it from the top, it's evident that Samuel Simon Schmucker's version is "American Lutheranism." And "American Lutheranism" is a term I use advisedly because Harold Dunkelberger has reminded me to do that.

**Glatfelter:** It might not be wrong to put it in quotes.
Birkner: In quotes, right. But his version of "American Lutheranism" is different from the Lutheran vision or creed that is embraced by others associated with the college. And would you just say a word or two about that because it's common now to say that Schmucker had become a minority voice in his own institution by his fifties. What do you make of all that?

Glatfelter: First of all I would say that he became a minority voice in the West Pennsylvania Synod, the East Pennsylvania Synod and some other Synods and in the General Synod of the Lutheran Church. I am not sure that the other side was represented by the majority of the faculty, certainly by some of the faculty. To Schmucker, "American Lutheranism" was a "Lutheranism" which did not insist on the finality of every word in the Augsburg confession. He did not endorse the Bible under all circumstances as some conservative Lutherans did. He was more adamant in opposing alcoholic beverages than other Lutherans were. And I think the battle between the segments of the Lutheran Church was more pronounced in the days of [Harvey] McKnight and [Henry Lewis] Baugher then it was in Schmucker's day, although if you look at the people who founded the Seminary in Philadelphia in the 1860s and then Muhlenberg College a little bit later on, they were the more conservative in the
sense that they had adhered strictly to the Augsburg confession and all of the symbolic books of the Lutheran church, which would include the book of Concord, the Apostle’s Creed and Luther’s catechisms and the like.

Birkner: Just for clarity, is that the Mt. Airy Seminary?

Glatfelter: Yes, it is.

Birkner: And since you mentioned Muhlenberg College, I might as well as this point ask you about Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg who was brought in I believe for the Franklin professorship but did not stay at the college for a great deal of time. Was he instrumental in the founding of Muhlenberg College?

Glatfelter: I don’t believe he was, I’m not sure of this. I don’t believe he was instrumental in founding it. He was summoned from the Gettysburg College faculty to become its President, Muhlenberg College’s President.

Birkner: Is that why he left Gettysburg?

Glatfelter: That’s why he left Gettysburg. And as I recall, in a little bit of a hurry because I do not associate him while he was here with the conservative fringe of the Lutheran Church.

Birkner: Well, I’m glad you said that because you anticipated the question I was going to ask which I felt was just going to be an affirmation but now I’m not so sure it
is. I assume he left in part because he was more oriented to the Augsburg confession and he found that the more conservative version of things at Muhlenberg College more appealing than the more ecumenical approach of Samuel Simon Schmucker.

**Glatfelter:** My response to that would be that he was somewhat more conservatively oriented than Schmucker, so that he was acceptable to the people in the Ministerium of Pennsylvania when they wanted to call a president.

**Birkner:** OK. Would the people at Muhlenberg College have still considered themselves friends of the people at Pennsylvania College? I want to get some sense of how Lutherans who might disagree on doctrinal points identified themselves. These doctrinal points were not so critical that the people at Muhlenberg would view Gettysburg as an illegitimate place or anything like that, would it?

**Glatfelter:** Not illegitimate but sufficiently unsatisfactory that they went to the trouble of founding their own Seminary and their own college. Now in my history of the college there is what I consider to be a nice long quote, maybe from Frederick A. Muhlenberg when he went to Muhlenberg in 1867, and I’d urge you to read it. It’s at the end, as I recall it, the end of a chapter in which he sets forth why he thinks that other college was needed.
Remember that the issue of German exists here. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania was much more committed to the German language much more than Gettysburg ever was. Gettysburg accepted German language as a requirement for students in the 1850s in order to receive the support that the Lutherans had given to Franklin College before it was a college. And if you read the story of what happened to the German professors who were called here, it’s not a happy story. Most of them were not here very long. Some of them did not get along with the students. And some of the students did not get along with them.

Birkner: That’s very interesting. Now, two other names I want to introduce to this 19th century Lutheranism discussion are two important trustees, Benjamin Kurtz and John G. Morris. And I raise their names here in the context of what we have already said about Schmucker and Frederick Muhlenberg. Is it a fair statement that if anything Kurtz and Morris are even more liberal and ecumenical than Schmucker? In other words they’re on Schmucker’s side but they’re actually on the other side of Schmucker compared to Muhlenberg. Is that a fair way of looking at them?

Glatfelter: Benjamin Kurtz indeed comes close to being called a liberal. He was someone who thought that students ought to prepare for the ministry, particularly those who
feel they have the call when they are adults in such a way that they do not have to go through four years of college and three years of seminary. And that was one of the things which got Susquehanna started. And for a long time Susquehanna had a Theological Seminary. In fact that Theological Seminary I think continued into the 1930s.

