



ESTABLISHING A COLLEGE FOR THE DEAF, 1864–1910

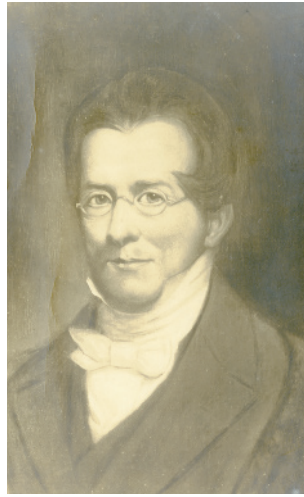
The entire early history of the Columbia Institution revolves around the actions of one man—Edward Miner Gallaudet, the youngest son of Thomas Hopkins (T. H.) Gallaudet and Sophia Fowler Gallaudet. The elder Gallaudet is renowned as the founder, along with Laurent Clerc and Mason Fitch Cogswell, of deaf education in the United States. Together the three men established the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons (now the American School for the Deaf), the first permanent school for the deaf, in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1817. The story of T. H. Gallaudet’s voyage to England and ultimately France in search of methods for teaching deaf children, and his return to Hartford with Clerc, an experienced deaf French teacher, is well known in the annals of American Deaf history.¹ T. H. Gallaudet’s trip was not at all unusual for Americans of that time who traveled to Europe, most often to France, in search of new ideas, especially in science, technology, and the arts. For example, the American painter Samuel F. B. Morse returned to the United States from France in 1832 with the idea for the electric telegraph, after having observed a long-distance system of visual communication in use in France.² In 1844, the first long-distance telegraphic transmission in history traversed the estate of Amos Kendall,

Morse’s business partner. Thirteen years later, Kendall founded the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, the institution that became Gallaudet University, on his estate in the northeast section of Washington, DC.

The impetus for the school began in 1856 when P. H. Skinner approached Kendall to solicit donations to found a school for deaf and blind children in the area. Skinner had brought five deaf children from New York and recruited several deaf and blind children in Washington. On learning that the children were not receiving proper care, Kendall successfully petitioned the court to make them his wards. He donated two acres of his estate, named Kendall Green, to establish housing and a school for them. The school opened with twelve deaf and six blind students.³

At that time, the federal government controlled virtually all public business in the District of Columbia. However, Kendall, a confidant of President Andrew Jackson and former postmaster general, used his political connections to secure the passage of legislation authorizing the establishment of the school, which President Franklin Pierce signed into law on February 16, 1857. Federal appropriations to support the operation of the Columbia Institution began in 1858 (under the

◀ Columbia Institution students, 1860.



◀◀ Laurent Clerc was born December 26, 1785, near Lyon, France. He became deaf when he was a year old, but he did not go to school until he was twelve. He attended the Royal National Institute for the Deaf in Paris for eight years and then became a teacher at the school. In 1816 he traveled with Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet to America, where they and Mason Fitch Cogswell established the first school for the deaf in the U.S. Portrait by Charles Willson Peale, 1822; courtesy of the American School for the Deaf Museum, West Hartford, CT.

◀ Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet was born on December 10, 1787, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He earned both bachelor's and master's degrees from Yale University and became a Congregational minister after studying at the Andover Theological Seminary. He changed his plans to be an itinerant preacher after meeting Alice Cogswell, the deaf daughter of his neighbor. In 1815, Gallaudet traveled to England and France to study the European methods of educating deaf children. Portrait date unknown.

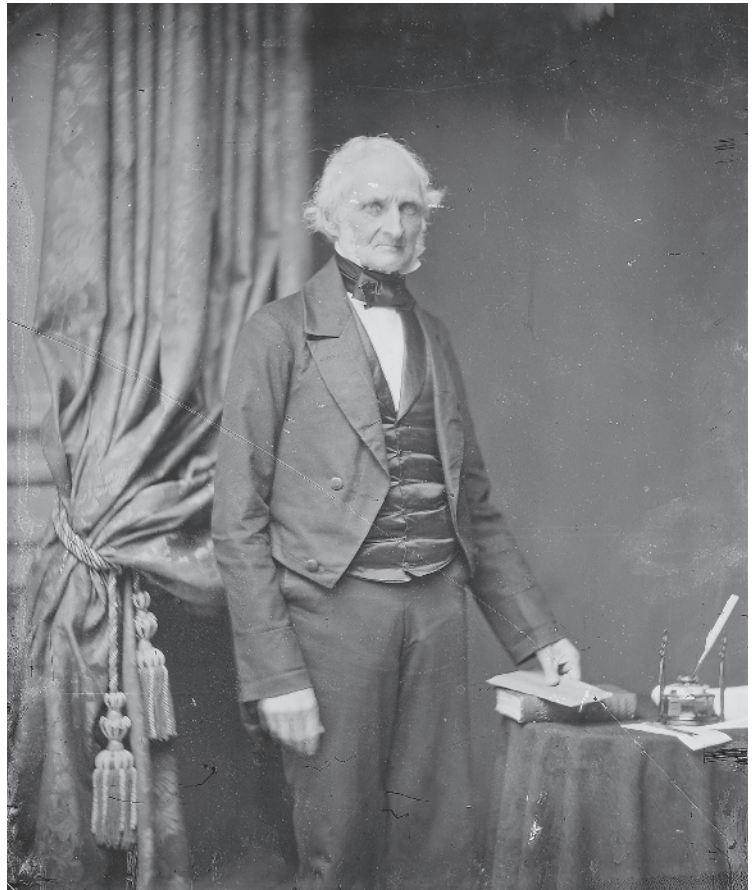


When Gallaudet returned from France, he brought Laurent Clerc with him to establish a school for deaf children in Hartford, Connecticut. The school officially opened on April 15, 1817. Gallaudet married Sophia Fowler, a former pupil, and they had eight children. Their youngest son, Edward Miner, became the first president of the National Deaf-Mute College.

Sophia Fowler was born on March 20, 1798, near Guilford, Connecticut. Deaf from birth, she did not attend school until 1818, when, at the age of nineteen, she went to the newly founded school for the deaf in Hartford. She remained a student until the spring of 1821, and the following August she married Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. When their youngest son, Edward Miner, became superintendent of the Columbia Institution, Sophia went to Washington, DC, with him to be matron of the school. Daguerreotypes circa 1842.

administration of President James Buchanan) and have continued annually up to the present.⁴ All in all, the consistency and longevity of this support indicates an abiding commitment by the government to the deaf citizens of the country. The fact that this support has been given to a private corporation (which Gallaudet has always been) is also testimony to a long-lasting bond of trust that the university would act in the best interests of deaf people and the country at large.

In 1857, when Edward Miner Gallaudet (hereafter EMG) was just twenty years old, Amos Kendall offered him the superintendency of the Columbia Institution. Although both T. H. Gallaudet and EMG were hearing, EMG's mother Sophia was deaf. Not surprisingly, EMG grew up as a native user of what then was known as the Sign Language and later came to be called American Sign Language or ASL. The importance of this fact should not be overlooked as the Institution he presided over was a constant haven for instruction in signed language, even when its use was prohibited or discouraged elsewhere. When EMG accepted Kendall's offer, he was unmarried, but because the standards of propriety called for an adult female presence at the school, his mother accompanied him to serve as matron of the Institution.



Edward Miner Gallaudet (EMG) was born February 5, 1837, in Hartford, Connecticut. After high school, he worked at a bank in Hartford, and a few years later, he enrolled in Trinity College. While still a student, he became a teacher at the American School. He was just twenty years old when Amos Kendall wrote to him about the Columbia Institution in Washington, DC. Photograph circa 1857.

▲ Amos Kendall (August, 16, 1789–November 12, 1869) was a wealthy businessman and philanthropist when he became the guardian of five deaf children in 1856. He used his political connections to convince Congress to pass legislation establishing the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind on his estate in northeast Washington in 1857. Photograph by Mathew Brady, circa 1860–1865; courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

◀ Sophia Fowler Gallaudet served as matron of the Columbia Institution for nine years (1857–1866). She died in May 1877 while visiting EMG and his family, and her loss was mourned by all at the college. She is buried in Hartford next to her husband. Photograph circa 1860s.



James W. Grimes, a Republican senator from Iowa (1859–1869), chaired the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia from 1861 to 1865. In March of 1864, EMG sought his assistance in presenting a bill to the Senate that gave the Columbia Institution the authority to confer collegiate degrees. With Grimes’s support, the bill passed, and President Lincoln signed it into law on April 8, 1864.

Soon after assuming the duties of superintendent of the Columbia Institution, EMG became convinced that the establishment of a college for the deaf was possible on Kendall Green, but he knew that federal legislation would be necessary. He began making plans to seek passage of the legislation without first consulting his friend and mentor, Amos Kendall, who was still president of the corporation. EMG described his actions as follows:

By what seemed a special providence, Mr. Kendall, in drafting the Act of Incorporation [in 1857], provided for the admission of deaf and blind children “of teachable age” as beneficiaries of the United States in the institution but set no limit of time or age at which they must be discharged, as is usual in the state schools for the deaf. So with our pupils in the District of Columbia

we had the material for beginning a college, and we were authorized to keep them as beneficiaries of the government as long as we could teach them anything. Thus without intending to do so, Mr. Kendall had secured a very important provision of law for the starting, at least, of a college for the deaf.⁵

Early in 1864, EMG drafted a bill granting the Institution the authority to confer collegiate degrees, and he began working with Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa to enable its passage. The law passed without significant opposition in both houses of Congress, and was signed by President Lincoln on April 8, 1864. After talking to Kendall, EMG became convinced that Kendall was not upset about not being consulted.

When Mr. Kendall learned of the passage of the bill authorizing us to confer degrees, he was pleased but remarked that he hoped I was not going too fast. My reply was, “You must remember Mr. Kendall, I am here to get upstream and move forward; if you think my rate of speed too high, you must put on the brakes.....” He laughed and told me that he believed he could trust me. And it was not long before he proved his confidence in me by a proposal that surprised me beyond measure.

It was soon decided by the [board of] directors to inaugurate a collegiate department with suitable public exercises, and Mr. Kendall informed me that he wished to have me inaugurated on this occasion as president of the institution in all its departments, including the corporation and the Board of Directors.⁶

The Inauguration and Organization of the College for the Deaf

On June 28, 1864, the College for the Deaf and Dumb (within the corporate structure of the Columbia Institution) was inaugurated with due pomp and circumstance. Many speakers addressed the crowd, including EMG and Kendall; Congressman James Patterson from New Hampshire; the legendary Laurent Clerc; John Carlin, a well-known deaf poet and artist who had advocated for



Laurent Clerc taught at the American School for the Deaf from 1817 until 1858. In 1821, he took a leave of absence for eight months to be acting principal of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf, where he planned the school's instructional program. Many of his students became teachers and founders of schools for the deaf throughout the United States. Clerc died in 1869, the same year this photograph was taken.

the establishment of a college for the deaf; and the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet, EMG's brother and rector of St. Ann's Church for Deaf-Mutes in New York City. The college bestowed its first degree, an honorary master of arts, on John Carlin. Clerc may have best summed up the emotions of many deaf people: "In closing, let me express to you, my dear young friend, Mr. E. M. Gallaudet, president-elect of this institution, the earnest hope that in the great work which is before you, you will be blessed and prospered, and receive for your efforts in behalf of the deaf and dumb such proofs of its benefits as will reward you for the glorious undertaking."⁷

Daniel R. Goodwin, provost of the University of Pennsylvania, was unable to attend the ceremony but sent a letter of congratulations that sums up the purpose of the college in terms that EMG must have found extremely gratifying.

