



Spring 2014

A Rising Image and a Brighter Future: Gettysburg College in Spring 1929

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A Rising Image and a Brighter Future: Gettysburg College in Spring 1929

Abstract

The spring semester of 1929 at Gettysburg College saw a unique combination of ambition and aspiration from many different quarters of the college community. While the college still struggled with antiquated student life and a male-dominated population, the college broke new ground by building its first ever library, winning the conference basketball title, and seeing a new generation of female students gain academic prominence. At the peak of the Roaring Twenties and led by College President Henry Hanson, Gettysburg College was creating for itself a brighter future.

Keywords

Gettysburg College, Henry Hanson, Roaring Twenties

Disciplines

Cultural History | History | Social History | United States History | Women's History

Comments

This paper was written for *History 300: Historical Methods* in Spring 2014.

A Rising Image and a Brighter Future

Gettysburg College in Spring 1929

5/1/2014

History 300: Historical Methods

Jesse Edward Siegel



In the cavernous gym, two hundred couples swayed to the music of the band on stage. Potted palms, placed among the fraternity booths along the wall, gave the “suggestion of the tropics,” allowing the crowd to forget the cold weather of the winter night outside. After one number, the canopies of blue and orange drapes hung across the ceiling released balloons down on to the audience, “a source of much fun and hilarity.” Party favors of a compact, lipstick, and purse delighted the dates of the young students. Moving amongst the happy couples were some older guests, known to all the resident students there: the college president, Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson; the dean of students, Mr. W. G. Tilberg; the head of the German department and the college librarian, Professor Karl Grimm; the chairman of the board of Trustees, Mr. John Dapp; as well as Dr. Frank Kramer, the head of the Education Department and a favorite of the student body.¹ The stress of the examinations of the past semester was over. It was time to party at Junior Prom.

The party on the night of February 1, 1929, in Eddie Plank Memorial Gym at Gettysburg College was a crowning moment for the Junior Class of 1930. The “event of events” for the campus brought back alumni and faculty to be with the students. It was a fitting opening to a semester where the combined efforts of the president, alumni, faculty and students would remake Gettysburg College and, under the leadership of President Hanson, expand Gettysburg’s vision for what it should be in the country and the world.

But the ambitions of the college did not stop with the oldest members of the college. Not to be outdone by the upperclassmen, the freshman and sophomore coordinators announced a date, April 12, for the Soph-Frosh Hop. This party had been originally organized by the Class of 1929, now the class of graduating seniors, to end the traditional conflicts between the freshman and sophomore classes, that had included sophomores invading freshman parties or preventing freshmen from going to their own

¹ “Upperclassmen Revel at Gala Junior Prom; Mal Hallet Pleases,” *Gettysburgian*, 7 February 1929, accessed 30 April 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>.

parties.² By 1929, the new party had become a tradition. The coordinators promised that the party in Eddie Plank Memorial Gym would be the best Soph-Frosh Hop ever.³

While the underclassmen aspired to outshine their peers in social activities, a building project was beginning just south of Old Dorm (now Pennsylvania Hall). In the first weeks of February, excavators finished the foundations for Weber Memorial Library on the site of Cottage Hall, which had served as a dormitory and had been demolished the previous November.⁴ The building materials of Cottage Hall were incorporated into the foundation. A *Gettysburgian* article written to mark the occasion noted that the foundations had been dug especially deep to provide for the weight of the stone columns of the library. The article also reported that Dr. Hanson would be travelling to Washington DC to meet with the chief librarian of the Library of Congress to discuss the inside decorations of the new academic building.⁵

The library was being built without the cash in hand. The Board of Trustees had expressed qualms with this proposal the previous year, but Dr. Weber, who had decided to donate \$75,000 to the college to build the library in memory of his wife, had presented a note that would allow the college to redeem the money in the event of his death. Dr. Hanson had pushed to move ahead with the plans. The new library was one of three buildings that he had acknowledged needed to be constructed at the beginning of his tenure six years earlier. The other two, a science building and a gym, had been finished, Breidenbaugh Science Hall in 1925 and Eddie Plank Memorial Gym in 1927.⁶ The need for the library could not have been more pressing. In the first issue of the second semester's *Gettysburgian*, an article

² Anna Jane Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory: Moments in the History of Gettysburg College*, (Gettysburg: Friends of Gettysburg, 2006), 145.

