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Donald Gallion

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Description

Donald Gallion was interviewed on August 6, 2008 by Michael Birkner about his time serving in the United States army during WWII and his return to Gettysburg College and after the war.

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Keywords

Robert D. Fortenbaugh, Wilbur E. Tilberg, gettysburg college, world war ii, gettysburg

Disciplines

Higher Education | Liberal Studies | Military History | Oral History | United States History

Donald Gallion, '49, oral history, part two. Conducted by Michael Birkner, Professor of History. Original oral history was conducted in 2005, and is available in special collections, Musselman Library.

This is August 6, 2008, I'm Michael Birkner. I'm sitting here in the fourth floor study room in Musselman Library with Reverend Donald Gallion of the Gettysburg College Class of 1948. Reverend Gallion and I have already had one conversation about his early life and his earlier experiences at Gettysburg College, his being called from the Army Reserves to active duty and his military experience during World War II till very close to the end of the war. We'll now carry his story forward. So I think the appropriate thing to do Don is to ask you where you were to be found on May 7, 1945?

GALLION: Well, I was in Bavaria when World War II ended. I think the official date is May 8, 1945 and I actually remained there until the fall. The army imposed a non-fraternization policy which I think today sounds ridiculous. But that eliminated all social contact with Germans and also eliminated opportunity to learn their language. And one could be fined if caught fraternizing. I had some brief contact with German soldiers because we were handling a number of prisoners at the

time and actually I have a portrait at home that was done by one of these prisoners. I think I paid him off with cigarettes which I had in abundance but which I never used. And furloughs were being given to England and several other places to kind of fill in the time until a person was declared eligible to go home. I was hoping to get one to England to visit friends before going home. I did receive the papers for furlough to go to Switzerland but it never materialized because the opportunity for me to go home preempted it. That was interesting because that would have been my very first airplane flight because those who were getting furloughs to Switzerland were being flown there.

BIRKNER: I'm not sure if this is the right place to ask but you just said that you didn't have that furlough because you got to go home. Why would you be so high up on the list to go home?

GALLION: Well, I'm coming to that. Points were given for time in the service and time overseas and probably in a couple of other categories. And I had received the bronze star which gave me five extra points at the time and that started me homeward. The bronze star was for nothing heroic. I think the citation simply says "meritorious service against an enemy of the United States." The bronze star can be given for one

particular action or for long term work against an enemy of the United States. It also lists the countries in which this took place and I think mine said Austria, Germany, Luxemburg or wherever we happened to have been.

BIRKNER: Did someone put you in for the bronze star?

GALLION: Oh yeah.

BIRKNER: One of your superior officers thought your work had been done well?

GALLION: The Captain of our company put my name in. So when came an opportunity to go home we were moved by train to Rheims-Epernay area.

BIRKNER: Will you spell that second one? Rheims is spelled Rheims, this will be transcribed, what was the second name?

GALLION: Epernay. That's the heart of the world's champagne country. And of course we had some samples while we were there. I had been in Rheims both going and coming. Going east we had been in the Rheims area and then coming back we hit this as a marshalling area. And then we went by train to Marseilles and sailed from Marseilles. The trip home in October was by a southern route and was a lot more pleasant than the original crossing in January of '44 by the North Atlantic route. There was no convoy and there was no blackout. Now a little bit of trivia in connection with this trip home.

I returned on the SS George Washington which was a passenger ship stripped down to accommodate troop movements. And the keel of this ship had been laid in Germany prior to World War I. The ship had been taken over by the United States at the close of World War I. This was the ship that took President [Woodrow] Wilson to Versailles in 1919.

BIRKNER: Would you say a word about the mood and behavior of the American soldiers in the two months that you were there after the Declaration of Peace.

GALLION: About the mood?

BIRKNER: About the mood and the attitude and the behavior of the soldiers. Was there a lot of drinking and carousing or were people worried mostly about going to Japan. What was the general demeanor of people?

GALLION: There were some thoughts about going to Japan. Oddly enough, prior to going to Europe our medical officer had received some special training in tropical diseases which made us a little apprehensive as well. But this move to go home eliminated any thoughts of going to Japan. There was no indication that we were being considered at all for that and now it is October and the war is over and we sailed for home. I was in Bavaria from May until the the fall of 1945.

BIRKNER: You're not really giving me a sense how people are behaving, what they're thinking about at that time. What are you noticing?

