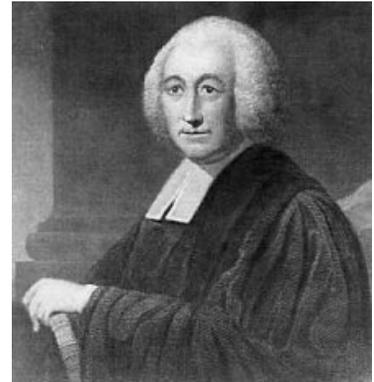


## **#850 The Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg – Establishing the first Lutheran Theological Seminary in America at Gettysburg**

**Henry Muhlenberg’s project of developing a theological seminary for the training of pastors disappeared in the smoke of the Revolutionary War** (according to *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America*, by Abdel Ross Wentz, revised edition, © 1964).

During the years after Henry Muhlenberg first presided over the organization of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, which constituted the birth of the Lutheran Church in America, other Lutheran synods (a regional organization of Lutheran congregations) had been formed – in New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and even elsewhere to the west in Pennsylvania itself.



Henry Muhlenberg

Henry Muhlenberg died in 1786. Over the course of the next two generations, the weakness of the regional synods was evident, so in 1820, in Hagerstown, Maryland, representatives from several of the synods formed a national synod, the “General Synod of the Lutheran Church in the United States.” A principle objective of the General Synod was the development of a theological seminary. It would be the first in the



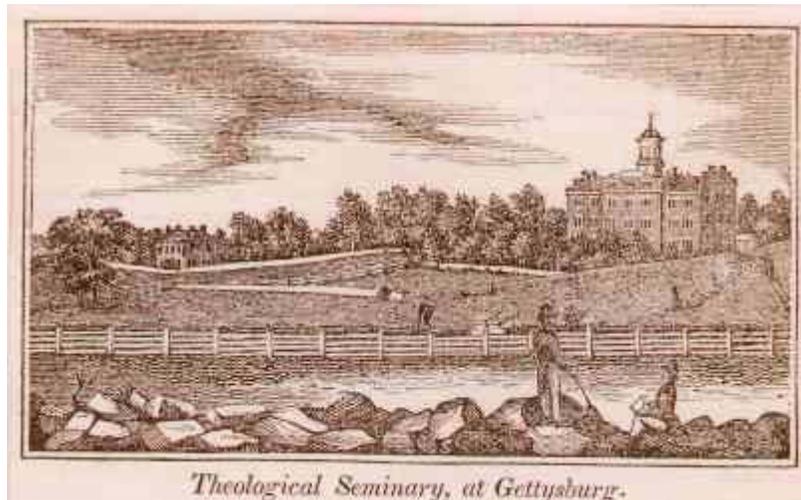
Samuel Simon Schmucker

United States. The men born and educated in Germany that were serving as pastors and leaders in America were gradually passing from the scene. The establishment of a seminary for the training of Lutheran preachers was a step of great importance. It meant that American Lutherans would no longer be dependent on German support or guidance, but were prepared to carry on as an independent, self-directing American Lutheran Church.

Further delays occurred in the establishment of a seminary, but a young Samuel Simon (S.S.) Schmucker pressed the General Synod in 1825 to move forward in establishing a seminary. The result was the setting of a time for the opening of a seminary. Dr. Schmucker was elected the professor, a board of directors was chosen, and Dr. Benjamin Kurtz was chosen to go to Europe to secure books for the library and funds for the endowment.

**Key Understanding #1: *Establishing the first Lutheran theological seminary in America at Gettysburg.* The seminary was begun in 1826 at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The site was chosen because it was centrally located in relation to the regional Lutheran synods that at that time were a part of the General Synod.**

[Sources: *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America*, by Abdel Ross Wentz; *Luther and the Reformation*, by Reginald W. Deitz; consolidated in *Gettysburg Seminary*, tape #10, *Martin Luther King Series*, 10-25-94.]



**Key Understanding #2: *Establishing the first Lutheran theological seminary in America at Gettysburg.*** The Lord ordained that the “just war” Lutherans build their first New World seminary at Gettysburg – and then brought the greatest battle in the history of the New World to Gettysburg and the seminary – to make the statement that the *sword-carrying side of the Protestant Reformation was/is errant and represents Men o’ War who cannot build the true spiritual house of God.*

*1 Chronicles 28:3 (KJV) But God said unto me [King David], THOU SHALT NOT BUILD AN HOUSE FOR MY NAME, BECAUSE THOU HAST BEEN A MAN OF WAR, AND HAST SHED BLOOD.*

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