The form of your present undertaking is novel, but I have no doubt that experience will prove it to be practicable and wise. Those who are deprived of one of the senses, possess, in general, as great intellectual capacities, as good natural aptitudes, and oftentimes as strong physical powers, and withal, as earnest a desire for knowledge and activity, as those who are blessed with the enjoyment of all the organic functions. It is right that they should have an opportunity to gain a full preparation for the highest employments that may be open before them, and should enjoy the happiness of the largest intellectual, moral, and religious culture.⁸



Thomas Gallaudet, born on June 3, 1822, in Hartford, Connecticut, was the oldest son of Thomas H. and Sophia Fowler Gallaudet. Like his youngest brother, EMG, he was active in the deaf community his entire life. He taught at the New York Institute for the Deaf, and, after becoming an ordained Episcopal minister in 1852, he established St. Ann's Church for Deaf-Mutes in New York City, where he conducted services in sign language. In 1885, he founded the Gallaudet Home for Aged and Infirm Deaf-Mutes near Poughkeepsie, NY. Gallaudet often came to Washington, DC, to visit his family at Kendall Green, and he acted as chaplain at several of the college's commencement ceremonies. Photograph circa 1855–1865; courtesy of the Library of Congress.



◀ John Carlin (honorary degree 1864) was born in Philadelphia in 1813 and became profoundly deaf as an infant. He attended the Mount Airy School (now the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf) and graduated in 1825. He later studied painting and became well known for his portraiture work, as well as for his poetry. Carlin raised \$6,000 to help establish St. Ann's Church for Deaf-Mutes in 1852. In June 1864 he received the first degree from the Columbia Institution.

▶ Edward Miner Gallaudet at age 27, in 1864 when the college opened.

Almost as soon as the collegiate program was approved, EMG began to prepare for its establishment. At the outset of this process, he and Kendall had the first serious disagreement of their twelve-year association. EMG believed that very few graduates of the existing twenty-four schools for the deaf in the country would be sufficiently prepared academically to directly enter a college-level program, so he proposed that the college offer a preparatory year that most entering students would have to complete before being formally admitted to the collegiate degree program. Kendall objected, worried that the public would be skeptical of the very existence of the Institution if it became known that very few deaf students were actually qualified to enter the college. For some reason that EMG never determined, Kendall eventually withdrew his objection, and the preparatory program was established. It continued to operate until 1995, when the college began to admit students directly to the bachelor's level program, but required them to fulfill

basic courses in English, math, or science before they could earn college credits in those subjects. The existence of the preparatory program and the fact that most students entering the college had to complete it influenced the creation of the signs used to refer to students by class standing. The sign for "prep" is made by tapping the open palm of the dominant hand on the pinky of the other hand; "freshman" by tapping the palm on the ring finger of the other hand, and so on, through "senior," indicated by tapping the palm on the thumb of the other hand.

In his detailed history of the first fifty years of the Columbia Institution, EMG described the first students to enter the collegiate program, revealing just how small its beginnings were.

It will be of interest to record the names of those who were the first to enter upon the advanced course of study prepared in connection with the college.

Melville Ballard of Maine, a graduate of the high class of the American School for the Deaf at Hartford in 1860, and who had performed acceptable service as a teacher in our institution from 1860 to 1863, then voluntarily retiring, entered in September 1864 on a special course of collegiate study. He is therefore to be named as the first student in our collegiate course and the only one for the year 1864–1865.

Charles K. W. Strong of Vermont, a graduate of the high class of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and employed in the U.S. Treasury Department in 1864, declared his purpose of entering college on a footing similar to that of Mr. Ballard, and his name was entered on our records. But he changed his mind and never became an actual student.

In September 1864 four pupils of our institution—Emma J. Speake, Annie Szymanoskie, John Quinn, and Isaac Winn, all of the District of Columbia—entered upon our advanced course of study under the tuition of Professor Storrs of our college, with a view of entering on the regular collegiate course as soon as they could be prepared therefore.

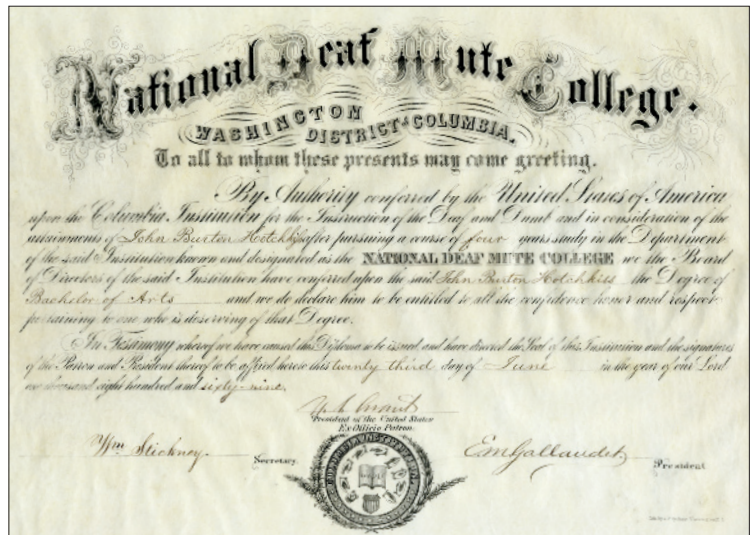
James Cross, Jr., and James H. Logan, both of Pennsylvania, entered upon a similar course of study with Professor Storrs. It will be seen therefore that seven persons made up the number of those who were

regarded as connected with the college as students during the first year of its existence.⁹

According to EMG, Ballard's status as the sole enrollee in the college program was the occasion for much amusement: "As only one of the five young men occupying this [college] building was, strictly speaking, a college student, remarks about him were often facetiously made by his mates, as follows, 'The College has gone to the City.' 'The College has gone to bed.' 'The College is taking a bath.' 'The College has a toothache today.'"¹⁰

In 1866, Melville Ballard became the first recipient of a bachelor's degree from the college, and he went on to serve as a teacher at the Columbia Institution for more than fifty years. One of the houses on Gallaudet's Faculty Row and a residential complex on the campus are named in his honor. The first regular class of college students received their diplomas in 1869. As patron of the institution, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the diplomas of the three graduates, and every sitting U.S. president has since done likewise. EMG noted that, "the graduation of the first bachelors of arts in a college for deaf-mutes, from what could justly be claimed to be a regular collegiate course of study, excited unusual interest in the educational world."¹¹

In 1869, EMG also marked the death of his good friend and mentor, Amos Kendall: "My memory of Amos Kendall is one of particular tenderness. That he should give me the confidence he had when I came to Washington a youth of twenty was a surprise. The internal management of the institution could not have been committed more absolutely to me than it was."¹² Aside from his initial disagreement with Kendall over what became the prep program, EMG noted only one other serious dispute with Kendall—EMG wanted the college diplomas to be written in Latin, as was the frequent custom at the time, and Kendall wanted them to be in English. This may seem to be a trivial argument, but it reflected an underlying tension in American higher education. At this time, there was a growing movement away from "classical" education in the Greek and Latin languages, knowledge



John Burton Hotchkiss, one of three students in the class of 1869, received this diploma on June 23, 1869. It is signed by President Ulysses S. Grant, EMG, and William Stickney, the secretary of the college and Amos Kendall's son-in-law.

of which was a mark of upper-class status, to a more populist, practical education in English, math, science, and other "useful" subjects. Insistence on an English diploma, which the graduates themselves could actually read, was a mark of the latter view. Kendall won the argument—Gallaudet diplomas are written in English.

During the 1865–1866 academic year, the number of students enrolled in the college grew to twenty-five, including two women. They came from throughout the East Coast and the Midwest. The college then became known as the National Deaf-Mute College. Within a few years, students were coming from most of the existing states, and in

JANE MELISSA FESSENDEN GALLAUDET

Jane Melissa Fessenden was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on October 16, 1837. Her parents, Edson Fessenden and Lydia Worden, owned a hotel, the Trumbull House, and it was there that Jane grew up. Both the Fessenden and Gallaudet families attended the First Church of Christ in Hartford, and they were well acquainted. Coincidentally, Edward Miner Gallaudet's sister Alice and her husband Henry Trumbull lived in the Fessendens' hotel.

During the 1850s, EMG would visit his sister and brother-in-law, and they often invited Jane to join them on their outings. Jane and EMG became engaged in December 1857 and married seven months later on July 20, 1858, in Hartford. Soon after their wedding, the couple moved to Washington, DC, and took up residence in the Stickney House on Kendall Green. Jane's father provided the furnishings for their rooms. Though Jane did not have an official position at the Columbia Institution, she occasionally filled a vacancy as a teacher of the blind students.

Jane and EMG had three children—Katherine Fessenden (June 25, 1861), Grace Worden (December 27, 1862), and Edward LeBaron (November 9, 1864). Young Edward died suddenly in July 1865, and Jane's health deteriorated soon after. In June of 1866, EMG took Jane to stay with her parents in Hartford in the hope that a cooler climate might help her regain her strength. After a few months, he brought their two daughters north to join their mother, and he returned to the college to tend to his administrative duties. Later that fall, EMG received word that Jane had died on November 23; she was twenty-nine years old. She was buried in the Gallaudet family plot at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford.

Katherine and Grace came back to live with their father on the Gallaudet campus. As young women, they traveled frequently and were active in Washington society. In EMG's later years, Katherine became



Jane Fessenden Gallaudet in 1863, when she was twenty-six years old. EMG affectionately called her "Jennie."

