

**An Historical Tour of the Close**  
*A History of the Building of  
The General Theological Seminary  
Of the Protestant Episcopal Church*

**Susan Wrathall**  
Church History 3  
April 21, 2005

**In the Beginning**

The General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church was established by the General Convention on May 27, 1817 following a series of resolutions drafted by Bishop Dehon of South Carolina declaring it “expedient to establish, for the better education of the candidates for Holy Orders in this Church a General Theological Seminary, which may have the united support of the whole Church in these United States, and be under the superintendence and control of the General Convention.”<sup>1</sup> The Convention further appointed a committee to devise a plan for its establishment, operation and the raising of sufficient funds. Thus as the Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Johnson writes, “It was in the city of New York in Trinity Church, on Tuesday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 1817, in the morning, that the General Theological Seminary was born.”<sup>2</sup>

In February 1819 Clement C. Moore offered sixty lots, comprising the block now bounded by the Ninth and Tenth Avenues and Twentieth and Twenty-first streets on the condition that “the buildings of the theological school should be erected thereon.”<sup>3</sup> This site was then an apple orchard, about twenty feet below the entrance to the grounds which was on Ninth Avenue, a little north of what is now Twenty-first Street. A narrow road, called “Love Lane,” ran easterly from it to the Bloomingdale Road, now Broadway. The principal approach to the site

---

<sup>1</sup> James Grant Wilson, Ed., **Centennial History of the Diocese of New York** (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886) 374-375

<sup>2</sup> William Stevens Perry, **The History of the American Episcopal Church** (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1885) 508-9

<sup>3</sup> Perry, 511

was by the road which ran near the line of the present Hudson Street. The high water mark of the Hudson River was east of the present Tenth Avenue.<sup>4</sup>

It wasn't until July 28, 1825, after a brief move to New Haven, Connecticut, that the cornerstone of the first building was laid by Bishop White "in the presence of the professors, students, and a large assemblage of citizens."<sup>5</sup> When the East Building was occupied in the spring 1827 the seminary became for the first time a residential college.

The East Building was the site of two intriguing incidents. On December 5, 1878 the New York Times reported the "assassination attempt" on Rev. Dr. Samuel Buel one of the professors of the General Theological Seminary. Apparently a bullet of the dimensions used in the smallest caliber revolver came crashing through his window about 10 o'clock in the evening. The New York Times reported that "the missile bore no traces of powder or abrasion from the tube of an air-gun, and had been carried in someone's pocket for a long time. Capt. Allaire says it was evidently fired from a rubber sling by some vagrant boy living in the neighborhood."<sup>6</sup>

In the early hours of the morning of July 5, 1879 Mr. John F. Seymour, who resided in the East Building with his wife and brother-in-law Bishop George F. Seymour was found dead in the west end of the seminary grounds. "The grounds are a great resort for tramps and disreputable characters after dark and Mr. Seymour has been in the habit of going around every night to drive out intruders."<sup>7</sup> The absence of a weapon ruled out suicide. The mystery of his death was never solved but the police eventually came to the conclusion that "the man's death was caused by a stray bullet which was recklessly fired by someone who wanted to celebrate the

---

<sup>4</sup> Perry, 517

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, 377

<sup>6</sup> "Little David With A Sling" **New York Times** December 6, 1878

<sup>7</sup> "John Seymour's Strange Death" **New York Times** July 5, 1879

arrival of the Fourth ... not improbable that it may have been fired by somebody in one of the houses on Twenty-first Street.”<sup>8</sup>

The East Building, of similar design as the present West Building, was closed in the fall of 1890 and demolished in 1892 to make way for Chelsea 2, 3, 4, which was part of Dean Hoffman’s “Grand Design.”

Confronted with an anticipated student body of eighty men in the following year the **West Building** was ordered by the Trustees in 1834. It was completed in the spring of 1836. The West Building provided accommodations for sixty students in double rooms, with partitions in them, separating the sleeping space at the corridor end from the study area near the windows, with other rooms used for reception and administrative purposes, for recitation (the basement rooms whose windows overlook the tennis courts today) as well as a robing room for the faculty.<sup>9</sup> Improvements in the design eliminated the “ugly out buildings that clung to the north side of the East Building.”<sup>10</sup> Daily chapel services of Morning and Evening Prayer were held in the hall known as the Long Room, which was also used for a variety of meetings.<sup>11</sup> In 1845 the chapel was moved one floor up where for the first time the Seminary was to set aside a place exclusively for worship. The chapel was described by students as a “long, low room, very stuffy and very crowded. At one end was a little chancel, raised a step, with a plain altar. No cross and no flowers. At the other end was a little wheezy organ which we took turns in blowing, although sometimes very proud and haughty students refused to do it, saying it was menial work.”<sup>12</sup> Over the years the West Building underwent a number of changes, at one point part of the floor was

---

<sup>8</sup> “The Mystery Not Solved” *New York Times* July 6, 1879

<sup>9</sup> Powel Mills Dawley, *The Story of the General Theological Seminary – A Sesquicentennial History 1817-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) 123-4

<sup>10</sup> Dawley, 123

<sup>11</sup> Dawley, 125

<sup>12</sup> Dawley, 125

removed to create a two-level library. In 1910 it was completely remodeled, except for the original professor's house at the east end, to what it is today.

