

ORAL HISTORY MATERIALS

- 1) Douglas Allan Rosenvinge born March 13, 1954.
- 2) The interview is divided into four units. Unit one deals with basic biographical material and Mr. Rosenvinges early college years at Concordia College, Bronxville, New York. Unit two deals with his years at Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Unit three comprises his days at Concordia Theological Seminary also in Ft. Wayne. Unit four deals with the question of why the Senior College was closed and the affect that will have on the future ministerium of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
- 3) FOUR YEARS AFTER-A STUDENT LOOKS AT CONCORDIA SENIOR COLLEGE, FT. WAYNE, INDIANA
- 4) Interviewer: Clark M. Davis Interview conducted: October 11, 1980
- 5) Terms of Use: The file and tape are Open.
- 6) Length of Interview: Sixty minutes, twenty-one pages of transcript

FOUR YEARS AFTER-A STUDENT LOOKS AT
CONCORDIA SENIOR COLLEGE, FT. WAYNE, INDIANA

An Interview with
Douglas Allan Rosenvinge

Interview Conducted by
Clark M. Davis
October 11, 1980

Preface

The interview with Douglas Allan Rosenvinge is an attempt to see how the closing of Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Indiana has affected one student in his preparation for the ministry. The interview is informal and yet seeks to be objective in getting at some of the basic issues surrounding the closing of the Senior College. The interview also attempts to explore some of the basic differences between the Senior College and Concordia Theological Seminary which now occupies the former's campus. All this through the eyes of a student who has attended both institutions.

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I. Background

Basic Biographical Material

D: This is Clark Davis and I am speaking with Doug Rosenvinge at his residence, 3670 N. Wells. The date is October 11, 1980, and the time is 1:07 p.m. Doug, would you state your full name for me please.

R: My full name is Douglas Allan Rosenvinge.

D: Would you spell your last name, Doug?

R: Rosenvinge.

D: okay and your age?

R: Twenty six

D: What is your address, Doug?

R: 3672 N. Wells Street.

D: 3672 N. Wells. And what's your home town or where did you spend most of your life?

R: North Massapequa, Long Island, New York.

D: Would you spell that for me please - Massapequa

R: Massapequa.

D: What about your education, did you attend a Lutheran elementary school?

R: I attended Trinity Evangelical Lutheran School in Long Island, New York, to the eighth grade.

D: What about a Lutheran high school?

R: I attended Long Island Lutheran High School up to 1972 when I graduated.

D: What colleges did you attend?

R: Concordia College, Bronxville, [New York] for two years and then Concordia Senior College, [Ft. Wayne, Indiana] for the next two years.

The Junior College Years

D: Doug, the nature of this project is to get your reactions to those Senior College years, but in order to do that we'd like

- D: to talk a little bit about your Junior College years. How do you feel about that experience at Bronxville?
- R: Well, I feel very good about that experience at Bronxville. For me it wasn't much of a transition from high school because about a third of my graduating high school class also went to Bronxville. So in a way it was slightly advanced high school, at least for the first year.
- D: Why did you happen to attend Bronxville?
- R: It was close and its cost was lower than the other schools that I had applied to.
- D: What other colleges did you apply to?
- R: I applied to Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts and the Kings College in Briarcliff Manor, New York.
- D: Were those religiously related schools?
- R: Yes, both of the others were independent Christian colleges.
- D: Doug, can you describe the nature of the curriculum of the classes at Bronxville for me?
- R: Generally, Bronxville was a liberal arts institution and the classes that it offered everyone, at least in the first two years, were not too differentiated at that point. It was generally liberal arts [with] the standard [courses] like English and science. They had some very good science courses which was my interest at the time and a very good arts program both in music and in other forms of arts, including photography.
- D: Were there any specialized courses at Bronxville that you could remember?
- R: The only specialized course, at least for the pre-theology program that I was in, was Greek. [phrase omitted]
- D: Do you think that this Junior College program adequately prepared you for the Senior College?
- R: Yes. It did in some ways, and no, in others. I had along with a number of other students problems learning Greek and the other languages in Bronxville. During my time, that seemed to have been a problem among a number of the students. There were a couple of notable exceptions. But it seems that most of us did have problems with foreign languages. Other than that, our preparation was sufficient.
- D: You mentioned that you were in the pre-theology program when you started the Junior College program. Do you remember how many were in your class?

- R: Well, in the beginning there were quite a few and at the end there were quite few. (laugh)
- D: Maybe we can expand on that in terms of numbers, how many did you wind up graduating with in the pre-theology class?
- R: I think there were only, and this is only a guess, [a section was deleted] about twenty-five guys or less graduated. [Of those] there were maybe twenty that went to the Senior College.
- D: Was Greek the number one obstacle?
- R: In my mind Greek was the number one obstacle.
- D: What was the social life like at Bronxville?
- R: Bronxville had a very active social life. There were quite a few girls on the campus [two phrases deleted] and there was a lot going on. [phrase deleted]
- D: Maybe we should pin down where Bronxville is. Can you give us an idea where Bronxville is?
- R: It is located roughly twelve miles from the center of Manhattan, north on Highway 22, otherwise known as White Plains Road. [This is a] major route coming north.
- D: So you also had the social life of New York City close at hand.
- R: Oh yes. A number of us made numerous trips, especially in our second year, once we had gotten accustomed to the area and learned a little about the trains and so forth. We went down to New York quite a bit.

