

LANGUAGE CULTURE COMMUNITIES



200 Years of Impact
by the American
School for the Deaf

AN EXHIBIT AT THE
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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EXHIBIT SCRIPT

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Section 1: Language, Culture, Communities

Wall Quote *“I’m grateful that ASD was established. I thank Gallaudet and Clerc for their amazing journey, for what they did. The school is still here today and I’m so appreciative, as a deaf person, of what it has allowed us to achieve. When I look at deaf kids today, I hope they meet with the same success that we did.”*
Chad Williams, ASD Class of 2004

Section 1 *Label* **Language, Culture, Communities**

In 1817, a school in Hartford formed a new language, a new culture, and a new community.

Led by a minister, a deaf teacher from France, and the parent of a deaf child, deaf students from across the country came together for the first time and began a project that would transform lives, open doors, and advance equality across the nation. Supported and championed by the hearing community around them, these pioneers developed a “singular, living, moving, acting language” (as they described it in 1827) that would become American Sign Language. Through signing, reading, and writing, they connected with each other and with communities around them in ways that had seemed impossible before.

Two hundred years later, the legacy of the American School for the Deaf (ASD) is evident in a dynamic, proud, and global community of deaf and hard of

hearing people fully engaged with the world.

Object IDs Reunion register, 1850. ASD Archives.
This book lists the names of ASD alumni who attended various Hartford reunions, evidence of a growing deaf community. Reunions included the dedication of the Gallaudet Monument in 1854 and the New England Gallaudet Association Convention in 1860.

Area label **Hartford: The Birthplace of Deaf Education in America**

American Deaf education began in Hartford, Connecticut through the work and passion of prominent local leaders and well-educated teachers, funding from state government, and the eagerness of citizens to improve the social and spiritual condition of deaf people. From the beginning, Hartford supported and valued its “Asylum.” City maps, street names, statues, and monuments speak to this civic pride, then and today.

Object IDs Bird’s-eye view of Hartford, looking east. Drawn by Jacob Weidenmann, 1864. CHS collection, gift of the Heirs of Morgan B. Brainard.
The Asylum is just below the Hartford Reservoir, in the left center, now the site of insurance company The Hartford. Weidenmann, who designed Bushnell Park and Cedar Hill Cemetery, taught art and drawing at ASD from 1860-64.

Object IDs Lithograph of the Gallaudet Monument. ASD

Archives, on loan from The Kentucky School for the Deaf.

Made to commemorate the erection of the Gallaudet Monument in 1854, this lithograph was sent to the Kentucky School as a “thank you” for their \$10 donation to the monument fund.

Gallaudet Monument fragment, 1854. ASD Archives. *The Gallaudet Monument stood on the grounds of ASD until the school moved to West Hartford in 1921. When an attempt was made to move the monument to the school’s new location, it broke apart from deterioration.*

Object IDs: Founders Statue model. ASD Archives. *Located at the corner of Asylum and Farmington Avenues in Hartford, the Founders Statue was completed by Francis L. Wadsworth in 1953. The statue depicts a small girl being lifted by two hands, the ten fingers of which represent the ten benefactors of ASD. The hands are unfolding to form the beginning of the manual sign for “enlightenment.” In her left hand is an open book, representing the opening of the door to education.*

Object IDs: Bennett City Hotel plaque. ASD Archives. *A duplicate of this plaque is mounted on Bushnell Towers, Main St., in Hartford. This was the site of the first permanent school in America to teach deaf children: “The Connecticut Asylum for the Education of Deaf and Dumb Persons.”*

Object IDs: Envelope addressed to “The Asylum,” about 1870. ASD Archives. *When this envelope was printed, ASD*

was commonly referred to as “The Asylum.” One needed only to address their correspondence accordingly and it was sure to be delivered.

Hartford Bank Note, pre-1860. ASD Archives. Prior to the National Currency Act of 1863, the federal government did not issue paper currency. However, banknotes were issued by local banks. The Hartford Bank issued this note featuring a vignette of ASD and a portrait of Thomas H. Gallaudet.

Object IDs: Street Signs

*Asylum Street and Asylum Avenue, Hartford
Litchfield Turnpike on the northwest corner of Main St. was laid out in 1800 and later renamed Asylum Street in recognition of “The Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons,” which stood on the north side of the street for over 100 years. The name was changed to Asylum Avenue in 1939.*

*Garden Street, Hartford
Lord’s Garden occupied a large space east of ASD’s former site on Lord’s Hill. Some of this space was used for the school’s garden, as well as the principal’s plot. The street may have been named on account of this.*

*Sigourney Street, Hartford
Hartford poet Lydia Huntley Sigourney opened a girls’ school in Hartford in 1814 and was Alice Cogswell’s first teacher before Alice enrolled at ASD. The street was*

dedicated to her in 1862.

Cogswell Street, Hartford

Hartford physician Mason Fitch Cogswell helped found ASD, and his daughter Alice was the school's first student. Formerly Broad Street Extension, the street was renamed Cogswell Street in 1930. It extends between Asylum Avenue and Garden Street.

