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Beneath the Tower: The Story of a Campus Icon

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Beneath the Tower: The Story of a Campus Icon

Abstract

A history of Glatfelter Hall, one of the most iconic buildings on the Gettysburg College campus. This paper also aims to compare Glatfelter with a similarly iconic building on the campus of UVA, the Rotunda. Finally, it proposes a series of interpretive markers about the history of Glatfelter Hall both in terms of content and placement.

Keywords

Gettysburg College history, Glatfelter Hall, late 19th-century architecture on colleges, college architecture

Disciplines

Cultural History | History | Public History

Comments

Written for HIST 201: Introduction to Public History

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Beneath the Tower: The Story of a Campus Icon

Ziv Carmi

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Glatfelter Hall is one of the most iconic locations on Gettysburg College's campus. This picturesque hall dominates the college skyline, secondary only to Pennsylvania Hall in terms of its fame. This Romanesque Revival building, emblematic of the Gilded Age in which it was built, has a long and storied history, showing the evolution of the college campus over the approximately 130 years it has stood. While, unlike during its initial few years of use by the college, classrooms are dispersed throughout the campus, Glatfelter Hall remains one of the most significant buildings on campus, housing programs such as the Political Science Department, ensuring that Gettysburg's tradition of strong academics endures. To understand the story of Glatfelter Hall (called Recitation Hall until 1912), it is necessary to understand the College's financial situation following the earth-shattering events of 1863 as well as the wider architectural trends of the 1880s.

Historical Context

By 1868, the College owned approximately 21 acres of property. On the campus, only three buildings stood: Pennsylvania Hall, Linnaean Hall, and the President's House.¹ Of these structures, only Linnaean Hall has been demolished; Pennsylvania Hall remains the most famous building on campus, and the President's House has since become the Alumni Relations House.

Following the Civil War, the College faced several financial difficulties. In the crash of 1869, several of the school's largest donors lost a significant amount of money, the budget was not balanced, expenditures on a new building (now Stevens Hall) were far over budget, and, in that year, the school attained a debt over \$25,000.² To try to compensate, the college raised tuition in 1871 from \$39 a year to \$50 per year.³ By 1873, the debt was between 30 and 35 thousand dollars.⁴ These difficult financial circumstances remained through the 1870s, until Professor Baugher (the

¹Charles Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence: Gettysburg College, 1832-1985* (Historic College Publications, Special Collections, Gettysburg College): 242.

²Samuel Gring Hefelblower. *The History of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932* (York: Maple Press Company, 1932): 240-41.

³ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

son of the former President Henry Lewis Baugher) began a campaign for donations, and, with the assistance of several other agents, managed to reduce the debt by a few thousand dollars and balance the budget as the school entered the 1880s.⁵

It was in this decade of relative financial stability that the school undertook several major moves to expand the campus. Through the early 1880s, the College bought several new lots to the west and south, and, through the 1890s, continued to purchase lands. By 1904, the property had doubled from 21 acres in 1868 to 43 acres.⁶ In addition to the new buildings erected during this period, a steam heating plant was completed in 188 for about \$20,000 and Pennsylvania Hall's interior completely renovated.⁷

The Construction and Dedication of Glatfelter Hall

Dr. Harvey Washington McKnight, '65, the fourth President of the College, was elected by the Trustees in 1884, and, during the first few years of his tenure, wished to improve the infrastructure and embark on a building program. Soliciting donations from prominent Lutherans in the community, McKnight did not find success until he spoke with Philip H. Glatfelter, a paper manufacturer at Spring Grove. Glatfelter had promised to give \$10,000 for the construction of a new building, allowing for McKnight's undertaking to begin taking shape.

According to historian Charles Glatfelter, since the College purchased the land on which Glatfelter Hall currently sits in 1885, the Trustees had intended to build a hall on the site.⁸ However, it was not until 1887 that they were able to begin authorizing the funds for the building. In June 1887, the Board convened to create a committee for the new building. The President of the Board of Trustees, John Graeff, named fellow Trustees McKnight, Edward McPherson, Frederick

⁵ Hefelblower, *The History*, 244.