It was in 1834 that the first catalogue of the General Theological Seminary was printed.<sup>13</sup> The professors and their area of responsibility are listed as: Rt. Rev. Benjamin T. Onderdonk, D.D. Professor of the Nature, Ministry and Polity of the Church; the Rev. Samuel H. Turner D.D., Professor of Biblical Learning and the Interpretation of Scripture (who lived and died in the West Building); the Rev. Bird Wilson, Professor of Systematic Divinity; Clement C. Moore, LL.D. Professor of Oriental and Greek Literature; the Rev. Francis L. Hawks, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History; and the Rev. Henry Anthon, D.D., Professor of Pulpit Eloquence and Pastoral Theology. "The expense of a student, during the seminary year, for boarding, washing, fuel and lights, is about eighty dollars. There is no charge for room rent and tuition."<sup>14</sup> The largest item in a student's expenses was the cost of board, which was provided at two dollars a week in the commons maintained in the East Building basement for the first few years at Chelsea.<sup>15</sup>

### **Dean Hoffman and his Grand Design**

The Very Reverend Eugene Augustus Hoffman (1820-1902) is known both as "our most munificent benefactor"<sup>16</sup> and as "the richest clergyman in America."<sup>17</sup> He was the eldest son of Samuel Verplanck Hoffman and Glorvina Russell Storm Hoffman. Hoffman received degrees from Rutgers College and Harvard. In addition he received the D.D. from Oxford, the LL.D from the University of the South and Trinity University, Toronto, the D.C.L. from Kings College

---

<sup>13</sup> Dawley, 131

<sup>14</sup> **GTS Catalog** 1834-5

<sup>15</sup> Dawley, 133

<sup>16</sup> Dawley, 249

<sup>17</sup> "Death of Dean Hoffman" **New York Times** June 18, 1902

University, Windsor, Nova Scotia.<sup>18</sup> He graduated from the General Theological Seminary in 1851. He served in a number of parishes before accepting the call to become Dean of the General Theological Seminary in 1878.

It was in 1882 that Dean Hoffman employed Mr. Charles C. Haight, the architect of the new buildings of Columbia College, and the son of the late Rev. Dr. Haight, who was the chair of Pastoral Theology at the seminary for many years, to create the design for the seminary. In the 1883 press release the project was described this way: “It will be seen that this is one of the most complete plans for a collegiate establishment in this country, ... where the chief element of collegiate architecture, the cloistral life, which gives its chief charm to the buildings of Oxford and Cambridge, ...the idea of a ‘range’ of buildings, half monumental and half domestic in character, which is also characteristic of collegiate architecture.”<sup>19</sup> The material to be used is pressed brick and Belleville stone for the walls and dark slate for the roofs. The style of the buildings is described as English collegiate Gothic. The grounds would continue to function as a private park.

The buildings were to be laid out to form two quads – the west and east, with the Chapel of the Good Shepherd dividing the two. While quads are the norm on college campuses today, they were not common in Haight’s time.<sup>20</sup> Going from east to west the buildings which are part of Hoffman’s Grand Design that remain today are: Pintard Hall, which houses the Center for Jewish-Christian Studies and Relations and guest suites, Sherred Hall, a classroom building, Dehon, Dodge and Kohne Halls, student dormitories, Chelsea 2, 3, and 4, faculty housing, the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Edson, White Halls, more student dormitories, Lorillard Hall,

---

<sup>18</sup> “Death of Dean Hoffman” *New York Times* June 18, 1902

<sup>19</sup> Theo. Myers Riley, *A Memorial Biography of the Very Reverend Eugene Augustus Hoffman* (Jamaica Queensborough New York: Marion Press – privately printed 1904) 624

<sup>20</sup> *Dean Hoffman’s “Grand Design” - The General Theological Seminary 1879-1902* (New York, 1988) 6

which houses a day-care center and student apartments, Hoffman Hall, with the gymnasium, refectory, and student apartments, and Eigenbrodt Hall, with faculty offices, and student dormitory and apartments, and Chelsea 8 and 9, with faculty apartments. Located where the Sherrill building now stands was Hobart Hall (the library) at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Twenty-first Street, Jarvis Hall, with the, then, new main entrance on Ninth Avenue, and the Deanery, on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Twentieth Street.