GALLION: I didn't really notice anything, any apprehensions or concerns about going to Japan. That was a very peaceful uneventful season and time.

BIRKNER: I want to give you an example. There's a film based on Stephen Ambrose's book *The Band of Brothers* in which Easy Company is in Bavaria at the end of the war and the men go into the private stashes of the Nazi leaders and get drunk and they are generally carousing. Some of them get in trouble, that kind of thing and I'm assuming this isn't just Hollywood-ized; I'm assuming this is based on the way men behaved at the end of the very arduous experience. I mean you were in the Battle of the Bulge. You've seen some pretty tough stuff. You're a medic, you've seen everything. I was just curious if you noticed things?

GALLION: Well, I didn't really notice and I don't know whether our guys were exceptionally well behaved. Of course this is a little military police battalion handling prisoners. We didn't have much encounter with wild behavior or anything of that. And of course the non fraternization policy seriously eliminated a lot of social contact. And I was one

of those who followed the rules and I didn't fraternize. I didn't feel like I wanted to subject myself to a fine. I don't really know how rigidly this was enforced. We got away from the area in which we lived and hit a restaurant somewhere in the mountainous area and dealt with people there but not to any serious intent at all. Well, at any rate we arrived in New York City on the 26th of October, 1945, which happens to be my father's birthday. And coming into New York Harbor we noticed the patchwork on the Empire State Building because it had been struck by a plane sometime earlier in the year. And I was discharged from Fort Meade, Maryland on the 31st of October, 1945.

BIRKNER: And your feelings at that time?

GALLION: Well, just glad to get home and to get home safely. In mid November, 1945 I returned to Gettysburg College. But after all these years I can't really remember how it happened. The college . . . made an offer. There was perhaps a group of a dozen of us that took just two courses spending extra time in class for each course to make up for the gap between September and mid-November. Now initially I thought this was very generous of the college but later realized that they were simply taking advantage of the GI Bill and increasing the population of the campus after some lean years. In my second

semester I went on a full schedule. I roomed in McKnight Hall, took meals at the Shetter House on Chambersburg Street with Phi Kappa Rho Fraternity. This was a local fraternity which lost its house during the war. The house was almost opposite of Lambda Chi on [West] Broadway. And the house was brought by a Mr. Campbell who happened to be the treasurer of the college at the time. Phi Kappa Rho was later absorbed by Sigma Nu but I never joined the national fraternity. Summer school offered full courses in each of two semesters and I went full time in 1946 and one semester in the summer of 1947. In August of 1946 the college celebrated the first anniversary of VJ Day and there were a number of activities on campus. But the most interesting one was a professional baseball game featuring two teams in the old Negro League played on Nixon Field. The longest drive ever seen on that field was during that game. Now the [Musselman] Library and some other buildings have covered up Nixon Field pretty well but one of the batters hit Eddie Plank Gym part way up the wall on the fly. It was rather an exciting game and the pre-game activities were very interesting. I was married in May, 1947, and my wife Doris secured the position of secretary to the Director of Athletics, Clayton E. Bilheimer.

BIRKNER: Right.

GALLION: And supplementing the GI Bill was a challenge as was finding a place to live. Counting my college time and Seminary time we lived in five different places in four years.

BIRKNER: Were you expecting when you came back to go to Seminary or did that just happen?

GALLION: No, I was expecting to go to Seminary.

BIRKNER: What did you major in at the college?

GALLION: History.

BIRKNER: So you had courses with Dr. [Robert] Fortenbaugh?

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: And you probably have a senior thesis somewhere buried in the library.

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: I don't remember if we talked about Dr. Fortenbaugh already. Was he the major person that you got to know or were there other faculty that you have strong memories of?

GALLION: I got to know him and I think he was quite influential. I didn't have real close ties with him but he recommended me for a job that I'll get to eventually. So he must have had some regard for me as far as a student is concerned. Matter of fact during my college and Seminary days I supplemented the GI Bill with a variety of jobs. For example, I delivered mail for the Post Office during the pre-

Christmas season in 1945, '46 and '47 and Parker Wagnild was on my route. He lived on Lincoln Avenue and I went quickly down Chambersburg Street delivering the mail and when I hit his house there was about a half an hour stop for some Scandinavian treats that his wife Helen produced. During the summer of 1947 I worked relocating the track from Nixon Field to Memorial Field behind Eddie Plank Gym. It was the hottest, dirtiest job I ever had screening cinders and earth at sixty-five cents an hour.