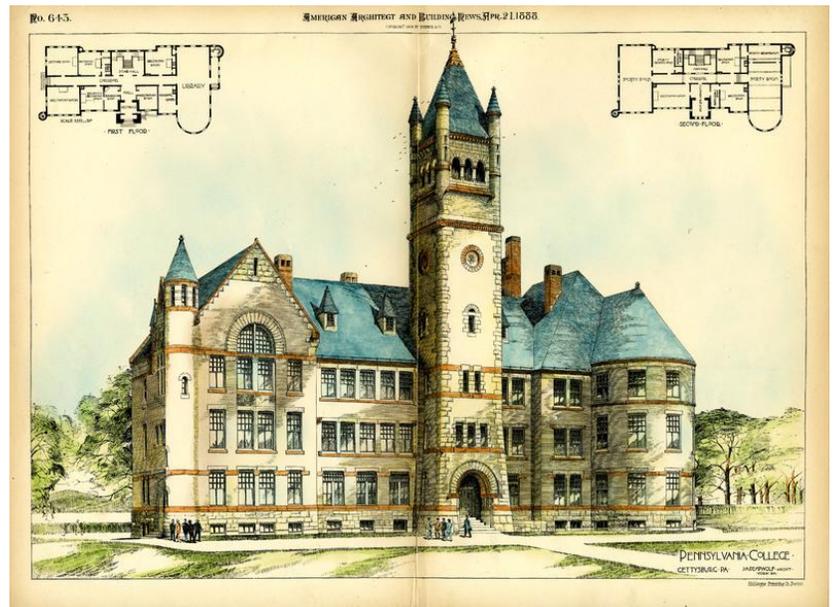
⁶ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 242.

⁷ Hefelblower, *The History*, 263.

⁸ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 253.

Conrad, and former President Milton Valentine to this committee. Indeed, by the end of this meeting, Graeff and four other trustees had pledged another \$15,000 for the project, creating an endowment of \$25,000.⁹ The Board of Trustees had initially set a budget of \$50,000 for the new building. However, with Graeff's encouragement, this budget was soon raised to \$100,000.¹⁰

By the end of September 1887, the Board approved the plans of John Dempwolf, a York architect for the new building. A German immigrant, Dempwolf was a member of the Christ Lutheran Church, whose former pastor sat on the Board of Trustees.¹¹ Besides Glatfelter Hall, Dempwolf was also responsible for designing the York County Courthouse, Prince of Peace Episcopal Church on the corner of High



Dempwolf's initial sketch of Glatfelter Hall. Note the different coloration between this drawing and the actual building. (Andrew Dalton, "Gettysburg College Throughout Time")

and Baltimore Streets in Gettysburg, and several buildings on the Seminary and College campuses, including Glatfelter Lodge, Brua Hall, and McKnight Hall.¹² Dempwolf's plans were for a building 162 feet long and 69 feet deep with a 52 foot central extension for a chapel. The main tower, located above the main entrance, was to be 143 feet high.¹³

Dempwolf's plan was to utilize the Romanesque Revival style. This period, popular from the 1870s until the turn of the 20th century, was inspired by the medieval European style that had

⁹Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 252-253.

¹⁰ Hefelblower, *The History*, 260.

¹¹ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 253.

¹²*The Gettysburg Times*, "Dempwolf Building Designs Were Shown To Members of Society," April 15, 1988, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=WgUmAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=8fwFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4932%2C7434161>

¹³Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 253.

existed in the 11th and 12th centuries during a period of revival of Roman architecture. Emphasizing the Classical Roman arch as a dominant feature, this style has distinctive round arches over the windows and doorways, thick masonry walls, towers with a conical roof, an asymmetrical façade, and thick and deep entryways.¹⁴ As the Indiana Department of National Resource says, many of these buildings have “castle or fortress-like exteriors,” which describes Glatfelter (commonly known as “the Castle” amongst students) to a tee.

While an early version of this style was popular in the antebellum period (as exemplified by the Smithsonian Castle), it saw a renaissance in the post-war period. Largely inspired by the architect

Henry Hobson Richardson, a student of the Paris Ecole des

Beaux Arts famous for designing Boston’s Trinity Church among other buildings, American architects created a distinct style of Romanesque Revival architecture.¹⁵ These buildings are less common than other Victorian styles, since such large and grand brick and stone structures are so much more expensive than wooden ones, resulting in a proliferation of Romanesque Revival buildings in more upper-class and public areas.¹⁶

Like many other Romanesque Revival buildings, Glatfelter Hall was an extremely complex



Recitation Hall as depicted on the 1888 program for the cornerstone laying (Special Collections, Gettysburg College)

¹⁴ Architectural Styles of America and Europe, “Romanesque Revival,” <https://architecturestyles.org/romanesque-revival/>

¹⁵ Indiana Department of Natural Resource, “Romanesque Revival Style,” <https://www.in.gov/dnr/historic-preservation/learn-about-topics/buildings-and-bridges/architectural-styles/romanesque-revival-style/>

¹⁶ Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, “Romanesque Revival Style 1840-1900,” <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/romanesque-revival.html>

undertaking. Estimated to use approximately 1.2 million bricks, the *Star and Sentinel*, a local Gettysburg newspaper, described it as “a style greatly admired and adapting itself readily to a modern structure of this character- its forms suggesting dignity and strength.” Bids were ranged from \$77,457 to \$91,318, with the College giving the contract to William A. Slagle, a local contractor.¹⁷ Ground was broken on March 1, 1888.