**Birkner:** I have no knowledge of that.

**Glatfelter:** John C. Morris was a contemporary of Schmucker. They were only about five or six years apart. John G. Morris’s father was an officer during the revolution. He died while John G. was quite young. The family lived in Europe. Schmucker’s family lived in Europe. And I think one of the things that impressed me about these two men were that they were two pretty intelligent men, contemporaries who simply could not climb into the same pea pod together. I think there was a certain element of jealousy between them. As you know, there is a biography of John G. Morris that came out some years ago. The author and I had a lot of conversation while it was in preparation. But I come back to say that they were two contemporaries whose world views were not far different from each other.

**Birkner:** So what we’re dealing with here is someone who might theologically be on Schmucker’s wave length but is not
necessarily personally on his wave length. There's just
different chemistry there.

Glatfelter: That's a good way to put it.

Birkner: And he would not have been one of the people who
was trying to back Schmucker into any corners theologically,
because they were not far apart theologically?

Glatfelter: That's how I understand it.

Birkner: Based on your knowledge of Morris and perhaps
having read the biography that you referred to, did Morris
ever change his view? He lived a very long life. Did he
ever change as he did serve for fifty-four years on the
board here? Was he a consistent voice or did he ever adapt
or change his views or any of those fundamental issues?

Glatfelter: If he did, I'm now aware of it.

Birkner: So he would likely have been a voice for this
ecumenicalism that Schmucker represented?

Glatfelter: Yes.

Birkner: Morris was around in fact long enough to see some
of these doctrinal disputes of the 1880s.

Glatfelter: He died in 1896.

Birkner: I discovered that he spoke either at the
groundbreaking or the dedication of Pennsylvania Hall; I
probably got it from your book. And I was quite surprised
to learn that he was around then, but he was. Here's the
thing that I’m finding interesting, some of the names that appear on the conservative side in the arguments after the Civil War are in fact sons of people who had been at the college, President Krauth’s son is one of them and Michael Jacobs’ son is one of them. And very much on the conservative side. What’s going on here? Why do you think that they’re taking the ground that Gettysburg ought to be more quote “Lutheran” in the Augsburg confession mode or something else? I’m not sure whether I have a good understanding of why these men are so convinced that the college is going to hell by not being more Lutheran.

Glatfelter: What you’re describing is part of a larger movement which I do not understand either. Nor do I understand fully why there has been the conservative movement that we have been experiencing in the last few years in this country. A movement which at time repudiates much of what I came to accept a long time ago as a movement which holds that the federal government in an increasingly, complicated and industrial society has more of a role to play than it did 150 years ago. That was happening with Lutheranism too. And I can’t explain why. I simply know that it did. Now Benjamin Kurtz was the son of a Lutheran minister who spent his career in Baltimore. And the grandson of a young man who came to this country in 1745,
was shepherded by Muhlenberg. He was ordained at the first ministerial meeting in 1748 and was one of the strongest Lutheran pastors in Colonial Pennsylvania. He wound up in York and reduced the Lutheran Church there to an order that’s scarcely ever been observed and lived until 1790. So Benjamin Kurtz is the grandson of one of the founders of the Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania. And John G. Morris was the son of a doctor, as I recall, who was a strong member of the senior Schmucker’s congregation in York. Now I may be moving far a field and if so it’s because I can’t answer the question that you asked, I wish I could. The question you asked was, and I understand it, why this conservative movement?

Birkner: Whatever the motives, whatever the incentive, whatever the provocation, whatever the influence, it happens. And there’s tension and there’s even bad words said about people to the point where the president of the college from 1884 to 1904, Harvey McKnight, feels he can’t put up with it anymore. So clearly this wasn’t just a minor tempest in a teapot, it was something more than that. And it has to do with what kind of place Gettysburg is. In your book, there’s a little illustration of a pamphlet that asks the question “How Lutheran is Gettysburg?” And somebody is raising these issues. Is this simply something that’s going
on among the faculty and the board and maybe the Synods, or are the students involved in this too?

**Glatfelter**: I don’t think the students were very much involved in it. I think that some of it came from the synods which wanted to see synodically elected representatives. And if they got enough of these they would inject Lutheranism as they understood it more prominently into the curriculum. And you remember that in the 1890s the Board of Trustees considered their requests and came up with a conclusion that did not provide for Synod elected trustees. Simply a statement that a percentage of the trustees had to be Lutheran. And that meant that the trustees would continue to elect them.