The Senior College Years

First Reactions

- D: [Your years at Bronxville] served then as the background for your Senior College years. Let's talk about those Senior College years. Let's [start with] your first reaction to Fort Wayne and Indiana after coming from Bronxville.
- R: Well, my first reaction was kind of negative. My family had moved to Florida from New York before I went to the Senior College. Before going to Fort Wayne, I took a train up to New York City to visit some friends and drove out from New York City with one friend, Ted Rellstab. We were driving out and came to Indiana. It was a Sunday and there was hardly anyone on the road. [phrase deleted] When we approached Fort Wayne we saw a sign that said, "Fort Wayne the next five exits." For as far as the eye could see [there were]

- R: farms and that was it. No other cars, no other people, just farms. Ted turned to me and said, "I came to Fort Wayne and it was closed, let's go home." (laugh) That was our first reaction. We went on just to see what the campus was like.
- D: What year was this that you came to Fort Wayne?
- R: Oh that would be, let's see, I guess that would be the Fall of 1974.
- D: So you came on to see what the campus was like. What was your first impression of the campus?
- R: The campus itself is quite a bit different from the impression that Fort Wayne gives. When you come across Fort Wayne, it's very commercialized and just basically looks like nothing. phrase deleted [Yet] when you come up to our campus, you're struck first by the woods that surround it. It seems to be isolated by the woods from Fort Wayne. It's like an island. As you drive into the campus, the well-treed road on the way in, the main entrance, and the large lawns give a very peaceful look. The way the buildings rise out of the ground gives a very peaceful setting to the whole campus. It makes one feel at home.
- D: What about a first reaction to the courses that you were taking? [Do] you have any recollections of the courses that you took or your first reaction to them?
- R: Well, my first reaction was the amount of work that was required from us. It was more than Bronxville. At Bronxville there was a lot of time to fool around and have a good time, but at the Senior College you got the impression right away that they were serious about what you were doing.
- D: What about a first reaction concerning the other students or student life? Obviously, there was a big change over Bronxville. [phrase deleted]
- R: Well, I think part of the student life was dependent on one fact. We all felt we were misplaced. [phrase deleted] (laugh) I mean why go to Fort Wayne? That was the big 'why are we here' and I think that was one bond that brought most of us together. Most of us [who] came to Fort Wayne, [never] had any intention of going to Fort Wayne, but there was just no way to get around it. So that's why we were there. And second, we were there for the same reason, to study to become ministers. We were about the same age. Since we were all in the same boat and had similar interests, it was one great communal family. A lot of fun and a lot of friends.
- D: We're going to want to explore that a little bit later. What about your first reaction to the faculty? How did you perceive them?

R: My first reaction to the faculty was that they were very knowledgeable or competent men. I had little question about the men that I came across and their abilities.

Reflective Reactions-Courses

D: We're going to want to explore that question, too. Let's take a look back at some of these things based upon your reflections on the institution now that you have been out of it for awhile, and the institution has been closed for a while. In relationship to the courses, Doug, can you describe what you perceive the educational philosophy of the Senior College to be?

R: Well, as I said before, when you [first got to the] Senior College you attended some classes [and] got the idea that they meant business. They were serious about what they were doing. I think the first thing that they attempted to do was to strip away from an individual any unfounded or Sunday School type of faith. With the idea being not just to leave the person naked without a faith, but now to enable him, with proper tools, to rebuild the Biblical faith and to build a strong faith that was capable of weathering the modern world and the modern challenges that people would receive. One must remember that a number of students came from the Midwest, or from other areas where perhaps they would not be confronted with the modern problems that one would face say humanism, rationalism, [phrase deleted] or just the plain secularism [phrase deleted] in the larger cities.

D: So there was a big cross culture type of thing really going on within the same context of your culture. Did this cause some problems [for] some of the guys from the Midwest [who] didn't quite understand why this educational philosophy was being undertaken? [phrase deleted]

R: Well, I know a couple of students, and I would say just a couple, [phrase deleted] who eventually dropped out of the program because they were unable to deal intellectually with what the professors were saying. [They] were unable to either formulate counter arguments in their own mind, or unable to understand what the guy was driving at. In essence they were unable to really react with flexibility.

D: Was this educational philosophy [something] that was written down, or were students just subtly made aware of it through their class experience?