³ "Underclassmen Prepare for Annual Hop," *Gettysburgian*, 7 February 1929, accessed 30 April 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>.

⁴ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 108.

⁵ "Foundations of Weber Library Now Complete," *Gettysburgian*, 13 February 1929, accessed 30 April 2014 <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>.

⁶ Charles H. Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, vol. 2 (Gettysburg: Gettysburg College, 1987), 522.

described how new books had been added to the library, which at the time was kept on the first floor of Glatfelter Hall, but could not be placed on the shelves in the library rooms and instead were being kept in the stock room in the basement.⁷ But other things must be noted about the new library. Some of the original structure of Weber Memorial Library, now Schmucker Hall and home to the Music Department, can be viewed from Schmucker Hall's west side overlooking North Washington Street. The red brick building's imposing columns, the arched windows, and the high, sloping roof bear some similarities to the other buildings constructed under Hanson's term, especially Plank Gym and its columns and arched windows. That Dr. Hanson, the president of a small Pennsylvania college, was going to Washington about his library reinforces this conclusion: through a Georgian building style, Dr. Hanson was transforming the image of Gettysburg College and aspired to enhance the greatness of the college.

In the early months of the spring semester, Dr. Hanson would have been able to step on to the porch of his residence just southwest of Old Dorm, now the Alumni House, and look eastward through the trees across the southern quad to where the edifice of the library was rising. Letters directed to a former president of the college regularly ended with references to the rising library. One of those letters, written just a few weeks after the beginning of the spring semester, announced that the committee in charge of publications for the upcoming centennial of the founding of the college had selected the recipient to "author the history [of Gettysburg College]." "It will probably be necessary for you to take a number of trips East and to undergo considerable stenographic expense. In any case the college will most cheerfully meet any expenditure involved in the production of such a work as you

⁷ "Many New Volumes Given to Library", *Gettysburgian*, 7 February 1929, accessed on 30 April 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>.

would produce.”⁸ Dr. Hanson was clearly thinking beyond the moment. With his final building projects nearing completion, his mind was looking to the textual legacy of the college as well as its physical appearance.

But the man he had selected was not so keen on his plans. The former president and selected author was Professor S. G. Hefelbower, who at the time was teaching philosophy at Carthage College in Carthage, Illinois. He had been aware of rumors that he might be selected as author and had written in early December of 1928 to John F. Dapp, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, that with the time he had available he could not do the job. He promptly refused Hanson’s offer again, stating bluntly that “I simply do not have the time.”⁹

But Dr. Hanson had a key ally in Mr. Dapp, who apparently was given a copy of the letter and replied for Dr. Hanson. “I wrote to him on March 16,” Dapp told Hanson, “saying that you would invite him to a conference in the near future and expressed the hope that he would approve your suggestion.”¹⁰ He also recommended bringing up compensation. Hefelbower responded with a handwritten note to Hanson, saying he could come over the Easter break. “But I meant what I said in my last letter,” Hefelbower emphatically declared. Loyalty to the college or Hanson’s consistency, however, seemed to be waning. He ended his scrawled note to Hanson: “If you refuse to take my good council and still wish to see me, I can come.”¹¹

⁸ Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson to Professor S. G. Hefelbower, 21 February 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “Professor S.G. Hefelbower, D. D., President 1904-1910,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

⁹ Professor S.G. Hefelbower to Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson, 14 March 1929, *ibid.*, Gettysburg College Special Collections

¹⁰ Mr. John F. Dapp to Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson, 19 March 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “John F. Drapp –’89, Harrisburg insurance executive, Trustee 1908-1935, Chair 1913-1930”, Gettysburg College Special Collections.