At the dedication of Hoffman Hall in May 1900 the Rev. Morgan Dix said, "I know of nothing in the history of collegiate growth and expansion to equal this; the simple record is enough to give the impression of a march, steady and uninterrupted, right onward, in the strength of a grand and inspiring purpose, and under the guidance of a great heart, a clear mind and a strong hand."<sup>21</sup>

During his tenure Dean Hoffman brought the seminary "From a struggling college, living on its capital and barely supporting six professors for seventy-five students, the seminary has grown to have ten professors, whose chairs are fully endowed, as is also the office of the Dean; three instructors, five fellowships, and nearly 150 students in regular attendance."<sup>22</sup> The buildings that were part of his "Grand Design" "embodied all that was at that time most admired in ecclesiastical and collegiate architecture" while "the ordering of chapel, classroom, and community life so as to frame a context for the training of priests in mind and spirit" were also part of Dean Hoffman's aims from the outset.<sup>23</sup> Toward that end Dean Hoffman prepared a digest of rules and regulations for seminary students. The Dean's concern for chapel attendance was obvious in that "a record shall be kept of the attendance of the students on the Chapel

---

<sup>21</sup> "Address by the Rev. Morgan Dix, D.D. Oxon., D.C.L. Rector of Trinity Church, NY on the occasion of Hoffman/Eigenbrodt dedication" May 30, 1900

<sup>22</sup> "Death of Dean Hoffman" **New York Times** June 18, 1902

<sup>23</sup> Dawley, 249

services. Irregularity in attendance on these services on the part of any student, without satisfactory excuse, will, if in the judgment of the Dean the number of absences warrants such action, be brought to the attention of the Bishop to whose Diocese the student belongs.”<sup>24</sup> Attendance at worship anywhere except that of the Protestant Episcopal Church was forbidden by the Dean.<sup>25</sup> The Dean was also concerned about classroom attendance, “Each professor shall keep a record of the attendance of the students on his lectures and recitations, and this record is to be reported to the Dean at the end of every month.”<sup>26</sup> Ordination prior to graduation was cause for expulsion from the seminary, as was marriage.<sup>27</sup>

How fortunate the General Theological Seminary is with the involvement of Dean Hoffman. But for his father’s insistence to the contrary he might have become associated with the seminary in Virginia instead because, as he reveals in his Journal, it was his hope and intention to have gone to the Seminary in Alexandria.<sup>28</sup>

### **Building by Building**

**Sherred Hall** was the first of Hoffman’s buildings. Designed as a classroom building, the cornerstone was laid on May 10, 1883. The building was named for Mr. Jacob Sherred, a vestryman of Trinity Church who, upon his death in 1821, left a legacy of about \$60,000 dollars for a seminary to be established in New York “for the education of young men designed for holy order in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.”<sup>29</sup> Upon the occasion of the dedication of Sherred Hall on Saturday, July 26, 1884, sixty years after the legacy was left for the seminary, Assistant Bishop Potter said,

---

<sup>24</sup> **Digest of the rules and regulations of the General Theological Seminary** (New York: Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Co., 1898) 5-6

<sup>25</sup> **Digest of the rules and regulations of the General Theological**, 5

<sup>26</sup> **Digest of the rules and regulations of the General Theological**, 11

<sup>27</sup> **Digest of the rules and regulations of the General Theological**, 15

<sup>28</sup> Riley, 227

<sup>29</sup> Perry, 515

“We should remember this honest man with gratitude. But behind Jacob Sherred, it belongs to this morning to remember another man who must have exercised great influence in early New York. He was a friend of Jacob Sherred. His name was John Pintard. At one time he was wealthy but lost his property through indorsing a friend’s notes. But he never lost his generosity and his public spirit. He was the founder of the New York Historical Society, and was active in founding the Mercantile and Society libraries. He knew the necessity of deep scholarship among the clergy, and he used his personal influence first with Mr. Sherred’s wife and then with Mr. Sherred himself, and so it came to pass that Mr. Sherred’s will contained the bequest of \$60,000 which has built your new hall.”<sup>30</sup>

It was this legacy that prompted the return of the seminary from New Haven and practically settled once and for all the permanent establishment of the General Theological Seminary in New York City.

