



Fall 2006

## Plaque in Christ Chapel

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# Plaque in Christ Chapel

## Description

We see them every day and pass them as we rush to class. Painting, monuments, and even old photographs that remind us of Gettysburg's past. They have become so commonplace that we hardly spare a second glance for them so that they start to fade into the general scenery, eventually losing their meaning and with that, the rich history that they denote. What if one could turn back the clock and return to the beginning of freshman year when every sign and monument was new, worth our attention and more importantly, our curiosity?

Although Gettysburg College is well steeped in history, it is meaningless unless one takes the time to uncover and try to understand the object. Let us examine the Reverend Adam Long memorial plaque in Christ Chapel to illustrate the rich history and present day reality that lies right in front of us. [*excerpt*]

## Course Information:

- Course Title: *HIST 300: Historical Method*
- Academic Term: Fall 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, Christ Chapel, India, missionaries

## Disciplines

History | Islamic World and Near East History | Missions and World Christianity | Near and Middle Eastern Studies | Religion | United States History

## Campus Location

Christ Chapel

Gettysburg College

Hidden in Plain Sight:  
Plaque in Christ Chapel

History 300

Historical Methods

Dr. Michael Birkner

By

Amanda Caligiuri

Fall 2006

We see them every day and pass them as we rush to class. Painting, monuments, and even old photographs that remind us of Gettysburg's past. They have become so commonplace that we hardly spare a second glance for them so that they start to fade into the general scenery, eventually losing their meaning and with that, the rich history that they denote. What if one could turn back the clock and return to the beginning of freshman year when every sign and monument was new, worth our attention and more importantly, our curiosity? Although Gettysburg College is well steeped in history, it is meaningless unless one takes the time to uncover and try to understand the object. Let us examine the Reverend Adam Long memorial plaque in Christ Chapel to illustrate the rich history and present day reality that lies right in front of us.

Tucked into the right-hand side of the narthex in Christ Chapel, the Adam Long and India Missionaries marble plaque is easy to miss. This is even more true now that it is hidden behind a coat rack. The plaque itself is unassuming, simple in its lack of elaborate design, saying, "In Memory of Rev. Adam Long, class of 1854, who died in India March 5, 1866 in his master's service and in honor of 25 sons and daughters of Gettysburg who have served, or are serving, in India. 1941"<sup>1</sup> This plaque almost assumes too much of the average Gettysburg student. If we actually chance to see and read it, very few of those who do know what it means. The plaque is a curiosity, but hardly a topic that one would go and devote a lot of time to its research. The immediate answer is often to ask someone in close proximity and the Chaplain of the College, Pastor Joseph Donnella, had this plaque in his building. Thus, I was surprised and a little disconcerted to learn that he knew little more than me. He had heard through alumni that it was given by alumni who had gone to India.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Memorial in Christ Chapel to missionaries with service in India by the India Alumni Club, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Donnella, interview by author, email correspondence, Gettysburg, Pa., 14 September 2006.

The Special Collections in the library proved to be a good starting point in finding out more about the plaque. The alumni records for Gettysburg College provided a history, however sparse, of Rev. Adam Long, class of 1854, which was fleshed out later by the Pennsylvania College Book and the Gettysburg Seminary Alumni Record.<sup>3</sup> Long was born December 14, 1825 in Clarion County, in Northwest Pennsylvania. He entered Gettysburg College, then Pennsylvania College in 1850, one of 81 other students where he became a Philomathaeon and later, the Latin Salutorian for his graduating class.<sup>4</sup> He entered the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg directly after graduating and graduated with the class of 1856. He was licensed in the Western Pennsylvania Synod in 1856 and ordained in the Allegheny Synod in 1857.<sup>5</sup> He married an Ohio woman, Mary Dietrich, on November 12<sup>th</sup> of the same year and they departed for India on December 23<sup>rd</sup> from Boston with a fellow Gettysburg missionary, Erias Unangst.<sup>6</sup> Delayed by the India Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, they arrive in Guntur on April 1, 1858.<sup>7</sup> They journeyed to Rajahmundry, and work there for a time until they “opened a new mission station at Samalkot” less than a year later, where he worked until being called back to Rajahmundry in 1865. The last of the General Synod’s Rajahmundry missionaries, he was

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<sup>3</sup> Clyde B. Stover and Charles W. Beachem, eds., Alumni Record of Gettysburg College 1832-1932 (York, Pa: Maple Press Co., 1932), 34.