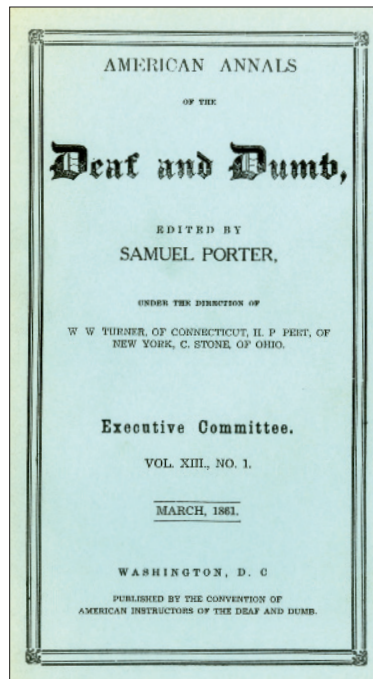


EMG and his wife Jane had two daughters, Katherine (*right*) and Grace (*left*). The young women grew up on Kendall Green and were well known on campus and in Washington, DC. Here they are shown riding their tandem English tricycle when they were twenty-nine and twenty-eight years old, respectively. An article in the *Washington Post* on October 3, 1887, described them as riding "with perfect ease and grace. They show the possibilities of the tricycles to perfection as they sweep through the streets on noiseless wings."

his companion, living with him at House One and, following his retirement, at their home in Connecticut. Grace graduated from Smith College in 1883 and spent most of her life in New England and Washington, DC. She was married and widowed twice. Katherine died December 13, 1942, and Grace died two weeks later on December 27, 1942.¹³

► The *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb* began publication in 1847 at the American School for the Deaf. It is the official journal of the Council of American Instructors of the Deaf (CAID) and the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) (formerly the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb). When EMG joined the executive committee of CAID, the journal became closely associated with the college. In 1886 the name of the periodical changed to the *American Annals of the Deaf*. The *Annals* is still published quarterly by Gallaudet University Press.

►► Edward Allen Fay (November 23, 1843–July 14, 1923) taught at the New York Institute for the Deaf (Fanwood) before being hired in 1865 as the third professor at the college. Before coming to the college he taught in Morristown, New Jersey. In 1870 Fay became the editor of the *American Annals of the Deaf*. In 1881, he earned his PhD from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, and four years later he became vice president of the college. Fay retired in 1920 at the age of seventy-seven.



the 1880s the first international students began arriving. Enrollment in the bachelor's program had exceeded one hundred by the early 1900s but did not increase significantly above two hundred before the 1950s. After the college was founded, responsibility for educating blind children was removed in 1865, and the Columbia Institution continued to operate a school for deaf students, primarily the deaf children of the District of Columbia. Throughout the institution's history, this school was generally known as the Kendall School. Eventually the mission of the school was expanded through legislation establishing the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in 1966 and the Kendall Demonstration Elementary School in 1970. The legal establishment of these programs formalized the Institution's national responsibilities in research and development, but the college played a key role in research and scholarship concerning deaf people and their education right from the beginning. The Institution has had a long editorial association with the journal the *American Annals of the Deaf*, which was founded in 1847 and is believed to be the oldest English-language journal for education professionals. Gallaudet professor Edward A. Fay served as editor of the journal from 1870 until 1920. Fay

himself was a pioneer in studies of the Deaf community and the education of deaf students.

Deaf students at the college quickly began to establish literary societies, social organizations, and college customs similar to those of other American college campuses. One of the best known of these customs is the "rat funeral," a tradition whose origins seem to have been lost in the mists of time. The ritual of the rat funeral involves the adoption and eventual execution and burial of a rat by each entering undergraduate class. The graves are marked by a headstone that became emblematic of each particular class. Because of concerns about animal cruelty, live rats have been replaced by rubber ones in recent years.

The predecessors of Greek fraternities date from the beginning of the college. The secret society for men, known by the initials H.O.S.S., was founded in 1864 and renamed Xi Phi Sigma in 1894. In 1901, it assumed its current name, Kappa Gamma, and many of Gallaudet's faculty and other leaders through the years have been members. Female students, who had been excluded from the college for two decades, quickly began to form similar societies when they were readmitted in the late 1880s. The first alumni reunion took place in 1889



Gallaudet's football team, originally called the "Kendalls," had a reputation for being fierce competitors. Paul D. Hubbard, the quarterback in the early 1890s, is seated in the center of the first row. Photograph 1894.



▲ The men's gymnastics "Indian club" drill team practicing in front of the gymnasium (now called Ole Jim). Photograph circa 1885.



◀ In the 1880s the male faculty and students of the college formed the Kendall Green Bicycle Squad. Pictured left to right: Arthur D. Bryant, Amos G. Draper, John W. "Jack" Chickering, N. Field Morrow, John B. Hotchkiss, James Denison, Edward A. Fay (on tricycle), Cadwallader L. Washburn, Albert F. Adams, Olof Hanson, Henry L. Stafford, and Edson Gallaudet (EMG's son, age 14). Photograph 1885.

and an active alumni association was founded at that time. The college also participated in intercollegiate athletics—it fielded a football team as early as 1883, just fourteen years after the first American intercollegiate football game was played between Rutgers and Princeton in 1869. An enduring bit of Gallaudet and Deaf folklore holds that the football huddle was invented at Gallaudet. According to the 1974 *Gallaudet Almanac*,

The football huddle, which is universally used today, was invented by a Gallaudet College football team. Paul D. Hubbard, quarterback for the "Kendalls"

forerunners of the "Bisons," is credited with originating this system in the 1890's to prevent other teams from reading his signs when he called signals. The position proved such a practical and quick way of getting the team together on the field to discuss the next play that soon one college after another adopted the method.¹⁴

Female students also participated in athletic competition early in the college's history. The first women's basketball team began playing in 1896. (See chapter 2 for more information on Gallaudet's student organizations and athletic traditions.)



▲ The men's baseball team competed against collegiate teams from the District, Maryland, and Virginia. The team's name is printed on their equipment bag. Photograph 1886.

► Male students circa 1885 in front of Kendall Hall. A student is pretending to feed the "Iron Dog" on the second step.



The 1896 women's basketball team in Ole Jim, wearing their uniforms.



The women students on their safety bicycles. Photograph circa 1897.



The 1899 football team on the western steps of College Hall.



After the board of directors changed the name of the Institution to Gallaudet College in 1894, the baseball team added a G to their uniforms. Photograph 1898.

THE ALUMNI ORGANIZE

As the number of graduates grew, the alumni became more involved in and concerned with the reputation and performance of the college. In 1889, a group of alumni attending the third convention of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), held in Washington, DC, met on June 27 to form the Gallaudet College Alumni Association (GCAA; now the Gallaudet University Alumni Association or GUAA). Its purpose was “to preserve and increase the influence and prestige of the College; to extend the sphere of its benefits among those for whom it was established; to oppose all influences tending to restrict those benefits; and secondarily, to perpetuate the friendships formed in College, and to promote relations between alumni of different college generations.”¹⁵ John B. Hotchkiss (BA 1869) chaired the organizational meeting, and Melville Ballard (BA 1866), the first person to receive an undergraduate degree at Gallaudet, was elected the first president. The first group of officers also included Hotchkiss as vice-president, George W. Veditz (BA 1884) as secretary, and Amos G. Draper (BA 1872) as treasurer. Thirty-one people paid the one dollar initiation fee that day to become charter members, and each year they paid \$.50 annual dues.¹⁶

As its membership grew, the GCAA became involved in and concerned with the college’s relations with the federal government. In 1890, the alumni objected to a measure adopted by Congress that would have restricted free tuition to only certain students. The GCAA conducted a writing campaign and, along with the efforts of the college administration, was successful in persuading Congress to repeal the measure.

In 1895, alumni living in Minnesota established the first GCAA chapter. At that time, the chapters were called “branches,” and in the following years, new branches formed in cities and states around the U.S. Most of the chapters were established in cities with a significant number of alumni or a residential school for deaf students. These chapters perpetuated



The charter members of the Gallaudet College Alumni Association sat for this photograph on the steps of Chapel Hall in July 1889.



Melville Ballard (July 31, 1839–December 15, 1912) enrolled in 1864 as the first student in the collegiate program, and in 1866, he received the first bachelor's degree. He had a long and distinguished career as a teacher at the Kendall School.



Amos Galusha Draper (1845–1917) attended the American School for the Deaf with John B. Hotchkiss. He worked as a newspaper editorial writer during and after the Civil War. In 1868, he enrolled in Gallaudet and, after graduating, he became a professor of Latin and mathematics at the college.



John Burton Hotchkiss (August 22, 1845–November 3, 1922) attended the American School for the Deaf before coming to Gallaudet. After he received his BA in 1869, EMG hired him as a professor of English, history, and philosophy. He is credited with introducing football at the college, and the football field is named in his honor.



George W. Veditz (August 13, 1861–March 12, 1937) went to the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) when he was fourteen. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Gallaudet and then became a teacher at MSD and later the Colorado School for the Deaf.

friendships among Gallaudet graduates, encouraged young deaf students to attend Gallaudet College, and took on projects in support of the college and alumni association. They also raised funds for student loans, scholarships, and other awards; athletic uniforms; and additional college needs.¹⁷

At the 1896 meeting, the alumni asked that deaf graduates be admitted to the Normal Department (the graduate school). In 1907, they passed a resolution to admit graduates of the Normal

Department to membership in the GCAA. The members also adopted a resolution protesting a civil service ruling that denied deaf people the right to take the civil service examination, thereby excluding them from most federal government jobs. President Theodore Roosevelt reversed the ruling by executive order. At this same meeting, the members launched a drive to raise \$50,000 for a memorial to Edward Miner Gallaudet; and in 1908, the association was incorporated.

The importance of student organizations cannot be overestimated in the formation of a well-organized and effective leadership group for the American Deaf community. William C. Stokoe, Russell Bernard, and Carol Padden have described the impact of these activities as follows:

What happens is that age and the associations afforded by this unique institution work together to provide strong bonds indeed. . . .

A few in each subgroup, as classmates, have shared both sides of the initiatory rites of hazing and all the rest of class rivalry and other college activities. Many have been in close touch since sharing one to five years in college. These then are more than cognitively and communicatively linked subgroups of deaf individuals; they are “cohorts” proceeding through life in a social formation that resembles the age-sets described in classic anthropological studies.¹⁸

From fairly early in its history, the college administration felt a responsibility to report on the post-college careers of its alumni, especially with respect to the kinds of employment they found. In 1890, alumnus and professor Amos Draper prepared such a report on the occupations of alumni, titled “Some Results of College Work.” Following is a summary of his findings:

One foreman of a daily newspaper, one assistant postmaster of a city, one clerk to a recorder of deeds, one official botanist of a state, one deputy recorder of deeds in a leading city, thirty-four teachers, one principal of a leading institution, five teachers and founders of schools for the deaf, four teachers and editors of schools for the deaf, two assistant professors in the College, one patent examiner, four teachers and clerks in the U.S. Departments, one clerk to the Librarian of Congress, eight clerks in U.S. Departments, custom houses and post offices, two editors and publishers of county newspapers and general printers, one bank clerk, two farmers and teachers, one ranchman, one teacher and fruit grower, one insurance clerk, one expert in the finishing of lenses, one publisher of a paper for a Methodist educational society, three teachers and

STUDENT TRADITIONS

The Cremation of Mechanics

The Cremation of Mechanics (also known as Burning of Physics, Burning of Mechanics, or Burning of Analytics) was a popular tradition at many universities during the 1800s. Most colleges required students to pass a series of rigorous mathematics courses, including algebra, plane geometry, solid and spherical geometry, analytic geometry, and trigonometry. When students completed their final mathematics course, they would hold a mock funeral and cremate an effigy representing mathematics.

