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# Portrait of Philip H. Glatfelter in Glatfelter Hall

## Description

The first floor lobby of Glatfelter Hall is home to a Ned Bittinger oil painting portrait of Philip H. Glatfelter, the namesake of the building. Bittinger was commissioned in 1988 to paint the portraits of several Gettysburg College benefactors. Philip H. Glatfelter's generosity to Gettysburg College was never ending. In a forty year period, P.H. Glatfelter, his son William L. Glatfelter, and their immediate family gave \$225,000 to Gettysburg College. At the time of his death in 1907, he was considered "one of the best friends, if not the best, that Gettysburg College ever had." [*excerpt*]

## Course Information:

- Course Title: *HIST 300: Historical Method*
- Academic Term: Spring 2006
- Course Instructor: Dr. Michael J. Birkner '72

*Hidden in Plain Sight* is a collection of student papers on objects that are "hidden in plain sight" around the Gettysburg College campus. Topics range from the Glatfelter Hall gargoyles to the statue of Eisenhower and from historical markers to athletic accomplishments. You can download the paper in pdf format and click "View Photo" to see the image in greater detail.

## Keywords

Gettysburg College, Glatfelter Hall, Philip H. Glatfelter, William L. Glatfelter, Ned Bittinger

## Disciplines

History | United States History

## Campus Location

Glatfelter Hall

Gettysburg College

Hidden in Plain Sight:  
Portrait of Philip H. Glatfelter in Glatfelter Hall

History 300

Historical Methods

Dr. Michael Birkner

By

Rachel Burg

Spring 2006

The first floor lobby of Glatfelter Hall is home to a Ned Bittinger oil painting portrait of Philip H. Glatfelter, the namesake of the building. Bittinger was commissioned in 1988 to paint the portraits of several Gettysburg College benefactors.<sup>1</sup> Philip H. Glatfelter's generosity to Gettysburg College was never ending. In a forty year period, P.H. Glatfelter, his son William L. Glatfelter, and their immediate family gave \$225,000 to Gettysburg College.<sup>2</sup> At the time of his death in 1907, he was considered "one of the best friends, if not the best, that Gettysburg College ever had."<sup>3</sup>

Philip H. Glatfelter's family can be traced back to Glatfelden, Sweden, a town near Zurich. Two brothers, Casper and Johan Peter Glattfelder, left for America in 1743. Upon arrival, the family settled in York County—making them some of the earliest white settlers in the area. Although the surname was originally spelled Glattfelder, Casper, Philip H. Glatfelter's great-great-grandfather, would often spell it Gladfelter or Glatfelter—the latter eventually became what was used. Casper, who owned a farm, passed his land on to his son Felix, who was the great-grandfather of Philip H. Glatfelter, who then passed the land on to his sons John and Philip in 1815. Philip's second son, Charles, married Louisa Fishel and they had eight children, one of whom was Philip Henry Glatfelter.<sup>4</sup> P.H. Glatfelter was born on August 29, 1837 in Spring Forge, Spring

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<sup>1</sup> Ned Bittinger: Portraiture & Fine Art, <http://www.portraitartist.com/bittinger/index.html>, (accessed February 23, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Charles H. Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence: Gettysburg College, 1832-1985* (Gettysburg College, 1987), 441.

<sup>3</sup> "A Friend of Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Compiler*, July 17, 1907, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Lipper, *Paper, People, Progress: The Story of the P.H. Glatfelter Company of Spring Grove, Pennsylvania* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), 13-19.