“With the erection of Sherred Hall was begun a filling out of the magnificent plans for the group of buildings, the completion of which will give the General Seminary the best advantages of the present age.”<sup>31</sup>

Now in 1884, the year Sherred Hall was first occupied, the Seminary catalog yields some insight into what student life was like. There were 31 seniors, 22 middle students and 27 juniors enrolled. Each student was “required to furnish his own room, and provide himself with an academic black gown.”<sup>32</sup> The refectory, with its object to provide “simple substantial, and wholesome board, at as low a price as is consistent with due order and comfort” cost \$4 per week.<sup>33</sup>

In September 1885 **Pintard** and **Dehon Halls** opened. These student resident halls, built in the English style of staircase dormitories, contained two study suites and two bedrooms on each floor. **Pintard Hall** was named for John Pintard, who is mentioned above in Bishop Potter’s remarks. Pintard had many interests but books were his first love and “the favorite

---

<sup>30</sup> “Sherred Hall Dedicated” **New York Churchman** July 26, 1884

<sup>31</sup> Wilson, 386

<sup>32</sup> **GTS Catalog 1884-5** pgs. 30-31

<sup>33</sup> **GTS Catalog 1884-5** pg. 8



project to which he devoted time and money unstintingly was the establishment of a theological library of distinction at the Seminary.”<sup>34</sup> It is, therefore, fitting that today the computer cataloging system for the seminary library is named “Pintard.” **Dehon Hall** is named for Theodore Dehon, second bishop of South Carolina, and author of the resolutions at the Convention of 1817 that enabled the foundation of the General Theological Seminary. This same year the new library was moved into the new fire-proof building, Hobart Hall, with 17,850 volumes and 10,827 pamphlets.<sup>35</sup> Later in the year, on November 2, 1885 the cornerstone of the first deanery was laid.

On June 16, 1886 the cornerstone of the chapel was laid. Given by Dean Hoffman’s mother Mrs. Samuel Verplanck Hoffman in memory of her husband, the chapel cost \$150,000. The **Chapel of the Good Shepherd** “under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church” was consecrated on October 31, 1888. Unfortunately Mrs. Hoffman did not live to see the chapel completed but she was able to watch the tower, and inspired by Magdalen Tower in Oxford, rising to its 161 feet<sup>36</sup>, “in which is hung an exceedingly sweet and clear chime of bells.”<sup>37</sup> The chimes are perpetually endowed and ring on the anniversaries of the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Verplanck Hoffman October sixth and February eighteenth each year and “on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, the birthday of the Very Rev. Eugene Augustus Hoffman ... in commemoration of his munificent benefactions to the Seminary and of his twenty-three years of efficient administration as its revered dean.”<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Dawley, 63

<sup>35</sup> **GTS Catalog 1885-86** pg. 33

<sup>36</sup> Dawley, 258

<sup>37</sup> **New York Times** “New Memorial Chapel” November 1, 1888

<sup>38</sup> **GTS Catalog 1902-03** pg. 60

The interior of the chapel with walls of cream and red brick, arched with chestnut roof beams is said to recall the chapel of Keble College.<sup>39</sup> The interior of the chapel with walls of cream and red brick, arched with chestnut roof beams is said to recall the chapel of Keble College.<sup>40</sup> The rows of stalls for professors and students in the long choir are enclosed by a rood screen. Until fairly recently the students sat in rank order with seniors just below the professors.<sup>41</sup> Over the stalls around the chapel is incised the 1662 prayer book formula for the ordination of priests (rendered in Latin), a formula adapted from the Sarum rite of England. It is the reminder that Dean Hoffman never forgot, nor did he wish anyone else to forget, that what is now called the formation of priests was the central task of the Seminary.<sup>42</sup>

The reredos and rood-screen were prepared by Mr. J. Massey Rhind, a young sculptor who had come from England. "He also modeled from an engraving shown him by the Dean, the beautiful bronze tympanum which stands above the main entrance of the chapel and which illustrates the idea of the Good Shepherd, to whom the chapel is dedicated."<sup>43</sup> This tympanum, erected in memory of the Dean's oldest son Eugene. It was eventually complemented with the magnificent doors of bronze which were hung shortly before the Dean's last commencement.<sup>44</sup> The west door depicts scenes in the life of Christ: the Annunciation, the Baptism, the Institution of the Eucharist, and the Crucifixion; the east door depicts the calling of Andrew, the Sermon on the Mount, the Delivery of the Keys to St. Peter, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles. Rhind's carved alabaster reredos contains marble statues of Moses and John the Baptist, the four Evangelists, St. Peter, St. Paul, and in the center, Jesus the Good Shepherd. Carved into the steps

---

<sup>39</sup> Dawley, 262

<sup>40</sup> Dawley, 262

<sup>41</sup> Interview with the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright, St. Mark's Church in the Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History; April 13, 2005