BIRKNER: Where was the track relocated? Behind Plank Gym, did you say?

GALLION: They just relocated the track, putting it around what was then the football field.

BIRKNER: OK. That's what I wanted to be sure of. And who else was working with you on that project? Was it college people or local people or what?

GALLION: Yeah, a couple of students and then they reached a point where they needed some more labor so they hired a couple out of the employment office. They had to pay them seventy-five cents an hour. And I protested to Romeo Capozzi who was in charge of this project, and he tried to console me by quoting scripture about the laborers and the vineyard and all that sort of thing and I told him, "Don't go Biblical on me

about that." I think this was a project that the college had anticipated doing but thought it was going to be too costly. Rome [Romeo] Capozzi had some connection with building the track at Franklin Field in Philadelphia and through him the college was able to do this for a lot less than what was originally anticipated. The only compensation out of that was that I got a free shower at Eddie Plank Gym at the end of the day.

BIRKNER: Big deal.

GALLION: The next job I had was teaching two sections of the required Bible class, I-A and I-B, during the academic year 1950-51, while I was a senior at Seminary. This course was required of all freshmen at that time and it was customary to employ a Seminary senior. I was chosen because Dr. [William] Waltermeyer who was the head of the Bible Department at the time was on the examining committee of the Maryland Synod and he knew me. I was not chosen because I was an outstanding Biblical scholar. It was really a marvelous experience and I have in my bag here the yearbook for show and tell about that. From 1948 until 1951 I worked for the National Park Service at Gettysburg as a historical aide or as was sometimes said at times, "hysterical aide." Dr. Fortenbaugh recommended me for the job since the position required one to be a history major.

I worked fulltime during the summer and part time during the academic year as my schedule allowed. I spent most of my time at the Cyclorama on Baltimore Street. This magnificent painting by Paul Phillipoteaux was brought to Gettysburg in 1913 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the battle and it was housed in this temporary building for about fifty years. This exhibit was closed each year just prior to Thanksgiving because the building was unheated. And by the same token it wasn't air conditioned during the summertime. The extremes of temperature there didn't do a great deal for the painting. My supervisor was Frederick Tilberg, Chief Historian of the park. His book *Gettysburg*, which is number nine in the National Park Service Historical Handbook series, was published while working with him. And I think it's still sold at the visitor's center. The cash box and the tickets were kept in the office and the residence of the Superintendent of the National Cemetery just up the street. And there was no scripted presentation for visitors and each talk was tailored to the interest level of each group.

BIRKNER: You did that in the Cyclorama?

GALLION: Yeah. For a time we experimented with a wire recording but this didn't go very well and it was abandoned. Many presentations were built around the questions that were

asked by the people in the audience. It was a great job and I enjoyed it very much and in retrospect probably could have had a career in the National Park Service as one of my colleagues did. William Everhart wrote a history of the National Park Service. Bill Everhart was one on the original list with me of the "frozen assets" [a wry reference to H.W.A. Hanson's assurances in Chapel early in 1942 that Gettysburg College students in a reserve enlistment program would not be called to active duty during the academic year because they were "frozen assets." The students were in fact called up within weeks of Hanson's pronouncement.]

BIRKNER: Was Bill Everhart a Gettysburg College person? Is that what you're telling me?

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: And his name was Everhart not Eberhart, is that right?

GALLION: It's ever.

BIRKNER: With a v?

GALLION: Yeah, William.

BIRKNER: Is he still living?

GALLION: I don't know. He had a career with the National Park Service and I can add another little bit of trivia. In the spring of 1942 he was a member of the mile relay team from

Gettysburg College that won at the Penn relays in Philadelphia. The yearbook from my freshman year contains a picture of the four members of that team. I don't know if Bill is still living or not. Some years ago I was down at Harpers Ferry and I heard that he was working out of that office at the time but I couldn't locate him and there were indications that he wasn't around that particular day.

BIRKNER: OK. You were going to tell me something about your experience at the college when you came back. But before you go further with your career why don't you say a word or two about your experiences at Gettysburg College. My recollection from an earlier conversation with you is that you said you were more serious the second time around.