Gallaudet Drive, West Hartford

Thomas H. Gallaudet co-founded ASD in 1817. This street is part of a 45-acre suburban development area that began in 1950, west of ASD's current location. The land previously belonged to ASD.

Story label

Hartford Intersections: Deaf and Hearing Communities

The founders of ASD were champions of the success of deaf education and ambassadors to the hearing community. Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc visited the major cities of the Northeast to disprove the myth that deaf people were incapable of learning and to convince audiences to support the cause.

In Hartford, Clerc (who was deaf) and Gallaudet (who was hearing) helped bring together both communities, and they lived by example. They both married deaf women. Clerc's marriage to Eliza Boardman defied the common belief that deaf people should only marry hearing people. These

families were living proof that deaf people could be citizens fully engaged in society.

Object IDs

Right:

Letter, written by Sophia Fowler Gallaudet to her husband, Thomas H. Gallaudet, probably 1828. ASD Archives.

This is the only written communication by Sophia Gallaudet in ASD's collection. One of ASD's earliest students, she married ASD co-founder Thomas H. Gallaudet in 1821. Two of their eight children would take a distinguished place in the second generation of deaf educators.

Daguerreotypes of Thomas and Sophia Gallaudet. Gallaudet University Archives.

Left:

Sophia Fowler Gallaudet's wedding dress, 1821. ASD Archives.

Thomas H. Gallaudet's carpetbag, 1821. ASD Archives, gift from the Gallaudet family. *Gallaudet used this on his honeymoon trip to Saratoga, NY in 1821. This was gifted to ASD in 1947 from Gallaudet's granddaughter, Mrs. John Sparhawk.*

Area label

Beyond Hartford: A Community Grows and Expands

ASD became the training ground for teachers and

principals of other schools, spreading deaf education out from Hartford to the entire country. Prospective teachers came to ASD to learn the “manual system,” or sign language, from Laurent Clerc.

Students came to ASD from all parts of the country and even other nations. Many graduates went on to start or teach at new schools in the United States, Canada, and across the globe.

Object IDs Letter, written by the Committee of Instruction of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb to ASD’s Directors, June 6, 1822. ASD Archives. *In this letter the Pennsylvania school requests ASD teacher Lewis Weld to act as its principal for one year to assist in “promoting the objects of the Institution.”*

Object IDs Pamphlets, postcards, and ephemera from other deaf schools. ASD Archives.

Story label **The First Deaf American Teachers**

Abigail Dillingham and Mary Rose were the first deaf Americans to become teachers of the deaf. (ASD’s first teachers were Laurent Clerc who was French, and others who were hearing.) When they enrolled at ASD in 1817, Dillingham was 31 years old and Rose was 9 years old. Dillingham finished her studies in 1821 and was hired by the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Her hearing brother also became a teacher of the deaf.

Mary Rose was from New York City and transferred to the New York School for the Deaf when it opened in 1818. At the age of 14 she became the first graduate to teach at the school, along with a classmate, John Gazley.

Object IDs Book of original letters and compositions by ASD's first students. Gallaudet University Archives.
The book is open to a letter written by Abigail Dillingham in 1819 to Abbé Sicard, the principal of the Royal Institution of Deaf Mutes in Paris.

Section 2: The Beginning of Deaf Education in America

Wall Quote *“Every creature, every work of God, is admirably well made; but if any one appears imperfect in our eyes, it does not belong to us to criticize it.”*
Laurent Clerc, 1818

Section 2 **The Beginning of Deaf Education in America** *Label*

What motivated ASD’s founders, supporters, and teachers? In the early 1800s, many Americans were experiencing a religious revival, known as the Second Great Awakening, which emphasized missionary work and evangelism. At the same time, reform movements such as temperance (abstaining from alcohol), the abolition of slavery, and women’s rights encouraged compassion and social action. Many of ASD’s first teachers were graduates of Yale, whose president, Timothy Dwight, promoted a vision of a moral and virtuous society.

To people like the Reverend Thomas H. Gallaudet (ASD’s founder and first principal), deaf education was also a matter of justice and Christian evangelism. They believed that without a formal education, deaf people had no access to the knowledge of God, morality, and salvation, and could not fully participate in society. Laurent Clerc, a deaf teacher recruited from France by Gallaudet, desired to share the benefits of education he had received and to prove the intelligence and capability of deaf people.

Wall quote *“The great object of the Connecticut Asylum, as it should be that of all institutions of learning, is to instruct the pupils in the way of salvation.”*
Thomas H. Gallaudet, 1818

Story label **The Cogswell Family**

Hartford’s school began with a personal story: a girl and her parents. In 1807, at the age of 2, Alice Cogswell lost her hearing to meningitis. No school for the deaf existed in the United States. Rather than send Alice abroad to be educated, the Cogswells asked: Why not establish a school for deaf students in Connecticut?

Alice’s father, Mason Fitch Cogswell, was a prominent Hartford physician. He helped commission a census of the state’s deaf population and began a publicity campaign to convince the public and the state of the need for a school. He also organized a small group of prominent local men to raise funds to send Thomas H. Gallaudet on a fact-finding mission to Europe.