**Birkner**: You suggest that we were not as whole hog into this notion of Lutheran dominance of the institution as opposed to liberal arts dominance of the institution which goes back to your original premise in talking about this subject. I know you deal with this in your book but just for a quick summary here, McKnight meant it when he offered his resignation but there were enough supporters of McKnight on the board to dissuade him from resigning. And they said “You’re doing all right, we’re satisfied with the approach you take to Christianity in this institution. Keep doing your work.” Is that fair?
Glatfelter: This is correct. And you also find in either the Pennsylvania College Monthly or the Gettysburgian statements by trustees that they like McKnight and what he has done for the institution. And as you look at Henry Lewis Baugher. The man died in a mental institution. And someone who made a comment about him felt that he was a person who found it difficult to say anything good about anyone. This isn’t verbatim.

Birkner: He was disputacious by nature.

Glatfelter: Yes, yes. And I do not know that he had more than one close supporter at the institution. There was a man named Menges who was in the Chemistry Department who also left the institution about the time that Baugher did.

Birkner: That is where I was going. Just as a sideline here, however, I wanted to just ask you a word about science. It’s not that I’m looking to see Gettysburg College exclusively embracing Darwinism or anything like that but what I wanted to ask you is more general. Is it fair to say that Gettysburg College attempted to stay abreast of the scientific developments, findings, research and teaching that would have been commonplace among the better liberal arts colleges and new universities in the country? I’m trying to get a sense here that Gettysburg was not trying to say “We’re not interested in science.” They
built a science structure, right? And they hired science professors. They continued to learn. I’m just trying to get some sense of how you would characterize Gettysburg’s interest in science in the late 19th century.

**Glatfelter:** I said that Samuel Simon Schmucker knew the difference between a Seminary and a college. And from the start, Gettysburg had persons who taught science. And Linnaen Hall was built by people who were interested in one aspect of science. There was a chemistry building, as you say, after the Civil War. There was a brief period of time when there was a chemistry professor, Myer, who was a little too hot I guess for Gettysburg to handle. And if you read [Milton] Valentine’s inaugural address and McKnight’s, I think both of them say that Gettysburg College wants to emphasize all of the liberal arts and sciences. That it may not be in the forefront of institutions, but these studies which are very worthwhile are studies which should be undertaken here. It may have been in the 1890s or a little later when one of the grandsons wrote an article which I refer to in my history of the college saying that there should be no conflict between faith and belief in evolution. That if you believe that God is a creator of all, this blessed science just as a study of Government. I told someone, a former student of mine, who tapped me on the
shoulder at a restaurant yesterday and said "I want to have a talk with you."

**Birkner:** You were in York yesterday?

**Glatfelter:** I was in York at the York Historical Society. I told Jim Mummert that on February 12, 1909, Gettysburg College celebrated the date. In the morning, it celebrated the centennial of the borough of Abraham Lincoln. In the afternoon on the same day, it celebrated the birth, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin.

**Birkner:** Formally they celebrated this?

**Glatfelter:** Yes.

**Birkner:** That’s fascinating. I don’t think that many Lutheran Colleges around the country were doing that.

**Glatfelter:** It would be worth checking out, but I wonder about that. And when I was doing the history of the college, I had gotten in contact somehow with Bill Sunderman. Now, I don’t know the extent to which Bill Sunderman understood my question or the attention that he gave to answering it. I said, "When you were in the science program at Gettysburg College about the time of World War I, was there any evidence of a conflict in the sciences between faith and evolution? Was there any evidence of a reluctance of Breidenbaugh and others to teach science as they understood it?" His answer was direct and as I say, I’m not
sure how comprehensive it was, but he said, "I never experienced any evidence of a conflict." Now this was a man who was a Lutheran to his dying day who explained that when he went off to college his father said, "Now you ought to go to church every Sunday." And as far as I'm concerned until someone comes along with a lot of evidence to the contrary, I think that the people who managed Gettysburg College thought that science as it was understood and being understood in the 19th and 20th centuries should be taught exactly that way. I am proud to be an alumnus of an institution which I think did this. Now I interrupted you.

Birkner: No, no, I interrupted you and thank you for that comment. I was just going to add something that I think you would probably underline yourself and that is, that this longtime beloved faculty member Breidenbaugh did his graduate training at Yale which would be an institution that would follow the truth, follow science wherever it led. And that it makes a statement about his own seriousness about science that he did have a graduate degree from Yale. I know he never finished his Ph.D and I gather that he couldn't crack a particular piece of his doctoral dissertation and that's why he didn't get the Ph.D. But he was trained at Yale presumably in the latest scientific knowledge as of the early 1870s when he would have been
there, right? So that fits. It’s also hard to imagine some of the findings of an Edgar Fahs Smith studying at Gettysburg in what, the 1870s, and going on with the kind of career he went on to. Well, do you have a sense of his dates?

**Glatfelter:** I thought he was born in the 1840s and died in 1926.

**Birkner:** He died that early, OK. When I went to Philadelphia this summer, I went to a reception at The American Chemical Society Building in Philadelphia. And they had an exhibit room and they mentioned three prominent scientists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who they considered to be of extreme importance. One of them was Einstein, one of them I don’t remember, and the third one was Edgar Fahs Smith. So he must have learned some science as an undergraduate enough to stimulate him to go on and take his graduate degree, wherever he took it. I know he wound up at Penn.