R: Well, I found part of it written in Dr. [Oscar] Walle's book under the objectives of the Seminary [Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana] pardon me, I mean of the Senior College. [These objectives were] to build a Biblical faith, a strong faith in the students. Now as far as this particular method or set of objectives to achieve that end, I wasn't aware of it at the time. [phrase deleted]

- R: I came across this at an alumni meeting right before I left. During my last year they had a joint alumni meeting and it was something to that affect that I attended. They invited students to come if they wanted to. I was kind of amazed at the description of the educational process and how it worked. [phrase deleted] That was exactly what was happening to me in my thought processes as though I was there.
- D: How did the curriculum of the Senior College differ from that of Junior College?
- R: Well, it was more specific. [section deleted] Now we were starting to get into the philosophy behind the sciences and the philosophies [behind] some theologies. Now we were going, you might say, into the abstract world. [phrase deleted]
- D: How did this differ from what you had initially expected?
- R: Well, I didn't come to the Senior College with too many expectations. We heard a lot about it and everybody went there and so it was just kind of a, well you know you go through the next door and you don't really think about what's going to happen too much. You just [didn't] like where it was. (laugh)
- D: So the nagging question of the location (laugh) comes up again. What were some of the educational standards at the Senior College over and against the Junior College? What about grading procedures? For instance, were they tough? Were they lax?
- R: I would say the grading, generally, was tougher. You had to work for the grades for the most part. Especially in my concentration which was theology. There just seemed to be nothing you could do to get a B much less an A. (laugh)
- D: We alluded to it a little bit before, but what about the reading material that was assigned? The quality and the quantity of reading material?
- R: Well, the quantity [and] the quality [were] high in my particular concentration. Rather than reading what somebody else had written about Bultmann, we had a book that Bultmann wrote to read. Or any of the others--Barth...
- D: Maybe you could give us an idea of what the average reading assignment for a week would be in something like that.
- R: Oh, I wish I could. I don't remember any more and accurate figure, but we would discuss, say in a quarter, there were three quarters, four theologians. I would say we would have to read one book by the theologian about every two weeks and then write a report on it.
- D: So you were actually reading the theologians instead [of] reading about the theologians.

R: Yes.

D: [Sentence deleted] What about papers and projects, [phrase deleted] were they frequent?

R: About every course, to my recollection, had a paper or a project.

D: Would this be a simple two or three page paper?

R: No, generally they'd be about ten to fifteen pages, or for a course there might be four or five three-page papers due for the quarter.

D: Could you give us an idea about your class load. What type of courses were you taking [phrase deleted] during your senior year? How about languages? What languages were you studying?

R: Well, the languages that [were] offered at the Senior College when I was there [were] Greek [and Hebrew] You already were to have [passed] a German proficiency before going to the Senior College, or another proficiency in another language. You were really supposed to have Greek before you got there, but there was more [advanced] study in Greek and New Testament studies. [phrase deleted]

D: What about sciences--social sciences?

R: Yes, sociology and psychology [were] taught at the Senior College. As far as other sciences, one course which was memorable to me, was taught by [Professor] Oscar Walle which was the Philosophy of Science or a name similar to that.

D: What about philosophy per se, were there philosophy courses?

R: Yes, there were philosophy courses. I remember a course by Professor Soovik which dealt [with] ahhh, well we had other names for the course.

D: Maybe you would like to share (laugh) [some of] those names with us?

R: Well, [phrase deleted] one of the early questions was, What is the essence of anything? That became [phrase deleted] What is the essence of duck?

D: Yes, I remember quite well that statement. Doug, what kind of a student were you at the Senior College?

R: Well, I went up and down a little bit. I guess mainly a high C student if you want to put me on an academic spectrum. I could have worked harder. I did work hard, [but] I could [have] worked harder. I worked awful hard in Greek, but I did take some time to relax.

Reflective Reactions-Student Life

- D: Good, that's well needed and fits into the next area we're going to talk about: student life. What do you think you gained as a student by coming to the Senior College?
- R: Well, I gained a lot of friends. A lot of friends that I have maintained, even though we have gone separate ways. I gained a sense of community. I think you were kind of separated before you came to the Senior College. I think what I gained there was a feeling of community with the other men who were there, with the other students. [phrase deleted]
- D: Let's kind of explore that a little bit. I know that was a big reason for the development of the Senior College. How did you really perceive the sense of community? [In] what ways was it visible to you?
- R: I don't know if you could call it---well, I guess you could call [it] visible. There were certain outcroppings of normal college spirits, such as senior prank day, [phrase deleted] but these were taken generally with a smile by the administration. I do remember cap gun wars between dorms and things like that, with even very technically evolved rules to how long one was actually dead by what type of shot and things like this. We had "lakings."* All this was in the spirit of fun. [phrase deleted] There were rivalries between the dorms in intermurals and things like that, at the same time, the sense of community was preserved and maintained, [even] extended with our joint dorm devotions. We would invite other dorms over to join with us in devotions, invite a professor, and it was really a community.
- D: What about group alliances or factions---were these things a problem?
- R: Oh, on occasion it was, these things popped up [but] I don't think they were very serious for the most part.
- D: Dr. Walle mentioned in his book that, for instance, fellows from Bronxville thought that every thing west of the Hudson River was Indian country. [phrase deleted] Did you find [a] close knitness between all the Bronxville guys?
- R: Yes, [phrase deleted] Bronxville guys [seemed] to stick together a lot more than other guys for some reason. [You would] find Bronxville guys running the snack bar, taking up positions in the library, [or] doing most of the things in running the student commons. [phrase deleted] For some reason, I guess they took positions of power. [phrase deleted] We all---I had this feeling too, had trouble when [we] first got to Fort Wayne in dealing with the

* Lakings- The physical act of throwing someone in the lake, generally the dorm proctor.