Object IDs Silhouettes of Mason and Mary Cogswell. Made by William Bache, 1809. ASD Archives.

Alice Cogswell’s pocket notebook, about 1818. ASD Archives.

This small pocket notebook is one of few surviving possessions of Alice’s.

Alice Cogswell's Bible, published in 1816 by Hudson & Co. in Hartford. ASD Archives.

Note the faint remains of Alice's name embossed on the front cover.

Alice Cogswell's calling card holder. ASD Archives.

Object IDs

List of ASD's subscribers, May 1, 1815. Gallaudet University Archives.

These Hartford businessmen and philanthropists funded Thomas H. Gallaudet's trip to Europe to "acquire the art of instructing the Deaf and Dumb to be established in the town of Hartford."

Story label

Mason Cogswell's 1812 Census

At the request of Mason Cogswell, the General Association of Congregational Ministers in Connecticut commissioned a census of the state's deaf population. Cogswell used their 1812 report to estimate the regional and national deaf population, and used this information to persuade the public and the state of the need for a school.

- 84 deaf people in Connecticut
- An estimated 400 deaf people in New England
- An estimated 2,000 deaf people in the United States

Story label

Thomas H. Gallaudet and Alice Cogswell

The meeting of Thomas H. Gallaudet and Alice

Cogswell is a story with legendary status. Gallaudet was a graduate of Yale and Andover Theological Seminary, hoping for a career as a minister. On a visit to his parents' home in Hartford in 1814, Gallaudet encountered his nine-year old neighbor playing in the garden. In an attempt to communicate with Alice, Gallaudet removed his hat, pointed to it, and wrote H-A-T in the dirt.

Alice's ability to recognize the relationship between the object and the letters was a turning point. For Gallaudet, it offered proof of a deaf individual's intellectual abilities and influenced the course of Gallaudet's career and his passion for deaf education.

Object IDs Portrait of Thomas H. Gallaudet, painted by deaf artist Philip Hewins, about 1843. ASD Archives.

Object IDs Right:
Bust of Thomas H. Gallaudet, created by deaf American sculptor Eugene E. Hannan, 1906. ASD Archives, gift of Saint-Jacques School in Paris.

Left (in wall case):
Thomas H. Gallaudet's sermon at ASD's dedication, May 22, 1817. ASD Archives.

Gallaudet delivered this sermon on the front steps of the American Asylum with the audience seated in the front yard.

Thomas H. Gallaudet's Bible. Gallaudet University

Archives.

Story label **Lydia H. Sigourney and Alice Cogswell**

Lydia Huntley Sigourney published more than 50 books and poetry collections during her lifetime and achieved international fame as a writer in the early 1800s. Born in Norwich, she moved to Hartford in 1814 to open a school for girls drawn from Hartford's elite families, including the Cogswells.

After Alice Cogswell's encounter with Gallaudet, she joined Sigourney's school along with her sisters Mary and Elizabeth. The Cogswells communicated with Alice using "animated gestures" and an early form of fingerspelling. Sigourney used these communication systems to teach Alice. By the time ASD opened in 1817, Alice, its first pupil, could already read and write English.

Object IDs Bust of Lydia Huntley Sigourney, created by American sculptor Chauncey B. Ives, 1842. ASD Archives.

Area label **Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc**

Thomas H. Gallaudet was part of the original group who met in Mason Cogswell's home, and he agreed to travel to Europe to investigate educational

methods for the deaf. While in London, Gallaudet encountered Abbé Sicard and Laurent Clerc at a demonstration of the French “manual method” (hand-signing). Sicard was the principal of the Royal Institution of Deaf Mutes in Paris (founded in 1760).

Gallaudet traveled to the school in Paris to observe Laurent Clerc in the classroom. Gallaudet persuaded Clerc to come to Hartford to teach the French system of sign language and help establish a school. In the summer of 1816, the two men set sail for America.

Object IDs

Abbe Sicard handbill, 1815. ASD Archives.

This handbill announcing a demonstration lecture by Abbé Sicard was among Thomas H. Gallaudet's personal papers. It was while attending this lecture series that Gallaudet met Sicard and Laurent Clerc in London.

Books, *Theorie des Signes*, Vol. 1 & 2, written by Abbé Sicard, 1808. ASD Archives.

It is said that Dr. Mason Fitch Cogswell lent his copy of this work to Thomas H. Gallaudet during his trip to Europe in 1815.

Wall quote

“I had a great desire to see the world, and especially to make my unfortunate fellow-beings on the other side of the Atlantic, participate in the same benefits of education that I had myself received.”

Laurent Clerc, 1852

Wall quote

“I do thank my God I have One friend, yes one friend, dear to me, in whom I have always confided, to whom I have opened the inmost of my soul, who will never abandon me;—it is you, you whom when I first saw I esteemed; you, who was so kind to me in France;—you, who taught me how to teach the poor deaf & dumb;—you, who trusted in me when we left together your native land;—you, who crossed the great deep with me; you, who went with me from city to city begging for the dear objects of our case; you, who have labored with me one year in leading these immortal souls to the knowledge of their God & Saviour;—you, who have been my counselor in difficulty, my succor in melancholy; my friend always... Soon we shall finish the short journey of life.— Will you lay the turf on my grave, as shall I weep over yours?— Let us live together & dispense the goodness of God to the poor deaf & dumb.” Letter from Thomas H. Gallaudet to Laurent Clerc, April 10, 1818.