Within a month, the College’s plans had changed. Lieutenant Colonel John Brua met Trustee William Baum, telling him that he wanted to create a monument to his parents somewhere on the College campus. With the encouragement of Trustee Charles Hay, the pastor of Brua’s parents’ church, Brua ultimately decided to fund a combination theatre and chapel in his parents’ honor, giving \$15,000 to its construction.¹⁸ This structure, now Brua Hall, meant that Glatfelter would not require its chapel annex.

The cornerstone of the New Recitation Building, as it was called then, was laid during the commencement week of June 1888. That same day, ground for Brua Memorial Chapel (also designed by Dempwolf) was broken. The keynote speaker at the ceremony was John G. Morris, one of the two final living founders of the College,



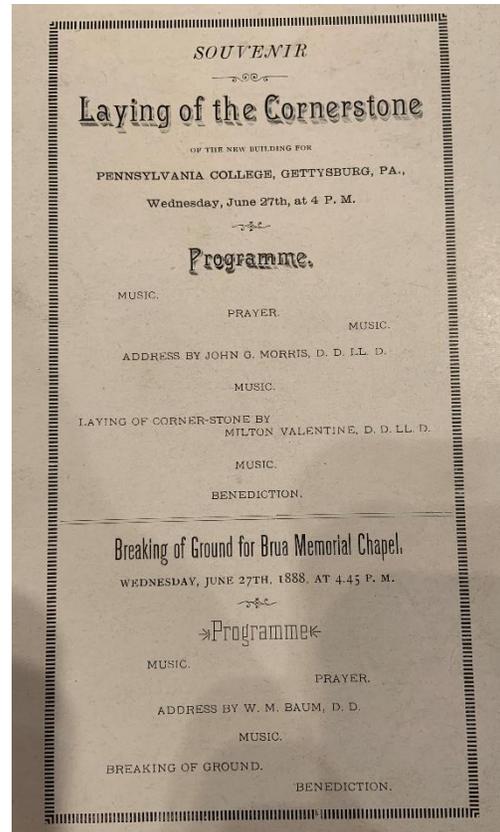
Photograph taken during the Cornerstone Laying Ceremony, 1888 (Andrew Dalton, “Gettysburg College Throughout Time”)

¹⁷Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 253.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

and Valentine formally laid the cornerstone.¹⁹ By fall of 1888, the building was completed at the top of the third story, and by December, only the interior remained unfinished.

By the end of the year, the building committee had expended all its funds and was still about \$25,000 short. The school could either continue the project and fall into debt or suspend construction until more money could be raised. The *College Monthly*, a school publication, said that this conundrum would “throw a cloud over our present promising outlook and prove extremely damaging to the welfare of the College,” noting that, on the other hand, the school could not get indebted from this project, citing the financial disaster of Stevens Hall as a example of what not to follow.²⁰ Despite these trepidations, the Board of Trustees decided on January 22, 1889, to continue construction on not just Recitation Hall but also on four other campus buildings.²¹ Despite another gift of \$5,000 from Trustee James McMillan, the school ultimately saw a negative financial impact from these projects; historian Samuel Gring Hefelblower noted that for almost 30 years afterwards, the College had a debt from these projects (even though the construction of Recitation Hall itself was paid off by the day of the building’s dedication).²²



Program from the 1888 Cornerstone Laying Ceremony of Recitation Hall (Special Collections, Gettysburg College)

¹⁹ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 254.

²⁰ *Pennsylvania College Monthly*, December 1, 1888, Historic College Publications, Special Collections, Gettysburg College, <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/GBNP01/id/4577/rec/106>

²¹ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 255.

²² Hefelblower, *The History*, 261.