At the National Deaf-Mute College, the students completed the mathematics requirements in their junior year, and they would hold the cremation ceremony at the end of the spring semester. They often gave the effigy a humorous name, such as *Anna Lytics*. Ushers, pall-bearers, an undertaker, and a minister or master of ceremonies performed the last rites and other formalities. “Mourners” or “wailers” would weep for the “departed,” inducing tears by rubbing onions under



The Cremation of the Mechanics ceremony occurred in the spring of the students’ junior year. One of the earliest student ceremonies performed at the college, it was a precursor to other traditions such as the rat funeral. Photograph 1892.



The Hare and Hounds Chase, an annual race. The hares (*left and right*, holding bags of paper scraps) run ahead of the hounds, releasing paper to mimic the hares' scent. The hounds follow the paper trail and attempt to catch the hares before they reach the finish line. Photograph 1888.

their eyes. The class of 1898 was the last junior class to perform this ceremony at the college, which may have been the result of a changing curriculum or an indication of changing attitudes on campus.

Hare and Hounds

The Hare and Hounds (also known as a Paper or Chalk Chase) is a traditional cross-country racing game. The game had been played for centuries, but it gained greatest popularity in the U.S. between the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the game, one person was designated as the *hare* and all other players were the *hounds*. The hare started ahead of the other players, dropping bits of paper to leave a trail for the hounds to follow. After a set amount of time the hounds would begin to follow the trail, chasing the hare in an attempt to catch him before he reached the finish line. The annual Hare and Hounds race at Kendall Green began and ended on its 99 acres, which at the time included the college buildings, farmland, and back-

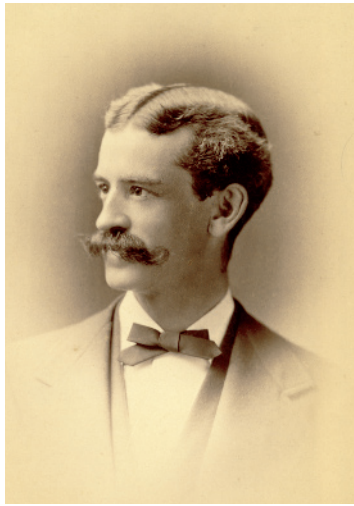


The annual weeklong camping trip to Great Falls during the Easter holiday. Photograph 1908.

woods. Racers also covered miles of land through the eastern portion of Washington, DC.

Camping at Great Falls

In the early years of the college, the students and faculty began taking an annual camping trip to Great Falls, Virginia, in the area that later became Great Falls National Park. During the Easter recess, the male students would journey out to the campgrounds with wagonloads of provisions, including food and tents. The men would stay for an entire week, while the female students would come out on Saturday and Sunday to join them for their "Ladies Day Camp." Students and faculty activities included swimming, hiking, and playing games. The tradition continued into the twentieth century; however, the latest photo of this event is from 1910, suggesting that interest in the camping trip waned and it fell out of practice. Curiously, the trips ended the same year that EMG retired.¹⁹



Amos G. Draper (BA 1872, MA 1877, honorary degree 1904), taught at Gallaudet for 44 years. He was well liked and well respected by students and faculty.

missionaries among the deaf, one architect's draftsman, one architect, two practical chemists, and one partner in a wholesale floor milling business.²⁰

The concentration of graduates in educational institutions and public agencies has continued into the present.

In 1894, the board of directors voted to change the name of the collegiate department from "National Deaf-Mute College" to "Gallaudet College," an idea proposed by the alumni to honor Thomas H. Gallaudet. EMG noted that

the alumni and students had often during a number of years expressed their dislike of the words *deaf-mute* in the name of the college, and they felt it to be a misuse of terms to apply those words to the college which certainly was not a deaf-mute. . . .

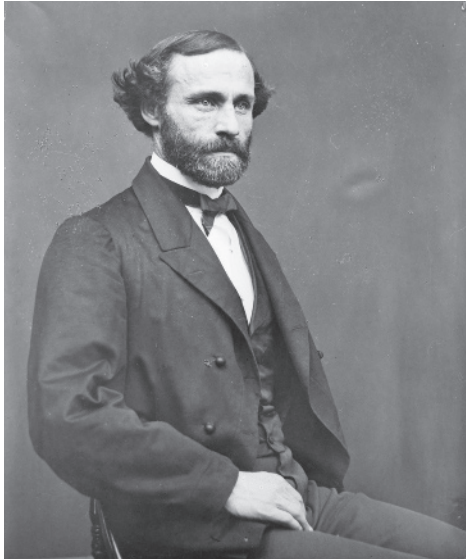
In regard to this matter I naturally had a good deal of feeling lest some might think I was anxious that the college should have *my* name. Some of my friends and members of my family thought the name should not be given to the college while I was its president. But I wish to record here that my wish was to have the name given with the clear understanding that it was *in no way* in honor of me, but solely to honor my father who richly deserved such an honor.²¹

Relations with the Federal Government

Although Kendall and EMG were able to secure appropriate authorizing legislation for the Columbia Institution and its collegiate program, relations between the Institution and the federal government were not always smooth. In general, before an agency or a program can receive federal appropriations, it must be established by separate legislation that defines its purpose and authorizes its receipt of funds. Once funds are appropriated, oversight mechanisms ensure that the funds are used for the purposes for which they were appropriated. Both Congress and the executive branch may exercise oversight; in Gallaudet's case, the Department of the Interior initially provided this oversight (the Department of Education did not exist at this time). During the late 1800s the Interior Department had responsibility for overseeing a diverse array of domestic programs, including the schools for American Indians being established at this time by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Gallaudet has also received oversight from congressional committees, including the appropriations committees of both houses, and by members of Congress who have served as voting members of its board of directors. For example, Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts sat on Gallaudet's board for more than thirty years, from 1869 to 1903. Gallaudet's current authorizing legislation specifies that the board include two representatives and one senator and that the Department of Education provide executive branch oversight.

There can be little doubt that EMG was a skilled and persistent lobbyist in support of funding and favorable treatment for the Institution. He was quite literally a lobbyist—he once waited in the cloakroom of the Senate in order to confront senators whose support he needed. EMG faced several early threats to the Institution's funding from members of Congress. The following account of an encounter with Representative Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts in 1867 is but one example.

I remember appearing on one occasion before the Appropriations Committee of the House when General



Henry L. Dawes was a Massachusetts state representative (1857–1875) and senator (1875–1893). After succeeding E. B. Washburne as chair of the Committee on Appropriations in 1869, Dawes became a supporter and advocate of Gallaudet; he later joined the college’s board of directors. In 1910, the boys’ dormitory was named Dawes House in the senator’s honor. Photograph circa 1860–1865, courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Benjamin F. Butler was a Massachusetts state representative (1867–1879), the thirty-third governor of Massachusetts, and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. Photograph circa 1860–1865, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

B.F. Butler was a member of the committee. As the interview proceeded General Butler asked me in rather a sneering tone if I would tell the committee on what ground I would urge their appropriating money for the training of persons so deficient as the deaf and dumb were. “Why would it not be better,” said the general “if Congress wished to spend money for educational purposes, to give it to those who had all their faculties.”

I replied, “I ask aid for the deaf, with confidence that it will be given, because I believe that every generous man giving help to others likes to feel that it is bestowed where it is most needed.” The committee gave me all I asked for, but General Butler opposed the appropriation in the House and in the course of his speech said when a deaf-mute had received all the education that could be given him, he is at the best no more than “half a man.”

This expression roused the ire of one of our students, Joseph G. Parkinson (BA 1869) by name, who came to me to ask if I thought harm would come from his calling at General Butler’s and sending in his card with the following written on it. “Half a man desires to

see the Beast.” Some will remember that during Butler’s administration of the municipal government of New Orleans during the Civil War, the people gave him the soubriquet “Beast Butler.”²²

A similar incident occurred in 1868, this time involving Congressman Elihu B. Washburne of Illinois, who opposed funding for the Institution. During lengthy hearings, Washburne presented information on enrollments and expenses at the Institution and claimed that there had been extravagant and inefficient use of public funds. EMG succeeded in defeating this attempt to block the appropriation, but he was left with Washburne’s continuing animosity. According to EMG, “Mr. Washburne spoke of me with bitterness . . . declaring that he would yet ‘get even with that d---d little Frenchman’” [the Gallaudets were descended from French Huguenots].²³ There is a double irony here. Despite his apparent lack of affection for the French, within a few years Washburne would win praise for

SUSAN SKINNER DENISON GALLAUDET

Susan Skinner Denison was born January 24, 1847, in Royalton, VT, to Dr. Joseph A. Denison and Eliza Skinner, the tenth of eleven children. Her second oldest brother, James, was deaf. He graduated from the American School for the Deaf, taught at the Michigan Institution for the Deaf, and became the first teacher at the Kendall School in 1857. He and Edward Miner Gallaudet were the same age and they became close friends. In the summer of 1864, EMG traveled to Vermont to visit James, and there he met Susan for the first time. In July of 1868, EMG, who was now a widower, again went to Vermont to stay with the Denisons, and by the time he returned to Washington, he and Susan were engaged. They married on December 22, 1868. When they arrived in Washington, Susan took on her new role as stepmother to EMG's two daughters, Katherine and Grace (ages 7 and 6 at the time), and as the president's wife she began running the household and his social affairs. In 1869 they moved into the newly built president's house (House One).

EMG and Susan's first child, a son named Denison, was born on April 1, 1870. The following year their second son, Edson Fessenden (named after the father of EMG's first wife), was born. The couple's daughter, Eliza (named for Susan's mother) was born in June of 1874, but she died fourteen months later due to whooping cough. Their third son, Herbert Draper, was born in 1876, and their youngest child, a daughter named Marion Wallace, was born in 1879.

Susan maintained the family home and raised their six children while being actively involved in the social life of the campus and in Washingtonian society. She gave birthday parties for the children in Kendall School, held receptions for the older students and faculty, and entertained public officials and politicians and their wives.

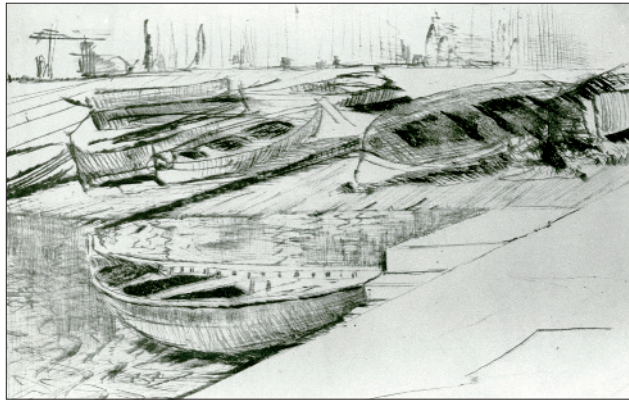
After suffering from various ailments, including headaches and abdominal pain, Susan died on November 4, 1903. She was buried in the Gallaudet family plot at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford.²⁷



EMG and his second wife, Susan Denison, with EMG's two daughters Katherine (age seven) and Grace (age six), and Susan's nephew Will Denison (age eleven, the orphaned son of her eldest brother George). Photograph by Mathew Brady, 1868.