¹¹ Professor S. G. Hefelbower to Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson, 21-24 March 1929. Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “Professor S.G. Hefelbower, D. D., President 1904-1910,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

Whatever was said at that meeting over the Easter break apparently did what Hanson intended it to do. When Hefelbower wrote back to Hanson in the middle of April, he was at work on his task. He recommended that a section on the Alumni Association be written, as he had worked with it during his time at the college. Apparently wanting recommendations on organization and style, he requested the college purchase through the library “half a dozen histories of colleges” which would be added to the library after completion. He also talked of knowing people with old documents who could provide useful information for the work. A little reluctance for the job was now mixed with determination. “If I am going into this thing,” he told Hanson, “I want the largest possible amount of information when I begin work.”¹²

This would not be the only time that Dapp would help Hanson. It appears that on one occasion, Dapp even helped save Hanson from himself. Before receiving the letter from Hefelbower, Hanson wrote to Dapp in Harrisburg, where he was an insurance executive, about the library, enclosing two blueprints of the proposed third floor. “In one of these,” Hanson explained, “you will find that extra set of stairs completely spoil the plan we had in mind.” Hanson goes on to complain, “At no time will more than sixty young men be up there. The building is fireproof and the one stairwell will most certainly prove a satisfactory exit for so limited an area.” He concludes by instructing Dapp “that the state department [must] grant us the courtesy of permitting us to eliminate the one flight of steps if the third floor is to be of any practical value.”¹³

What was Hanson referring to? A picture of the completed structure shows a third floor reading area, looking out over the main reading room, now Paul Recital Hall, between two pillars at the end of

¹² Professor S. G. Hefelbower to Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson, 13 March 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “Professor S.G. Hefelbower, D. D., President 1904-1910,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

¹³ Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson to Mr. John F. Drapp, 8 March 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “John F. Drapp –’89, Harrisburg insurance executive, Trustee 1908-1935, Chair 1913-1930,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

the main reading room.¹⁴ This overlook is still visible in the recital hall, covered by blue drapes and maintained as a small balcony. It is possible that whatever stairwell had been added would have ruined the aesthetics of this appearance, or have taken over space that made the reading room less worthwhile. Either way, appearance might have been taking precedence over safety.

Dapp soon wrote back to Hanson. He told him that he had spoken with a Mr. Gotwalt at the state department. "He said that he would like to accede to our wishes, but if he did, it would be in a direct violation of the law." Dapp said that Mr. Gotwalt recommended that Hanson and the architect of the library, J. Alfred Hamme, come to Harrisburg to figure out a plan "which will give us what we want and at the same time be in accordance with the law."¹⁵

Dapp had managed to pull Hanson back from trying to force an illegal building design. But would Hanson risk the lives of his students for the aesthetic quality of the building? He appears in these letters to be unconcerned of the risk or the ability of the students to handle a fire. The staircase was just unnecessary as it did not fit with his vision for what a library worthy of Gettysburg should appear.

While Professor Hefelbower was being cajoled into writing the history of the college, another kind of history was being made. On the night of March 6, the Bullet quintet took to the court against Dickinson's Red and White before four hundred spectators packed into Plank Gym. Advertising had been taken out in Carlisle and Gettysburg newspapers, bringing out the supporters for both teams to what promised to be a showdown. For Henry "Hen" Bream's team, the emotions in this game could not have been stronger. The previous year, the team had compiled an 11-6 record, only to lose to Dickinson in

¹⁴ "Schmucker Library 1930", #2374, Schmucker Memorial Library (before 1962 renovation), Buildings, Photo File, Gettysburg College Special Collections.

¹⁵ Mr. John F. Dapp to Dr. Henry W.A. Hanson, 9 March 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, "John F. Drapp -'89, Harrisburg insurance executive, Trustee 1908-1935, Chair 1913-1930", Gettysburg College Special Collections.

Carlisle 37-29, thereby the conference championship title.¹⁶ Then, earlier in the 1928-1929 season, Gettysburg had lost again to Dickinson in Carlisle, 31-22.¹⁷ Now, with an 11-7 record and back on their own court, against the team that had denied them victory a year before, Gettysburg basketball sought redemption.