<sup>42</sup> Dawley, 262

<sup>43</sup> Riley, 648

<sup>44</sup> Dawley, 262

is a text from Revelation “Blessed are they that enter in through the gates of the City” which may be representative of Dean Hoffman’s urban theology.<sup>45</sup>

The chapel windows were modified from a design originally prepared by John Henry Hopkins, Jr., and made in London by Lavers & Westlake. They illustrate “the history of the Old and New Testaments from the creation to the consummation of all things. In each window the lower pictures represent typical scenes from the Old Testament and the upper pictures present their respective antitypes.”<sup>46</sup> Just as the Alpha and Omega recall the beginning and end of Creation, the north and south windows remind us of Jesus at the beginning and end. The south window at the back of the chapel depicts the Eternal Logos – Christ brooding over the water and the north window, above the altar, depicts Christ in judgment at the end of time.

Many of the distinctive marks of student life and community custom were introduced by Dean Hoffman. In 1880 the students began to wear academic gowns for class and chapel and in 1892 the Oxford cap was added.<sup>47</sup> It was during this period that the faculty began wearing surplice and black stole with academic hood at Evensong. Commencement ceremonies were first introduced by him in 1880 and 1881. The seminary motto *SERMO TUUS VERITAS EST* was also introduced by Dean Hoffman. In the 1888-1889 catalog chapel services are listed as follows:

“There is daily Morning and Evening Prayer, except Sundays, in the chapel, throughout the Seminary year, at 9 AM and 5:30 PM. Upon these services each Student is required to attend, unless specially excused by the Dean. The Holy Communion is administered on every Sunday, Thursday, Saint’s Day and Festival, at 7 AM.”<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Interview with the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright, St. Mark’s Church in the Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History; April 13, 2005

<sup>46</sup> “New Memorial Chapel” *New York Times* November 1, 1888

<sup>47</sup> *GTS Catalog 1892-1893* pg 39

<sup>48</sup> *GTS Catalog 1888-1889* pg 31

In 1957 the original chapel organ was replaced by a Holtkamp organ of neoclassic tonal design. It was in the late 1960s that the altar was moved forward “as a symbol of identification with the modern liturgical renewal.”<sup>49</sup>

**Dodge and Kohne Halls** were opened in September 1891 as student resident halls. Built at a cost of \$46,000 Dodge was so named in grateful recognition of a large legacy in the estate of Mrs. Anson G.P. Dodge, Jr.<sup>50</sup> Kohne Hall was named in recognition of Fredrick Kohne who upon his death on May 26, 1829 left a sum of \$100,000 to the Seminary to be paid upon his wife’s death which occurred some 25 years later.<sup>51</sup>

On June 8, 1892 the cornerstone of additional professors’ houses was laid. This building, known as **Chelsea #2,3,4** was originally designed as three houses. It underwent extensive renovation recently and was reopened in 2004 with six units.

In July 1895 the cornerstone of **Chelsea 8, 9** was laid. This building occupies the southwest corner of the Close and contains faculty apartments. It will close in 2005 and will be renovated as part of the Renewal of Chelsea Square project.

May 30, 1900 saw the dedication of the **Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** containing a refectory, gymnasium and new dormitories. The initiative for this project came from the Rt. Rev. Henry Y. Satterlee at the 1893 Commencement Dinner. Describing the current seminary dining room, the Long Room in the West Building, Satterlee said,

“it had been used for the meetings of trustees, as a lecture-room, and as a place of assembly for academic discipline, where reprimands to unruly students were given when needed. One such occasion the writer recalls in his own seminary days. This room was long and reasonably broad; it had a low ceiling, which rendered it not only stuffy and uncomfortable in the way of ventilation, but also made it necessarily a place of noise and sometimes of tumult when crowded with eager and hungry students just delivered, at the dinner hour say, from the tedium of the

---

<sup>49</sup> Dawley, 358

<sup>50</sup> Dawley, 258

<sup>51</sup> Dawley, 110

lecture rooms. Neither cheerfulness, good digestion, nor good table manners were promoted by such a situation...<sup>52</sup>

Ground was broken in 1899 after the greater part of \$150,000 had been raised by the alumni. According to Dean Hoffman “For many years the students have been looking forward to the time when physical as well as theological training would become part of the curriculum, while the provision of a refectory adequate in size and convenience to the largely increased number of students had become an absolute necessity.”<sup>53</sup>

The first meal served in the Hoffman Hall refectory was at 1:30 on the day of the dedication. The Dean in describing the Hall remarked, “which I do not hesitate to say is not equaled by anything of its kind in this country, and which compares very favorably with the great halls of Oxford and Cambridge in the old country.”<sup>54</sup> In speaking about the Dean, for whom the Hall was named the Rev. Morgan Dix said the Hall was a “gift of the alumni and other friends to the Seminary, as a mark of their recognition of the services of the present Dean for the past 21 years... [and when elected Dean] the right man was put in the right place.”<sup>55</sup>