By 1869, construction of the residence for the college president and his family had been completed. EMG and Susan lived there for many years with their six children. *Left to right:* Herbert (standing), Marion (seated), Susan (seated), Katherine (standing), Grace (seated), EMG (standing), Edson (standing), and Denison (seated). Photograph circa 1885.



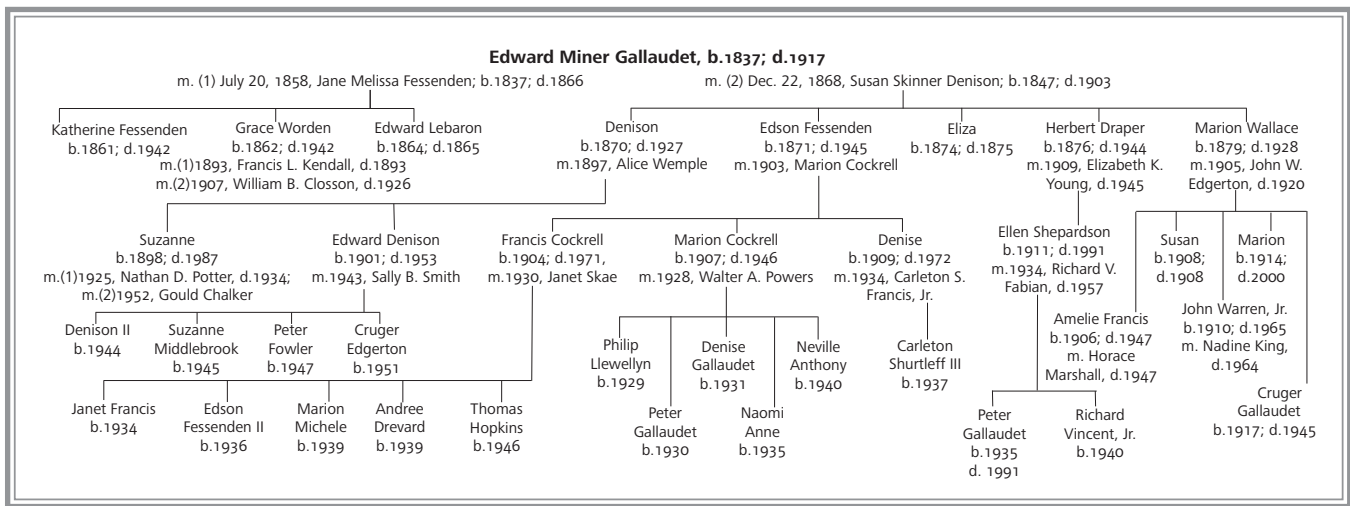
◀ Cadwallader Lincoln Washburn (BA 1890, honorary degree 1924) received his bachelor's degree from the college and then studied at the Art Students League in New York City. He later traveled to Spain and France to study art and exhibit his work. Washburn also worked as a war correspondent, reporting on the Russo-Japanese War and the Mexican Revolution. He is well known as a dry point etcher and an oil painter. The Washburn Arts Building on the Gallaudet campus was named in his honor in 1969.

▲ Washburn became internationally known for his printmaking.

his heroic actions as the U.S. minister to France during the Franco-Prussian War and Paris Commune of 1870 and 1871.²⁴ Upon learning of Washburne's appointment to the post, EMG remarked: "I need not say that the action of President Grant in sending Mr. Washburne to that glorious city where all good Americans like to go, met with the hearty approval of the friends of our college."²⁵ Later, in 1890, Washburne's own nephew, Cadwallader L. Washburn (spelled without the final *e*), graduated from the

college. Cadwallader Washburn became one of the Institution's most illustrious early graduates, gaining fame as an artist. EMG could not resist a final dig: "Mr. E. B. Washburne was not living at the time of his nephew's graduation, but he lived long enough to know that he *had* a nephew in the college he had tried to break down."²⁶

EMG's skill as a lobbyist can also be seen in his efforts to secure congressional support for full scholarships for the undergraduate students.



Adapted from Boatner (1959), p. iv.

During 1898 and 1899, I made efforts in Congress to secure an increase in the number of free scholarships in the college, the number allowed by law, sixty, having been reached.

The law increasing the number of free scholarships from forty to sixty was carried through chiefly by the friendly cooperation of Hon. Joseph G. Cannon, then chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. Mr. Cannon wrote the paragraph in his own hand and said, when I remarked that the limit of sixty might be reached in a few years, that it would be easy to increase the number allowed. This law was passed on August 30, 1890 and the limit of sixty was reached in 1898.

Greatly to my surprise he declared himself opposed to any increase. I got my friends in the Senate to give the increase, but Mr. Cannon opposed the measure successfully. In 1899, I made a second attempt, with a similar result.

In 1900 it happened that five applicants for admission to the college from Iowa could not be received because of the limitations of existing law. I laid the matter before Speaker [David] Henderson who was from Iowa and who had been a good friend of the college for many years.

I had recommendations from five members of Congress from Iowa, asking for the admission of the five young people. General Henderson was naturally *for Iowa* as well as for the college. He advised me to get the provision for one hundred put on in the Senate and said he would do all he could to carry it in the House.

The provision was agreed to by the Committee of Conference, and I was told that Mr. Cannon, making use of language more emphatic than elegant said, "With the Senate and the Speaker against me, what in ----- could I do?"²⁸

EMG also had occasional clashes with officials of the Department of the Interior. Late in 1897, an Interior official asserted the right to control all expenditures by the Institution, a development that would have made management by EMG and the board of directors extremely difficult. Going again to his friends in Congress, EMG managed to defeat this effort.²⁹ Disagreements with federal officials about how to control programs and expenses at the

college continue up to the present, as will be seen throughout this book. For a period of time, for example, the federal General Services Administration contracted for all construction on the campus, with less than architecturally pleasing results. It is, however, fair to say that the federal government has rarely attempted to involve itself in policy issues concerning modes of instruction, especially with respect to how language is used in the classroom.

During the early years of the college, U.S. presidents were fairly frequent visitors to Kendall Green, and EMG clearly understood the importance these visits lent to the visibility of the college. President Grant attended the dedication of Chapel Hall (the central building of the original campus) in 1871. In May 1874, the college began the practice of holding a "Presentation Day" for the degree candidates in that year. EMG reasoned that the weather was still likely to be cool, and the professors and students less tired than they would be at the end of the academic year in June. At this ceremony, the candidates for degrees were "presented" to the public. Presidents Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland, and Harrison all attended these ceremonies between 1874 and 1889. President Garfield, in particular, made several visits to the college both as a member of Congress and as president. He was assassinated shortly after attending Presentation Day in 1881. Very near the end of EMG's tenure as president, Theodore Roosevelt attended Presentation Day in 1906, where "the young men of the college greeted him with the college 'yell,' surprising him with the noise of the voices of those whom he expected to find *mute*."³⁰

Growth of the Sign Language

Instruction in sign language, especially at the collegiate level, was central to the character and spirit of the Institution right from its founding. At this time, most residential schools for the deaf in the United States used sign language for instructional purposes, and many educated people accepted it as a real language, although different in some respects from spoken languages. In addition,



◀ James A. Garfield became the twentieth president of the United States after completing nine consecutive terms in the House of Representatives and serving as chair of the House Committee on Appropriations. He was a great supporter and advocate of the college and a close friend of EMG. Three months before his assassination in 1881, he spoke at the college's commencement. The alumni association later commissioned a bust of his likeness, which has been on display in Chapel Hall since 1883. Photograph circa 1870–1880, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

▶ President Theodore Roosevelt arriving at the front steps of Chapel Hall to preside over the college's commencement in May 1906. He was the last U.S. president to attend commencement ceremonies at the college until 1966.

scholars had long speculated that some form of gestural language might have preceded speech in human history. In his 1864 address at the inauguration of the college, Amos Kendall expressed the underlying ideas in terms that would have been familiar to many educated people at that time.

It is a great mistake to suppose that deaf-mutes are in general inferior in capacity to children having all their senses in perfection. The inferiority is not in the want of capacity, but in the want of its development. We wish to supply that want . . .

If the whole human family were destitute of the sense of hearing, they would yet be able to interchange ideas by signs. Indeed, the language of signs undoubtedly accompanied if it did not precede the language of sounds. . . . We read that Adam named the beasts and birds. But how could he give them names without first pointing them out by other means? How could a particular name be fixed upon a particular animal among so many species without some sign indicating to what animal it should thereafter be applied? . . . If a company

of uneducated deaf-mutes were, for the first time, brought into contact with an elephant, without knowing its name, they would soon devise a sign by which he should be represented among themselves. So, were it possible for a company of adults with their senses entire to be placed in a similar situation, they would probably point him out by a sign accompanied by some exclamation, and the exclamation might become the name of the animal. Thenceforward the perfect man would convey the idea of an elephant by sound, while the deaf-mute could only do it by a sign . . .

It is our function to teach, improve, and enlarge the sign-language; make it co-extensive with the language of sound, and through its instrumentality open the minds of deaf-mutes to the wonders of creation and the secrets of science and art.³¹

Many of the hearing people in the audience would not have been surprised by the assertion that sign language may have preceded speech in human history or that signing was somehow more “natural” than speech. Prior to the rise of oralism in deaf

education, most would not have been surprised by the idea that education, including higher education, could be carried out in sign language, or that sign languages were, in fact, languages. Scholars at this time were interested in understanding how sign languages worked, including the sign languages used by members of American Indian tribes (in this case, hearing people). Garrick Mallory of the Smithsonian Institution, author of a major study of Plains Indian Sign Language, gave the following account of a visit to the college.

On March 6, 1880, the writer had an interesting experience in taking to the National Deaf-Mute College at Washington seven Utes (which tribe, according to report, is unacquainted with [deaf] sign language), among whom were Augustin, Alejandro, Jakonik, Severio, and Wash. By the kind attention of President GALLAUDET a thorough test was given, an equal number of deaf-mute pupils being placed in communication with the Indians, alternating with them both in making individual signs and in telling narratives in gesture, which were afterwards interpreted in speech by the Ute interpreter and the officers of the college. Notes of a few of them were taken, as follows:

Among the signs was that for *squirrel*, given by a deaf-mute. The right hand was placed over and facing the left, and about four inches above the latter, to show the height of the animal; then the two hands were held edgewise and horizontally in front, about eight inches apart (showing *length*); then imitating the grasping of a small object and biting it rapidly with the incisors, the extended index was pointed upward and forward (*in a tree*).

This was not understood, as the Utes have no sign for the tree squirrel, the arboreal animal not being now found in their region.

Deaf-mute sign for *jack-rabbit*: The first two fingers of each hand extended (the remaining fingers and thumbs closed) were placed on either side of the head, pointing upward; then arching the hands, palm down, quick, interrupted, jumping movements forward were made.