By September 1889, the New Recitation Building was completed. Coinciding with the dedications of about 80 Pennsylvania monuments on the Gettysburg Battlefield, the ceremony was a grand one.²³ In town for the other dedications, sitting Governor James Beaver served as master of ceremonies. The *College Monthly* wrote that this event was meant to be held outside, but because of rain, it was held on the third story of the new building. Despite the worries of low attendance between the other ceremonies and the weather, the *College Monthly* wrote that “happily, this was not the case.” Featuring the GAR Band of Gettysburg, the remarks at the ceremony heavily relied on links to the College’s wartime past. Beaver’s remarks, which referred to the other dedication ceremonies, also drew upon the most famous moments in the school’s history. Furthermore, he spoke of the “true American College,” noting that Gettysburg was a “true type over against the pretentious so-called university.”²⁴

While the new building was dedicated, the college had not been able to entirely afford its construction. At this point, the school needed to pay \$14,000 for the contractor and \$6,000 for furniture.²⁵ As such, “President G.,” as the *College Monthly* called him, spoke to the audience, soliciting the final \$20,000. Indeed, he said that he “trusted the audience would help him to



The construction team posing in front of a completed Recitation Hall, 1889. Note the lack of a clock face on the tower. (Special Collections, Gettysburg College)

²³ Glatfeter, *A Salutary Influence*, 256.

²⁴ *Pennsylvania College Monthly*. October 1, 1889. Historic College Publications, Special Collections, Gettysburg College. <https://gettysburg.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/GBNP01/id/7244/rec/112>

²⁵ Hefelblower, *The History*, 262.

discharge it in less than twenty-five minutes.” After about thirty seconds, Philip Glatfelter pledged another \$5,000 if the full sum was raised. Following this and a brief silence, Graeff himself solicited \$5,000 of his own money, raising “great applause” for his generosity (he had donated several thousand dollars for various other projects, including \$5,000 for the building of Recitation Hall already). Following this, donations poured in, including \$500 more from Graeff, \$250 from Dempwolf, and \$100 from Beaver.²⁶ Like Graeff had said, they had successfully raised the funds within half an hour, and “the building could be dedicated without debt.”²⁷ This event showed the significance people placed on the building; indeed, they seem to have treated it as the flagship classroom on campus, a reputation which endures today. The total cost of the building was \$92,850.11.²⁸

Glatfelter Hall has three floors and a basement. The basement initially was used for physics lecture, but later, became a storage location. On the first floor was the president’s office and the library, and the museum collections formerly in Linnaean Hall were placed on the third floor near the infirmary. In addition, the two literary societies (Philomathean and Phrenakosmian) moved their libraries and meeting rooms to this building following the spring of 1889.²⁹



Philo Meeting Room (Andrew Dalton, “Gettysburg College Throughout Time”)

In 1892, the famous bell (that still rings to this day) was added to Glatfelter’s tower,

²⁶*Pennsylvania College Monthly*, October 1889.

²⁷*Pennsylvania College Monthly*, October 1889.

²⁸ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 262.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 256.

replacing the old and unsatisfactory one that had been moved from Penn Hall to the new building. Costing \$1,200 and weighing approximately a ton, the bell was manufactured by the Meneely Bell Company of Troy New York. To accompany the bell was a clock, manufacture by Howard and Davis. As the *College Monthly* wrote, “the blank clock faces on the tower of Recitation Hall now have bright dials and hands to indicate the time of day—an improvement to the appearance of the tower and a great convenience to the whole college community.” In her Fall 2018 paper exploring the Glatfelter Bell, Shannon Zeltmann estimated that the bell had been rung over 7.1 million times since its 1892 installation!³⁰ Indeed, to this day, the bell remains a beloved aspect of campus culture, ringing on the hour and cheerily alerting students of the time.

A Campus Icon: Glatfelter Hall in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Nothing of particular note, besides the renaming of the building to Glatfelter Hall during 1912’s commencement ceremony, happened through the early 20th century. However, that would all change beginning in the mid-1920s. While the library was in the first floor of Glatfelter, there was little space for a reading location. While Philo’s meeting space (which had since been abandoned after the Literary Societies died in 1925) was, according to Hefelblower, “the best reading room facilities that the students ever enjoyed,” it was not sufficient, and as such, the Board approved the construction of a new library (now Shmucker Hall) in 1928.³¹

³⁰ Shannon Zeltmann, “A Tradition of Bells: Glatfelter Bell and Hall,” *The Cupola*, Fall 2018, https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1798&context=student_scholarship

³¹ Hefelblower, *The History*, 310.