Story label

Laurent Clerc in America

Laurent Clerc brought the French system of deaf education and sign language to America. He taught the first students and trained the first teachers at the American School for the Deaf. He and Eliza Boardman, a deaf student, married and settled in

Hartford, and as a deaf family they became well-known in the community.

Immediately after arriving in America, Clerc worked to change perceptions about deaf people. He toured the country, delivering speeches in sign to audiences, with Gallaudet acting as his interpreter. Clerc's goal was to demonstrate that deaf people were equal in intelligence to hearing people, and to raise support for deaf education.

Wall quote

"I had left many persons and objects in France endeared to me by association, and America, at first, seemed uninteresting and monotonous, and I sometimes regretted leaving my native land; but on seeing Alice, I had only to recur to the object which had induced me to seek these shores, to contemplate the good we were going to do, and sadness was subdued by an approving conscience." Laurent Clerc

Object IDs

Portraits of Laurent Clerc and his wife Eliza Boardman Clerc, painted by Charles Willson Peale, 1822. ASD Archives.

Laurent Clerc and former ASD student Eliza Boardman were married in 1819, despite a common belief that deaf people should only marry hearing people. Even Thomas H. Gallaudet initially disapproved of a deaf-deaf marriage, until he was persuaded by the Clercs' example.

Object IDs

Objects in Case

Left:

Laurent Clerc's birth certificate, 1785. ASD Archives, on permanent loan from the descendants of Laurent Clerc.

Laurent Clerc's passport, 1811. ASD Archives.

Center:

Jean Massieu Dictionary, 1808. ASD Archives.

Jean Massieu, deaf since birth, was a teacher at the Paris Institute and a contemporary of Laurent Clerc. Clerc may have brought this book to America with him.

Front: Laurent Clerc's pocket watch. ASD Archives.

This was gifted to Clerc "by friends" (possibly from Jean Massieu to Clerc when Clerc came to America in 1816).

Top Right:

Portrait of Laurent Clerc, ca. 1815. ASD Archives. *Oil on walnut panel, probably painted by an English artist at the time Thomas H. Gallaudet met Laurent Clerc.*

Exquisite in detail, it depicts a youthful Clerc signing "C" and holding a stylus and slate. It is believed by Deaf historians that this is the first portrait of a Deaf person signing his/her initial.

Additional items belonging to Laurent Clerc, 1800s (lap desk, embroidered pocket, shaving kit, book, daguerreotype of Clerc, card with Clerc's signature, brass plate engraved "Eliza C. Clerc"). ASD Archives, on loan from the Clerc Holt family. *Laurent Clerc probably brought these items with him when he came*

to America in 1816. Used by Clerc throughout his lifetime, these artifacts are on loan to ASD's museum, courtesy of Clerc's descendents - Laurent Clerc Holt, Caitlin Pennock Holt, and Sarah Morgan Holt

Object IDs Portrait of Laurent Clerc, painted by Hartford artist Louis Fusari from an original glass plate negative, 1948. ASD Archives, gift from the ASD Alumni Association in 1948.

Object IDs The original document belongs to Laurent Clerc's great, great, great granddaughter, Sue Galloway.

Object IDs The original document belongs to Laurent Clerc's great, great, great granddaughter, Sue Galloway.

Wall quote Question: *"By what means do you judge whether the operations of your mind are similar to those of persons who can hear and speak?"*

Clerc: *"I can express my own ideas by writing, and as what I write is what you speak, I can judge that I possess the same faculties of the mind as you do."*

At a public demonstration and question-and-answer in Philadelphia, 1817

Area label **Public and Private Support**

Funding for the school came at first from private donations. Prominent Hartford citizens were the first to financially support the idea. Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc toured New England,

New York, and Pennsylvania to raise funds.

In October 1816, the Connecticut legislature granted \$5,000 to the school, *the first public grant for special education in the United States*. In March 1819, the federal government recognized the school by providing it a land grant in Alabama, which the school sold to establish its endowment.

Object IDs Proclamation by Connecticut Governor Oliver Wolcott, Sept. 3, 1818. CHS collection.
Wolcott authorized churches to solicit funds in the month of October to support ASD.

Object IDs Alabama land grant carrying case, 1819. ASD Archives.

Area label **The Early Years**

The first permanent school for deaf students in America opened in Hartford on April 15, 1817. Seven students attended, including Alice Cogswell, age 11. The youngest was George Loring, age 9, from Boston. The oldest was John Brewster, Jr., age 51, a successful portrait artist (look for some of his work in this exhibit). Thomas H. Gallaudet was the school's principal, and Laurent Clerc was the teacher, the first deaf teacher in America.

Object IDs Admission book, Vol. 1, 1817-1833. ASD Archives.
ASD's first register of students admitted for instruction.