This was readily understood.

The signs for the following narrative were given by a

deaf-mute: When he was a boy he mounted a horse without either bridle or saddle, and as the horse began to go he grasped him by the neck for support; a dog flew at the horse, began to bark, when the rider was thrown off and considerably hurt.

In this the sign for *dog* was as follows: Pass the arched hand forward from the lower part of the face, to illustrate elongated nose and mouth, then with both forefingers extended, remaining fingers and thumbs closed, place them upon either side of the lower jaw, pointing upward, to show lower canines, at the same time accompanying the gesture with an expression of withdrawing the lips so as to show the teeth snarling; [pg 322] then, with the fingers of the right hand extended and separated throw them quickly forward and slightly upward (*voice or talking*).

This sign was understood to mean *bear*, as that for *dog* is different among the Utes, *i.e.*, by merely showing the height of the dog and pushing the flat hand forward, finger-tips first

It will be observed that many of the above signs admitted of and were expressed by pantomime, yet that was not the case with all that were made. President GALLAUDET made also some remarks in gesture which were understood by the Indians, yet were not strictly pantomimic.

The opinion of all present at the test was that two intelligent mimes would seldom fail of mutual understanding, their attention being exclusively directed to the expression of thoughts by the means of comprehension and reply equally possessed by both, without the mental confusion of conventional sounds only intelligible to one.

A large collection has been made of natural deaf-mute signs, and also of those more conventional, which have been collated with those of the several tribes of Indians. Many of them show marked similarity, not only in principle but often in detail.

The result of the studies so far as prosecuted is that what is called *the* sign language of Indians is not, properly speaking, one language, but that it and the gesture systems of deaf-mutes and of all peoples constitute together one language—the gesture speech of mankind—of which each system is a dialect.³²



▲ Alexander Graham Bell, though a strong proponent of oralism, received an honorary degree from Gallaudet in 1880.

◀ EMG attended the Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf in Milan, Italy, accompanied by his brother-in-law James Denison, his older brother Reverend Thomas Gallaudet, Isaac Lewis Peet, and Charles A Stoddard. Photograph by Mathew Brady, circa 1870–1880, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Later linguistic studies would show that this conclusion is not warranted—the signed languages of Deaf people and hearing people such as Plains Indians are, in fact, quite distinct from each other. However, they share mechanisms for sign creation and formation that depend upon iconicity or resemblances of many signs to the things they refer to. As a result, people who are unfamiliar with each other but are used to communicating either in formalized signed *languages* or less formalized gestural systems may find it easier to develop mutually intelligible ad hoc signs.

The year 1880 is particularly important in the history of ASL and deaf education in general. The International Congress of Instructors of the Deaf held that year in Milan, Italy, voted to support oral education of the deaf to the exclusion of sign-based methods. The passage below is the first of several resolutions that the congress approved overwhelmingly.

The Convention, considering the incontestable superiority of articulation [speech] over signs in restoring the deaf-mute to society and giving him a fuller knowledge of language, declares that the oral method should be preferred to that of signs in the education and instruction of deaf-mutes.³³

EMG attended the Milan Congress and voted against the resolutions, and he gives the following account of what happened:

The Milan Congress was a partisan body, a majority of its voting members being from the Italian Schools. Out of 164 members only 21 came from countries outside of Italy and France. The Congress was, therefore, not really international in its character nor was its composition representative. It is not improper to say that its pronouncement in favor of the oral method was the expression of little more than local opinion in Italy and France.³⁴

Oral education programs existed in the United States and Europe before this congress; however, this vote was to prove influential in eliminating signed-based education in Europe and restricting it severely in the United States. Historian Douglas Baynton points out that as oralism prevailed and signing declined, there was a chilling effect on the scholarly study of sign languages and their acceptance by the public as legitimate forms of communication.³⁵ The best known and most influential of the American oralists was Alexander Graham Bell.



Following the establishment of the Normal Department in 1891, hearing men and women enrolled in the two-year graduate program. Pictured here are the instructors and students of the second Normal class, during the 1892–1893 academic year.

A. G. Bell was married to a deaf woman and considered himself a teacher of the deaf. He founded the Volta Bureau in Washington, DC, to promote the ideals of oral education, and, in doing so, he had a significant impact on the development of the National Deaf-Mute College.

Establishment of the Normal School

The idea for a normal department at the college to train teachers of the deaf came from Mr. L. S. Fechheimer of Cincinnati, Ohio. Fechheimer had a deaf son and was a strong supporter of oral instruction. Despite this, EMG requested funds from Congress to establish a new program “in which young men and women, having all their faculties, could be thoroughly trained to be teachers of the deaf,” in both methods then in use—oral and manual. He also told A. G. Bell about his plan and invited Bell to be a lecturer. The House Appropriations Committee held hearings to consider funding the department in January 1891. A few days before the hearings, EMG discovered that Bell planned to block passage of the appropriation. Bell was extremely influential both as the inventor of the telephone and as a staunch oralist. EMG went to Bell and explained

that he planned to restrict admission to the normal department to hearing students. Bell replied that he opposed the establishment of the normal school because he believed that deaf students would be admitted. EMG then told him

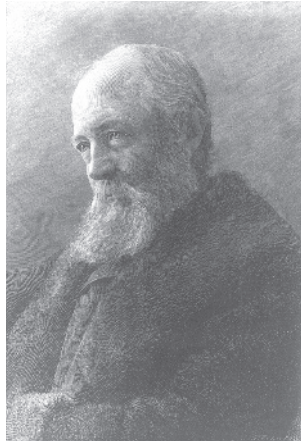
plainly that he was entirely mistaken in this idea, that no deaf persons would be admitted to our normal class, and that all its members would be thoroughly trained in the oral method of teaching the deaf. And yet on the very next day Professor Bell appeared before the Appropriations Committee and spoke for forty-five minutes, asserting flatly that our purpose was to train deaf teachers of the deaf and opposing the plan mainly on that ground.³⁶

EMG succeeded in getting the appropriation passed, although it was less than he had hoped for, and it was to be used specifically to pay articulation teachers. Nevertheless, the college established the normal department as it had originally planned. The first students graduated from the program in 1892, and all seven were hired by schools for the deaf. As for his feud with Bell and its eventual settlement, EMG wrote in his diary, “The hatchet is buried, but I know where it is.”³⁷

Development of the Campus on Kendall Green

In planning the Kendall Green campus and allowing for its growth, EMG tended to hire the most renowned experts of the day in whatever art form might be involved. His motivation may have been partly to draw positive attention to the Institution. In 1866 he engaged Frederick Law Olmsted, generally considered to be the founder of landscape architecture in the United States and still its best known practitioner, to design the campus. EMG had known Olmsted in Hartford, and Olmsted had gained national fame as the designer of Central Park in New York City. EMG also hired well-known architects to design the buildings on the campus.

The campus was located on what had been Amos Kendall's farm in the northeastern quadrant of the District of Columbia, on what was then known as Boundary Street (now Florida Avenue). It retained much of the flavor of its agricultural



Frederick Law Olmsted was commissioned as the architect and designer of the Institution's campus. Olmsted Green is named in his honor. Engraving made and photograph taken in October 1893, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

▼ A view of Kendall Green in 1866 with the Rose Cottage (*right*) and the newly built east wing of College Hall (*left*), which was designed by Emil S. Friedrich.

▼▼ The east wing of College Hall (*left*), and Chapel Hall (*center*), which was completed in 1871. A portion of the shop building can be seen between the college building and Chapel Hall, along with the "old" Fowler Hall (*right*). Photograph circa 1875.

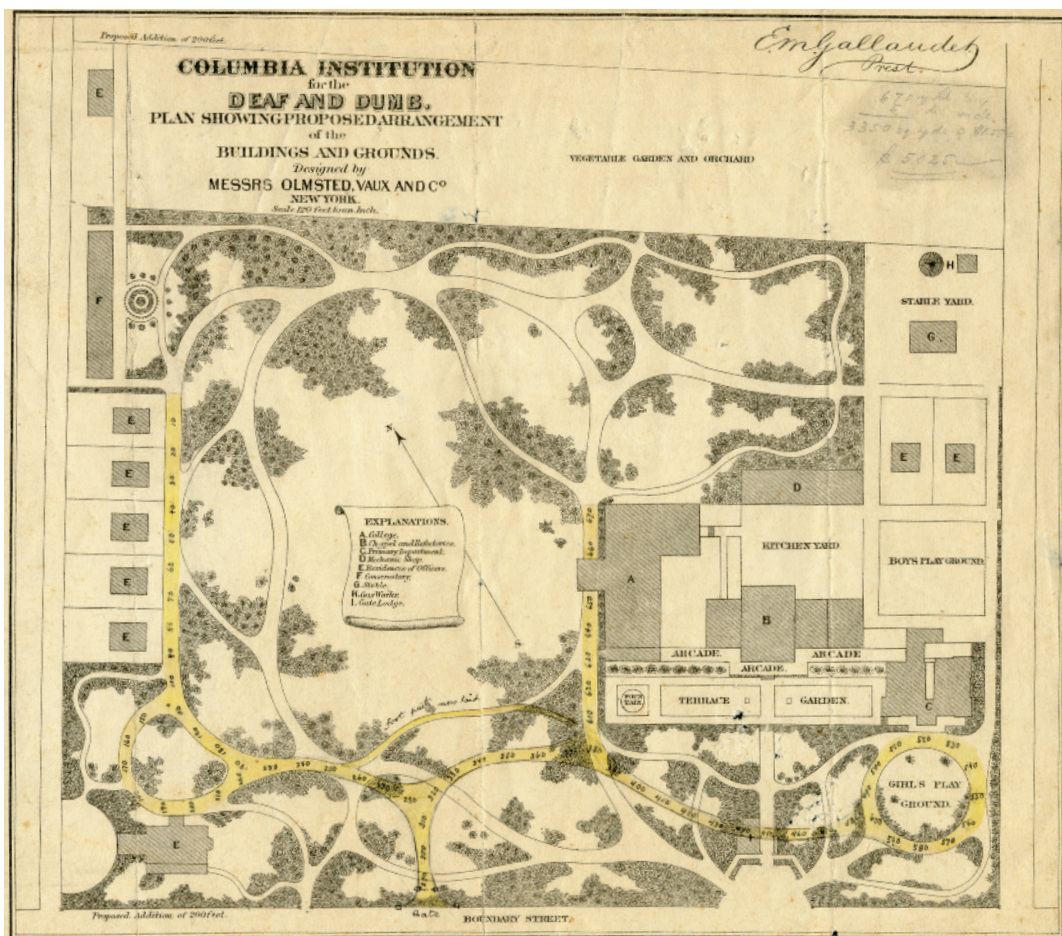


OLMSTED'S DESIGN FOR THE CAMPUS

In planning the Gallaudet campus, Olmsted organized the college and Kendall School buildings so that they backed onto a shared service yard with spaces for the kitchen yard, boys' playground, and the mechanic shop. Kendall School faculty housing faced the service yard as well, making this area a lively outdoor space on the campus. The formal entry to the academic buildings in this cluster faced outward to the campus grounds bounded to the west by Faculty Row, a line of five brick houses for faculty and the president's house. These campus grounds were designed as a park-like "naturalistic" setting where pathways meandered

through groves of shade trees and open fields offering a variety of spatial and sensory experiences. Within the informal campus quad between College Hall and Faculty Row, students and faculty alike had many choices of places to either seek social interaction or solitude along the paths, where one could linger within the shaded groves and gaze across the open fields. One can still experience this sublime campus experience by walking along the original pathways that surround the historic Olmsted Green [the heart of the original campus, later named in Olmsted's honor].³⁸

Gallaudet alumnus and professor, BENJAMIN BAHAN, and Campus Architect, HANSEL BAUMAN



The original proposed plan for the Columbia Institution campus, designed by Olmsted in 1866 and approved by EMG.