The chief architectural element of the exterior of Hoffman Hall is the octagonal staircase tower with its ogee turret, which corresponded originally to a corner tower of the old library building, which stood at the opposite end of the Close.<sup>56</sup> Inside the refectory is reached by means of a generous stairwell with a colorful mosaic floor and marble steps in a cast-iron frame. At the west end of the refectory sits Rhind’s marble bust of Dean Hoffman on the mantle with the words carved above “Manners Makyth Man”, recalling the book by William Wymark Jacobs and

---

<sup>52</sup> Riley, 628

<sup>53</sup> **Dedication of Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** May 30, 1900 Remarks by Dean Hoffman pg. 1-2

<sup>54</sup> **Dedication of Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** May 30, 1900 Remarks by Dean Hoffman, 21

<sup>55</sup> **Dedication of Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** May 30, 1900 Remarks by The Rev. Morgan Dix, 15

<sup>56</sup> **Dean Hoffman’s “Grand Design”**, 12

the motto of William of Wykeham's Winchester College, as a reminder that this was a gentleman's dining room.

Below the refectory housed the gymnasium complete with a punching bag and suspended running track, dressing-rooms, lockers, and a lavatory with baths and showers. In his remarks about the gymnasium the Rt. Rev. H.C. Potter said, "The conditions of theological training in our modern life are greatly altered, but so long as the students in this Institution come upstairs to dinner from having been down-stairs in the gymnasium, I venture to believe, sir, that the theology which they learn and the sermons which they write will be both clearer and more helpful and more inspiring."<sup>57</sup>

Eigenbrodt Hall was named for The Rev. Dr. William E. Eigenbrodt "priest and doctor, sometimes professor in this Institution, a just man and a good [sic], who having served our Lord and the Church all his life, departed, leaving nearly the whole of his property to this Seminary and Trinity School."<sup>58</sup> As a student at the General Theological Seminary Eigenbrodt had what could be presumed to be a less than auspicious beginning as it was necessary for him to take a second year to complete his junior year studies.<sup>59</sup> Eigenbrodt would have paid \$100 in fees, and read William Paley's **Evidences**, George Campbell on **Miracles** and Joseph Butler's **Analogy** in his course on Evidences of Revealed Religion.

Eigenbrodt Hall contained dormitories for students with sitting rooms and bedrooms. In the basement was a complete laundry plant with "electric mangle, washer, and wringer, and a large and well-lighted ironing, linen and store-rooms."<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> **Dedication of Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** May 30, 1900 Remarks by The Rt. Rev. H.C. Potter, 29

<sup>58</sup> **Dedication of Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** May 30, 1900 Remarks by The Rev. Morgan Dix, 7

<sup>59</sup> **GTS Catalog 1835-36**, 13

<sup>60</sup> **Dedication of Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls** May 30, 1900, 64

Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls were the last of the Grand Design that Dean Hoffman saw completed. He laid the cornerstones of White, Edson and Lorillard Halls, the cost of which was born almost entirely by his family, but died before they were occupied in September 1903.

In the year White, Edson and Lorillard Dormitory Halls were occupied tuition was still free. "Rooms are furnished with the exception of bed clothing. The charge for board, coal, light, and care of room is two hundred and twenty-five dollars a year, payable in advance semi-annually, in September and January...Other expenses of students are personal and will vary according to the habits of the individual, from one to three hundred dollars a year."<sup>61</sup>

**White Hall** was named for Bishop William White of Pennsylvania who was among the first bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. **Lorillard Hall** was named for Mr. George Lorillard whose legacy bequeathed to the seminary in 1832 helped to fund the building of the West Building. **Edson Hall** was named for the family who provided the funds in 1882 and 1885 that comprised the Edson Funds for instruction in elocution and church music.

In 1973 **Edson Hall** became a women's dormitory. Women had been admitted for the first time the year before. In 1973 there were three women in the senior class, four in the middle class, and two in the junior class, in addition to three fulltime special students. Prior to 1973 women were able to study through Windham House, the national graduate training center in the east for women worker's in the Episcopal Church. Originally they were not in class with the men and they worshipped in the antichapel. Eventually they were able to eat in the refectory one night a week. **The North Porch** is another name associated with Edson Hall. In the course of their church history studies the women leaned of the medieval practice of having women enter churches through the North Porch, the least desirable entrance because it was on the darkest and

---

<sup>61</sup> GTS Catalog 1903-1904, 54

coldest side of the building. These first women admitted to the General Theological Seminary saw fit to name their new home The North Porch.<sup>62</sup>

