

Gettysburg College  
Musselman  
**Library**  
*special collections*

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Guide to MS-069:

Papers of John W. Vannorsdall



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library  
Special Collections and College Archives

Amy Sanderson, Class of 2007

September 2006

## MS-069: Papers of John W. Vannorsdall

Processed by Amy Sanderson, Class of 2007  
September 2006

### Size

1 box, 0.27 feet

### Dates

Inclusive: 1953-1978

Bulk: 1968-1972

### Provenance

Donations by John W. Vannorsdall in May, 1992 and August, 2006.

Donations by G. Edward Whetstone, class of 1967, and Tom Boll, class of 1974, added August 2020.

### Biographical Note

John W. Vannorsdall served as the Chaplain for Gettysburg College from 1962 until 1976, when he took a position as the chaplain for Yale University. An Ohio native, he graduated with an A.B. from Harvard University in 1945 and received his B.D. from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as well as completed graduate studies in Social Ethics at Harvard.

Prior to his term at Gettysburg College, Chaplain Vannorsdall was the Lutheran Campus Pastor at Cornell University, 1957-1962, and his past pastorates include St. Paul's Lutheran Church and St. John's Lutheran Church in Elma, New York, 1949-1951, and Trinity Lutheran Church, New Haven, Connecticut, 1951-1957. He also served as a lecturer at the Yale Divinity School in 1956. Chaplain Vannorsdall served with the Department of Worship, L.C.A. from 1956-1962, and was Chairman of the Local Staff in the Division of College and University Work for the National Lutheran Council from 1960-1962. He wrote *The Place Where We Stand* (Muhlenberg Press, 1961) and lesson materials for the Board of Parish Education, as well as articles and reviews for "The Lutheran" and "Frontiers."

Chaplain Vannorsdall assumed his duties at Gettysburg during a period of change for the college. The Student Christian Association (S.C.A.) had all but fallen by the wayside and compulsory chapel services had been abandoned. Chaplain Vannorsdall did not institute the traditional religious programming but designed a program that would work for the 1960's which acknowledged that the "church [was] a minority movement on campus." He conducted Sunday morning chapel services and formed the Chapel Council which would merge with the S.C.A. in 1965. By the last year of his term at Gettysburg College, Chaplain Vannorsdall expanded the Chapel Council to the point where it was overseeing thirty-six programs involving 500 students and welcomed various faith denominations.

Source: Biographical Sketch from John Vannorsdall's Scrapbook and Charles H. Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence, Gettysburg College, 1832-1985, Vol. II* (Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1987), p. 925-7.

## Scope and Content Note

The Papers of John W. Vannorsdall consist of six series with a majority of the documents included being correspondence and issues and proposals from the late 1960's and early 1970's.

## Series Description

The collections is divided up into six series. **Series I:** War Concerns, **Series II:** Campus Life, **Series III:** Correspondence, **Series IV:** Miscellaneous Publications, **Series V:** Sermons; **Series VI:** Scrapbook.

## Box List

### Box 1

- 1-1 Finding Aid and Accession Correspondence
- Finding Aid
  - Letter dated 28 May 1992 addressed to Anna Jane [Moyer]
  - Letter dated 4 August 2006 addressed to Karen Drickamer
  - Accession form #2021-0024 Edward Whetstone donation
  - Accession form #2021-0042 Edward Whetstone donation
  - Accession form #2021-0045 Tom Boll donation

### Series 1: War Concerns

- 1-2 Vietnam/Cambodia
- "Waist-Deep in the Big Muddy," reaction to Vietnam War, 10 October 1969
  - Telegram from The Board of College Education of the Lutheran Church in New York, May 1970 (J.W.V. personal note attached)
  - Student response to the shootings at Kent State, May 1970 (J.W.V. personal note attached)
  - Letter dated 6 May 1970, C.A. Hanson, President of Gettysburg College to Robert D. Baus, President of Gettysburg College Student Senate, RE: Position of Gettysburg College with regards to the Vietnam War. (J.W.V. personal note attached)
  - Letter dated 6 May 1970, C.A. Hanson, President of Gettysburg College to Senator Scott, RE: Position of Gettysburg College with regards to the Vietnam War. (J.W.V. personal note attached)
  - Broad sides of Strike Steering Committee, one is printed on the back of a State made by US Senator Richard S. Schweiker (R-PA), 5 May 1970 (J.W.V. personal note attached)

- Letter dated 15 May 1970, Representatives of the Steering Committee for Peace to the Parents of Gettysburg College Students, RE: Cambodian Invasion (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Letter dated 18 May 1970, R.A. Schultz, parent, to Chaplain John W. Vannorsdall, RE: involvement of daughter in Campus Anti-War activities. (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Letter dated 2 July 1970, Mary Jane Beeg and John F. Beeg, alumni, to Paul H. Rhodes, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Gettysburg College, RE: Supposed Threat to Chaplain's position (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Written statement by "Students in Support of Nixon, Honor, and Peace" against Student Senate providing funds for anti-war letter to parents. (undated, after 20 May 1970)
- Vietnam Teach-In Agenda dated Tuesday, 20 April 1971 (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Stop the War letter writing initiative

