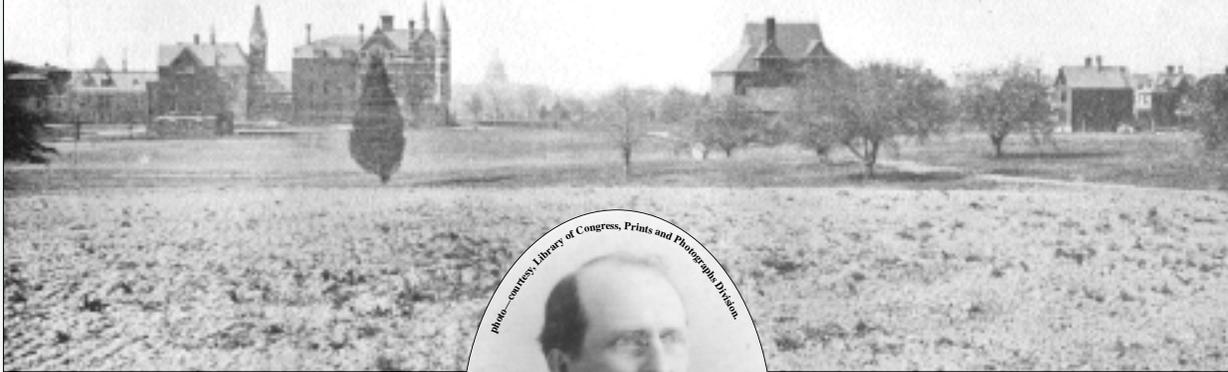


Scenes from the Past...



As this early view above, of the campus located along what is today Florida Avenue near 6th Street, NE shows, it was then bounded by thick woods at the edge of the city.

The elegant gymnasium building shown below, designed by Dr. D.A. Sargent of Harvard University, was built in 1881 for a total cost of \$14,000.



photo—courtesy, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

photo above—Charles Moore, *Charities and Reformatory Institutions* (U.S. Gov't. Printing Office, Wash. DC, 1898); courtesy, Kelsey & Assoc. private collection.

At left, Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet.

As this photo reveals below, within a few short years the campus, having expanded onto the Kendall estate, was becoming especially lovely.



photos above—Charles Moore, *Charities and Reformatory Institutions* (U.S. Gov't. Printing Office, Wash. DC, 1898); courtesy, Kelsey & Assoc. private collection.

Gallaudet University, the world's only university in which all programs and services are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hearing-impaired students, was officially founded in 1864 by an Act of Congress, with its charter signed by President Abraham Lincoln. However, the local landmark along Florida Avenue at 6th Street, NE can trace its origins to 1856, when the Hon. Amos Kendall visited a man whose name has wisely been allowed to be forgotten. That individual had adopted five deaf children in New York City, and brought them to Washington with a plan to ask Congress to fund a school for them, with an ample salary for himself.

Kendall found the children malnourished and suffering from a variety of maladies, and instead asked Congress himself to become their warden. His request was granted, and Congress created the Columbian Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind in February of 1857. Kendall donated two acres of his own estate, known as Kendall Green, for the first humble buildings of what would grow into Gallaudet University. Kendall served as its president from that year until 1864. A Dartmouth-educated journalist, he had made a fortune wisely investing in the electric telegraph with his friend Samuel F.B. Morse.

Kendall hired Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet, son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, founder of the first school for deaf students in the United States, as the school's first superintendent. Gallaudet's deaf mother, Sophia Fowler Gallaudet, became the school's matron. The school received \$150 per student per year from the U.S. Treasury, in an early form of today's school voucher program.

Kendall, himself, built the institution's first major building in 1859 at a cost of \$8,000. The school had an enrollment of 41 by 1862, when Congress provided additional funds for the erection of various buildings on the growing campus. In July of 1864, Congress authorized the purchase of 13 acres of Kendall's property along Florida (Boundary) Avenue as well as funds for additional buildings, salaries, and administration costs. That same summer, Congress formally established the National Deaf-Mute College, and granted the administration the authority to confer degrees in liberal arts and sciences. Kendall retired that year, with Dr. Gallaudet becoming the president of the new institution.

An act of Congress in 1865 provided that the nine blind students at the institution be transferred to the Maryland Institution for the Blind and changed the name of the institution to the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. Kendall died in 1869, the

same year that three men received degrees for having completed the four-year course of study, and the remaining 81 acres of Kendall's estate were sold to the Institution for \$85,000. The expanded college campus was landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted, noted for his design of New York's Central Park. From 1857 to 1875, government appropriations totaled \$470,134.51.

In 1880, the school boasted the DC area's first indoor swimming pool when its gymnasium opened. Seven years later, the first women were admitted on an experimental basis, and they resided on the third floor of the president's own house.

In 1893, at the request of the newly formed alumni association, the name of the school was changed to Gallaudet College in honor of Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the father of the president. He had founded the first deaf educational institution in Hartford, Connecticut, about 1820.

As the 19th century drew to a close, emphasis briefly shifted toward more technical courses of study that offered jobs in manufacturing fields, but by 1910, enrollment was declining when Gallaudet resigned and Dr. Percival Hall, a graduate of the Normal Department, was appointed to succeed him as second president of the College. Hall's tenure was marked by a liberal arts curriculum rich in scientific and cultural studies.

Dr. Leonard M. Elstad, who received his master's degree from the College in 1922, became the third president of Gallaudet in 1945. Later, in 1988, the Board of Trustees announced the selection of Dr. Elisabeth A. Zinser as the seventh president of Gallaudet. Protesting the selection, the students mounted a Deaf President Now (DPN) movement. This grass-roots effort united students, faculty, staff alumni, and members of deaf and hearing-impaired communities across the United States and abroad to support the selection of a deaf president for the University. The school was closed for over a week, and the movement captured worldwide attention from the press. Zinser resigned just two days after her appointment, and Gallaudet's eighth—and first deaf—president, Dr. I. King Jordan, was selected. The board also began the process that would fulfill a demand of the student protesters that 51 percent of the members of the Board of Trustees be deaf. Jordan remains the president of Gallaudet to this day.

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