Simultaneously, a team from the United Lutheran Church of America sent to survey the campus called the steam engine in Glatfelter's basement and the stairway a fire hazard and criticized the interior of the building as "the most extreme case of poor utilization of space in any college visited."³² While they recommended to totally destroy and rebuild the hall, President Henry William Andrew Hanson instead decided to completely renovate the building instead. In June 1928, he recommended that as soon as the new library was completed, the interior of Glatfelter would be completely remodeled.³³ Once again, a Glatfelter would contribute to the project; Trustee William L. Glatfelter (Philip's son) pledged \$25,000 and donations from his three sisters ultimately increased the donations to \$100,000.³⁴

This project began after commencement in 1929 and lasted until after the Thanksgiving Break. The *Gettysburgian* noted on September 19, 1929, that it would be the first time in 48 years the hall would not be available, writing that workmen were spending three eight hour shifts, "both day and night" to finish the project.³⁵

Interestingly enough, two men who initially helped build the hall in 1888, Charles E. Lady (who set bricks at 17) and George Lingg (also a boy during the initial construction) returned to direct the cement work on the remodel,



Glatfelter Hall during the 1929 renovation (Special Collections, Gettysburg College)

³² Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 523.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 523.

³⁵ *The Gettysburgian*, "Glatfelter Not to Open with College," September 19, 1929.

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/gettysburg/sharedview.article.aspx?href=GTU%2F1929%2F09%2F19&id=Ar00102&sk=9BA5FDC6&viewMode=image>

showing a continuity within the story of this historic building.³⁶ This project resulted in the classrooms being plastered, blackboards installed, new lighting, a new fireproof (concrete) structure, cork tile, and, most exciting, the marble staircase that is now iconic of the building.³⁷ Following the restructuring, part of the Engineering and the Military Science department were in the basement, the Math, Greek, and German department as well as administration were on the first floor, the English, History, Latin, Philosophy, Romance Languages, and Bible departments were on the second, and the Economics, Education, Political Science, and rest of the Engineering Departments on the third. For the first time in College history, department heads had their own offices separate from the classroom, marking a new period of facilities for professors. The renovations cost \$125,578.86.³⁸



The original staircase, c. 1890 (Andrew Dalton, “Gettysburg College Throughout Time”)

Despite assurances that the building would be ready on November 1, delays meant that it would not be finished until early December of 1929. In a humorous turn of events, students mounted a “stormy but unsuccessful” attempt to rally President Hanson for a holiday celebrating the overwhelming defeat of perennial rival Franklin and Marshall on Thanksgiving Day; Hanson responded that Glatfelter was finally ready for classes and that students should “take immediate advantage of this by attending their classes there as scheduled.”³⁹ Unhappy with this decision, they

³⁶ *The Gettysburgian*, “Workmen Remodel Building They Helped to Build 40 Years Ago,” December 5, 1929. <http://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/gettysburg/sharedview.article.aspx?href=GTY%2F1929%2F12%2F05&id=Ar00108&sk=A77DB3E7&viewMode=image>

³⁷ *The Gettysburgian*, “Glatfelter Not to Open.”

³⁸ Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence*, 524.

³⁹ *The Gettysburgian*, “Dr. Hanson Dispels Hopes of Holiday,” December 5, 1929.

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/gettysburg/sharedview.article.aspx?href=GTY%2F1929%2F12%2F05&id=Ar00203&sk=8CE6FD0C&viewMode=image>

“trudged through the thickly falling snow” from the Chapel to Glatfelter to attend their classes, ending one of the more unusual events of the building’s history.

The 1950s and 60s produced another few series of changes for Glatfelter. By the fall of 1956, more than half of the departments still had their offices in the building; the school dispersed them through the decade to other academic buildings to reduce crowding.⁴⁰ Despite this, by the late 1980s, almost 30% of all classes and 40% of all academic offices remained in Glatfelter.⁴¹ After his September 24, 1955, heart attack, President Eisenhower arrived at his Gettysburg farm in November to recuperate. On November 16, Press Secretary James Hagerty said that the College had loaned Ike the President’s Office in Glatfelter (unoccupied after the sitting President had resigned the summer before to take a position at University of Cincinnati) to use as a studio to record radio and film addresses.⁴² On December 18, Eisenhower filmed his Christmas message and lit the national Christmas tree remotely from the office.⁴³ Finally, in 1967, as technology continued to grow, the school purchased an IBM 1130 computer, which was placed in the basement for students to use until its replacement in 1977.⁴⁴

Glatfelter celebrated its centennial in 1989 with a ceremony during homecoming weekend

⁴⁰ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 841.