▲ Olof Hanson (BA 1886, MA 1889, honorary degree 1914) graduated from the Minnesota School for the Deaf in Faribault and then attended Gallaudet. Following graduation from the college, he worked in an architecture firm. He is perhaps best known at Gallaudet for his design of the boys' dormitory (now Dawes House). Hanson married fellow alumna, Agatha M. A. Tiegel. Photograph circa 1890s.

► The boys' dormitory for Kendall School (Dawes House), soon after construction of the building was completed in 1895.



origins, including orchards and pastureland. For many years, the college maintained a working farm, and students could take agriculture courses. An alumnus, Harley Drake (BA 1904), taught agriculture and managed the farm for many years.

Olmsted's task was to turn Kendall's estate and farm into a college campus. The part of the Kendall estate that Olmsted had to work with in 1866 was only a small portion of the eventual ninety-nine acres currently owned by Gallaudet University. An additional eighty-one acres of Kendall's land was purchased by the Institution in 1870–71. Olmsted's design not only included the placement of buildings but also allowed for walkways, lawns, and ornamental gardens.

A number of the buildings located within the original area designed by Olmsted are still standing, including College Hall; Chapel Hall; the original gymnasium (Ole Jim); four of the Faculty Row houses, including the president's residence; the Gate House; the original Kendall School building; and Dawes House.

Dawes House, named for U.S. representative, senator, and college supporter Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, is particularly noteworthy. Built in 1895, it was the last of the historic buildings constructed during EMG's presidency, and it was designed by Gallaudet alumnus and practicing architect Olof Hanson (BA 1886) of Faribault, Minnesota. EMG was highly satisfied with his work.

Mr. Hanson drew up complete specifications for this building and made careful estimates of its probable cost. It was to his credit and greatly to our satisfaction that the expense of constructing the building fell a few hundred dollars [a significant amount in 1895] short of the estimates. The building is a dormitory for the boys of the Kendall School, is well adapted for the purpose, and has no little architectural beauty.³⁹

The location of Kendall Green, within about one mile of the U.S. Capitol, had great strategic significance for a lobbyist as adept as EMG. He was a regular visitor to the Capitol, as have been all



On the morning of February 6, 1910, a fire burned through the upper levels of College Hall. Onlookers, including students, faculty, staff, and neighbors of the College, watched the action from Olmsted Green while firefighters with a horse-drawn fire engine (*foreground*) battled the blaze.

subsequent Gallaudet presidents, and he frequently invited members of Congress to visit the campus. In 1891, EMG had to use his lobbying skills once again to preserve the integrity of the campus. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had a bill introduced in Congress to give the company a right of way to lay tracks across the Institution's grounds. The placement of the tracks would have made Kendall Green unfit for use by an educational institution and would have severely depreciated the value of the property. EMG gave the following account of his efforts to defeat this measure:

Our directors in Congress, Senators Hawley and Dawes and Representatives Hitt and Hemphill, gave me much valuable aid, and the result was that a signal triumph was won for the institution. I hope I may be pardoned for quoting from my diary a remark I find recorded there from Senator Dawes under the date of January 30, 1891: "Senator Dawes, when I told him of the surrender of the B & O Railroad, said, 'You are bigger than Congress for they can't beat a great railroad which you have done.'"⁴⁰

On February 6, 1910, shortly before EMG retired, one final dramatic event took place on the historic campus. During the morning, a fire broke out in College Hall where the male students lived. The fire spread to the roof of the building, a location that made it particularly hard to put out. College students and faculty fought the fire until firemen arrived, averting catastrophic damage and injury. Because it was bitter cold, the water pumped by the fireman froze and encased much of the building in ice. It also flooded the lower floors. The next day, the *Washington Evening Star* reported on the aftermath of the fire.

Dr. Gallaudet was not present at the time. Acting President Fay quickly straightened out the situation, and saw that the boys got comfortable beds for the night. The work of cleaning out the debris began Monday morning, the college boys and younger members of the faculty volunteering, and all worked with a will that the re-construction might speedily begin. As is the rule with government buildings, no insurance was carried. Dr.

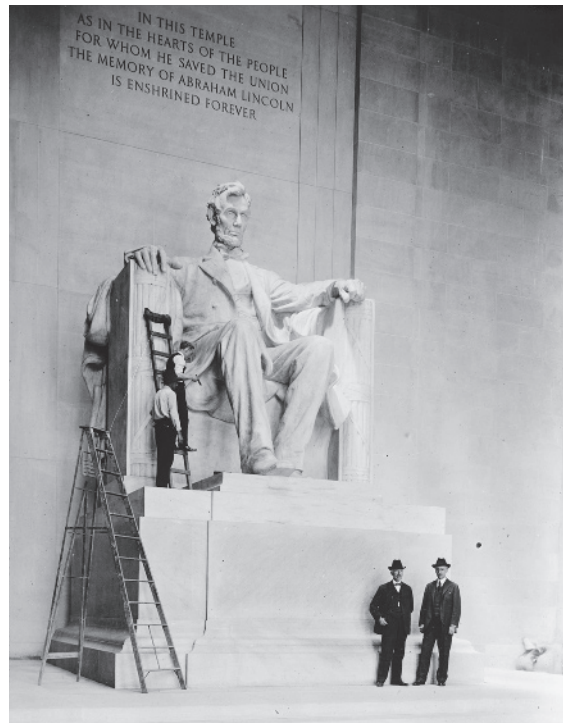
Gallaudet will shortly go before Congress and ask for a special appropriation to cover the cost of the repairs. With favorable weather it will take about two months to put everything back in first-class order.

Controversy on the Campus

During EMG's tenure as president of the college, several issues arose that prompted actions deemed acceptable at the time, but that are questionable in hindsight. One particular incident involved the Deaf community's opposition to EMG's actions in a decision they believed rightly belonged to them. It all began in 1883 at the second convention of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD). C. K. W. Strong proposed that the NAD commission a bronze statue to honor the one hundredth anniversary of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet's birth, which would be in 1887. The statue would be unveiled in 1888 on the grounds of the National Deaf-Mute College. The resolution passed and the NAD formed a committee of fifteen members to manage the project.⁴¹

A number of controversies arose over fund-raising and selection of a sculptor, but the controversy that is significant here involves convincing evidence that EMG exerted undue influence in the selection of Daniel Chester French, a hearing person, as the sculptor. French was already well known at the time of his selection, but he achieved lasting fame for his monumental sculpture of a seated Abraham Lincoln for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

Problems began to surface early in 1886 when Theodore A. Froehlich, chairman of the NAD committee, announced that he had asked French to submit a design for the statue. However, Michael J. Olson, the Gallaudet archivist, has found evidence that French went to Washington to meet with EMG and to select an appropriate spot for the statue on November 18, 1885.⁴² Several articles appeared in Deaf newspapers questioning Froehlich's apparently unilateral decision. EMG also noted in his diary on February 24, 1887, that



Daniel Chester French (left), the sculptor, and Henry Bacon (right), architect of the memorial, stand beside the Abraham Lincoln Memorial statue. Many deaf people believe that the hands of the statue form the manual alphabet letters "A" and "L." French began working on the statue in 1915, some twenty-six years after he created the Thomas H. Gallaudet/Alice Cogswell statue on the Gallaudet campus. In that work, both Gallaudet and Cogswell are forming the letter A, which indicates that French knew of the manual alphabet.⁴³ Photograph circa 1921–1922, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Froehlich told him the committee planned to offer French a commission in the spring.⁴⁴

Froehlich placed an announcement in the *Deaf-Mutes' Journal* on April 14, 1887, stating that a five-member committee would select an artist, and he encouraged artists to submit their designs by May 2nd. The committee met on May 3, 1887, and awarded the project to French. Protests arose immediately among members of the Deaf community, which had been responsible for raising the funds to construct the statue. Olson writes that a mass meeting took place in New York on May 9, 1887, where "deaf people protested against the committee for awarding the contract to a hearing

sculptor. They argued that experienced deaf artists would do the job for only \$8,000 to \$10,000, including the pedestal, whereas French charged \$10,000 for a bronze statue without a pedestal. They also complained that one member of the committee was afraid to give the job to a deaf artist because he thought that a deaf artist could not do the task.”⁴⁵

The deaf artists mentioned as capable of creating the statue included Albert Ballin, J. F. J. Tesch, and Douglas Tilden. Ballin and Tesch both submitted proposals during the selection process. In June, Tesch wrote to Amos Draper, the chairman of the fund-raising committee, complaining that French was “a *pet friend* of yours and Gallaudet.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, EMG and the fund-raising committee stood firmly behind their selection of French, and the controversies eventually died down. French’s statue of T. H. Gallaudet and Alice Cogswell now stands in front of Chapel Hall on the



The memorial statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet and Alice Cogswell, also designed by Daniel Chester French, was unveiled in 1889. The NAD commissioned French, who was well known as a capable and professional artist, in 1887 to design the statue. Photograph circa 1930s.

SELECTING A SITE FOR THE GALLAUDET STATUE

How the statue wound up in its current site is a frequently told piece of Gallaudet lore. After visiting the campus, French suggested the site in front of Chapel Hall. However, an old apple tree where EMG’s daughters had played as children stood on the site, and they objected to its removal. Even after a storm had destroyed much of the tree, his daughters still objected. EMG, who occasionally saw the hand of Providence at work in the college’s history, wrote to French describing what happened next:

What will you say when I tell you that a miracle has happened? Behold! Another storm has come and gone, and the other branch has been torn away, and even my unreasonable offspring do not insist that the bare stump be left standing. The statue can stand where you and I want it, and where it should stand.⁴⁷

Kendall Green campus. The dedication took place on June 26, 1889, with prominent members of the Deaf community, Alexander Graham Bell, and U.S. President Benjamin Harrison in attendance.

In 1905, EMG took steps to move the few African American students attending Kendall School to the Maryland School for Colored Deaf-Mutes in Baltimore. It appears that EMG bowed to pressure from parents when he instituted this policy.