### 1-3 ROTC

- Letter dated 10 April 1970, C.A. Hanson, President of Gettysburg College, to Jeffrey Webber, Chapel Council, RE: ROTC Commissioning in the Christ Chapel (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Letter to the Editor, John Vannorsdall, RE: ROTC Commissioning in Christ Chapel (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Letter dated 14 May 1970, C.A. Hanson, President of Gettysburg College, to Reverend Walter S. Smith, RE: ROTC Commissioning in the Christ Chapel (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Newspaper Article RE: ROTC Commissioning in the Christ Chapel, undated
- Student statement of protest RE: ROTC Commissioning in the Christ Chapel, undated

## Series 2: Campus Life

### 1-4 General

- Student proposal for African American Studies on campus after a trip to New York in 1969.
- Letter to faculty and students regarding the new grading option for the Spring Term of 1970
- List of Participants in Sunday night group discussions about higher learning at Gettysburg College
- Letter from John Vannorsdall regarding a meeting of the Sunday night discussion group, April 1970
- Letter from John Vannorsdall regarding a meeting of the Sunday night discussion group, April 15 April 1970
- Letter from John Vannorsdall regarding a meeting of the Sunday night discussion group, 1 May 1970
- Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty, 16 April 1970
- Draft of Chaplain's Statement to Administrative Staff Meeting, 10 March 1971

- Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty, 2 December 1971 concerning grants to athletes
- Draft of letter dated 14 November 1975, John Vannorsdall to President Hanson, Dean Williams, Dean Holder, and Mr. Lenny O., RE: Colloquium with Board, enclosure: Strategy of BSU for Action to Secure Faculty and Staff Members from Minority Groups in the Immediate Future.
- Letter dated 4 February 1976, E. Thomas Johnson, Chairman, Student Conduct Review Board and Frank B. Williams, Dean of Students to Whom it May Concern, RE: Assault by Fraternity Brothers of Townsperson, 8 December 1975
- Proposal from students concerned about the future of Gettysburg College, undated
- Draft of statement regarding the Honor Code by John Vannorsdall, undated
- Letter inviting students to participate in a “Free” Classroom experiment, undated
- Miscellaneous notes on a broad range of college issues

1-5 Moratorium, 15-16 April 1969

- “This Way Out”, guide to discussions during moratorium
- A reflection on the moratorium by Jim Henderson with discussion summaries attached

1-6 Alcohol

- Draft of a Possible College Policy on Alcohol, dated 16 October 1969
- News Bureau Publication, Gettysburg College Ext. 224, Vol. 1, No. 3, 13 December 1969, *Special Board of Trustees Report on Alcohol*
- 13 December 1969, *On the Question of Alcohol*
- Letter dated 15 December 1969, John Vannorsdall to Residential Life Commission and President Hanson, RE: Alcohol Policy
- Letter dated 29 December 1969, Lewis B. Frank, Associate Professor, to Residential Life Commission and President Hanson, RE: Gettysburg College Ext. 224, Vol. 1, No. 3, 13 December 1969
- Magazine Article dated 7 January 1970 RE: Alcohol Policy
- Letter dated 13 January 1970, Lewis B. Frank, Associate Professor, to Residential Life Commission and President Hanson, RE: Alcohol Policy

1-7 Housing

- “An Attempt to Gain our Rights to Privacy and Choice”, Student Statement RE: Visitation in Dorms, undated
- “Today’s demonstration and its Purpose”, RE: Visitation in the dorms, undated
- Memorandum dated 6 March 1975, 3:30 PM, Paul G. Peterson to President Hanson RE: Letter about Visitation Option Plan
- Letter from Karen Dworski and Jeffrey Brader RE: Objections of Whole Earth House to change in Housing Policy, undated

1-8 Chapel and College Events

- Letter dated 9 April 1970, David J. Cowan to Faculty and Staff, RE: Environmental Teach –In (Earth Day) on 22 April 1970, enclosure: Tentative Schedule
- Moratorium Flyer (most likely 1971) (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Knoxville Exchange Agenda, 8-14 November [1972].
- Flyer for Silent March, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., undated.
- Flyer for Vigil For Peace

1-9 *EatsIt* (1968)

- *EatsIt*, Vol. 1, No. II, 10 September 1968
- Drafts of statements regarding students rights and basic freedoms (J.W.V. personal note attached)
- Draft, *A Statement of Conscience*, RE: *EatsIt*. By students
- *The Situation*, RE: *EatsIt*. Statement by students
- *The Situation*, RE: *EatsIt*. Statement by students
- Memorandum dated 25 October 1968, C.A. Hanson, RE: attached letter to the Board of Trustees by C.A. Hanson dated 12 October 1968, reaction to *EatsIt*

1-10 “Hearts and Minds” (11/1975)