Object IDs Certificate of Incorporation, 1816. ASD Archives.
This Act included a \$5,000 grant to ASD to establish the school, resulting in the first allocation of state funding for special education in the United States.

Story label **What Did Students Learn?**

The early curriculum focused on religion. Academic subjects were soon added, along with vocational classes such as woodworking, tailoring, shoemaking, cutlery, and printing for boys, and domestic skills and dressmaking for girls.

Students arrived with a wide range of language skills. Some brought with them the natural hand signs they had developed at home, which they taught to the teachers. Others, who had become deaf later in life, retained spoken language. Many came to school without any language. Laurent Clerc taught the standardized sign language developed in France. Students also learned the manual alphabet. Through sign and written example, they learned to read and write in English.

Wall quote *"I arrived here on the first day of February 1868 safe and sound, but when I was out among the pupils, I thought myself better off at home, for I could not understand one word they said. It seemed very curious*

to see them express their ideas to each other by the action of the hand called signs. They made their hands fly about their head in such a manner that I thought they were fighting mosquitoes, but I soon got acquainted with the sign language, and in looking back to the day on which I entered school, I perceive that I have made great improvement.”

John E. Crane, of Whiting, Maine, 1872. Crane graduated in 1872, earned a B.A. from Gallaudet College in 1877, and taught at ASD for at least twenty years.

Wall quote

“I saw them making signs with their arms. I could not understand them. . . I began to study my lessons in Mr. W’s class. He taught me how to spell with my fingers and I was happy with him but I could not understand his signs. But after a few months I could understand them. Now I am happy to study and improve.”

William Hickock, remembering his entrance to ASD in 1855

Wall quote

“Clerc’s familiarity with the whole circle of signs is the only fountain from which must flow all the future streams of instruction in the Asylum.”

Thomas H. Gallaudet, 1818

Object IDs

Ambrotype portrait of ASD student and shoemaker Leonard Bartlett of East Killingly, about 1850. CHS collection.

Certificate presented to Leonard Bartlett by ASD, signed by school principal Lewis Weld, 1853. CHS

Collection.

Upon graduation, students who had successfully completed the requirements of their chosen vocation were given a certificate of proficiency for presentation to prospective employers.

Certificate stamp. ASD Archives.

Object IDs

Top Shelf:

Old Testament books for children by Thomas H. Gallaudet, early 1800s. ASD Archives, gift from Maxine Boatner. *In addition to his books for children, Gallaudet preached and conducted daily religious exercises at the school in sign language. He continued writing religious and teaching texts long after his retirement in 1830.*

Books, *The Child's Book on the Soul*, parts 1 and 2 by Thomas H. Gallaudet, 1830s. ASD Archives.

First Lessons for Deaf-Mutes by William H. Latham, 1874.

Wooden stool made by ASD students in boys' pre-vocational class, early 1800s. ASD Archives.

Middle Shelf:

Sewing box, made by ASD students, 1830. ASD Archives, donated by Brad Moseley.

Bottom Shelf:

Lantern slide projector, 1870. ASD Archives, gift from Susan B. Aller. *Used to present illustrated lectures and classroom instruction. The chimney is meant to carry off the heat and smoke from the kerosene lamp which furnished the light for this machine.*

Glass plate photographic negative, 1880-1900. ASD Archives. *ASD's archives contain hundreds of glass plate negatives that were used for illustration of its early textbooks as well as the earliest classroom photographs at "Old Hartford."*

Instructional books, late 1800s-early 1900s. ASD Archives. *From the beginning, Thomas H. Gallaudet and other ASD teachers published textbooks and teaching manuals. ASD became a major publisher of schoolbooks for Deaf children.*

Globe used in the classroom, about 1850. ASD Archives, gift from Maxine Boatner in 1967.

Kelsey Excelsoir printing press, about 1875. ASD Archives, gift from Richard Howson. *This tabletop press, powered by means of a lever, was intended for printers with low budgets, and is similar to the ones used in ASD's early printing classes.*

Story label

Living at School

Life at school was routine. In 1847, one student described a typical day of meals, prayer, class, homework, and free time, regulated by the signal of the bell. The student wrote:

“When I say ‘the bell rings,’ the reader of this may think it absurd to ring a bell in a community of persons whose ears are shut forever; but the fact is, a few of the pupils have a *little* hearing, and they, when they hear the bell, tell the rest.”

The sense of community that developed at the school was for many deaf students a sharp contrast to the feelings of isolation they experienced in their own homes. Coming to the “Asylum” to meet, live, and bond with other deaf students was a life-changing experience.

Object IDs

Right:

Student packing lists, 1870-1871. ASD Archives.
Most of ASD's students arrived in September with their trunks packed for the duration of the school year.

Left:

“Thank you” silver pitcher and salver presented to Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc by ASD students, 1850. Courtesy of Gallaudet University Archives and the objects’ owner, Laurent Clerc’s great, great, great granddaughter, Sue Galloway.