Pennsylvania College Book (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1882), 245.

Abdel Ross Wentz, ed., Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary: Volume Two: Alumni Record (Harrisburg, Pa: The Evangelical Press, [1964]), 44.

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania College Book, 245.

<sup>5</sup> Wentz, Gettysburg Seminary Alumni Record, 44.

<sup>6</sup> Stover and Beachem, Alumni Record of Gettysburg College, 35.

M.L. Dolbeer and R.D. PH. Augustus, Biographical Record of the Pastors, Missionaries, and Prominent Laymen of the United Lutheran Church Mission and the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Silver Jubilee Committee of the A.E.L. Church, 1955), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Schmitthener, Gettysburgians in India, being prepared for publication, 2.

Dolbeer and Augustus, Biographical Record, 3-4.

Guntur, in Andhra Pradesh, is along the southeastern coast of India and was a frequent arrival spot for many of the missionaries.

Samalkot, also known as Samulcotta, was 30 miles north of Rajahmundry.

“placed in charge of the whole field . . . worked with great zeal” for six months. “Then tragedy struck. On March 5, 1866, he and his second son and small daughter died of small pox.”<sup>8</sup>

This is all that can be found on Rev. Adam Long, which is a bit perplexing because he has a memorial dedicated to his memory. Although Rev. Walter Gunn passed in 1851, 15 years before Long’s death, Long was the first Gettysburg College graduate to die serving in India, which might be the reason for the dedication.<sup>9</sup> Yet, if he were so important to the field why is there so little information in print on him? Aside from being one of the first missionaries to India, what did he do? It is hard to know for certain and to get the true measure of the man because the majority of the books written about missionaries follow only the openings of buildings and other notable events like marriages and deaths. His daily life is hard to know for certain, but it was probably similar to the accounts of his contemporaries.

Like many other missionaries, Long went to India almost immediately after being ordained.<sup>10</sup> The Lutheran mission to India was still in its early phases when Long arrived, it having been started in the Andhra region by Rev. John Christian Frederick Heyer, in 1842, who at 48 and widowed was an anomaly compared to other missionaries. He was joined by the Rev. and Mrs. Walter Gunn, another Gettysburg College and Seminary graduate, in 1844, and by Rev. George Martz in 1849.<sup>11</sup> There these men, and Gunn’s wife, Lorena, began the task of educating and converting Indians. In a country that is dominated by the polytheistic Hinduism and

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<sup>8</sup> Schmitthenner, *Gettysburgians in India*, 2.

George Henry Trabert, *Missions Among the Telugus* (Philadelphia: The JAS B. Rodgers Printing Co., 1890), 21, 119.

<sup>9</sup> Schmitthenner, *Gettysburgians in India*, 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Wentz, *Gettysburg Seminary Alumni Record*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> Dolbeer and Augustus, *Biographical Record*, 2-3.

Luther B. Wolf, ed., *Missionary Heroes of the Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1911), 97-98, 101.

Mohammedanism, this was not an easy task.<sup>12</sup> Traveling from village to village, these men and women counted their accomplishments by the individuals that they could convert and the schools and churches that they built. At home the Church “was very apathetic and sent little money” to help fund the mission, leaving the missionaries to use ingenuity, the generosity of the English, and their personal power of conviction to set the foundations for future work. By observing some of the preexisting missions they were able to set theirs up employing some of the same methods. Learning Telugu, the language of the region, was necessary to facilitate conversation, and many including Heyer spent time being tutored by other missionaries or a native converted instructor.<sup>13</sup>

The spread of Lutheranism in India required a lot of leg work on the part of the missionaries and their wives. Rev. Samuel Schmitthenner, who served as a missionary in India from 1952 to 1981, recalls how his father used to divide his time in between administrative work and traveling to different villages. In charge of 16 elementary schools and 4 parishes in a sixty village congregation, he would have weekly rotations between touring the different villages and teaching his faith as well as providing alms and with the general maintenance of the mission. Traveling was not easy and often had to be done by ox cart or bicycle up until recently. In areas without missions, reading of the gospel was done outside and they would go door to door or work through the chain of contacts of those that were converted.<sup>14</sup> By bringing medicine, food, and providing free medical care to those that needed it, the Lutheran Church found many converts in the *harijan*, the outcasts. They soon became the foundation of the Lutheran Church in

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<sup>12</sup> George Drach and Calvin F. Kuder, The Telugu Mission of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1914), [20-21].