⁴¹ National Park Service Mid-Atlantic Region, “Historic American Buildings Survey,” <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa1800/pa1894/data/pa1894data.pdf>

⁴² Ed Creagh, “Ike Will Use College Office as TV Studio,” *The Gettysburg Times*, November 16, 1955, <https://access.newspaperarchive.com/us/pennsylvania/gettysburg/gettysburg-times/1955/11-16/>

⁴³ Glatfelter, *A Salutory Influence*, 786.

⁴⁴ *The Gettysburgian*, “Renovations Required for Computer Center,” March 25, 1977.

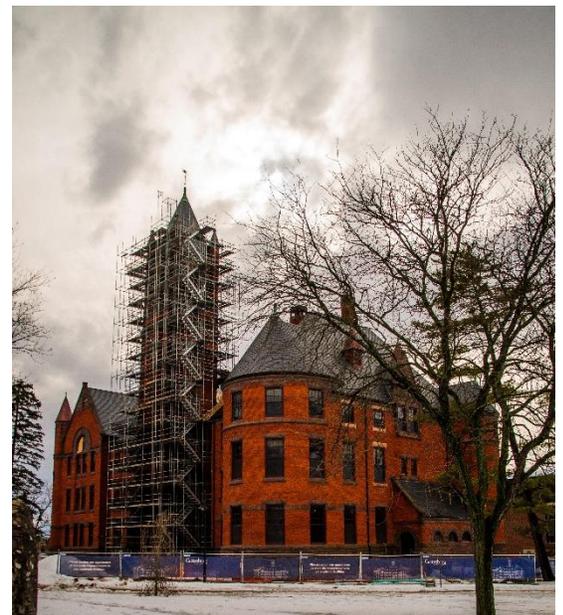
<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/gettysburg/sharedview.article.aspx?href=GT%2F1977%2F03%2F25&id=Ar00401&sk=0AC5EC7E&viewMode=image>

and a facelift. Along with several other buildings on campus that were updated, the windows were all replaced with insulated windows, air conditioning units were added, a stairway made connecting the third and fourth floors, new lighting was installed, asbestos removed, and, most importantly, an elevator tower was built.⁴⁵ This would be the last change to the building until 2013-14, when one final renovation would take place.



The rear side of Glatfelter Hall, 1892. Note that there is no tower on the south side (facing the fence and photographer), an addition in the 1989-1991 renovations to house the elevator (Special Collections, Gettysburg College).

Like the 1928-29 renovation, this project completely altered the interior of the building. According to Jim Biesecker, the Director of Facilities at the time, the building had water seeping through the foundation, requiring excavation, waterproofing, and other major repairs.⁴⁶ While classrooms and offices were removed to trailers on Constitution Avenue's lot, crews dug a trench around the building to waterproof walls and the hall's slab. Indeed, the foundation's floor was removed to allow better drainage, more concrete, and better ventilation equipment. Furthermore, for the first time, fire-suppression sprinklers were installed along with other



Glatfelter during the 2014-15 renovations (Wikimedia Commons)

⁴⁵ Paul E Heimbach, "Renovations on Campus," *The Gettysburgian*. August 25, 1989. <http://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/gettysburg/sharedview.article.aspx?href=GT%2F1989%2F08%2F25&id=Ar00100&sk=AFA07D45&viewMode=image>

⁴⁶ Jess Haines, "College Set to Begin Renovations," *The Gettysburg Times*, March 28, 2013. https://www.gettysburgtimes.com/news/local/article_3c0150cf-f3ce-523e-9913-2b8e55ea09bd.html

maintenance tools and new lights, ensuring that the building remained safe for students and faculty for years to come.⁴⁷ Simultaneously, 339 Carlisle Street (the former Theta Chi house) was renovated to make it the Economics and Africana Studies building it remains today, allowing those two departments to move out of Glatfelter and allow the Sociology Department to take their place on the first floor. Following the renovation, the Political Science, Management, Mathematics, and Computer Science Departments joined Sociology to take their place in the building, where they all remain today. By the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, the renovated Glatfelter was ready to reopen, retaining, as the brochure produced by the College promoting the project, “its historic charm with modern day classrooms and offices.”⁴⁸

Glatfelter versus UVA’s Rotunda: A Comparison

Several comparisons can be made between Glatfelter and academic buildings on other college campuses. While far newer and less historic than the Rotunda at the University of Virginia, both can be considered as famous buildings on their respective campuses, and it is worth comparing the two of them, especially given that both had extensive renovations done upon them. Following the destruction of the Rotunda in a devastating 1895 fire, it was rebuilt.⁴⁹ Unlike Glatfelter, whose historic exterior remained totally intact, the Rotunda was rebuilt in the spirit of Jefferson’s original plans, providing for a modern update that was far more utilitarian and practical.⁵⁰ This provides for an interesting contrast in the cultures of the two campuses, both of which clearly have a love and respect for their storied histories but have taken different approaches to the upkeep of their historic structures. Indeed, both colleges would argue that by making their respective alterations (or lack thereof), they were ensuring that their historic campus landscape

⁴⁷ Haines, “College Set.”