Two silver pitchers and salvers were presented, one to

Thomas H. Gallaudet and the other to Laurent Clerc. On one side of each pitcher is an engraved scene representing Gallaudet leaving France with Clerc. On the other side is an interior view of a school room. In front is the head of Abbé Sicard, and around the neck are the coats of arms of the New England states. These gifts were entirely paid for by ASD students, and many chose to stay at the school for the presentation, as seen in the Robert H. Sloan letter on display.

Letter from ASD student Robert Sloan to his parents, August 24, 1850. ASD Archives.

Object IDs Map of grounds and buildings of the American Asylum on Asylum Street in Hartford, about 1850. ASD Archives.

Story label **Martha's Vineyard**

One group of students came to ASD with a signed language all their own. Children from Martha's Vineyard had grown up in a deaf community as old as its original English settlement in the 1640s. On this isolated island, one out of every 155 residents was deaf. They were equal members of society, who spoke a common sign language. Students from the Vineyard did not express the feelings of loneliness and ostracism that other students felt before coming to ASD. They brought with them Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, contributing to the mix of Clerc's French Sign Language and other students' home signs that eventually developed into American Sign Language.

Wall quote *“Some evenings my parents, brothers, and sisters sat in a circle and spent much time enjoying themselves in agreeable conversations, while I was sitting out of the circle with my eyes fixed upon them, thinking of their intelligence and my ignorance. I sometimes felt so envious of their lives of light as nearly to burst into tears.”*

Charles H. Augur of Milford, CT, age 16, 1854

Wall quote *“One day I was informed of there being an Institution in Hartford for the Deaf and Dumb, and it made the blood run through my veins to think of it, for I desired very much to get an education.”*

John E. Crane, of Whiting, Maine, 1872

Story label **Taking Care of the Students**

The matron and steward served as caregivers to the students boarding at the school. They lived at the school and supervised residential life, making sure students were groomed and well-mannered, enforcing bed-time hours, getting them to class on time, and tending to those who were ill or homesick.

Phebe C. White served as the school’s matron from 1839-1871. One of her students remembered, “More than once, I myself, when in trouble and anxiety, found in her a mother’s tender sympathy and wise counsel.” Jeremiah M. Allen served as the steward, as well as a teacher, from 1855-1864. He was also an insurance adjuster and scientist. In 1867, at the age

of 34, he became the president of the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company.

Object IDs Steward's desk, made by students in ASD's cabinet shop under the tutelage of Rufus Lewis, Cabinet Shop Master, 1864. ASD Archives.
One of the students who made this desk, Samuel Greene, later became the first deaf instructor at the Ontario Institution for the Deaf & Dumb.

Hand-painted teaching scrolls used in the classroom, about 1830. ASD Archives.

Story label **Racial Integration**

The first African American student to enroll at ASD was Charles Hiller of Nantucket, MA, age 15, in 1825. Free black students and white students studied and lived alongside each other. Gallaudet and other ASD staff supported the abolition of slavery. Teacher Lewis Weld, who became principal in 1830, was the brother of the famous abolitionist Theodore Dwight Weld.

In 1833 Connecticut passed the "Black Law," intended to outlaw Prudence Crandall's School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color, in Canterbury. The law (repealed in 1838) broadly outlawed the education of black students from outside the state, yet ASD continued to operate in violation of this state law. It has remained racially

integrated since 1825.

Object IDs

Admission book, Vol. II, 1834-1849. ASD Archives. *This open page includes students Delia, Susan, and George Boardwin, African American siblings from Boston.*

Connecticut Freedom Trail Plaque, 2016. ASD Archives.

When Mende African captives from the Spanish ship La Amistad were jailed in Connecticut in 1839, a major legal dispute ensued regarding whether they were “slaves” or “free men.” To break the language barrier, Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc facilitated initial communication with them using sign language. Former President John Quincy Adams successfully defended the Mende Africans before the U.S. Supreme Court and they were declared free in 1841. Because of Gallaudet and Clerc's willingness to intervene, ASD was declared an official site on the Connecticut Freedom Trail and awarded this plaque in a 2016 dedication ceremony.

Story label

Julia Brace, Deaf-Blind Student

Julia Brace (1807-1884), born in Newington, CT, became deaf and blind at the age of 5, due to typhus fever. The famous writer Lydia Huntley Sigourney helped arrange charitable funds to support Julia Brace's attendance at ASD. Brace enrolled there in 1825, **the first deaf-blind American to receive a formal education.** Brace communicated using signs and fingerspelling

by touch, and she learned to manipulate wooden letters and pins on a cushion to produce words. In 1842, Brace enrolled at the Perkins School for the Blind (founded in 1829) in Massachusetts, but returned to ASD one year later. Brace lived at ASD into her 50s. In 1860, she moved in with her sister in Bloomfield, CT.

Object IDs Letter from Lydia Sigourney and the Ladies Visiting Committee requesting financial assistance for Julia Brace, ASD's first Deaf-Blind student, November 4, 1823. ASD Archives.

Story label **The Fifteen Puzzle**

This puzzle was most likely invented by New York Postmaster N. P. Chapman and became a commercial hit in the 1880s. During this time several newspapers in New York, Boston, and Hartford promoted a myth that the puzzle had been created by a deaf student at the American School for the Deaf.