- R: Midwestern people. It just seemed odd, sitting in a place talking to a person who had no conception of what an ocean looked like. Of course, growing up on Long Island, who doesn't know what an ocean looks like!
- D: What about the other schools? Did the other schools have their own little factions or groups too?
- R: I wouldn't go so far as to call them factions because there was a great deal of friendship between all of these groups. [Yet] each of the schools primarily had their own clusters. [Those] generally didn't hold up, say if you came to the cafeteria for lunch. Generally the way things broke up were by the dorms guys were in. Dorms only held about twenty-six guys. These twenty-six guys would then eat together. During my stay there, it was very popular to buy dorm shirts that would then identify you as a member of your dorm. So while there was cohesiveness between the individual schools where the guys came from before, there was [phrase deleted] even more of a cohesiveness by the second year between the dorm you lived in.
- D: You mentioned dorm devotions as being one part of the sense of community. What about the rest of the worship life at the Senior College? Did that add anything at all?
- R: Well, the worship life did add a lot to the community. For the most part, I think that the chapel services were well attended. By well attended, I would say perhaps a half to two-thirds of the students at a given time during regular services would be there. Almost everybody [attended when] special things were going on. [Chapel] gave us different experiences in worship that many of us hadn't had before, coming from our own individual churches where they had their own customs, then meeting all together in one place where other customs might be tried out and experimented with. [phrase deleted]
- D: What about the celebration of the Sacrament? Was it on a regular basis?
- R: If I remember correctly, it was every Wednesday, every Wednesday morning we'd have the Lord's Supper. [As] a matter of fact, when the Seminary arrived, it was kind of a sparking between the two groups because they the Seminary did not want it as regularly as we did.
- D: [phrase deleted] I think we pretty well covered this idea of the sense of community. How did the professors fit into this whole sense of community? Did they encourage it?
- R: I think the professors encouraged it. The professors would take a very active interest in each of the students that they came across? I've been invited over to professors houses a couple of

- R: times along with many other students. [phrase deleted] Our residence counselors were faculty members who lived in houses adjacent to our dorms. There would be one counselor and his family living in a house that was set off from about four dorms, [and] he [would] be the counselor for that village. You'd see him coming through the dorm every once in a while, not so much to check up on everybody, but to say hi and to find out what was going on. So you felt that they were all part of the community.
- D: Did you ever think that you missed anything by coming to the Senior College?
- R: Ahh, well, New York. (laugh)
- D: I guess that's an obvious.
- R: Generally no. As far as the academics or [the] personal growth, no. The Senior College, I think, was an experience that I wouldn't trade. [phrase deleted] When I was there, at times I would have traded it rather easily for something else, but now as I look back I wouldn't trade it.
- D: What was the social life like at the Senior College? Can you describe that?
- R: Well, there were dances, I am assuming that's what you are referring to at this point. If you mean social contacts outside of the Senior College that students had, there were generally several groups like Parkview School of Nursing, did I say Parkview? Lutheran School of Nursing, and a couple of other groups which would invite [our] guys out. [We] would invite them on to the campus for square dances, picnics, festivals, gatherings, get-togethers, all sorts of things that would go on. [These were] planned by a very active social committee.
- D: What about female students? Did you have female students when you were there?
- R: When I was there we had about forty female students, somewhere between twenty and forty.
- D: What kind of contribution did they make to the social life of the campus?
- R: Well, they made a very good contribution as they provided a little change of scenery on the campus. (laugh) They were very friendly and a couple of them I count as friends even today. [phrase deleted]
- D: What kind of contributions did they make outside of social life? What about classroom activity and things like that?
- R: As far as classroom activity, I would say that some of them were smarter than most of our guys. (laugh)

- D: Did that create any real problems in the classroom?
- R: [phrase deleted] I didn't notice any real problem between the girls and any of the professors or other students. There may have been, but again from my limited perspective on that, not that I noticed.
- D: Can you give me an average age of the students at the Senior College when you were there?
- R: I guess that would be around twenty, twenty-three, or something like that.
- D: What about any older [phrase deleted] or married students on campus?
- R: Oh, we had married students. A few lived on campus in some of the campus housing, but not in the dorms. There were a couple of apartments available that couples lived in. [phrase deleted] The married students, to some extent, formed almost their own grouping within our campus. When most of us would be going to coffee breaks, they'd be having married student's meeting down in the bottom of the student commons where most of them would get together. I can understand that because being that young and being just married and then being in the Senior College situation in the midst of the academics, there was probably a lot of things they needed that cohesiveness for. [phrase deleted]
- D: [Did] they separate themselves from the rest of the community then, or did they try to interact with the community?
- R: They interacted with the community. I'm just saying why two sets of individuals that come together overlap and [form] a joint community. The single guys also didn't go to some of their things, [phrase deleted] because after all we were single. I don't mean to say that [there were] two separate communities. There were two identifiable communities that mingled and worked together.
- D: Talking about community, what type of social contacts did you have with the city of Fort Wayne itself?
- R: Good ones. I found it very easy to get a job. The Senior College had a very high name and position among the people here. That was always expressed to us by the administration of the Senior College. I think there was an effort maintained by those of us who sought work outside to give a good image to the Senior College and that in turn helped others. It was kind of a joint thing.
- D: Where did you work when you were at the Senior College?
- R: When I was at the Senior College I worked for a short time at King's, a department store [near the college]. I worked as a