**Glatfelter:** Was he the person that took his graduate degree?

**Birkner:** Well, it’s very possible.

**Glatfelter:** And he had a brother, Allen Smith, he was a little older. He came to Gettysburg and as Edgar Fahs was in chemistry, Allen was in biology. He made a name for
himself, but for the moment don’t ask me to say more than that. I recently read a bit about him because Ned Brownley called me last Friday or Saturday and said that there is a statue of Edgar Fahs Smith in Philadelphia. And under his left foot, he seems to have the alligator. And Ed wondered why there was an alligator there. And I said "I didn’t know," but Edgar Fahs Smith was one of the founders or supporters of Phi Psi fraternity, which celebrated the anniversary of what, was it 150 years maybe. They celebrated in the hotel last Saturday night.

Birkner: Now, just on a couple of names here. I didn’t want to bring up a name of someone whose slightly younger than that because I want to check to see if you actually knew this person personally and that connected to the conversation we’re having. Luther Eisenhart spent much of his working life as a professor of mathematics at Princeton. Gettysburg graduate, class of 1896. Esteemed enough at Princeton by Woodrow Wilson to be named one of the first preceptors at Princeton. Esteemed enough by his students and colleagues at Princeton to have an archway at Princeton named in his honor. And did you know him?

Glatfelter: No. I did not know him but I’m sure he was alive when I was teaching here.
Birkenr: Yes, yes. And the premise I’m working on again here is that if he had been just fed some kind of pabulum at Gettysburg College it’s unlikely he could have gone on to the graduate career that he did, right? This had to be a serious place in academics. In terms of the Gettysburg Lutheran College connection there is also the issue of support financially for the college. It seems that the college has received the support of the Lutheran Church more or less in different cycles. And that at certain points, it has been willing to concede certain things to the church in order to get more support from the Synods. Financial support that helped to support the college’s operations. This is something you’ve obviously dealt with in your history. I just want to get a summary view if I could from you about whether you feel that the Lutheran Church stepped to the plate for the college, given that it was in fact a Lutheran institution, or whether we need to be careful and say in certain areas it did this, and in certain areas it was willing to do that. What is your reflection on this financial commitment?

Glatfelter: To start with Henry W.A. Hanson, it is clear as a crystal that that man who wanted to keep knowledge about the income of the college as close to his vest as possible. Joe Larkin told me in the 1950s that until after World War
II, he had never seen a financial statement from the college. Now they were printed because I found some when I was working on the history. As late as '51 or '52 there is a statement by Hanson that we can take care of our own affairs. Walter Langsam appeared on the scene in 1952. I remember vividly because the faculty members, particularly the underlings, were very disappointed that there had been no change in the faculty's scale, the salary scale since 1947. And it was very disappointing to hear Walter Langsam get up in a faculty meeting and say "I'm sorry, thee cannot be any increases for this year and we'll see about next year." Now I'm sure it was Walter Langsam who decided that about the most promising source of funds for the current account at Gettysburg College was the Synods of the Lutheran Church, the United Lutheran Church in America which in one way, shape, or form supported the college. And he persuaded the board to amend the charter so that the Central Pennsylvania Synod, the West Virginia Synod and maybe one other Synod would be authorized to elect members to the board, the first time in the history of the college, that these Synods elected members to the board and this would mean that the Synods would make annual grants to Gettysburg College. Those annual grants that began in the later '50s and continued into the '60s were given the college budget at
this time very substantial. But as you know, the atmosphere of the early '60s changed dramatically and by the later '60s particularly on the floor of the Central Pennsylvania Synod meetings, younger pastors would get up and say “We have much more pressing needs for synodical money than the grant to Gettysburg College.” And this is at a time when the Lutheran student body of Gettysburg College was decreasing. “We ought to have campus pastors at Penn State and places like that as well as a chaplain at Gettysburg College.” And consequently after little more than a decade, the synodical grants decreased and I think that in all probability they were never returned except perhaps in very, very small amounts. So in 1957 I think that was the year, by that time Langsam was gone, but it took time to change the charter and to get other Synods to agree fully to this. For the first time in its history, in 1957, the college permitted synodically elected trustees and the board of directors had no control over those persons, as they were elected and qualified.

Birkner: What percentage of the board consisted of these people?

Glatfelter: Something like six or eight.

Birkner: There were about thirty-five members on the board?

Glatfelter: Yes, approximately thirty-five.
Birkner: And how long did that continue? I mean when did we stop allowing Synods to elect members? I assume we don’t allow that anymore.

Glatfelter: Not anymore.