While that story is not true, the simple wooden puzzle was easy to produce, and ASD students did make copies in the school's woodworking shop and sold them to support the shop. It is possible that a student brought a puzzle home and sold it in Boston, where manufacturers began producing and selling it to shops in the city.

Section 3: Responding, Innovating, Empowering

Wall Quote *“The cultivation of the human mind is paramount to all other pursuits.”*

Thomas H. Gallaudet, in a sermon delivered at the opening of ASD, April 20, 1817

*Section 3
label*

Responding, Innovating, Empowering

The American School for the Deaf was the first permanent school for deaf students in the country and a model for future schools. Grounded in religious instruction and Christian evangelism, the school aimed to develop teaching methods that were most effective and practical for equipping its students to be self-reliant, productive, and equal citizens. In the early 1800s, this meant a focus on a standardized sign language, reading and writing in English, and vocational courses.

ASD continues this legacy with a mission to meet the unique needs of each student, “empowering them to become educated and self-directed, lifelong learners.” Much has changed in 200 years of deaf education, from competing educational philosophies, to advances in technology, to new laws supporting those who are differently-abled. Today, ASD seeks to embrace change, innovate effective teaching methods, and respond to the needs of its students, families, local school districts, and other community partners.

Area label **“A Comprehensive Learning Environment”**

ASD describes itself today as “a comprehensive learning community that welcomes all deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.” In 2015 the school launched its American Sign Language/English Bilingual Approach, an educational method designed to “enable our students to achieve true language and communication literacy and become successful, lifelong learners.”

Story label **ASD’s Response to the “Pure Oralism” Movement**

Competing philosophies about deaf education existed throughout ASD’s history. Oralism—teaching communication through lip reading and speech—gained influence and dominated much of deaf education from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. In 1880, delegates to the International Congress on Education of the Deaf in Milan, Italy voted overwhelmingly to outlaw the use of sign language in schools. The American delegates opposed this move. This group included Edward Miner Gallaudet, president of the National Deaf-Mute College, and Episcopalian minister Thomas Gallaudet (the sons of ASD’s founder Thomas H. Gallaudet). ASD was founded on the manual (signing) method, and it resisted the “pure oralism” movement, choosing instead to utilize multiple learning methods for its students.

Object IDs Pamphlet by Alexander Graham Bell about “Vocal

Physiology” and “Visible Speech,” 1872. ASD Archives. *Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, led the 19th-century oralist movement, which promoted teaching communication through lip reading and speech over the use of sign language.*

Story label **ASL/English Bilingual Education**

ASD’s bilingual educational approach means teaching American Sign Language and English as separate languages, while at the same time integrating ASL, speech, auditory training, reading, writing, and the use of assistive devices in the classroom. The method is rooted in modern educational and communication theory. It also reflects the founders’ original method of teaching both written English and sign language.

From the school’s 2016 Position Statement: “We develop the whole child — intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially. Here, students and their families are surrounded by supportive peers, guided by dedicated educators and specialists, and empowered by the latest technology. Utilizing the proven American Sign Language/English Bilingual approach, we foster a language-rich environment that maximizes each student’s unique potential.”

Object IDs Letter from George Loring to his parents, 1817. ASD Archives.

Students who boarded at ASD were encouraged to write home every weekend. George was 9 years old when he wrote this letter, a good way to practice his English

grammar. Thomas H. Gallaudet included his own notes of explanation below George's letter.

Story label **American Sign Language Today**

The term “American Sign Language” appeared in 1965 in the groundbreaking book, *A Dictionary of American Sign Language on Linguistic Principles*, by William Stokoe of Gallaudet University. The book described signs as comprised of handshapes, location, and motion, and it was arranged according to handshapes (not the alphabet). It challenged the common perception that sign language was not a unique language or that it was simply a form of “broken English,” as many people believed throughout the 1800s and 1900s. After the dictionary was published, many people began to study sign language more closely, and the Deaf Community took renewed pride in ASL and its culture.

Story Label **Learning American Sign Language**

ASD’s first students and teachers learned sign language from each other. They combined the natural hand signs developed at home, the sign language developed by the deaf community on Martha’s Vineyard, and Laurent Clerc’s French Sign Language into what is now American Sign Language (ASL).

Like any language, ASL is complex and structured and takes effort to learn. But it’s natural for people to use their hands to help them communicate. If you don’t

know ASL, you probably still use your hands when speaking, maybe to point or gesture.

Object IDs James Monroe's bicorn hat, 1817. James Monroe Museum Collection. *President James Monroe visited ASD in July, 1817 and wore this hat. From the design of the hat came the sign "president," which is used to this day.*

Story label **Legislative Action**

ASD works with the state, local school districts, and parents to meet the needs of its students in compliance with civil rights laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed by Congress in 1990. IDEA requires states and school districts to ensure that children with disabilities receive a "Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment."

ASD is currently advocating for an amendment to IDEA to specifically address the needs of deaf, hard of hearing, and blind students. Legislation for this amendment was introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2015 as the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act.