⁴⁸ Gettysburg College, “Renovation of Glatfelter Hall” (2013: Historic College Publications, Special Collections, Gettysburg College).

⁴⁹ Daniel Bluestone, *Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory: Case Studies in Historic Preservation* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company): 46.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 47

remained preserved for generations to come.

Indeed, Gettysburg's historic landscape departs significantly from that of UVA. Whereas Charlottesville moved towards a homogenous "Jeffersonian" style in the late 19th century, Gettysburg embraced the diverse variety of architectural styles as a product of their time.⁵¹ The Neoclassical Pennsylvania Hall contrasts starkly with the Romanesque Revival Glatfelter and the Modernist Musselman Library, each of which was built in a distinctly different era than the others. In a sense, the Gettysburgian approach seems to preserve its campus history better, for, while deviating from its roots and founding customs (unlike UVA), it contains a series of snapshots reflecting the architectural trends throughout the ages, showing the evolution of the campus during the historic tenure of the college. While UVA seemed constantly torn between modern urbanism and classical Jeffersonian architecture, Gettysburg remains perfectly at ease with its eclectic collection of buildings. Indeed, while Glatfelter remains especially beloved on our campus, there is no one building that is mediocre in its architecture or controversial in its design, a far cry from the descriptions of the UVA campus by historian Daniel Bluestone.

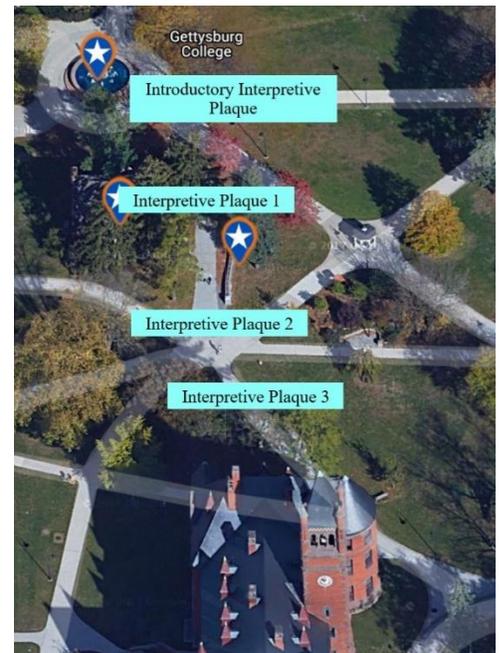
Interpreting Glatfelter for the Modern Audience

When people visit the College, Glatfelter is, along with Penn Hall, the first building that catches their eyes. Tall, bright red, and medieval in its appearance, it attracts even those who view it daily to admire and photograph (in the case of the author, an overwhelming majority of pictures taken on campus feature Glatfelter). Even from the Eternal Peace Light Memorial overlooking the entire town of Gettysburg, Glatfelter towers over the skyline. Any interpretation of the building's long and complex history requires an establishment of its status as a beloved and flagship structure emblematic of Gettysburg College. What follows is a series of suggested interpretive signs: An introductory plaque to this interpretation should be placed on the walkway approaching

⁵¹ Ibid., 50

Glatfelter Hall (near the fountain), so visitors can read it while they can view the building in context of the wider college campus:

The National Park Service’s Historic American Buildings Survey called Glatfelter Hall the “facility which is at the heart of the academic program of Gettysburg College.” Until the proliferation of other academic buildings constructed during the mid-20th century, over 90% of classes were held in this building. As of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Glatfelter Hall held over 30% of all classroom space and 40% of academic office spaces on campus, percentages which likely have not changed significantly since. Even if students do not attend classes in Glatfelter, its presence over campus is noticeable; no matter where one is, they can always hear the antique bells in Glatfelter’s clocktower tolling. The following interpretive plaques will explore the history and significance of this landmark building.