- R: stockboy and then afterwards I got a job at a machine shop, partly because I had the good reference of being at the Senior College. Most of the time, however, because I didn't have a car [phrase deleted] I worked for the college in the library.
- D: What other types of contacts did you have with Fort Wayne? Did you attend any public functions or church in town?
- R: Well, I attended a number of different churches. Ahh, some were in town, some were out of town, most of the time I attended a church in New Haven, Connecticut, I'm sorry, New Haven, Indiana.
- D: Then you feel that the Senior College was very well respected in the community of Fort Wayne.
- R: Right, I think it was. I find an interesting thing is that if you still look at the city maps even though they've changed the other roads, [phrase deleted] I don't know whether it's an oversight, [but] the name of the campus, where the Seminary now, [is] still Concordia Senior College on all [the] new maps. (laugh) phrase deleted
- Somebody must like us. (laugh)
- D: [phrase deleted] Well, what then could you give as an overall picture of the student life at the Senior College? If you were to sum it up in a capsule statement, what would you say?
- R: A living, breathing community of Christian men and women who loved each other, would grow from their contacts with each other and their professors.

Reflective Reactions-Faculty/Student Relations

- D: What about faculty-student relations? [phrase deleted] How close were you to your professors?
- R: For the most part, I was not all that close to many professors. Now I remember tlaking with Professor Essig and a couple of other professors about personal situations.

[end of side one]

- D: This is Clark Davis and we are now taping the second side of our interview with Doug Rosenvinge at his residence, 3672 N. Wells. The date is October 11, 1980. And the time is now 1:42 p.m. Doug, when we turned the tape over, we were talking about faculty-student relationship. You had mentioned that you weren't that close to your professors, but how close did the professors attempt to get to the students at the Senior College?
- R: Well, I think that the professors for the most part, I mean there

R: is of course variation with every faculty, but I think that for the most part professors did try to get in contact with the students. Now I don't think that many of them came to the coffee hours, but on the other hand, as I said before, I do remember going over and eating at a professor's house on a couple of occasions. I do remember that they were always available if you needed to talk with one about almost anything, a theological problem, a personal problem, or any problem. I can remember that they were willing and ready at any time to be there.

D: What type of in classroom relationships went on between faculty and student?

R: Well, classroom was more of a separation between professor and the student. You knew that the professor was a professor and that you were the student. Now I don't mean to indicate that professors habitually squelched student's ideas, complaints, whatever, but they had a short period of time to cover a lot of material and thus off they went. Nor do I mean that things were straight lecture, or that they were force feeding material or anything like [that]. There was, [I would say], a clear distinction between the student and the professor.

D: What about out of class? How did the faculty interact with the students?

R: Out of class then the interaction was more [open] than in class.

D: What about intramurals? Did any of the [professors] play intramurals?

R: That I can't recall. I think a couple may have been involved with them. [phrase deleted] My particular dorm was known for apathy as far as intramurals [were] concerned. I think my first year there we never fielded a team for any of the intramurals. (laugh) It was only our last year, when we heard that the Senior College was going to be closed, that our dorm decided to for once [go] to the field. We had a history [phrase deleted] of not fielding any real teams.

D: I know that from my past experience, one of the highlights of the year was the Faculty Follies. Could you maybe enlighten us on this particular area of interaction between faculty and student?

R: Well, I have to admit that I wasn't present for the Faculty Follies when they were on, so I can't comment on that other than that the students that I did talk to who went were impressed by the humorous stage show that was put on by faculty people. Our last one was a little pointed. [section deleted] As I remember, it had something to do with the coming to a close of the Senior College.

An interesting thing, I remember was that often Professor Spomer

- R: would come into the cafeteria, which was also our general gathering place throught the day, and go to the [piano] and just start playing some rather interesting and jazz-like compositions. (laugh)
- D: What about faculty and student get-togethers like various banquets? [phrase deleted] Can you describe some of those activities for us?
- R: The only banquet that is fixed in my mind is once we had a Seder meal on the campus which was stage primarily by the Hebrew people. [phrase deleted] We held the traditional Seder with a Christian Communion reference at the end in the dining hall. The faculty was present. They were not sitting at tables by themselves, per se, but we had a faculty member at our table who just happened to stop [and sit down]. [phrase deleted] It was free and open where everyone sat. [phrase deleted]
- D: Can you evaluate these kinds of experiences that you had with the faculty? Were they of value to [your] relationship with the faculty members?
- R: Well, I think the one thing that comes across when you [deal] with the faculty members on this level is that you get to know them as people. You get a better model then to go by later on. [phrase deleted] The type of person you might be if you were in a similar situation. [section deleted] You had role models which were being displayed in front of you of how these guys dealt with their everyday life. You dealt with just regular people not just with the image of the professor in the classroom.
- D: So there was a pastoral model there?
- R: Very much so, very much so.
- D: What year did you graduate from the Senior College?
- R: I graduated from the Senior College in 1976.