Grove, Pennsylvania. In good Lutheran tradition, he was christened on November 18 of the same year in York, Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup>

P.H. started his early life on the farm. However “the ambitious boy, who from childhood exhibited a restless desire to get on in the world, could not content himself with the humdrum life upon the farm.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore in 1857, P.H. Glatfelter left the family farm to work at the Loucks & Hoffman paper mill on the Gunpowder River in Maryland. While there, he met Jacob Loucks, whose family first came to America in 1730 from Germany. Loucks told P.H. Glatfelter of the paper mill for sale in Spring Grove. The mill, previously owned by Jacob Hauer, was to be sold at the Orphan’s Court sale on December 23, 1863.<sup>7</sup> The handbill advertising the sale said the land had a “stone paper mill, a frame machine house, stone stock house, and four tenant houses.”<sup>8</sup> P.H. Glatfelter used the money from his sale of interest in the Loucks & Hoffman paper mill, other savings, and eventually a mortgage on December 14, 1865 to buy the Spring Grove mill on July 2, 1864 for \$14,000. He also bought twenty-four extra acres of land for \$2,607.50.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to purchasing the paper mill, P.H. Glatfelter married Amanda Elizabeth Loucks, the sister of the Jacob Loucks, in 1863. The couple had seven children: Iva

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<sup>5</sup> FamilyHart Pennsylvania Dutch Genealogy Family Pages and Database, <http://members.aol.com/familyhart/> (accessed February 13, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> George R. Prowell, History of York County Pennsylvania, 2 vols. (Chicago: J.H. Beers & Co., 1907), 2:225.

<sup>7</sup> Lipper, Paper, People, Progress, 19-23.

<sup>8</sup> Handbill reprinted in *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

Jennie Glatfelter, Clara E. Glatfelter, William Lincoln Glatfelter, Melie Irean (Mollie) Glatfelter, Francis Henry Glatfelter, Elsie Kate Glatfelter, and Lucy Romaine Glatfelter.<sup>10</sup> The family first lived in a house diagonal from the mill then moved, around 1887, to a Victorian-style house nearby.<sup>11</sup>

In July of 1864, when the mill was first put into operation by P.H. Glatfelter, it was running at the rate of 1,500 pounds of newsprint a day. By 1868, thanks to the dedication and ingenuity of P.H. Glatfelter, the mill was producing 4,000 pounds a day. Another building that cost \$200,000 was built and furnished in 1874—which increased the paper output to 10,000 pounds a day. In 1880, the plant was enlarged again and improved by adding a fourdrinier machine that was 101 inches wide, steam engines, beating engines, steam boilers, and pumps.<sup>12</sup>

In 1881, P.H. Glatfelter's Spring Grove paper mill was one of the first mills in the country to make paper from pulp instead of rags. The mill began to use jack pine, poplar wood, and straw to make paper. Thus in 1883 the production of the mill had risen to 30,000 pounds a day and the number of employees had risen to 110 and in 1885 the buildings covered five acres of land, the machines were valued at \$450,000, and the company was doing more than \$500,000 of business a year. Also in 1885, the company built a railroad depot and freight office in Spring Grove. In 1886, the Glatfelter Company switched to electric lighting—one of the first companies to do so in the United States. In 1887, the Glatfelter Company paper mill was the only mill in the country that

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<sup>10</sup> Family Hart Genealogy.

<sup>11</sup> Lipper, Paper, People, Progress, 39.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

could provide rolls of paper 94 inches wide for George W. Childs' Philadelphia Public Ledger.<sup>13</sup> The Glatfelter Company also furnished the paper for several of the large daily journals of Pittsburgh and many other newspapers in Maryland and Pennsylvania. In 1892, P.H. Glatfelter decided to stop making newspaper and concentrate on fine paper for lithography, books, and conversion to business forms. By 1907 the company had a capacity of 90,000 pounds of book paper each day.<sup>14</sup> In 1906, with a capital of \$1,000,000, the plant became incorporated as the P.H. Glatfelter Company.<sup>15</sup> In 1907, the company's machines were valued at more than \$700,000, there were 325 employees working night and day shifts in the plant, the annual payroll was \$125,000, and the company was doing \$800,000 in business daily.<sup>16</sup>

The success of the Borough of Spring Grove, which was incorporated in 1882, is often attributed to the success of P.H. Glatfelter and his paper mill. P.H. Glatfelter was elected one of the first councilmen and was known for his generous giving to various sectors of the town. He gave half of the total money (\$600) to build a new brick school house in Spring Grove. He also donated \$10,200 to construct a new building for St. Paul's Lutheran Church which was finished in 1880. The Glatfelter Company's electric plant also provided electricity and running water for the town at a nominal fee—making Spring Grove one of the most advanced towns in the area at that time. In 1902 when the First National Band of Spring Grove was organized, P.H. Glatfelter served as one of the first directors while his son, William L. Glatfelter, was the first President. P.H. Glatfelter

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 35-45.