And redemption they found. Coming back from a four point deficit at the very start, Captain “Bo” McMillian scored and, backed by Duke Cramer and Fritz Haller, began to build a lead. Polly Challenger protected the team defensively, holding off Dickinson. After rapid scoring in the second half, Gettysburg stayed in the lead and beat Dickinson 44-26.¹⁸ Haller and McMillian tied for most points scored in the game, and Haller ended his senior year with a grand total of 162 points scored during the season.¹⁹ That the freshman team fell that same night to Dickinson was barely given any attention and was relegated to an article below the triumphant description of the victory. The team that had missed a title now had one.

The season that led to this moment had started over the Christmas Break, with the team playing and losing in Philadelphia just before New Year’s to the University of Pennsylvania and then, a few days later, to Penn State. Only when they began playing at home again, beating AU in Plank Gym on January 9, did the team begin to win games. The schedule was grueling. Games frequently happened within three or four days of each other, with three away matches occurring in a seven day span in early February. Transportation was largely provided by C.B. Hartman, a Gettysburg taxi operator who drove the college boys to the colleges in the area.²⁰ Otherwise, the players had to ride the bus.²¹

¹⁶ Michael J. Birkner, *Building Men: Hen Bream and Gettysburg College Athletics* (Gettysburg: Gettysburg College, 2009), 38.

¹⁷ Dickinson at Gettysburg, 6 March 1929, *Financial Reports 1928-1929*, Gettysburg College Athletics Records, Gettysburg College Special Collections.

¹⁸ “Bullets Basketeers Bury Dickinson Five under a Barrage of Goals,” *Gettysburgian*, 7 March 1929, accessed 1 May 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>.

¹⁹ “Basketball Season of 1929,” *Spectrum* 1930, 158.

²⁰ “C.B. Hartman”, *Gettysburg Times*, 12 July 1962, accessed 27 April 2014, <http://access.newspaperarchive.com/gettysburg-times/1962-07-12/page-10?tag=C+b+Hartman&rtserp=tags/?pc=10970&psi=77&pci=7&pt=8598&pf>

The profits taken in for the season from guarantees offered by other teams as well as ticket sales at home, set against expenses, brought out a net loss of \$50.00. This was a trend of losing money that would be followed by the other spring sports, baseball and track. While baseball enjoyed an 8-6 season, track suffered in May. In two separate meets out on Nixon Field, a track surrounding the baseball diamond where Musselman Library and the East Quad first-year dormitories now stand, lost to both Johns Hopkins and Bucknell. Of the three track meets that Gettysburg students participated in, only at the Penn Relays did one student, Duke Cramer, place overall, with an eighth in the decathlon. From their expensive travels and no money taken in without ticket sales, the track team cost the college \$450.00. The weaknesses in track and its poor financial showing reveals the difficulties the college experienced in making these athletics sustainable, as well as deficiencies in these sports. But the meaning of the basketball game in early March would have a more lasting impact. Gettysburg College had finally established itself as a powerhouse in basketball and made a name for itself in sports.

The announcement of Professor Hefelbower's acceptance of the position as author of the centennial college history was on the front page of the *Gettysburgian* on April 18, 1929. But the writing of the second history of Gettysburg had to share the page with two other important events. The biggest headline announced that Charles W. Beachem, of the Class of 1925, would become the first alumni secretary of the college. The article calls him a "popular alumnus" who had, among his numerous campus activities, been in charge of the first Mother's Day committee when the tradition began in the spring of 1925. Now he would open another chapter in college history. The intention of his post would be "bind the alumni closer to their Alma Mater," through maintaining an alumni newsletter and organizing alumni clubs, eventually bringing back more alumni to campus for the annual football game

=c-b&pl=hartman.

²¹ "Basketball Season 1928-1929," *Financial Reports 1928-1929*, Gettysburg Athletics Council, Gettysburg College Special Collections.

and the alumni day at the end of the spring semester. But the article also mentions that Beachem's first task would be to visit other colleges to see how they had organized their alumni programs.²² Beachem was not the first of his kind among college alumni secretaries, but he was the first for Gettysburg. The college was trying to bring itself up to the standards of others and thereby improve its image of what the college could do for itself.