<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther Dolbeer, “A History of Lutheranism in the Andhra Desa (The Telugu Territory of India) 1842-1920” (Ph.D. thesis, Hartford Theological Seminary, 1959), 47-51.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Schmitthenner, interview by author, 30 September 2006.  
Dolbeer, “A History of Lutheranism,” 52-54.

Adam D. Rowe, Talks about Mission Work in India: for Boys and Girls (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1879), 16-17.

India and were the preachers that would interact with the locals the most. Adam Rowe, a Gettysburg College and Seminary graduate, who according to Rev. Schmitthenner, had the idea “that they should immediately train laypersons.” This idea went even further as the mission progressed. “If India is to find its rightful place in the commonwealth of nations, surely educated Indians must be trained for leadership.”<sup>15</sup> At the present the Church is currently almost completely run by Indians.<sup>16</sup>

The main obstacle to Lutheranism was the caste system, a social construct that was particularly criticized by missionaries. Although social hierarchy exists today in many countries, the caste system was so rigid that the different social groups were segregated. This was relaxed as the native Christians, once outcasts, were educated and began to “occupy high positions as teachers, preachers, and officers under government.”<sup>17</sup> Schmitthenner related a story about how, at the 1997 Golden Jubilee for *Suvartha Beerakanthamma*, a harijan who became a layperson, there was a large celebration and all the different castes were present and coexisting with each other in a way that was not feasible in the past.<sup>18</sup>

The highest castes, the Brahmins, Vaishyas, and Ksatriyas kept their women in seclusion, and were thus hard to reach. They were out of the reach of the male missionaries but, as Rowe pointed out, “missionary ladies have but little difficulty in being admitted into the zenanas,” the women’s household.<sup>19</sup> This was not to say it was easy to achieve a rapport with the women, but many of the female missionaries devoted much time to the zenanas. They also helped found and

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<sup>15</sup> A. Daniel and others, Silver Jubilee: Dr. and Mrs. H.H. Sipes, 1913-1938 (Guntur, India: U.L.C.M. Power Press), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Schmitthenner, interview by author.  
Rowe, 31.

<sup>17</sup> Adam Rowe, Talks about India: for Boys and Girls (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1878), 177.

<sup>18</sup> Schmitthenner, interview by author.  
*Suvartha* means Gospel, *Beerakanthamma*, Mother of Light. This was not her real name, but one that was used for the purpose of the retelling.

<sup>19</sup> Rowe, Talks about Mission Work, 48.



manage schools and congregations, as well as filling any of the odd jobs that might come up.

Mrs. John Aberly, for example was remarkable in her managing of a girl's boarding and training school along with playing the organ at all of the services. This was done while raising two children. Rev. John Aberly described how the women "receive no pay. It is voluntary work. But I know that they do a full missionary's work." The church also did not "give language teacher allowances to the wives of missionaries."<sup>20</sup> This is understandable when one takes into account the general lack of funds going to the missions throughout the years and the reluctance of the Church to ordain women, which did not happen until 1999.<sup>21</sup>

The stage has been set for the different missions and the climate of India. The time was ripe for the missionaries, yet people did not simply convert in droves. Providing an education and a chance for a better life certainly went a long way toward conversion, but most of it can be placed on the strength of these missionaries' devotion and whole hearted belief in their work. Luck is against them to start, because who automatically wants to change their beliefs? Human beings are creatures of habit and religion is, for some, an identifying factor. For the Indians, converting to Christianity rejects some aspects that are so ingrained in their culture, like the caste system. These men and women also faced a completely new style of living and foreign climate.