The approximate location of the initial four plaques (plaques would all be placed on the left side of the walkway in a fairly prominent and easy to view and see location for maximum accessibility).

The first plaque, placed on the path somewhat before the Donor Wall, should contextualize the context of the building’s construction:

In the 1870s, Gettysburg College faced severe financial troubles and debt. Despite this, however, they were able to recover in the 1880s and, under the leadership of College President McKnight, purchased the land that Glatfelter Hall now sits upon along with many other plots. By 1904, the College had doubled its acreage since its last large land purchase in the 1860s.

The second plaque, placed directly next to the Donor Wall, should detail the fundraising process:

Philip Glatfelter, the College Trustee for whom Glatfelter Hall is named, donated \$15,000 to the construction of the building. On the day of the building’s dedication, the College collected the remaining \$20,000 needed to pay for construction in under half an hour, including from then-Governor James Beaver and architect John Dempwolf.

The third plaque, placed right after the intersection of sidewalks near the Donor Wall (far enough that readers can still view the entire building) should detail the actual architecture of the building:

Glatfelter Hall, designed by local architect John Dempwolf is built in the Romanesque Revival style, popular from the 1870s to the turn of the 20th century.

This style emphasizes arches and grandiose, castle-like buildings. It is estimated that 1.2 million bricks were used to construct this building. Dempwolf also designed Brua Hall and the Prince of Peace Episcopal Church in downtown Gettysburg.

The fourth plaque, placed near the northern entrance of Glatfelter, should discuss the initial use of the building:

Glatfelter Hall initially housed most classrooms, the campus's two literary societies, and the library. During the late 1920s, the library was moved to what is now Shmucker Hall. The interior of the building was completely renovated in 1929, modernizing and fireproofing the structure.

The fifth plaque, placed near Glatfelter's main entrance on the east, should discuss the story of the building's 1929 reopening:

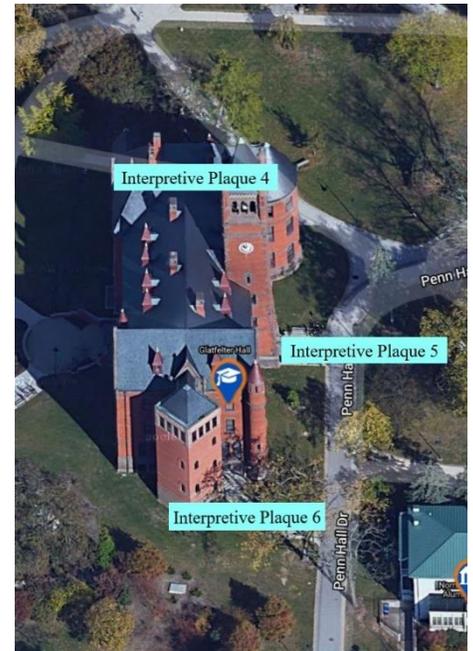
In December 1929, students tried to rally President Hanson for a day off to celebrate the overwhelming defeat of perennial rival Franklin and Marshall in a Thanksgiving Day football game. Hanson responded that Glatfelter was finally ready after its renovation and that students should "take immediate advantage" of the building. The *Gettysburgian* reports that disappointed students "trudged through the thickly falling snow" to attend their classes in the reopened hall.

The sixth plaque, placed near the entrance of the elevator tower, should discuss the building in the modern era:

President Eisenhower used an office in Glatfelter Hall while recuperating from his heart attack. Famously, he delivered his 1955 Christmas Address from the building. In the late 1980s, the elevator tower was added, and, in 2013-2014, the building was completely renovated and waterproofed. Today, Glatfelter is a perfect mixture of the past and the present with its historic exterior and a modernized interior.

Conclusion

Glatfelter Hall is one of the most beloved buildings on campus. With its hourly bells and stately red façade, it remains a favorite of many students. During its long and fascinating history, it has remained central to the campus identity, just as much as its more famous neighbor, Penn Hall.



The approximate location of interpretive plaques around the structure of Glatfelter Hall. (plaques would be placed further away from the building and closer to the walkways for maximum visibility).

Even its exterior, evocative of medieval towers but with modern Victorian sensibilities is emblematic of Gettysburg College's mixture of older traditions and modernity. From its initial flurry of donations to the College's respect for its historic exterior as recently as the past decade, this building has clearly been treated as one of the headlining locations on the campus. As a local icon, it will remain prominent for many years to come, inspiring students for generations to come, allowing them to learn from the legacy of the Gilded Age as the towers of Glatfelter march into the future with them.

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