The other news item of note was the Soph-Frosh Hop. The scene on April 12th was one that put the Junior Prom to shame. Spotlights illuminated the gym where the organizers had set up on the stage "a setting of courtyard pillars and an artistic doorway through which could be seen a deep blue glow of black stage night." Dr. Hanson, Dean Tilberg, and Dr. Kramer were once again chaperoning two hundred students and their dates, clad in tuxedos and evening gowns, dancing in the light of bridge lamps as McKinney's Cotton Pickers, who sat among palms and "terraces" of multicolored flowers while playing their "savory brand of modern music." As the evening wore on into the late evening, the syncopated music brought some of the dances to "absolute revelry."²³ The dance would later be described by Anna Jane Moyer as "one of the last great flings of Gettysburg during the twenties."²⁴ The sophomore and freshmen coordinators had aspired to achieve a party to remember, and they had succeeded.

The cooperation expressed so well in this scene between the sophomore and freshmen classes was an exception to a rule. Freshmen were expected to adhere to a set of traditions and customs established by previous generations of students, and the sophomores were the ruthless enforcers of those rules. An incident in early February proves that the previous semester had not engrained into the

²² "Charles W. Beachem, '25, Chosen as Alumni Secretary, To Take Up Duties July 1," *Gettysburgian*, 18 April 1929, accessed 30 April 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>

²³ "Underclassmen Revel at Annual Soph-Frosh Hop," *Gettysburgian*, 18 April 1929, accessed 1 May 2014,, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>.

²⁴ Moyer, *To Waken to Fond Memory*, 145.

minds of the first year students what was expected of them by their older peers. The Tribunal, a student organization controlled by sophomores and organized to reduce hazing against the freshmen, judged a group of eight freshmen to be punished for infractions against custom. Four freshmen were required to wear items of women's clothing for talking with a girl outside of a social function. Another was required to wear boards on his feet for walking on the grass. Another was required to carry a brass rod for failing to have matches for the use of an upperclassman. Yet another, for wearing his class ring in a year when he could not, was made to wear a halter. But for one unlucky frosh, the "severest penalty was imposed": for wearing colored socks instead of black, Charles Mayberry had his hair cut.²⁵ These punishments were exacted in a culture where freshmen were constantly aware of an inferior status to everyone else on campus. Freshmen were expected to tip their regulation Gettysburg caps to upperclassmen and faculty, be the last to leave chapel after morning service, and offer their seat at games if an upperclassman or a woman was standing.²⁶ This form, almost comparable to segregation, clearly built a tradition of humiliation that was only justified by then inflicting it upon the following class in the next year. Despite the progress that had been made, class relations remained in some ways stuck and immovable. That was what made events like the Soph-Frosh Hop a sign of Gettysburg College advancing from small town college traditions to greater cooperation that might be a sign of maturity.

While the freshmen did have to tip their hats to everyone, the freshmen co-eds had a greater struggle. With only fifteen of them on campus in a very small female student body, the freshmen co-eds were also subject to some forms of hazing. While not as strict as the forms given to their male counterparts, co-eds were required to wear "black stockings and green arm bands" and were prohibited from wearing "rouge powder, rolled stockings or fancy garters." These traditions were also enforced by

²⁵ "Tribunal Metes Out Punishment to Wayward Frosh", *Gettysburgian*, 20 February 1929, accessed on 1 May 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2> .

²⁶ "College Customs," undated, Student Council—Miscellaneous, Gettysburg College Special Collections.

the sophomore class of co-eds.²⁷ In what might otherwise have been an area of advancement, female freshmen students appear to have slid back into longtime traditions of the freshmen-sophomore relationship in order to maintain a pace with the male student body.