GALLION: Yes, I'm not so sure that I enjoyed college the second time around, because of getting married when I did. It took me off campus so I didn't have much to do with campus life although I played varsity soccer in 1946 and '47. And that was back in the days before the NCAA created divisions and we played Navy and Penn State, Delaware, Rutgers, Bucknell. I think I expressed this maybe earlier, I have some regrets for hurrying up. I should have probably stayed at home with mom and dad and I could have done that very easily and maybe reentered Gettysburg either in February or the

following September. But when you're in your twenties and you're three or four years older than your colleagues that's sounds makes you feel terribly old at that point.

BIRKNER: Yeah, I understand.

GALLION: And the extraordinary way in which I returned to the campus you know. I was discharged the 25th of October and I'm back on campus within two weeks. That's almost impossible to do today.

BIRKNER: Did you shake hands with Henry W. A. Hanson when you came back?

GALLION: Mrs. Hanson had promised us tea in the White House when we returned but that never came to pass. And I'm not so sure I ever talked to Dr. Hanson personally after I came back.

BIRKNER: Were you required to go to daily chapel?

GALLION: Yeah, we were still required to go to chapel. And I think I exceeded my cuts because I think I had an extra semester hour added for graduation.

BIRKNER: Yeah, that's what they would do then. Now you mentioned of course that you might have done it differently. Where does getting engaged and marrying fit into this? Were you back already when you got engaged or how did that work out?

GALLION: This began as a correspondence. Doris worked for some company in Baltimore. She was a superb typist and stenographer. And her supervisor was an old friend of my family's and I think it was a case where she wanted to write to somebody in the service and that's how it started. And actually it was just kind of a newsy correspondence. There wasn't any romance involved or anything of that nature. And so I looked her up and it was just one of those things that happened. I think she was fascinated by somebody who was preparing for the ministry and she was very active at her own church and she happened to be a Lutheran as well. And so that's how those things happened. We originally had planned on marrying after I finished Seminary. And it didn't work out that way. The marriage didn't last by the way. We were married eighteen years. Had three children who have had measurable success in life, no problems because of the divorce or anything like that. I married a second time and this second time I've been married forty years.

BIRKNER: Well it's good that you give clarification on that. Anything else before we move on? You had an interesting memory of helping build the track behind Plank Gym. Is there anything that stands out as amusing or memorable incident of

your time at Gettysburg in terms of people met, scenes witnessed, activities engaged in?

GALLION: Well, it didn't involve me but they had a tremendous housing problem.

BIRKNER: The vets came back.

GALLION: Let me think, was that '47 that they were building what we called the barracks. It was where the student union now stands. And of course Eddie Plank Gym became a dormitory.

BIRKNER: Right.

GALLION: And they had amusing pictures of people going in and out of a window of Eddie Plank Gym. That was an amusing time.

BIRKNER: You say we have pictures. What do you mean by that? You mean the newspaper, the yearbook or are you talking about you personally?

GALLION: No, I wasn't involved in that personally.

BIRKNER: I was just curious, did you have a camera taking pictures or something like that?

GALLION: No.

BIRKNER: You're saying there are pictures of this?

GALLION: Yeah. I think yearbooks that were produced in 1947 and '48 had some pictures.

BIRKNER: What about the atmosphere on the campus given that there were so many veterans there? Were the classes a little more serious in the late forties than maybe they are now?

GALLION: Well I think so. There was a lot of serious attitude. I also remembered there was a fire on campus. The SCA building burned and matter of fact I was on campus. It happened on a Saturday. We went over to see what we could do and Parker Wagnild was very much concerned because all of the vestments for the choir were kept in that building. And he wanted to retrieve those and we restrained him from going into the building as I can recall. I think there was a little inefficiency with the fire company. The students had a big hand in retrieving furniture and whatever else we could retrieve.

BIRKNER: Did you actually save some things? You saved some things from Weidensall Hall?

GALLION: Yeah, yeah.

BIRKNER: And within two years they rebuilt it didn't they in fact a larger addition.

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: Did you ever swim in the swimming pool in that building?

GALLION: No, I never did, but there was one.

BIRKNER: When you were married and a student at the college and the Seminary what was the fun thing to do? What did you enjoy doing on a week-end night when you were free? Did you go into town or what did you do?