- Letter dated 15 November 1975, John Vannorsdall to Bob Bloom, RE: Viewing of the film “Hearts and Minds”
- Letter dated 20 November, Unknown to President Hanson, RE: Scheduling Conflict

1-11 The IN (1976)

- Letter dated 2 February 1976, John Vannorsdall to Friends, RE: The transfer of The IN from the Chapel to the College Union.
- A Tribute to The IN

Series 3: Correspondence

1-12 Miscellaneous (alphabetical)

- Letter dated 11 March 1969, John Vannorsdall to Arnold, Basil, Stan, Frank, and Paul, RE: Playing students for one week
- Letter dated 14 July 1970, Rev. John A. Huenniger, pastor, to The Board of Directors, Gettysburg College, RE: Supposed Threat of Chaplain’s position
- Letter dated 11 June 1970, Stephen Johnson, Chaplain to John Vannorsdall, RE: Two attached letters dealing with Pennsylvania Student Financial Aid.
- Letter dated 2 December 1975, John Vannorsdall to Public Relations, RE: Alumni Bulletin Column (draft attached)
- Letter dated 16 February 1971, Arthur Cohn, Director of Serious Music to Rev. Lawrence R. Recla, RE: Royalties for *Jesus Christ, Superstar* Concert on 25 March 1971

- Letter dated 19 June 1970, Leonard E. Shertzer, Pastor to John Vannorsdall, RE: Concealment of Christ Chapel's Reredos
- Memorandum from Frank, RE: attached letter to him from John Vannorsdall, undated

1-13 President C.A. Hanson (chronological)

- Memorandum dated 13 October 1971, C.A. Hanson to John Vannorsdall, RE: *Junto*
- Memorandum dated 14 July 1972, C.A. Hanson to John Vannorsdall, RE: Synod Relationships
- Letter dated 29 August 1972, C.A. Hanson to Jean V. Smith, RE: Letter to the Board of Trustees
- Memorandum dated 24 October 1972, C.A. Hanson to John Vannorsdall, RE: Joint Committee on Athletics
- Memorandum dated 21 November 1972, C.A. Hanson to John Vannorsdall, RE: Synod and Admissions
- Letter dated 27 December 1972, John Vannorsdall to Mr. and Mrs. Leo Smith, RE: Gifts in Memory of Lee
- Letter dated 29 December 1972, Chapel Staff to President Hanson and Dean Williams, RE: Use of Carlisle Street House
- Memorandum, (1973?), John Vannorsdall to President Hanson, RE: Budget
- Memorandum, 11 July 1973, CA. Hanson to John Vannorsdall, RE: Budget
- Letter, undated, John Vannorsdall to President Hanson and Dean Williams, RE: Honorary Degree for Zane Brandenburg

Series 4: Miscellaneous Publications

1-14

- Pamphlet, *Christ Chapel, Gettysburg College*, 1953
- Pamphlet, *Cries: in the Wilderness Prepare Expressions of Religious Concern*, Gettysburg College, Fall 1963
- Pamphlet, *Chapel Choir* Fall 1964
- Pamphlet, *Religion Meets Science*, Prof. Hagen Staack, Ph.D, Religious Emphasis Week, 21-15 March, 1965
- *Classified*, September 1974
- Program, *Lent 1976*, Christ Chapel
- Flyer, *Student Lecture Series*, 1976
- Pamphlet, *Changing Values and the American Future*, undated
- Pamphlet, *The Cybernetic Revolution Its Meaning for Man*, Robert Theobald, February 7, 8, 9, Christ Chapel
- Pamphlet, *75 Years of Christian Growth: The Student Christian Association of Gettysburg College, 1867-1942*, ed, Kent Gilbert

- Magazine, *The Lutheran*, Dec. 20, 1972, including a Christmas article “And Morning Will Soon Be Here” by John W. Vannorsdall, Chaplain of Gettysburg College (Acc.# 2021-0045)

#### Series 5: Sermons

##### 1-15 Sermons (Acc. #2021-0024 & 2021-0042)

- Kennedy assassination and Service of Remembrance, Christ Chapel, November 24-25, 1963, 3 pp.
- “The Weakness of God”, Christ Chapel, November 15, 1964, 3 pp.
- Mother’s Weekend 1965, Christ Chapel, 4 pp.
- Father’s Day, Christ Chapel, October 2, 1966, 3 pp.
- “Bread and Dignity”, Christ Chapel, October 23, 1966, 3 pp.
- “When God Is Silent”, Christ Chapel, November 13, 1966
- “Vietnam: One Man’s Perspective”, Christ Chapel, April 23, 1967, 4 pp.
- “It Was a Very Good Year for Paper Moons”, Mother’s Weekend 1967, 4 pp.
- Passion Sunday, Christ Chapel, 4 pp.

#### Series 6: Scrapbook

##### 1-16 Scrapbook

#### Related Collections

Record Group 3.4: The Office of the Chaplain; The Papers of the Chapel and the Student Christian Association

#### Contact Information

Special Collections and College Archives  
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