The cornerstone of **Seabury Hall** was laid May 26, 1931 and was completed at a cost of \$185,000 dollars, of which \$60,000 was raised by the dioceses of New Jersey. It was to serve as a social center for students, professors and alumni and contained an auditorium for special purposes. Rooms on the upper floor have served at various times as student rooms, offices and rooms for tutors, and in the 1970's as home to a student commune.<sup>63</sup> It has also housed the refectory and library at times of transition. The building is named in honor of five generations of "the Seabury family who have lived in this country, two of whom were prominent in the history of the seminary. The late Rev. Dr. William Jones Seabury, father of [Judge] Samuel Seabury, who was his professor"<sup>64</sup> said The Rt. Rev. Paul Matthews, bishop of New Jersey who laid the cornerstone.

Construction of **Moore Hall** began in 1955 and was occupied in the summer of 1956. At present time it contains seven faculty apartments. It was named for Clement C. Moore, who gifted the seminary with the plot of land on which it sits, and was among its first professors as professor of Hebrew and Greek Literature from 1821-50.<sup>65</sup>

In March of 1957 the seminary purchased 420, 422, 424 West Twentieth street to provide housing for married men, who by the mid-fifties numbered about one-third of each entering class.<sup>66</sup> As late as 1949-50 the GTS catalog continues to state that married men may be accepted as students in the Seminary, but it is a statutory provision of the Board of Trustees that "If any

---

<sup>62</sup> Interview with the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright, St. Mark's Church in the Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History; April 13, 2005

<sup>63</sup> Interview with the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright, St. Mark's Church in the Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History; April 13, 2005

<sup>64</sup> "General Seminary Lays Cornerstone" **New York Times** May 27, 1931

<sup>65</sup> Dawley, 367

<sup>66</sup> Dawley, 346



student shall marry during his connection with the Seminary he shall cease to be a member of the institution.”<sup>67</sup> General Students who did marry while enrolled transferred to the Virginia Theological Seminary as married students, while the Virginia students would transfer to General.<sup>68</sup> In September of 1957 rent at **422** was \$50 per month.<sup>69</sup>

On January 16, 1957 the Board of Trustees voted to raze the Ninth Avenue Buildings, known as Hobart and Jarvis Halls and the 23 room Deanery, to make way for the new **Sherrill Hall** which was to contain a new library, administrative offices, two faculty apartments, rooms for graduate students and a new Deanery. Severe overcrowding in the library had forced the dispersion of some collections to other buildings, and lack of study space both restricted the ordinary use of the old library and made research a discouraging and time-consuming chore.<sup>70</sup> The building was named for Bishop Henry Know Sherrill, founder of the Episcopal Church Foundation and retired Presiding Bishop. The new Deanery was occupied by Dean and Mrs. Rose in December 1960 and in the summer of 1961 the books were returned to what is now called St. Mark’s Library.

Life at the seminary in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s included a number of features no longer common as well as some familiar events slightly transformed as recounted by Professor Emeritus Richard Corney<sup>71</sup>. Chapel attendance was expected, students came dressed in academic gowns and formed the choir, which rehearsed two times a week. The Monday through Saturday service schedule was 7am Morning Prayer, followed by Eucharist and Evensong. Eucharistic vestments were only worn when the mass was sung.

---

<sup>67</sup> **GTS Catalog 1949-50**, 26

<sup>68</sup> Interview with the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright, St. Mark’s Church in the Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History; April 13, 2005

<sup>69</sup> **GTS Catalog 1958-59**, 25

<sup>70</sup> Dawley, 349

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Professor Emeritus Richard Corney, April 19, 2005

Juniors met with tutors once a week to go over their assigned paper in addition to their five other classes. The first paper topic was always “What is Christianity?” which yielded a great deal of information about the student. Middlers met with a tutor in pairs alternating by week who wrote the paper. Tutors were STM or ThD students. They were paid \$125 a month plus room and board and tuition.

The food in the refectory was excellent; professors sat at the high tables and were served by wait staff. Student meals were family style. Three meals a day were served with about 250 [sic] sitting down for the main meals. The chief dietitian, Helen Chapman, served up a few peculiarities including a penchant for not serving bacon with eggs; both were served in large quantities, but never at the same meal. Ice cream was a frequent treat – but rumors of it being endowed were squelched by Miss Chapman whenever she was asked. Students could have female guests for Tuesday night meals.

Communes could be found on one of the upper floors of the West Building and Seabury Hall during the late 1960s. Pets were not always welcome on the Close, but Professor Corney reports that once allowed they included a python. He could not substantiate the report of a pet monkey, although it is rumored to have been buried on the grounds.