<sup>14</sup> Prowell, History of York County, 1: 911-912.

<sup>15</sup> "A Friend of Gettysburg," Gettysburg Compiler, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Lipper, Paper, People, Progress, 45-49.

also gave \$20,000 to the building of the Spring Grove High School and supported the organization of the area Young Men's Christian Association.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, P.H. Glatfelter served on a building committee with M.W. Lau and George Miller that created plans for a new building for St. Paul's Lutheran Church once the old building had reached capacity.<sup>18</sup> He also built and furnished the Hotel Aldine as a place for businessmen to stay in Spring Grove.<sup>19</sup> P.H. Glatfelter's philanthropic efforts helped make Spring Grove into a thriving community, as the Historian George R. Prowell commented:

To his well-directed efforts and masterly ability the Borough of Spring Grove owes its origin and prosperity. He has given liberally toward erection of churches, school buildings and other interests intended to promote the public welfare of the community with which he has identified since his early manhood.<sup>20</sup>

P.H. Glatfelter's generosity did not stop at the Borough of Spring Grove, Gettysburg College also benefited from his philanthropic efforts. From 1882 to 1884, P.H. Glatfelter's son, William L. Glatfelter, attended Gettysburg College.<sup>21</sup> P.H. Glatfelter served on the Board of Trustees for Gettysburg College from 1888 to 1907 and was President of the Board from 1900 to 1904.<sup>22</sup> In the 1880's the faculty of Gettysburg College began to urge the trustees to "construct a new building to provide improved

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 40-49.

<sup>18</sup> Prowell, History of York County, 1: 913.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 2: 226.

<sup>20</sup> George R. Prowell, as quoted in Lipper, Paper, People, Progress, 49.

<sup>21</sup> Charles W. Beachem and Clyde B. Stover, The Alumni Record of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932 (Gettysburg, PA: Gettysburg College, 1932), 550.

<sup>22</sup> Glatfelter, A Salutary Influence, 201.



facilities. Especially desired were larger classrooms and updated libraries.”

Furthermore, they argued that a new building “would be more fireproof than Pennsylvania Hall where stove fires still heated the individual rooms.”<sup>23</sup> When President Harvey M. McKnight began seeking donors for the construction of a new building on campus, P.H. Glatfelter promised \$10,000 towards the new building if certain conditions were followed, conditions which he later removed. The cornerstone for New Recitation Hall, as it was first called, was laid on June 27, 1888.<sup>24</sup> An article in the Gettysburg Compiler recounts the activities of the afternoon: “Rev. Milton Valentine, ex-president of the college, deposited a copper box containing a great variety of college historical matter into the cavity, and with three strokes of the hammer formally performed the act of laying the corner-stone. The exercises closed with the benediction by President McKnight.”<sup>25</sup>

By December 1888, the exterior and the roof of the building had been completed, but the college had run out of money to pay for the interior. The trustees voted in January of 1889 to borrow funds to complete the building and on September 11, 1889, the New Recitation Hall was dedicated.<sup>26</sup> Governor James A Beaver presided over the dedication. In his speech, John Graeff, the President of the Board of Trustees, announced that an additional \$20,000 was needed to meet the balance to pay for the building and to furnish it. P.H. Glatfelter immediately offered \$5,000 to the fund as long as the rest of

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<sup>23</sup> Jerold Wikoff, “Celebration Marks Glatfelter Hall’s 100<sup>th</sup>,” Gettysburg Times, October 11, 1988, 1A.