GALLION: Well, we went down to Baltimore to do some visiting because both parents were still living. And of course once I got to Seminary there was a lot of supply work to do. By that I mean there were any number of vacant congregations around and students were asked many times to conduct services at those places. And this involved many time Saturdays because some of them were down like Davis and Elkins, West Virginia, Oakland Western Port, Maryland. These were two hundred miles, two hundred fifty mile trips. Some were in the Bedford area and this was back in the days before interstate highways so you traveled Route 30, Route 40, Route 50 to get to some of those places. We did some ca pooling and you have to recall that individual ownership of an automobile was not that common. In you first year at Seminary you were assigned to a congregation for field work. You did anything that the resident pastor wanted you to do. And one of the big concerns with these assignments was not everybody had an automobile. And I recall in my first year we didn't have an automobile. We didn't have an automobile until my daughter was born. There

was a family that came down the Fairfield Road and picked me up and took me over to my field work assignment. I was assigned to what was then a two-church parish in Arendtsville. And somebody from the congregation brought me home when my assignment was finished.

BIRKNER: You made a transition directly from getting your degree at Gettysburg College to the Seminary, right?

GALLION: Yes.

BIRKNER: And for Seminary was it a two or three year program?

GALLION: It was a three-year program. Nowadays there's an intern year tossed in there.

BIRKNER: Was any particular person at the Seminary influential in affecting your outlook on ministry or anything else?

GALLION: Dr. Harvey Daniel Hoover was one. Abdel Ross Wentz who taught history and who was at the time President of the Seminary who was excellent in the classroom. And when he talked about the development of Lutheranism in the United States he was on hand so you had a close person connection at some of those events. And the late Robert Clippinger who was the organist, choirmaster at the Seminary was a personal great influence.

BIRKNER: How so?

GALLION: He was probably the best liked member of the faculty even though he was technically part-time since he was also the organist choirmaster at Grace United Methodist Church in Harrisburg. He had a significant connection with my second marriage because my present wife is an excellent organist and was a student of his at the age of thirteen and he had a tremendous influence on her life musically and mine as well through the influence of music. Incidentally my present wife has no connection with the past. As a matter of fact I was in the service when she was born and she is five and a half years older than my daughter. Fortunately Sue came into this situation deciding not to play a role. Technically she's a stepmother and since she never had a sister and my daughter never had a sister they relate in that fashion.

BIRKNER: Did you have any children with your second wife?

GALLION: No.

BIRKNER: Well, your marriage has obviously lasted. Forty years is a good run.

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: Now, just for the record was Clippinger's name spelled with a K or a C?

GALLION: C.

BIRKNER: And Clippinger was an influence because of the sacred music that you were introduced to?

GALLION: Yes.

BIRKNER: And ultimately you had that connection to your wife's interest in music. One more word about Abdel Ross Wentz. He was the President of the Seminary and he also taught a class or two. You took a class with him?

GALLION: Yes.

BIRKNER: So you also heard him give convocations and those kinds of things more general speeches to the whole student body, right?

GALLION: I never heard Abdel Ross Wentz speak beyond the classroom.

BIKRNER: You never did?

GALLION: No.

BIRKNER: But he was good in the classroom?

GALLION: Yes.

BIRKNER: What kind of a man was he? He was like a bantam rooster, right? He was small?

GALLION: Yeah, yeah. He had that and he was rather strict and became quite concerned about fire. He had a close experience. He was attending a meeting of Lutheran Missionaries in Chicago sometime in the forties at the LaSalle Hotel and there was a

fire. The father of a college and Seminary college classmate of mine was killed in the fire. It is my understanding that when Wentz returned to the campus he became very much concerned about safety features and fire and that sort of thing on campus.

BIRKNER: Anything else you want to say about the Seminary experience? Was it what you were looking for at that time of your life or was it something else?

GALLION: No, I think maybe I've said about all I wanted to indicate. If I could go back I would do some things differently. Of course I'm so much wiser now than sixty years ago. . . . I have never returned for a college class reunion. I started with one class and ended with another. That took the edge off of some of it. And because of the fraternity system I never had a great overwhelming sense of college spirit. There was a lot of fraternity spirit and things like that and I joined the local largely because I knew a lot of the alumni out of that group. And secondly it was the cheapest. And had I not joined in my freshman year I doubt if I would have joined when I returned to the campus because I didn't see that fraternal life contributed very much to college life and college spirit.

BIRKNER: Would you just for the record makes sure my transcriber gets this, say the name of that local fraternity that you belonged to again.

GALLION: Phi Kappa Rho. Incidentally the pictures I gave to the library have been misidentified as Phi Kappa Psi, but I never made an issue on it; it's not all that important.

BIRKNER: Well, it is important because most people don't know about Phi Kappa Rho.