Birkner: Would it have gone into the presidency of Charles Glassick?

Glatfelter: It may have. I’ve forgotten now when it happened. So that at the present time I think that there is only one trustee designated by the President from the United Lutheran Church in America. And the holder at the present time, or the holder a year ago was Jim Brenneman.

Birkner: And he’s about to be replaced, right?

Glatfelter: Probably.

Birkner: So a layman could do that job in consultation with the higher ups at the college?

Glatfelter: Oh, I think that even when those eight were elected, some of them always were or had to be laymen.

Birkner: Now, we’re skirting around the question though, the Lutheran Church’s overall financial commitment to the institution. What I take away from the previous statement is that when the college felt a serious financial need, it was willing to sacrifice a certain degree of its own independence to get funds from the Synods on the grounds that we were, after all, a Lutheran institution so this was a
legitimate thing to do. But, we’re talking about something that would last for, I’m guessing, a quarter of a century. 

**Glatfelter:** Less than that, I think. It’s closer to fifteen to twenty years, when the annual grants are significant. 

**Birkner:** Right. I’m thinking of the authority granted the Synods to be electing Board members. So you’ve got significant financial support from the institution from the synods for the institution, really as you just said now for fifteen to twenty years. Before that time how did monies feed into the college from the Synods? Did they put something into the collection plate for Gettysburg College? Did they have an annual amount that Synods agreed to give to Henry W.A. Hanson for the use of the institution? Or is this too obscure for a historian even to know? 

**Glatfelter:** In the period right after World War II, there was something called the Christian higher education year. It was CHEY: Christian Higher Education Year. This was the entire United Lutheran Church of America. That’s what it was at the time. And the educational agencies in that church were to receive a certain amount of money. There was a target set and the individual colleges and seminaries were to receive a certain amount of money. The amount set for Gettysburg, as I remember, never reached the amount
suggested. But here was a campaign that may have lasted two to three years which did provide money for the college. And every so often there might be a collection raised in congregations or in Synods for Gettysburg College, but there was never that I know of a line item in the synodical budgets pledged to Gettysburg College.

**Birkner:** That answers a question I had. Let me go collaterally here to something I'm interested in about the connection between Gettysburg College and Christ Lutheran church. If you pick up Breidenbaugh's history, there's a picture of Christ Lutheran Church, Breidenbaugh's *Pennsylvania College Book* as it's called, of 1882. Gettysburg students were expected to worship at Christ Lutheran Church. Is that right?

**Glatfelter:** They were required.

**Birkner:** They were required to worship at Christ Lutheran Church. Were non-Lutheran students required to worship there as well?

**Glatfelter:** Unless they got a statement from their parents that they should be permitted to go somewhere else. And I don't believe, but I'm not sure of this. I don't believe they had the option of going nowhere.

**Birkner:** And how long would that policy have been in effect? How long into the 20th century did that last?
Glatfelter: What you need to do is go to my history of the college and read the story of something which ended with a whimper, not a bang. I thought when I went to work on that part of the history of the college, that I was going to find a statement by the board, a statement by the faculty, a statement by the president that this requirement for good and sufficient reasons had come to an end. I never found such a statement. And so I think what I had to say was that about the year 1930, this statement no longer appears in the catalog or no longer applies. It's a whimper rather than a bang.

Birkner: What about if we transfer that from students to faculty? My assumption is that a good number, not all the faculty were Lutherans, what would the President of the institution have said to a young hire or a Department chair, perhaps, about expectations for worship? I'm thinking 1915, 1925, 1935, any of those periods. What would the expectations have been?

Glatfelter: What I'm about to say to you is based on what I think I've learned from the outside looking in. It was doing the last years of [Samuel] Hefelbower and [W.A.] Granville when persons of non-Lutheran backgrounds began to be employed as faculty members. I got the first impression that [Samuel] Hefelbower's tenure was a non-entity. I
changed my mind when I started working seriously on the history of the college. This is a man who began to say “We’ve got to have people who had finished graduate training and who have degrees.” Now some of those people became members of Christ Lutheran Church. Whatever they might have been before, they became members of Christ Lutheran Church. And that continued to be the case. Norman Richardson was a Methodist, but he joined Christ Lutheran Church. Dunning Idle was a Methodist and he continued to be a Methodist. John Glenn was a Methodist and he continued to be not much of anything, but his wife was a Lutheran. Doc Arms was a Presbyterian and my story is, I say my story, what I learned was that he joined the Presbyterian Church in Gettysburg to please his mother. But when Bob McAskill conducted Doc Arms’ funeral, he told me that he had never seen Doc Arms in church. Earl Bowen whatever he was did not join a church and his wife who survived him for many years, joined St. James.