Important legislation was enacted by Congress in regard to the education of the colored deaf-mutes of the District [of Columbia]. From the very early days of the institution we have had colored pupils. But the number was so small for many years as to occasion no particular

difficulty. We had separate sleeping rooms and separate tables for them with the white pupils in the classrooms. Within the past few years the number of the colored increased until we had fourteen. On a good many occasions we had complaints from the parents of white children and protests against the mixture of the races in our school. Some difficulties also arose, growing out of the treatment of the colored by the white. Other considerations made it seem best, on the whole, that there should be a separation. Senator Cockrell [of Missouri] rendered very important aid in securing the necessary action of Congress authorizing the transfer of the colored deaf children of the District to the Maryland School for Colored Deaf-Mutes in Baltimore.

The transfer was successfully made in September 1905, and the new arrangement works well in all respects. The principal of the school in Baltimore is a graduate of our normal department, and two of the teachers were graduates of our college.⁴⁸

This is apparently all the justification that EMG offered for moving the African American students. If he had felt the need to elaborate, he would probably have pointed out that Jim Crow was the order of the day and that the District of Columbia public schools were also segregated. He might also have asserted that his overriding goal was to ensure the survival of the college and that he did not want to anger Southern senators and congressmen. However, other models of how to deal with legalized segregation were available, and it can be seen as a failure of the Institution (and EMG personally) that it dismissed African American parents and their deaf children in this way. No record exists that the children themselves or their parents felt that this arrangement worked “well in all respects.” In fact, dissatisfaction with the arrangement finally led to the return of deaf African American students to the Kendall School almost fifty years later (see chap. 2).

Although the college never had a specific policy against admitting African Americans, records exist for only two African American students in the nineteenth century. James Gilbert, Jr., entered as a preparatory student in September 1880 at the age of nineteen. He left Gallaudet after his first year of

study, possibly because of the treatment he received from other students. In September 1883, sixteen-year-old Ennal Jerome Adams, Jr., was admitted as a preparatory student. Three months into his freshman year, he left the college and returned home to Baltimore. There is no clear account of why he left, but the minutes from a faculty meeting state that he was “allowed to withdraw.”⁴⁹

It was not until 1954 that African American students received a Gallaudet degree. In that year, Andrew Foster got a bachelor’s degree and Hylda Purce obtained a master’s degree. Gallaudet archivist Michael J. Olson has found evidence that a perception may have existed that the college would not accept black students. In December 1897, EMG received a letter from William J. Blount of the Colored Division of the Kentucky School for the Deaf. In it, Blount makes this request:

The information came to us to the effect that you will not accept a negro deaf mute into your college—hence this letter to you for the confirmation or denial. If such is the case, we deplore it greatly as we have an unusually bright colored boy, named Lee Bates, aged 15 years. He is a semi-mute, having lost his hearing at the age of about 7 years. We are more than anxious to send him to your college upon his graduation. So is Supt. Rogers [of the Kentucky School for the Deaf as a whole].⁵⁰

Olson has been unable to find a response from EMG in the Gallaudet Archives, and no one named Lee Bates enrolled in the college. There is no record of organized faculty or student protests against the racial policies during this period and no evidence that white deaf people at Gallaudet felt a sense of solidarity with deaf African Americans.

Just as societal views on race apparently outweighed solidarity on the basis of shared deafness, so did the views on women. Although female students were among the first admitted to the college, none made it beyond the preparatory year, and no more were admitted until 1887, when six arrived at Kendall Green. They lived on the upper floors of EMG’s residence, known as House One.



Female students were admitted to the college in the fall of 1887. The members of this first class included Alto M. Lowman (BS 1892), Anna L. Kurtz (class of 1892), Annie E. Jameson (certificate 1892), Ella F. Black (class of 1892, attended one year), Georgia Elliott (class of 1892, attended two years), Hattie A. Leffler (class of 1892), Margaret Ellen Rudd (class of 1892), and Agatha Mary Agnes Tiegel (BA 1893). Photograph taken near the Gate House, 1888.



▲ May Stafford (née Martin, BA 1895, MA 1900) attended the New York School for the Deaf (Fanwood), graduating in 1891. As an undergraduate at the college, she was a founding member of the O.W.L.S. and founder of the Jollity Club; she also worked for Vice President Edward A. Fay and assisted him with the editing of the *American Annals of the Deaf*. Following her graduation, she became the first female faculty member at the college. In 1900, she stepped down from her position to marry fellow alumnus Henry Lathrop Stafford (BA 1893, MA 1908).

◀ Agatha Mary Agnes Tiegel Hanson (BA 1893) attended Western Pennsylvania Institute for the Deaf and Dumb until the age of fifteen, when she was admitted as a preparatory student at the college. As an undergraduate, Hanson was a founding member of both the O.W.L.S. and the *Buff and Blue*. She married fellow alumnus Olof Hanson. Photograph taken on May 13, 1893.

EMG was reluctant to admit them because of his general opposition to coeducation, although he gave no real explanation for it. After the first year, though, he wrote that the experience “was so much more so than I had expected that I felt disposed to continue the experiment, and I am compelled to say at the date of the present writing, November 1899, that my apprehensions have not been realized. On the whole I feel that the presence of young women in the college has had a favorable influence.”⁵¹

At first, the male students subjected the women to hazing and harassment. An article in the *Buff and Blue* (the student newspaper) in 1895 reported that “when the girls went to and from recitations in the college halls, all the [male] students would line up in rows and thus compel them to run a daily gauntlet of masculine curiosity.” They were also frequently denied membership in student organizations, including the prestigious literary society. In response, thirteen of the women established their own society, the “O.W.L.S.,” on January 9, 1892. The founding members included Lily Bicksler, Bertha Block, Laura Frederick, Mary Agnes Gorman, Lulu Herdman, Augusta Kruse, Alto Lowman, Margaret Magill, May Martin, Hannah Schankweiler, Agatha Tiegel, Christina Thompson, and Bertha Whitelock. The society, whose name is “an acronym whose definition is still a tightly held secret,” held open literary discussions and dramatic productions, as well as other social programs. In 1893, Agatha Tiegel, the first president of the O.W.L.S., became the first woman to receive a bachelor’s degree from the college.⁵²

EMG’s Legacy

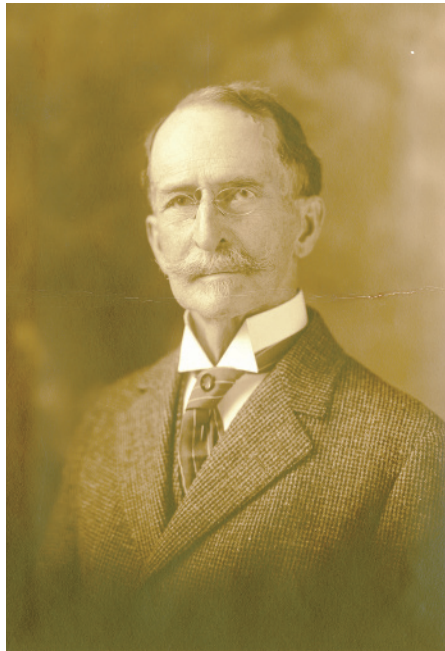
Edward Miner Gallaudet served a total of fifty-three eventful years as head of the Columbia Institution—seven years as superintendent of the original school, and forty-six years as president of the college. He retired as president in 1910, and he lived only seven more years. In the benediction at the end of his *History of the College for the Deaf*, he writes, “My prayer is that the blessing of heaven may ever attend the institution, and all who have, or



In 1904, EMG celebrated his fortieth year as president and his sixty-seventh birthday. Photograph 1909.

may in the future have, any connection with it.”⁵³ There can be little doubt that EMG was a strong-willed and tenacious visionary who was willing to do whatever was needed to ensure the survival of the Institution. But, in what ways did he succeed? Did he have failings? Was he really the “voice of the deaf,” as his biographer would have it?⁵⁴ It is always difficult to evaluate the ethics and morality of the actions taken by people who lived in times that were quite different from ours. So, in assessing EMG, we should look not only to our values but also to those of the time in which he lived.

It is clear that, in general, EMG held deaf people in high regard, and he respected their abilities and their language. It is also clear, however, that when he felt it was necessary or expedient in some way, he could ignore their interests. The exclusion of deaf students from the normal school is a glaring omission, one that continued until 1960. There is no indication that EMG ever seriously considered the possibility that he might be succeeded as president by a deaf person. The idea that it was acceptable for hearing people to manage the affairs of the Institution at the levels of the presi-



In May of 1910, EMG announced his retirement as president of the college. His chosen successor, Percival Hall (MA 1893, honorary degree 1935), took over the office the following September. In the company of his eldest daughter, Katherine, EMG left Kendall Green to reside at their house in Connecticut, where he lived until his death. Photograph 1915.

gency and the board persisted late into the twentieth century and led to one of the pivotal events in Deaf history.

The removal of African American students from Kendall School during EMG's tenure is a mark of shame both on his record and that of the Institution and its board. It is not enough to say that this policy was typical of the time and place. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1868) requires equal protection under the law for all Americans, but the Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) established the doctrine of "separate but equal." This cleared the way for the passage of Jim Crow laws in many states and the District of Columbia. The Columbia Institution received substantial support from all U.S. taxpayers, and it was the only institution of its kind—no comparable separate facility was ever offered to deaf African Americans. So the Institution's actions failed even the meager test of "separate but equal." Had the Institution actually been legally compelled



This western view of Kendall Green shows College Hall (left, completed 1877), Chapel Hall (center, completed 1871), and "old" Fowler Hall (right, completed 1859). Both Chapel Hall and the west wing of College Hall were designed by Frederick C. Withers. The east wing of College Hall was originally called the "Friedrich building" (for its architect) and "the college building." Photograph circa 1888.

to exclude African American students (which it was not), it could have followed the example of Berea College. When, in 1904, the Kentucky legislature passed a law requiring racial segregation, Berea raised funds to support a separate college for black students.

The treatment of female students, while not as egregious as that of African Americans, also raises serious questions of fairness. Again, Gallaudet was the only institution of its kind in the world, yet it excluded half of the deaf population from the college program for two decades. When Gallaudet College was founded in 1864, it was no longer unusual for women to obtain higher education. Several women's colleges existed at this time, as did several coeducational institutions, including Oberlin College, which began admitting women in 1837, and the University of Iowa, which did so in 1855. Cornell University had female students as early

as 1870, and the University of Pennsylvania admitted its first women students in the mid-1870s. Even though, as EMG said, coeducation might present certain problems, he could have followed the policies in place at other colleges. Finally, there is no evidence that EMG tried to arrange for the higher education of deaf women in some other institution when he was unwilling to have them at the college.

On balance, and despite the blemishes on his record, EMG's achievements were great and far-reaching. Against all odds and at a time of enormous crisis in the country's history, he managed, through his own skill and tenacity, to create and keep alive a completely unique institution that has come to occupy a special place in the hearts of deaf people throughout the world. One hundred and fifty years later, no other country on Earth has created an institution like Gallaudet, and it is unlikely that one ever will.