Numerous accounts make reference to the hot month of mid May to mid June where the missionaries would leave the plains and vacation up in the cooler mountain air of Kodaikanal. Nevertheless, sickness was commonplace and many missionaries were quite susceptible because of the climate. It was asked of Aberly while he was traveling to India for the first time in 1889, "How many on this steamer who enter India will never live to come out of it?" The careful and the lucky survive because "in this country . . . we get used to seeing persons with these diseases,

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<sup>20</sup> Samuel Schmitthenner, ed., The Diary of Rev. Dr. John Aberly: The India Years 1889-1923 (Bolivar, Missouri: Quiet Waters Publications, 2005), 28, 61-62, 69.

<sup>21</sup> Schmitthenner, interview by author.

and think but little of small-pox, leprosy, and even Cholera.”<sup>22</sup> Aberly became seriously ill three times during his 33 years there, paratyphoid and malaria, or “Calcutta Fever” being the worst. He devotes a significant amount of writing in his diary to these occurrences because it was so serious.<sup>23</sup> Malaria was a common problem, even as the mission grew and medicine advanced. August Frederick Schmitthenner was a missionary from 1921-1946 and once when on tour with a doctor, was told to “look at all those swollen spleens,” a latent sign of malaria, according to Samuel Schmitthenner. Many of the early missionaries and workers died of malaria. Others like Adam Rowe worked themselves too hard and did not heed the wisdom of others. He got sunstroke from not wearing a hat outside, never recovered, and got typhoid. This hugely influential man, the “Children’s Missionary,” only served 9 years before his death. Another large number had to return to the states because of poor health, like John Henry Harpster, Mrs. Unangst, and John Aberly’s grandson, Harold Dunkelberger.<sup>24</sup>

Despite all the negatives of the mission, people kept coming, with great fervor. Coming with their new wives, the family grew in India. Many children were born and raised in India. Up until the generation after Harold Dunkelberger, children were sent home for an education because there were not any schools for missionary children. They were at home with relatives while their parents continued to serve. Aberly questioned the wisdom of this choice, to leave one’s children while helping those of others, “one cannot feel whether leaving him that time was the right thing to do. His life might have been different could we have stayed here. But then India

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<sup>22</sup> Rowe, Talks about Mission Work, 75.

<sup>23</sup> Schmitthenner, Diary of Rev. Aberly, 16, 45, 105, 111-114, 120.

<sup>24</sup> Schmitthenner, interview by author.

Margaret E. Coleman, ed., The Church is Planted: A Biographical Record of the Missionaries in India of the Lutheran Church in America 1842-1987 (Division of World Mission and Ecumenism Lutheran Church in America, 1987), 67.

Rowe, Talks about Mission Work, 145.

Wolf, 152.

Harold Aberly Dunkelberger, interview by author, 25 September 2006.

beckoned.”<sup>25</sup> Rev. Harold Dunkelberger, like those before him, was sent home with his grandparents to receive a formal education. Up until his departure in 1923, at the age of 8, he was educated by his grandmother, Mrs. Alice Aberly. However, his younger sister Dorothy remained in India until she was “12 or 14” because she attended an Indian school until high school. Schmitthenner, too received an education in India with all the other missionaries’ children until he was 16, where he returned to Gettysburg to attend college. When asked how India stayed with him and how his parents work influenced his life, Rev. Dunkelberger said that he was “impressed with the dedication and willingness to give up good things like having your kids around. They sacrificed for the good of the cause.”<sup>26</sup>

These men and women who served in India gave so much for little recognition. That a memorial for them stands in both Christ Chapel and at the Seminary’s Church of the Abiding Presence, shows the familial nature of the Lutheran Church and the India mission. Whether they remained for 50 years like Luther Uhl and Roy Dunkelberger, or like Adam Long and Adam Rowe, served only a short time, their contributions helped to bring India to where it is ecumenically, socially, and economically because of the resources they made available.<sup>27</sup> The vestige of their work in Gettysburg, are these plaques, donated by the India Alumni Club in 1941. Although all of their names are not listed in Christ Chapel, their work is remembered and kept alive through reunions of missionaries and the memories of their descendants. As of 1941, when the mission was 98 years old, Gettysburg College graduates had “given a total of more than six centuries of service in India.”<sup>28</sup> This number does not even take into account those that

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<sup>25</sup> Schmitthenner, *Diary of Rev. Aberly*, 42,49,75-79, 131.

The ‘him’ being spoken of in the quote was Aberly’s son.

<sup>26</sup> Dunkelberger, interview by author.

<sup>27</sup> Dolbeer, *Biographical Record*, 12.