The Seminary Years

The Preparation

- D: What year did you enter the Seminary?
- R: I believe I entered the Seminary in 1978. I say I believe [because] I am not quite sure of when. I had left the program for about a year and a half, and just precisely how that falls, I'm not too sure at this point. Also I was, for a short time, not a special student, but something akin to that before I went right back into the program.

- D: How do you think, [Doug] the Senior College prepared you for your Seminary years?
- R: Well, I think it prepared us well by giving us a heavy course load. [phrase deleted] We were trained with the idea [section deleted] that certain things had to be done, [such as] a large amount of reading. How to cope with your own personal life versus what you were required to do to make the grade. How to juggle these values when you could either go one way and throw it all to the wind or [in] your personal life go the other way and throw all your academics to the wind and just go after what you wanted personally. You learned to balance and juggle the two. As far as the academic preparation I think it was superb.
- D: Do you feel that you were better prepared than other students who came to the Seminary?
- R: I think that compared to some of the students who are coming to the Seminary now, I was better prepared.
- D: In what areas do you think that you were better prepared for the Seminary?
- R: I think my [concentration] in theology [gave me] a broad background in the various modern day as well as ancient and medieval theologians. [It gave me] a reference, a frame-work with which I [could] approach the theology that we're studying now. When a reference is made to Thomas Aquinas I [at] least have an idea who Thomas Aquinas was without having to get a one-minute capsule summarization of who Thomas Aquinas was.
- D: [Then it is] primarily in the areas of vocabulary and background material that you feel that you're better prepared.
- R: Yes.
- D: Are there any areas that you think that you weren't better prepared in? [sentence deleted]
- R: Well, not for what the Senior College was designed to do. I can't fault it for any deficiencies that I have, I don't think. You finally get to a point that an institution can only do so much and I think that for what the Senior College set out to do, it more than accomplished its objectives.
- D: We outlined [the] educational philosophy in the Senior College. Maybe we should ask the same thing of the Seminary. What do you think that the educational objective or philosophy of the Seminary is?
- R: Well, the [section deleted] Seminary is in a different situation due to the change in the higher educational structure of the Synod.

- R: They no longer have a large number of guys who previously [have] the background in theology that they had before. You have a lot more people coming in from the outside. I am not commenting on whatever new program was started with River Forest [I believe he meant to say Ann Arbor] turning to a four year school, because most of the people that I know of have not been products of the four-year program. phrase deleted I don't mean to make my comments refer to those people, those in a four-year synodical program but say compared to the average student coming in from another background, I would say that I was better prepared. On the other hand, there are those who are coming in from some of the other backgrounds which more than make up for their deficiencies by even going further and excelling. They [seem to] work harder than some of us. Some of them are very good students.
- D: What do you think the Seminary is trying to do with its educational philosophy?
- R: The Seminary's educational philosophy, I think, is really trying to in four years take a man and mold him along a Lutheran theological line, which of course is their responsibility. If a guy isn't a Lutheran when he comes in, to try to at least make sure he is a Lutheran when he leaves. So most of their education seems to be centered around giving information and patterning some of the central though used to give you ways to make you think like a Lutheran would in certain situations.

The Actual Experience

- D: Doug, why did you choose to come to Fort Wayne?
- R: Primarily my reason for coming to this Seminary was location. I was already here in Fort Wayne and so when they moved the Seminary here, it was financially better for me simply to stay here. Also at the time, I don't know whether this is still true or not, but the per quarter hour course fee was far less here in Fort Wayne than [in] St. Louis. I already was set up in this town. [I had] lived here for three or four years already, it didn't seem to make sense to move to St. Louis for two years. [By this he means for the two years prior to vicarage]
- D: It was rather a pragmatic decision based on personal belief then.
- R: Right. Synod had just gone through the splitting process in St. Louis, and I wasn't really sure that they would have put together a faculty that was really functioning together as a unit, [as] I [had] experienced at the Senior College. [phrase deleted]
- D: Doug, [section deleted] can you reflect on the courses at the Seminary over and against [what] you had at the Senior College?