The forerunner of the GTS follies might well have been the Seminary Play held in Seabury Auditorium. Productions in the 1950s included “The Mikado”, “Devil’s Disciple”, “Henry IV Part I” and “The Skin of Our Teeth.” They were sponsored by the GTS Missionary Society, to which all students belonged. The society hired a director, students auditioned for parts, female actors came from the neighborhood in part, and there were three paid performances and one, the first, free for students. The Missionary Society raised approximately \$2,000 with these annual productions. With another \$2,000 in pledges from members and \$2,000 proceeds

from the student management of the bookstore, the society was able each year to give half to overseas missions and half to continental missions. The Missionary Society disbanded in the 1960s with the belief that mission work was patronizing.

### **Final Note**

The General Theological Seminary was designated a New York City Landmark in 1970. It was listed on the National Register in 1977. The chapel is described in the New York City Landmarks Designation Report as “the jewel of Chelsea Square.”<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Dean Hoffman’s “Grand Design”, 9

## **The General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church Timeline**

- May 27, 1817 – established by General Convention  
 May 1, 1819 – instruction began in New York City at Trinity Church  
 September 13, 1820 – removed to New Haven, CT  
 1821 – Constitution adopted by General Convention  
 February 13, 1822 – returned to New York City  
 April 5, 1822 – incorporated  
 July 28, 1825 – corner-stone of East Building laid  
 Spring 1827 – East Building first occupied  
 1834 – West Building ordered  
 Spring 1836 – West Building occupied
- May 10, 1883 – cornerstone of Sherred Hall laid  
 May 29, 1884 – cornerstone of first library laid  
 May 26, 1885 – first library dedicated – Hobart Hall  
 September 1885 – Pintard and Dehon Halls opened  
 November 2, 1885 – corner-stone of first Deanery laid  
 June 16, 1886 – cornerstone of chapel laid  
 June 1, 1887 – cornerstone of Jarvis Hall laid  
 October 31, 1888 – Chapel of the Good Shepherd consecrated  
 Fall 1890 – East Building closed  
 September 1891 – Dodge and Kohne Halls occupied  
 1892 – demolition of East Building  
 June 8, 1892 – cornerstone of professors' houses laid (Chelsea 2, 3, 4)  
 July 1895 – cornerstone of professors' houses (Chelsea 8, 9)  
 May 17, 1899 – cornerstone of Hoffman Hall laid  
 May 30, 1900 – Hoffman and Eigenbrodt Halls dedicated  
 May 14, 1902 – cornerstone of White Hall laid  
 September 1903 – White, Edson, Lorillard Halls occupied
- May 26, 1931 – cornerstone of Seabury Hall laid
- 1955 – construction of Moore Hall begins  
 Summer 1956 – Moore Hall occupied  
 January 16, 1957 – vote to raze the Ninth Avenue Building  
 March 1957 – purchase of 420, 422 and 424 West Twentieth Street building
- May 24, 1960 – cornerstone of new Ninth Avenue complex laid  
 December 1960 – new Deanery occupied  
 Summer 1961 – books returned to library, now know as St. Mark's Library

## Bibliography

“Address by the Rev. Morgan Dix, D.D. Oxon., D.C.L. Rector of Trinity Church, NY on the occasion of Hoffman/Eigenbrodt dedication” May 30, 1900; privately printed

Dawley, Powel Mills *The Story of the General Theological Seminary – A Sesquicentennial History 1817-1967*; New York: Oxford University Press, 1969

*Dean Hoffman’s “Grand Design” The General Theological Seminary 1879-1902*; New York: The General Theological Seminary, 1988

Hoffman, The Rev. E.A. *Digest of the rules and regulations of the General Theological Seminary, Relating to The Students, Compiled for their Use By the Dean – Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Co.:* New York; 1898

Hoffman, The Rev. E.A. *The General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church: Its Past History and Present Needs*, New York, 1882

“Sherred Hall Dedicated” **New York Churchman** July 26, 1884

“Little David With A Sling” **New York Times** December 6, 1878

“John Seymour’s Strange Death” **New York Times** July 5, 1879

“The Mystery Not Solved” **New York Times** July 6, 1879

“Death of Dean Hoffman” **New York Times** June 18, 1902

Perry, William Stevens *The History of the American Episcopal Church 1587-1883 – Volume II The Organization and Progress of the American Church 1783-1883*, Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1885

Riley, Theo. Myers *A Memorial Biography of The Very Reverend Eugene Augustus Hoffman D.D. (Oxon.) D.C.L. LL.D. Late Dean of the General Theological Seminary*, Jamaica Queensborough New York: privately printed at the Marion Press, 1904

Wilson, James Grant, editor; *The Centennial History of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of New York: 1785-1885*, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886