But in some ways, the mere presence of co-eds on Gettysburg College campus was an advance in itself. Despite a board of trustee vote not to admit more co-ed students after the 1926-1927 academic year, there were still small classes of co-eds, less than twenty for each class, every year since the ban took effect.²⁸ Co-eds still did not receive equal treatment: as they did not have dorms for women, the College did not allow Co-eds to be residents of the college. They were provided one room in the lobby of Glatfelter, called the "Cigar Box," which had enough space for "coats, books, or bagged lunches."²⁹ There were no female professors. Even the girls' basketball team was coached by a man.³⁰

But in the face of these biases toward a male dominated school, the co-eds created their own niche at Gettysburg. They could join two sororities, a glee club, a rifle team and the basketball team. And some young women stood out. One senior, Mildred Elizabeth Deardorff, served as vice-president of the co-ed student body.³¹ She would later be honored upon her graduation with Senior Class Honors and election to Phi Beta Kappa, as well as taking the departmental award in Romance Languages. She was the only co-ed in the graduating class to do so. Another student who was a rising star was Helen Stallsmith, who that year took the Hassler Prize in Latin as well as Junior Class Honors.³² She was also the only female junior to do so.

Another characteristic that marked out Helen Stallsmith was her part in the cohort of students who had been raised in Gettysburg. Of the 528 out of 622 students who came to the college from

²⁷ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 146.

²⁸ "Summary 1928-1929," Gettysburg College Catalogue 1928-1929, 167.

²⁹ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 146.

³⁰ "Girls' Basketball Season 1928-1929," *Spectrum* 1930, 133.

³¹ "Girls' Student Body," *Spectrum* 1930, 128.

³² Gettysburg College Faculty Minutes, 10 June 1929, Faculty Minutes September 1923-June 1929.

Pennsylvania, 62 came from the town.³³ Helen Stallsmith went through the Gettysburg High School.³⁴ Others went through the college preparatory school called Gettysburg Academy, run by Dr. Charles Huber out of what is now Stevens Hall and the building that now bears his name, Huber Hall.³⁵ With nearly ten percent of the student population hailing from the town itself, the town could draw a strong connection to the school as their children and neighbors learned at the college. The town would have found it in its best interest to support the growing goals of the college.

One organization with community building roots and with which Helen Stallsmith was heavily involved in was the YWCA. The organization that year complained of “not being as well supported as in previous years,” but still managed to accomplish sponsoring socials and suppers, supporting missions abroad, and sending a delegation to the Eagles Mere Regional Conference.³⁶ The YMCA, its counterpart, was not doing as well. After the departure two years earlier of General Secretary Bill Wood, a professor of mathematics and the football coach before Hen Bream, the organization maintained a general secretary on a semester or yearly basis, usually from the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary.³⁷ This was a cause of concern for the National Office of the YMCA, who sent a letter to Dr. Hanson and asked if he wanted any assistance in selecting a new officer to hold the position after the departure of the secretary for that year, Mr. Peterson.³⁸ Even Hanson expressed frustration, writing to the head of the YMCA at Dickinson that the association had “not been able to render its greatest possible service to this campus because two important contacts have not been firmly established.”³⁹ Once again, Gettysburg was still in need of repairing its image in areas of its student life, if it wanted to present a vision of enhanced improvement.

³³ “Geographical Distribution of Students in 1928-1929,” Gettysburg College Catalogue 1929-1930, 167.

³⁴ “Helen Kathryn Stallsmit,h, Spectrum 1930, 105.

³⁵ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 79.

³⁶ Spectrum 1930, 128, 130.

³⁷ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 98.

³⁸ L.C. Wilson to Dr. Henry W.A. Hanson, 31 May 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 4, Series I, “YMCA 1927-1929,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

³⁹ Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson to Professor Paul M. Lambert, 13 April 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 4, Series I, “YMCA 1927-1929”, Gettysburg College Special Collections.