**Birkner:** How about [William] Waltemyer and [Albert] Bachman?

**Glatfelter:** All right. Waltemyer was a Lutheran pastor.

**Birkner:** Did that mean that he belonged to Christ Lutheran Church?

**Glatfelter:** Oh, yes.
Birkner: They didn’t go to St. James. They stayed with Christ Lutheran is what you’re saying?

Glatfelter: But when you come to someone like Calvin Schildknecht, who was a Lutheran and had always been a Lutheran, from a prominent Lutheran family in Frederick, he joined St. James.

Birkner: So there wasn’t any iron law?

Glatfelter: Oh no, not at all. And in the sixties or seventies, a number of faculty members, maybe two, or three or four left Christ Lutheran and went to St. James, in part because Christ Lutheran had virtually no Sunday School for their children. Sherm Hendrix is one. David Crowney is one. There were one or two others in mathematics. And Carey Moore was another one.

Birkner: When you and Miriam set up housekeeping in Gettysburg, was there any question but that you would join Christ Lutheran as opposed to St. James?

Glatfelter: No, there wasn’t a question, but nobody suggested anything to me. And when I joined the faculty in 1949, I taught class in the Sunday school at Zion Lutheran Church in Glen Rock about once a month, a men’s Bible class. Now would you believe it there were times in the 1950s when there were close to a hundred men in that class.

Birkner: Isn’t that amazing?
Glatfelter: Now, to the best of my knowledge, there are none.

Birkner: That’s our culture, isn’t it?

Glatfelter: Yes, yes. And we joined Christ Lutheran Church in January of 1957 because Chris was five years old, going on six, and we decided that there ought to be a Sunday School here, so we didn’t have to drag her to Glen Rock every Sunday when I was going to teach that class. And maybe I’ve given you enough examples.

Birkner: You have, although why don’t we just square the circle. But first, I didn’t quite let you finish about Bachman.

Glatfelter: Oh yes, yes, yes. Bachman undoubtedly belonged to the Swiss Reformed Church. I thought that he became a Lutheran because he decided that there was no Swiss Reformed Church in Gettysburg. But he told me that he joined that church primarily because of his wife. Mrs. Bachman came from Geneva and I don’t normally associate Geneva with Lutherans, but it was the Lutheran Church that they joined. And they both were faithful members as long as it was possible for them to be.

Birkner: Just one more name and then we’ll move on to a different subject. Hen Bream. Was he churched?
Glatfelter: Oh yes. I heard him say in his later years that he was real sorry that his duties, often his football team prevented him from attending as regularly as he would have liked. And that was because after football games during the season he had responsibilities on Sunday morning. His wife was a very active member of St. James and Hen was an active enough member so that his funeral was conducted from St. James.

Birkner: Again, on the subject of churches and the college, I have got a good deal of anecdotal testimony from faculty members who began teaching at the college in the 1950s, that they were specifically asked at the time of their interview by the president of the institution, whether they were Trinitarians. And I’ve gotten some variation on the question itself. Do you belong to a church? Do you believe in the trinity, whatever? Do you have any light you can shed on whether the practice that was still going on under General Paul of inquiring about a prospective faculty member’s Christian belief simply ceased on a dime under Arnold Hanson, or whether it petered out under Arnold Hanson?

Glatfelter: Henry W. Hanson said on a number of occasions that all of the faculty members were Christian. Now I don’t remember what you picked up, that if anyone asked them
whether they were Trinitarians except this, Bill Darrah told me and maybe if you talked to him, he told you. Bill said that Walter Langsam told him, “I can’t hire you because you are a Unitarian. I can’t hire you.” Now, that is as a faculty member, but Bill Darrah started off on the staff of the summer school. He had evening sessions, supposed to be evening sessions. And then later, I guess when General Paul came, Darrah was hired in the Biology Department and that story was fading. All right, the General undoubtedly kept asking questions and making comments and when I became Dean. I used to ask the general questions but I was very uncomfortable because not too long before that Henry W.A. Hanson had said all of the faculty members were Christian. And I thought that meant practically that they were members of a church. I was uncomfortable and I thought you ought to have a statement which we present to faculty members at the time they were candidates for a position stating that Gettysburg College is an institution which is church-related and it expects to have a certain number of Lutherans among its faculty, but it welcomes others and hopes that they will at proper times and places discuss their own religious views. Now, I thought that meant that a Roman Catholic who accepted the religious orientation of the institution and who would not be reluctant at a proper time and place to
discuss his own beliefs at a proper time and place. That this would not prevent Unitarians. This would not prevent people who were agnostics.

**Birkner:** Perhaps this would be parallel to the kind of statement to the administration that Notre Dame would have produced at the same time just from a point of view that the predominance of their faculty would be Roman Catholic priests or laymen but that they would welcome people from a variety of religious traditions and there would be no impingement on their rights to believe at all, right?