<sup>24</sup> Glatfelter, A Salutory Influence, 252.

<sup>25</sup> “Commencement Exercises,” Gettysburg Compiler, July 3, 1883, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Wikoff, “Glatfelter Hall’s 100<sup>th</sup>,” Gettysburg Times, 1A.

the money could be raised that day—which it was.<sup>27</sup> An article in the Gettysburg Compiler noted the positive direction Gettysburg College was going:

This very important acquisition to the institution, costing fully \$100,000 coupled with other additions and improvements to the property generally places Pennsylvania College in the front rank of educational institutions a large share of the credit is due [to] the liberal contributions by many warm friends of the institution.<sup>28</sup>

At a Board of Trustees meeting on September 11, 1889, it was suggested by P.H. Glatfelter that New Recitation Hall be named after President McKnight. The resolution that was passed stated, “Whereas the Board of Trustees of Pennsylvania College recognize that the successful completion of the new building is due to the self sacrificing and indomitable efforts of President McKnight, we hereby resolve that the building shall be called McKnight Hall.”<sup>29</sup> President McKnight refused this honor. The building, which continued to be called New Recitation Hall, or just the New Building by some, contained ten to twelve recitation rooms, two halls for the literary societies, a museum,<sup>30</sup> offices, and the college libraries.<sup>31</sup> The construction of New Recitation Hall allowed Pennsylvania Hall to be a dormitory and living quarters were separated from the classrooms—a shift toward a more modern college feel.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> P.M. Bikle, ed., “Dedication of the New Building,” *Pennsylvania College Monthly* 6 (October 1889), 208-211.

<sup>28</sup> “College Dedication,” Gettysburg Compiler, September 17, 1889, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Gring Hefelbower, The History of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932 (Gettysburg, PA: Gettysburg College, 1932), 262-263.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>31</sup> Gregory J. Landrey, “A History of the Gettysburg Campus” (Gettysburg College history paper, Special Collections Department in Musselman Library, May 27, 1977), 60.

<sup>32</sup> Wikoff, “Glatfelter Hall’s 100<sup>th</sup>,” Gettysburg Times, 3A.

In June of 1897, P.H. Glatfelter was named a member of a building committee that was to look into constructing more buildings on campus. As a result, two more dormitories were built.<sup>33</sup> In September of 1903, he submitted his resignation as President of the Board of Trustees. The Board waited until 1905 to elect Samuel D. Schmucker to the position of President, but he refused the position a year later. After a three year vacancy in the role of President, Edmund D. Graff was chosen in June of 1907.<sup>34</sup> P.H. Glatfelter continued to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees until he died on July 4, 1907.<sup>35</sup> The Gettysburg Compiler attributes his death to a brief illness “ending in congestion of the brain.”<sup>36</sup> As a way to remember the generosity of P.H. Glatfelter, the New Recitation Hall was renamed Glatfelter Hall after Commencement Exercises in 1912. Dr. McKnight, who spoke at the dedication, called attention to the fact that “owing to the extreme liberality of Mr. Glatfelter, the building of Recitation Hall was made possible; and that the Glatfelter family has given more than sixty-thousand dollars for the benefit of Pennsylvania College.”<sup>37</sup>

The life of P.H. Glatfelter can be looked back upon with much admiration. His hard work and ingenuity created a multi-million dollar corporation which is still thriving as one of the world’s leading paper makers. His philanthropic efforts affected many communities, especially those of Spring Grove and Gettysburg College. Dr. McKnight speech at the dedication of Glatfelter Hall excellently summed up the character of P.H.

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<sup>33</sup> Glatfelter, A Salutory Influence, 264.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

<sup>35</sup> Family Hart Genealogy.

<sup>36</sup> “A Friend of Gettysburg,” Gettysburg Compiler, 1.

Glatfelter as a “careful, concerned father; a Christian, a churchman of deeds; an unselfish business man; and a friend of Gettysburg.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “Glatfelter Memorial Exercises,” Gettysburgian, June 12, 1912, 252-255.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

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