But if the organization was facing difficulties, the YMCA building was the heart of the campus. As a place for students to write letters home, to relax at the game room, to swim in the ground floor swimming pool, or to hold meetings in second floor auditorium, the Y was where a great deal of student life occurred.⁴⁰ It was therefore natural that 265 mothers gathered at the Y for the Mother's Day on May 11.⁴¹ The day began with an ROTC demonstration where Dr. Hanson's son, Captain Henry Hanson, Jr., won the prize for best drilled company. A luncheon served at the White House would have allowed the mothers to see the improvements made to the campus by the Campus Beautiful Club assisted by Dr. Kramer. Begun the year before, the organization had arranged more than 4016 plantings as of the previous semester. Wherever possible, the flower beds inspired by Dr. Kramer's visit to Oxford University were bright with flowers of orange and blue.⁴² Once more, the ambitions of the college were on display for all to see, not only in emulating other colleges, but also in promoting a sense of pride in the college itself. After the evening concluded with a performance by the Owl & Nightingale club at the banquet hosted in Plank Gym, the mothers returned to the campus in the morning for a Mother's Day chapel service. Dr. Hanson delivered a sermon preaching on the journey of life "from dreaming through drudgery to destiny."⁴³ Perhaps this audience, the largest Mother's Day crowd in the history of the event, was a sign to Hanson of destiny for the college as a thriving, growing place of community and learning.

⁴⁰ Moyer, *To Waken to Fond Memory*, 98.

⁴¹ John F. Wagner to Mothers, 12 April 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 25, Series II, "College Business 1929", Gettysburg College Special Collections.

⁴² Moyer, *To Waken to Fond Memory*, 102.

⁴³ "Mothers Spend Perfect Week End on Campus", *Gettysburgian*, 16 May 1929, Accessed 1 May 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2> .

Important steps were taken to direct the destiny of the college at the Board of Trustees meeting on June 11 in Glatfelter Hall. The meeting, held the morning after Baccalaureate and the day before graduation, would help decide many important factors for the growth and development of the college.

From the membership of the board at that meeting, the influence of the Lutheran Church was clear. Of the twenty-eight board members, eight, including Hanson, held doctorates in divinity. Hanson spent time during the Hanson himself was a graduate of the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, a fact reflected in the letter he received from a fellow alumnus that year against the merger of Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary with three other schools.⁴⁴ But the connection to the Lutheran Church went far beyond Hanson alone. One of the items discussed at the meeting was the continued funding by the Synods, “the loyal cooperation...upon whose loyalty we the college must depend” for the campaign of 1930. The resolution that the trustees adopted in support of the motion declared “it is our sincere desire that our own Gettysburg College may be able in a united campaign to equip itself for the larger service of our beloved church.”⁴⁵ Gettysburg College saw itself as a Christian college with Lutheran connections, and main areas of financial support depended on the college maintaining that image.

With the library continuing to rise, Hanson pushed forward with a plan to move the library books out of Glatfelter so work could begin on remodeling Glatfelter. Another key decision was made: Dr. Grimm, the librarian, formally tendered his resignation as librarian, a post he had held for twenty years. He requested that a full-time librarian be hired and the administration was prepared to do just that. Gone would be the heavily restricted hours, as a librarian could now operate with a more open time schedule. With its own building and a new, full-time employee in charge, the library could develop into its own institution for the first time since its inception. The college had created a new academic appendage with great promise for development into an independent college body.

⁴⁴ Rev. J.D. Baker to Dr. Henry W.A. Hanson, 23 April 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “Correspondence 1927-1929 Ba,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

⁴⁵ Annual Trustees Meeting, 11 June 1929, Board of Trustees Minutes 1921-1931.

One more small but essential change was made in an area where there should have been strength. Hanson proposed a change in the department of history, where there was only one professor, Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh, and an instructor, Mr. Reynold Greenholt. The course selection for the history department was had ten courses available for the spring semester, which focused almost exclusively on European history from the Renaissance onwards and American history. Courses on ancient or church history could be taken through the respective Greek, Latin, and English Bible Department.⁴⁶ Declaring “our institution was seriously in need of a balanced course in history,” Hanson proposed to elevate Greenholt to the position of assistant professor and have him teach a course on “general history of civilization.” The Classical Languages would continue to teach Greek and Roman history, but there is no mention of Church history. Fortenbaugh would be left to teach “in his special field which is American History.”⁴⁷ The modification does not appear to be much on the surface, only adding a single professor and one more class. But the result is a branching out of the history department beyond a very Eurocentric vision and one that takes responsibility for the history that had been left to be taught by other departments. The minutes kept put this change under the title “A New Departure.” It would be for a now growing history department with an expanded vision of its role in the education of Gettysburg students.