**Glatfelter:** That's correct. And I thought that this is what we ought to have rather than a statement that can be made applicable to all of the members of our faculty that are Christians. And such a statement was prepared by the executive committee while I was Dean. It was accepted by the president. It was not received enthusiastically by the faculty who were content, I think, to carry on the old way. And for awhile it was the college policy. Now it may no longer exist. I think before I retired, it had weakened somewhat. This statement on my part was intended to be more honest assuming that we were not going to deny that we had some church affiliation.

**Birkner:** This is very helpful. Please forgive me for pressing you on one point. In my notes, I have here you
saying that when you interviewed the potential and prospective faculty that you were uncomfortable asking about religion but you did ask “a general question.” So what kind of a question were you asking? “Are you a Christian?”

Glatfelter: No.

Birkner: You did not ask them that?

Glatfelter: I have no recollection of asking it that way.

Birkner: By the way, I have no testimony that you ever asked it. I do have testimony from enough faculty to make it very creditable that General Paul said “Are you a Christian? Are you a churchgoer? Do you belong to a specific church or are you a Trinitarian?” One or another of those questions or more than one of those questions were asked.

Glatfelter: You remember while Willard Paul was asking that, I was not Dean, except for one year.

Birkner: Right, and I do know that. So what I’m going to take from this is that the “Arnold Hanson, Charles Glatfelter era” saw an evolution or devolution of that and the college became less focused on the Lutheraness of its faculty.

Glatfelter: And I hope you will add that Charles Glatfelter told me that the position that he took was taken in the interest of being more honest than some of the statements
asked before. While Henry W. Hanson said all these people were Christians, did he mean that they were connected with a church? Earl Bowen wasn’t. Earl Ziegler wasn’t and I think there were other faculty members that weren’t.

Birkner: OK. Recently, I was looking at a picture from the 1950s of Dwight Eisenhower leaving the chapel after having worshiped at Christ Chapel with Mamie. A picture that you sent me a version of that same day. It was a different picture of Fred Weiser escorting Dwight Eisenhower into the college chapel. And the chaplain was a man named Korte. Can you say anything about his departure from the institution? He didn’t see eye-to-eye with Paul or Paul did not think he was doing a job he needed to be doing. Were you privy to any of that?

Glatfelter: Ed Korte was, I’m looking for the proper words. He was a pastor who was not really forceful. Some persons are so forceful that you can’t have a conversation with them. They will take over the conversation before it’s finished. He was a pastor who might function best in counseling students, rather than in preaching. And I believe that to Willard Paul, Ed Korte would never have been a good military chaplain. And consequently about the time that I was going to become Dean, the General ordered Korte out of the White House so that that facility could be used
for other purposes. And shortly after, Korte resigned and he may have been forced out. I do not know. I remember I think before I actually took over as Dean, going to the General and asking him to continue Korte, which he did not do. And so Ed left, I think for an institution, or maybe a parish in Ohio. And he’s been dead for a long time.

Birkner: Was there anyone between Korte and [John] Vannorsdall or was it just an interim chaplain?

Glatfelter: It was an interim during that period of time. I think that a member of the Religion Department handled most of it.

Birkner: Most of them were ordained ministers.

Glatfelter: And Vannorsdall may have come in 1962, so you’re talking about a period no longer than about two years. Arnold Hanson was the kind of person who would say to me “Do you think that I ought to ask John Vannorsdall to come from Cornell to be chaplain or do you think people would complain?”

Birkner: Well, that’s a rather unassertive approach to presidential leadership, to be concerned that people would interpret it the wrong way. I think most people in hindsight, of course, would say that Vannorsdall was one of his best appointments.
Glatfelter: Yes, oh indeed. As soon as Hanson arrived on the scene I said to him, “If you want to look around for your own Dean, I’m prepared to step aside at anytime.” But he didn’t want to, so I stayed on.

Birkner: In your years as Dean, could you observe the nature of the relationship between President Arnold Hanson and Chaplain Vannorsdall? Did he hire Vannorsdall and then follow the Dwight Eisenhower way, and say, “I trust you, do your work and I’m not going to worry about it.” Or did they have a personal relationship wherein Vannorsdall was a counselor to the President, or the President confided in Vannorsdall in some way. I’m just curious what you would had known as Dean, what you noticed?

Glatfelter: Well, the relationship was not the relationship that existed between the Deist God and his creation. And one evidence of that is that Jean Hanson’s funeral sermon and Arnold’s were preached by John Vannorsdall. They were close together, not in a way that was harmful to me, not at all, in fact I think that I’ve probably said this before; these were the two strongest persons in keeping Gettysburg College under control to the best possible sense of that word during the 19650s.