GALLION: Phi Kappa Rho. Yeah, it was a merger of I think the Criterion Club and the Star Club. I don't know exactly when they went out. (FIRST SIDE ENDS).

BIRKNER: Do you want to say some things about what happened as a professional in your career?

GALLION: Well, I served three parishes. One in Garrett County, Maryland, one in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania and one in Lancaster County. And Doris and I were divorced when I was serving the parish in Lancaster. And I left the parish ministry very abruptly and that was my choice. Divorce among clergy in those days was not all that frequent. And I wound up with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Industry which is the federal-state agency that serves the handicapped in Pennsylvania. And while I was serving the congregation in Lancaster I became involved with a specialized

ministry of deaf people and developed some facility with sign language thanks to a federal grant that allowed me to attend Galludet University in Washington which was at the time the only liberal arts college for the deaf.

BIRKNER: Did you ever happen to meet a Gettysburg alumnus who was on the faculty there?

GALLION: Gene McVicker. Know him quite well.

BIRKNER: Is he still alive?

GALLION: Yes. As a matter of fact we exchange Christmas cards and I noticed when I got his that his address was changed. He lived here on Sunset in town. Yeah, I know Gene quite well.

[Eugene McVicker died in November 2008. He rated a prominent obituary in the Washington Post.]

BIRKNER: I've spoken with him numerous times and I liked him very much. I know he taught English at Gallaudet for many years.

GALLION: Yes, he is a delightful fellow. As a matter of fact since you brought it up when Sue and I were married, we had thirty-five deaf people attend the service and he was the interpreter for the service. He was the son of deaf parents.

BIRKNER: I did not know that.

GALLION: Yeah, yeah and actually I got to know Gene and Mildred pretty well over the years still have contact with

him. But I noticed that he had moved and I can't think of where he's living.

BIRKNER: When he retired he did a lot of Park Service guiding.

GALLION: Yes, yeah. He got certification for that and I looked into that a little bit but I didn't pursue it.

BIRKNER: Well, it would be hard to do it from York because it's such a long ride. But anyway, you got the deaf certification, the sign language certification and how did you get the job at the Bureau of Rehabilitation.

GALLION: Well, largely through that and then I got involved with a lot of other things. And for about seven or eight years I ran a program dealing with employers. After the Rehab Act of 1973 was passed that put additional pressure on employers to hire handicapped individuals. And we ran this with a three-day session each month at the Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown which is State owned and operating, The Center for the Handicapped. The neat thing about this program is that we actually used handicapped people for the presentations. On orthopedic disabilities, we had a person in a wheelchair. The presentation on blindness was handled by a blind person and on occasion we had a presentation on alcoholism and we had a recovered alcoholic for that

presentation. And this ran all very successfully for about a seven or eight year period. And we had employers from the majority of the fifty states attend this. And in looking over my life this is one of the really most successful things that I was ever involved with and a fun job as the Park Service job was a fun job. And I think teaching those sessions here at Gettysburg College, that was a fun job as well, thoroughly, thoroughly enjoyable.

BIRKNER: How many years did you do the vocational rehabilitation, a lot?

GALLION: About nineteen years. I may have set a record for being out of the parish ministry so long and then returning. Now while I was with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation I did a lot of supply work for the church under the auspices of the Synod. I got assignments from them.

BIRKNER: Why don't you say a word if you would about whether there was any difficulty getting certified to that or asked to do that giving that you were a divorced man? Is that water over the dam as far as the Synod was concerned?

GALLION: Well, as far as the Synod was concerned I made things easy for myself because I left voluntarily. And when I made a decision to try to return it was done very, very

smoothly. The Bishop at the time knew me, had known me for many, many years.

BIRKNER: Was it Howard McCarney?

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: He was a Gettysburg person, I think.

GALLION: Matter of fact Howard McCarney was part time Chaplain on campus when we had the SCA building fire. So Howard and I had known each other a long time and he simply said "You're not under the discipline of the Synod are you?" And I said "No, I left voluntarily." This was the suggestion of one of his predecessors who had said to me, "If you ever decide to return," he said, "it will make it easier for you."

BIRKNER: So then they welcomed you back to do this supply ministry?

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: So you obviously liked it?

GALLION: Yeah.

BIRKNER: It agreed with you?