If the vision of the future was perhaps too strong, they left out an issue that had dogged the administration for the past semester. Among the maxims Hanson used for the campus, one was that there were “three nos for a Gettysburg gentleman: no cheating, no drinking, no immorality.”⁴⁸ Despite the maxim, cheating did happen and was dealt with severely. At nearly each monthly meeting of the faculty in the spring of 1929, another student was dropped from the school for cheating on an examination. The situation apparently became so bad that the faculty requested in early April that for

⁴⁶ Gettysburg College Catalogue 1928-1929, 70-72.

⁴⁷ Annual Trustees Meeting, 11 June 1929, Board of Trustees Minutes 1921-1931.

⁴⁸ Moyer, *To Waken Fond Memory*, 147.

students dropped due to cheating, that “the President would make a suitable statement of the fact in Chapel.” A student now dropped for cheating would be humiliated when Hanson would make an announcement of the expulsion before the entire student body at morning chapel. Considering Hanson’s maxims on morality, this could have been a quite a lecture. But despite all the concerns about cheating, Hanson and his Trustees make no mention of it. Is it possible that the Trustees wished to avoid the issue when there were so many grand plans for the improvement of the college in advance of the Centennial? As with Hanson and the stairwell, it is possible that the president of the college was letting nothing interfere with his vision for a grander Gettysburg. He could simply ignore it and move on.

With such grand visions for the college and problems wished away, the Trustees and the rest of the remaining student body joined a procession starting at Glatfelter Hall at 9:30AM on June 12.⁴⁹ The procession worked under the green trees and through the town to the annex of the Hotel Gettysburg just north of the Circle. There they took their seats in Majestic Theater for the commencement of 1929.⁵⁰ The graduating seniors wrote of their class for the Yearbook “The Class of ’29 has not yet begun to win world and mighty achievements. We expect to achieve greater and better things after we enter upon our real life of activity.”⁵¹ Some students had jobs already awaiting them. John F. Wagner, the head of the Mother’s Day Committee, had already been elected to work as a master at Gettysburg Academy.⁵² But there was one graduating student who had already won some acclaim—and he was not a senior. Robert D. Fidler was in fact listed with the Class of ’30 in the Yearbook. Yet that day Fidler was at commencement, not only as the winner of general final awards, senior class honors, a brother of Phi Beta Kappa, the runner up for the Kuhns history award and the winner of the History Departmental

⁴⁹ Dr. Henry W. A. Hanson to Dr. Charles Baum, 1 May 1929, Office of the President, Henry WA Hanson, 1923-1952, RG 2.0.7, Box 3, Series I, “Baum, Charles—Trustee, 1902-1938,” Gettysburg College Special Collections.

⁵⁰ “Diplomas at Colorful Commencement Exercises,” *Gettysburgian*, 12 June 1929, accessed 1 May 2014, <http://apa3.olivesoftware.com/Default/Skins/Gettysburg/Client.asp?Skin=Gettysburg&AW=1228941774510&AppName=2>

⁵¹ “Senior Class History,” *Spectrum* 1930, 42.

⁵² Annual Trustees Meeting, 11 June 1929, Board of Trustee Minutes 1921-1931.

Award, but also the Salutatorian. If Gettysburg was in need of symbols of academic achievement among its students, he was a prime example of the need fulfilled.

It was this vision, of a vibrant college community that was striving towards an image of academic prowess as well as athletic, might have sustained Hanson despite the sudden challenge to those dreams with the collapse of the stock market and the beginning of the Great Depression at the end of the year. It might have led him to still dream grand designs, like his later design for the colonial Christ Chapel and his long insistence on moral ideals.

We have now reached a stage in college history where the buildings of Hanson's early presidency have largely been altered or redesigned. Even Plank Gym is now facing redevelopment into classrooms sometime in the near future. But while we may not want to fully embrace his vision of the college or the blindness to deep rooted faults that such vision sometimes acquires, we can still aspire, as Dr. Hanson did over the growing library to grow as a college in an international frame as well as define what uniquely Gettysburg College is.

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