Birkner: Certainly, I’ve heard much testimony about Vannorsdall’s role in that. Hanson it seems to me was a
little bit of a fireman trying to put out fires. Whereas Vannorsdall was trying to channel a lot of pent up student energy into constructive as opposed to destructive behaviors, right?

Glatfelter: Yes.

Birkner: And so Vannorsdall is on the ground floor working with students while Hanson is up where he is dealing with conservatives who are angry at students. And having to manage that was not always easy.

Glatfelter: And it’s appropriate that they were on different floors, because as you said, they really had to be doing different things, preventing fires and fire control as well.

Birkner: In 1975, the college published in alumni magazine format the history of the Lutheran connections. It seems appropriate toward the end of this conversation I’m having with you to ask you about your responsibility for this. It was written by Harold Dunkelberger. I gathered he was a part of a publication committee with Bill Darrah and Ed Freed. Ed Freed, Bill Darrah and Charles Glatfelter. But would you say something here for the record about why and how you agreed that it would be Harold that would write this?
Glatfelter: This was part of the series. You said how did it come about? Because when we were talking about the series and we felt it was good for the institution to bring something like this out, but not every year. It seemed appropriate now to talk about it. The Lutheran connection. We had earlier talked about engineering. We had talked about student life. Now it was time for the Lutheran connection. And I don’t think that Ed Freed or I felt that either one of us should be doing this. So that left Harold. And I remember discussing some of the things that he wanted to include with Harold and I don’t remember that there was anything that I thought was incorrect. His view and my view were not exactly alike. Here is someone who comes from two previous generations of prominent Lutherans. And here’s someone who comes from a family in which I was, as I’ve told you, not only the first person to go to graduate school, not only the first person to go to college and even the first person who graduated from high school. Nobody except my great uncle had done any of those things. But I thought he was the person.

Birkner: Just a small question. Who was the editor? Would you or Ed have actually read the original typescript and made suggestions to Harold to incorporate in the draft that
would ultimately be published. I mean how did that system work?

Glatfelter: I don't know who the editor was, I'm sorry to say. I'm almost certain that I read the manuscript right after it became the typescript and before it was published.

Birkner: One of the things I'll just say, having read large chunks of all of these pamphlets: I'm impressed by the writing. It's very clear. I could pick nits, anyone could with anything that one reads. That's what we learn as historians, to be critical. But I think that the writing is very serviceable in this particular project and all of the others that were in the series. They stand out. They hold up as history and they are easy to read. And I think that's a good affirmation of the enterprise, that so many years later my students still use them very commonly and others use them for research purposes. I like Harold's pamphlet. I notice that he has historical references that you may have given him, Saul Sack and some other works on the early history of higher education in Pennsylvania. To round this out, it's obvious that the college has attenuated its relationship with the Lutheran Church. Harold made it clear to me in an oral history that I did with him recently, that his hopes for renewal and a revitalized relationship with the Lutheran Church have not been realized in the last
thirty years, since he published that pamphlet. He accepts it but that doesn’t mean he got what he was hoping for. The college has become more secular and advertises its Lutheranism much less. It has done structural things in terms of the trustees and so forth, that minimize that Lutheran connection. From your own perspective in the fullness of time, do you see this as simply a natural evolution and there’s no point regretting change or do you see this as something where Gettysburg has in effect ceased to be a Lutheran institution and we ought to just be more straightforward about our secularism? Just curious to know if you have pondered that?

Glatfelter: Yes, I have pondered that. I think it is if not natural, it is in line with what has happened in our culture. And what I would like to see is the college in the next five or ten years seriously asking whether there are ways in the twenty-first century to show that it has a Lutheran connection which goes beyond synodically elected trustees. Which goes beyond the expectation of grants alone to hear from the Synod. And one way I would like to follow the subject is to see how the college can say that in the way in which it deals with students is in line with the professions of the Lutheran Church and many, many other churches.
Birkner: Now when you say churches, you mean that
generically, including synagogues etc. Right? Judeo-
Christian tradition.

Glatfelter: Yes.

Birkner: Is there a way to make that meaningful rather than
simply a bromide or a slogan? Or is that the question,
itself?

Glatfelter: I think the only way of making it meaningful
would be by after a lot of discussion adopting a statement
that would be primarily an internal statement which
prospective faculty members would be presented and asked to
discuss and indicate ways in which they agree with it. And
I used to say, because I deeply believe this, that I was
expressing my Lutheranism by the way in which I tried to
deal with students. By the way in which I tried to accept
them where they were and push them to realize their
potential.

Birkner: Well, could you say that equally had you been
raised a Presbyterian?

Glatfelter: I don’t think the Lutheran tradition as far as
I’m concerned personally, I’m talking about myself
personally, has ever been exclusively Lutheran. Paul said
in one place, “I am a debtor to both the Greeks and the
Barbarians.”
TAPE ENDS