Dunkelberger, interview by author.

<sup>28</sup> Hazel Naugle, “India has formed its First Gettysburg Alumni Organization,” *Gettysburg College Bulletin Alumni Issue Records 1940-1949 (30-39)* (April 1941), 29-32.

were only Seminary graduates, undergraduates, and many of the women that went with their husbands.

The plaques in both Christ Chapel and the Church of the Abiding Presence, without knowing the rich history of the India Missions, are just regular plaques, one amongst thousands in Gettysburg. Now knowing the meaning and to an extent the people behind the plaque, Gettysburg College's tradition of greatness is a little stronger. Without these men and women who devoted a large part of their lives to the Lutheran Church and India, India would perhaps be developmentally different. Gettysburg, once had the largest collection of Lutheran literature in the world, and Lutheranism is a large, though often unrecognized, part of the town. People like them helped to build the town and college and kept it running up to the present. These plaques are the physical representations of some of the best that Gettysburg had to offer. Plaques cannot inspire the masses, nor can they improve one's life. People can, have, and always will be the tools of change. Together they form the true, flawed, often funny, and always touching stories that make those trite plaques worth reading and remembering.

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“India has formed its First Gettysburg Alumni Organization”

By Hazel Naugle, M.A. ‘38

[List of Gettysburg College graduates that have served in India, after Father Heyer founded it]

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Rev. Walter Gunn                 | 19. Rev. Henry R. Spangler           |
| 2. Rev. George J. Martz             | 20. Rev. C. Raymond Haaf             |
| 3. Rev. Adam Long                   | 21. Rev. George A. Rupley            |
| 4. Rev. Urias Unangis, D.D.         | 22. Rev. John E. Graefe, D.D., Th.D. |
| 5. Rev. John Henry Harpster, D.D.   | 23. Miss Helen H. Brennerman         |
| 6. Rev. L.L. Uhl, D.D.              | 24. Rev. Harry Goedeke               |
| 7. Rev. Adam D. Rowe                | 25. Rev. J. Russell Fink, D.D.       |
| 8. Rev. Luther B. Wolf, D.D.        | 26. Rev. Luther A. Gotwald, D.D.     |
| 9. Rev. Wm. P. Schwartz, Ph.D.      | 27. Mrs. Ethel Bare Gotwald          |
| 10. Rev. John Nichols               | 28. Rev. Harman F. Miller            |
| 11. Rev. John Aberly, D.D.          | 29. Rev. Luther W. Slifer            |
| 12. Rev. Noah E. Yeiser             | 30. Mrs. Matilda Anderson Slifer     |
| 13. Rev. Sylvester C. Burger, D.D.  | 31. Miss Grace L. Moyer, M.D.        |
| 14. Rev. Victor McCauley, D.D.      | 32. Miss Jessie M. Cronk             |
| 15. Rev. Isaac Cannady, D.D.        | 33. Miss Hazel Naugle, M.A.          |
| 16. Rev. Andrew S. Fitchthorn, D.D. | 34. Rev. Paul Gleichman              |
| 17. Rev. J. Roy Strock, D.D.        | 35. Rev. G. Summerfield Haaf         |
| 18. Rev. Roy M. Dunkelberger, D.D.  |                                      |

[Children born in India that have studied in Gettysburg]

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Rev. Harold Aberly Dunkelberger | 7. Martin Luther Dolbeer        |
| 2. Edward Water Graefe             | 8. John Russell Sipes           |
| 3. Keith Burger                    | 9. Frederick Gebhart Gotwald    |
| 4. Fritz Colman                    | 10. Eleanor Wilhelmina Graefe   |
| 5. David Edwin Thomas              | 11. Emily Irene Ziegler Gotwald |
| 6. Dorothy Jean Dunkelberger       |                                 |

Dr. Gotwald, who spoke at the meeting, proposed that two Palnad marble stones be placed in the two new chapels in memory of those who gave their lives in India.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Naugle, “India has Formed its First Gettysburg Alumni Organization,” 29-32.

Palnad is a place in India.

To get a more complete list of the India missionaries and some of their work, consult *The Church is Planted*, by Margaret Coleman. Rev. Samuel Schmitthenner found this book to be of great help in writing “Gettysburgians in India.”