- R: Well, as far as difficulty, I would say, at least at the time, it appears to me [phrase deleted] that some of the Senior College courses were tougher than our Seminary courses.
- D: Could you be a little bit more specific? [section deleted]
- R: [section deleted] I think that the amount of material that we covered in our nine week courses, taking four major philosophers and going through their thought, was a little rougher than some of the theology courses where we are going through one of the doctrines, [such as] soteriology. Of course, that could simply be because the theology we're studying now is familiar. It's the type of theology that I was brought up with rather than Plato's theory of the soul. [section deleted] That may explain part of it. As far as the work required for certain courses, I think some of them are about equal. I think that [phrases deleted] the Senior College did require more writing than [the Seminary] [section deleted]
- D: [Could you] compare perhaps courses in your theology concentration at the Senior College with one of your dogmatics courses? How would they [compare with each other]? [sentence deleted]
- R: Well, [their] aims were different. The Senior College courses were primarily a survey [phrase deleted] of different theologians, [for instance] Luther. [At the Senior College we studied] Luther's basic ideas of thought for a couple of weeks. How man was saved. What the nature of God was, or something to that effect. While here in our dogmatic courses at the Seminary, we spend more time analyzing the particular doctrine and trying to discover its Biblical roots or how it fits together with other doctrines. So there [was] a difference of emphasis. [phrase deleted]
- D: How would you compare for instance your reading material [in your] theology courses with what you're [getting] in your dogmatics courses?
- R: I would say that for the most part the reading of the theology courses was more difficult at the Senior College than our readings in the dogmatics courses.
- D: What do you see as an improvement for our dogmatics courses here at the Seminary? [section deleted]
- R: I think reading more first hand theological work would be [of] value, but then you also run into the question of time. We've got only those four short years to try to prepare a guy for the ministry, [phrase deleted] with the hope that [he] will continue to study. I believe that is the idea with which we are trained now. If we can at least get the ideas, the core ideas, down this is of course the responsibility of the Seminary, To make sure the person stands in [the] Lutheran Confessions, teaches what they teach and what the Scriptures teach, rather than [a] survey [of] the different theologians. [section deleted]

- D: What about the overall curriculum? How would you judge our overall curriculum over and against the Senior College?
- R: Well, I would say that [phrase deleted] [for me] the curriculum [section deleted] is based on the Senior College [phrase deleted] and the Senior College made a good lead into it. The Senior College gave you the tools with which to think. [phrase deleted] It prepared you for the narrowing down [of ideas] in the Seminary. [section deleted] The Senior College wasn't the Seminary in that it prepared you to be a minister. What it did was prepare you to prepare to be a minister. I think that is a crucial difference.
- D: Do you find a great deal of differences in the background of students [at the Seminary]?
- R: Yes, [phrase deleted] some of the background that we received in the Senior College saves a lot of lecture time because a lot of things [don't] necessarily have to be explained. [Many things] appear crystal clear to a lot of us from the Senior College. [section deleted] Yet newcomers or some of the students who came out of other backgrounds haven't developed the ability [perhaps because] they [don't] have the philosophical training or the background in theology. [They] get stuck on some of the very minor points and things which to us would just be minor considerations which don't really affect the main point. [section deleted] Sometimes, the discussions get really wrapped up in some of these minor things.
- D: Do you think that we should have perhaps two different or three different tracks for students [with different backgrounds]?
- R: I think that if a person is coming in from the outside, I mean outside of the synodical program, and hasn't had good basic [phrase deleted] philosophy courses or survey courses [in] theology, [section deleted] then there ought to be a division or [as] you say, another track to give this to the individual.
- D: So you see perhaps an introductory philosophy or survey of theology [course of value to the Seminary].
- R: It would definitely be most useful. [section deleted] One of the benefits of the Senior College [was] that we had courses on the philosophy of science, or regular philosophy. [phrase deleted] We had the regular courses which dealt with the thought of Luther, Calvin, Augustine and others; [like] Barth and Bultman. [section deleted] We weren't told what these men thought, but we were first to try and write our papers [and] figure out what they thought. Then we would discuss it in class, rather than writing the paper after the class discussion. [section deleted] That alters how you perceive the world or how you perceive thought, and stretches perhaps the categories of your mind to be able to deal with these different people better.

D: I think you've pretty well outline for us [the] courses. In relationship to student life, how do you see the change between the Seminary and the Senior College?

[section deleted]

R: There is a big difference between when I was at the Senior College and [now] that I am at the Seminary. [phrase deleted] Number one, at the Senior College I lived on campus. I was always a part of the dorm activities. [When] I was done at the Senior College I took an apartment here in Fort Wayne. [phrase deleted] So when I came back to the Seminary and started to attend classes I was somewhat isolated from the seminarians generally. [phrase deleted] I think I've noticed a fragmentation. There is not the [same] community. You have a much higher percentage of married people. It's the reverse of the Senior College. At the Senior College, we may [have] had thirty percent married or something [like that] at a given time toward the end. [phrase deleted] Well, here it seems at the Seminary maybe thirty percent of [the students] are single, if that high. So you get a reverse pattern [phrase deleted] which is much more fragmentary. [sentence deleted]

D: You alluded to the sense of community. Can you describe---is there a sense of community at the Seminary?

R: There is a sense of community at the Seminary. I don't think it is as intense as it was at the Senior College. I mean there is a sense of community. The other night when we went to the Octoberfest, there were a number of us who gathered around on a cold, rainy, drizzly day to drink beer and listen to some German songs being played [by] the band. There is a community and it shows up in the chapel services. There's a lot of people attending chapel. A lot of people doing things together but it still is more fragmented along family lines. I would say it's more like a place that you work at.

D: So it's more like a job going to the Seminary that it was actually living [here when you were at the Senior College]?