GALLION: Yeah. And today as a matter of fact one of my colleagues in York you know. He and his wife divorced and he stayed in the congregation and so did she for awhile. Now I have some problems with that because that kind of creates an armed camp on her side, some on his side and so forth. And as

a matter of fact when I left the situation in Lancaster I was there one Sunday and gone the next. My decision. Church Council said "Hey, we're keep you on the payroll. Maybe you can work this out." I said "No." I said "This congregation doesn't need this kind of turmoil."

BIRKNER: So tell me about being a minister as an older man. How has that worked out?

GALLION: I think it's worked out pretty well. And one of the problems now is the hearing loss. And I've been putting off getting retested because the next set of hearing aids are going to cost an arm and a leg and but I'm going to have to come to that. And I miss a lot of things at meetings sometime. You know in a meeting even six, seven or eight people, people have a tendency to drop their voice with dramatic affect and things of that nature you know. And I've interrupted many times to get them to speak up or to repeat or something like that.

BIRKNER: Let me throw in the question Don a little differently. When you went back into the ministry after many years in other line of work, what happened? I mean how did you feel about preaching the word, preaching the Gospel, pastoring and doing all the things that go along with being

the spiritual leader of the congregation? How that did that fit your persona? Did that work for you?

GALLION: Well, I took basically the same attitude. I think what has happened in this part two of the ministry, I don't get bent out of shape as I used to. Before I was enthusiastic and determined on making my congregation the center of the universe. I'd come home from a meeting and I'd fuss and storm. I'd just slam my books down or something like that and now I say when I come home, "Well, didn't go very well tonight, better the next time." I think I have in a way a more relaxed attitude and secondly I don't take myself so seriously. A lot of young pastors do that I think to their detriment. And I thought, "Well, I've been through a war, two bouts of coronary bypass surgery, a divorce. Really there's not much that this congregation can do to make life any worse, you know." So I think that's it. Now whether that answers your question or not I don't know.

BIRKNER: How many parishes have you had major responsibility for since you've had your second career?

GALLION: Two and they're both still going since I made a transition. The first one was a Union Church situation. There were lots of those especially in this section of Pennsylvania years ago. When I say Union they're talking about Lutheran

and what was Reformed now generally United Church of Christ. And I served that and if I had been asked twenty to thirty years earlier about this I would say no way am I going into a situation like that, but that's the change.

BIRKNER: You were mellow.

GALLION: Yeah, when the opportunity came up and I went through the same procedure. Well, you survived a war and survived so I approached that. Unfortunately my UCC pastoral counterpart was totally uncooperative and that congregation has since separated and gone on its own. And then I went to the present church. I've been there seventeen years now and that is the longest pastorate. I've been there longer than my four immediate predecessors combined, and somebody has said, "You're still there?" I said, "Well, neither the Bishop or the congregation has asked me to leave."

BIRKNER: That's a good sign. I guess what I want to ask you in the end is does this leave you the time to do the reading and travel and television watching or card playing or whatever you might like to do? Does it leave you enough time to be a retired person?

GALLION: Yeah, yeah.

BIRKNER: You're OK?

GALLION: I don't really consider myself retired but on the

other hand I'm a little more cautious. Anybody who has had cardio vascular history like mine, one of the things that you will try to avoid don't allow yourself to get too tired.

BIRKNER: So you're not overdoing anything?

GALLION: I've now been able to kick off my shoes and the congregation up to this point in time is not so demanding, oddly enough, and this surprises a lot of people. It's a congregation still pretty much on the young side. In seventeen years I've only had eleven or twelve losses by death.

BIRKNER: That's amazing.

GALLION: Yeah, on the other hand I had in that same period of time, something like forty-seven, forty-eight baptisms.

BIRKNER: Well that's healthy. That's great.

GALLION: I'm the second oldest member of the congregation.

BIRKNER: Well, your congregation will grow older with you, that's all. Before we close this just any final remarks or remembrances that you'd like to share before I turn this tape off. I think your story is a great story and I'm very lucky that you're willing to share it.

GALLION: Well, I think as a feather in your hat you've been very kind and generous and that is a very unique thing to do, particularly for those of us who had two different periods of

life on this campus. And that's what I meant when I read in the alumni news about what you were doing, and I thought "That's rather remarkable." I just wanted to see if you were interested in having me coming over.

BIRKNER: It worked out pretty well Don, I would say. Well, thank you very much and I'm going to close this tape right now, we're going to have some lunch.

GALLION: I have some stuff here for show and tell and I don't know whether to show it now.

BIRKNER: I would love to see it. Let's do it over at special collections. {TAPE ENDS}.