R: Yes, I look at my watch and say, "Now I have to leave to go to the Seminary." It's just like when I worked in a factory. [phrase deleted] [I don't mean] that the Seminary is as unpleasant as a factory, but [I'm] just saying that [phrase deleted] it seems to be more of a job.

D: What's student life really like at the Seminary? Can you comment on that?

R: What is student life really like? I'm kind of lost at what you're...

D: [section deleted] How does the student life on a day-to-day basis at the Seminary really differ from what you experienced at the Senior College?

- R: [section deleted] I see [the] big difference [as] a lack of cohesion among the guys. Most of us have one or two close friends or a loose group of people that we talk to. You see more people sitting apart from [others] in the cafeteria or with a couple of their family members who come in. It's nice [phrase deleted] that a number of professors let wives come with their husbands to classes if they want. Particularly right now when we have such a low employment rate in this city, it's rather nice to be able to take your wife. [section deleted]
- D: I think we pretty well covered that area. What about the faculty--student relationships at the Seminary? Can you compare them over and against what you had at the Senior College?
- R: Well, I think that my relationships with the faculty here [were] [section deleted] up to my vicarage more open [section deleted] than they were at the Senior College.
- D: Why do you think that is? Do you think that maybe age [plays] into that?
- R: I think that part of it is age. [phrase deleted] At the Senior College [you were] still [a] college kid with another four years to go. You weren't even half way up the ladder yet as far as getting out and being a minister. [phrase deleted] Now all of a sudden you're over half way and maybe just a rung from the top or for some students it's a matter of two weeks from the top. (laugh) [phrase deleted] I think that has something to do with it. [phrase deleted] I think that you tend to be looked upon as almost a colleague but [not quite].
- D: What about the openness of our faculty at the Seminary? Do you consider them to really be open to dialog or is there a sense of closeness or stand-offishness by them?
- R: No, I think that many of the faculty are open [to] dialog. I've sat down and talked to a few about different things that I wanted to talk [about]. I enjoy sitting down sometimes at lunch and just plain talking with a group of students [or] with [a] faculty person about anything. [It may be] theological, world problems, social things, or anything.

The Past, Present, and Future

- D: [sentence deleted] We've talked, Doug, about the past and the history of the Senior College and the present and what's going on with our Seminary. Now, perhaps, just a couple concluding questions about the future. I'm going to put you on the spot, Doug. Why do you think that the Senior College was closed?
- R: I've had various thoughts [as to] why it was [closed]. When I was

- R: there the thing that was most common in my mind [phrase deleted] was [phrase deleted] that we definitely were [going to] be closed. How could [they] kill it or why were they doing this? You know, the incomprehension of why. The first thing [that came to mind] was [because] of the ties between our campus [phrase deleted] and Seminex. [phrase deleted]. The first thing that came to mind is that there were some people around here who lean toward [the] liberal side, that's why we were crushed. But after being outside for awhile, I think that there was a shift going on in synod that was going to end up changing the educational program anyway. Things that, at that time, didn't connect such as the number of synodical schools being allowed to go to four-year programs. Well, obviously if I [would have had] the option of going four years at Bronxville or going to Indiana, I would have chosen Bronxville at the time. [section deleted] What about the guys in Oregon? [Would they] want to come all the way out to Fort Wayne, which is 2,000 miles? No, they [wouldn't] want to do that. Even [we] from New York didn't want to come the 700 or 780 miles out here. There would be a tendency to stay [home] and then finally go into the Seminary. I think that [had] a lot to do with it. The try to save the regional colleges by letting them go to four-year programs went a long way toward eventually cutting off the supply of the guys to the Senior College. I think even if they didn't close it, they would have probably had to face the same problem a couple of years further down the road.
- D: So you really perceive it not so much as a theological struggle, but rather almost an economic, an economics of time and man power..
- R: I would say that's how I would see it now. [phrase deleted] Whether it was right or wrong [phrase deleted] I have no way to pass judgment, [section deleted] but when they started to do that, then it was at that point [phrase deleted] [that the] student supply [dried up]. Once they made that change in the system, they either [had] to reverse it or find another way to get a hold of third and fourth year students who would be willing to come to Indiana.
- D: [section deleted] How do you think, Doug, that the closing of the Senior College will affect the ministry in the future in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod?
- R: Well, I think that in the immediate future you'll have a group of men who will [not] have quite the same wide background that we have. On the other [hand], I think the idea of community that the Senior College fostered among all its graduates [section deleted] led to a lessening of rivalries between the two seminaries. [section deleted] Now I think you're going to have a more regional type of view [from] the guys [who will come out] of the regional schools and then go into either one of [the] seminaries. There [will] no longer be the type of mixing that went on before.
- D: So it will be more centered in the regional area then?
- R: I would say that [will] be one way it [is] affected. [section deleted]

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Concordia Theological Seminary
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AGREEMENT OF RELEASE

I, DOUGLAS ROSENVINGE, for and in
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with CLARK M. DAVIS, hereby
(Narrator, please print)
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Douglas A. Rosing
(Narrator - signature)

Clark M. Davis
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