Story label **Responding to Community Needs**

To meet the needs of Connecticut's deaf and hard of hearing children and families, ASD develops innovative programs inside and outside of the

classroom. One example is Classroom of the Sea, a partnership between ASD and UConn that allows students to work directly with marine scientists, conducting research in underwater acoustics and marine studies.

Another innovation serving the larger community is Source Interpreting. ASD launched this service to meet the demand of statewide interpreting services after the state closed its program at the State Department of Rehabilitation Services in 2016. Source Interpreting is now a vendor for several state agencies and is listed on Connecticut's 211 website.

Object IDs

Underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV), 2000. ASD Archives.

Classroom of the Sea evolved from ASD's participation in the Aquanaut Program, which allows students to spend a summer carrying out underwater research.

“Classroom of the Sea” article from *The Science Teacher* magazine, March 2000, published by the National Science Teachers Association. ASD Archives.

Area label

Technology and Access

Throughout its history, ASD has welcomed and utilized technology that improves communication access for its students. Amplification devices (from ear trumpets, to hearing aids, to cochlear implants)

and communication devices (from teletypewriters to videophones to smartphones) have assisted students with varying communication needs. With the opening of the new Gallaudet-Clerc Education Center in 2013, ASD was the first to implement a school-wide digital FM amplification system, and it continues to pursue state-of-the-art technology in the classroom.

Wall Quote *“Every invention or discovery, however laudable and ingenious it may be, is never quite right in the beginning; time only makes it perfect.”*
Laurent Clerc, in an address at a public examination of the students at ASD, May 28, 1818

Story label Try out these early amplification devices

Brass & copper child’s ear trumpet, made in England, about 1830. (ASD Archives)

Ox horn ear trumpet, made in England, about 1830. This sound-amplification device is fashioned from an ox horn with pewter mounts. (ASD Archives)

Brass ear trumpet, about 1830. For the most effective amplification, an air column of length and diameter similar to that of a "trumpet" was ideal. However, these were heavy and inconvenient to carry about. (ASD Archives)

London hearing horn, about 1895. This was designed for those who were moderately deaf. It could be carried in a pocket and concealed in the hand when in

use. (ASD Archives)

Warning: Please don't yell into someone's ear with these devices. It could cause pain or damage to the person holding the device.

Object IDs

Wall:

Globe phone, manufactured by the Globe Phone Manufacturing Co., about 1890. ASD Archives. *This tube uses an earpiece similar to a telephone receiver, with a flexible diaphragm to amplify the sound.*

Dentaphone Advertisement, 1880. ASD Archives.

Top Shelf:

Portable TTY Machine, ca. 1970. ASD Archives, gift from Christa Bolen. *The TeleTypewriter (TTY) is a communication device that allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired to use the telephone by typing messages.*

Lamp, manufactured by the Greist Manufacturing Co., New Haven, CT. CHS collection.

Alarm clock, manufactured by Warren Telechron and designed by Belle Kogan, 1935. ASD Archives. *This Controlla Model 8B51 adapted to a bedroom lamp that would light up at the programmed alarm setting.*

Vibraphone, manufactured by the Vibraphone Sales Co. of New York, 1931. ASD Archives. *Wearers inserted*

these silver buds into each ear for improved amplification.

Bottom Shelf:

Filmslide attachment and film canisters. ASD Archives. *Before captioning, ASD teachers showed silent films in class or might use an overhead projector to add captions to recent films. In 1955, ASD's superintendent Dr. Edmund Boatner established Captioned Films for the Deaf, Inc. and began to splice captions directly into the film stock.*

Baby cry signal, manufactured by Heller's Instrument Works, 1940s. ASD Archives, gift from Mary Gasco. *This device enabled deaf parents to be alerted to their baby's cries by connecting it to a room lamp or a vibrating buzzer.*

Lamp, sold by G. Fox & Co., 1940s-50s. CHS collection, gift of the estate of Hazel E. Martino.

Story label

Captioned Films for the Deaf, Inc.

During the 1920s, movies with synchronized sound began to replace silent films in theaters. Teachers at ASD continued to show silent films to their students, but the school needed to keep up with the new technology.

In 1955, ASD's superintendent Dr. Edmund Boatner

established Captioned Films for the Deaf, Inc. Boatner obtained rights to 29 feature-length films and spliced text directly onto the film stock. As a private lending library, it met a significant need that extended far beyond Hartford. In 1959, Congress expanded Captioned Films for the Deaf to become a free loan service administered by the U.S. Office of Education. Captioning movies and TV has broadened access to news, entertainment, and education for deaf and hard of hearing viewers across the country.

Object IDs

Floor Model TTY, 1980s. ASD Archives.

The TTY was a breakthrough in communication technology for deaf people, but the floor model was quite large and bulky. To accommodate this, ASD reconfigured the barracks building on campus, establishing the Converse Communication Center.

Story label

Recent Technology

Recent advances in technology are creating new opportunities for communication. While videophones became available in the 1960s, texting and “Facetiming” have made communication mobile and more convenient. Deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people of all ages are taking advantage of new products to connect with each other’s communities. Mobile apps that teach ASL, ASL-video-recognition

devices, and phone apps that transcribe voice to text in real time are all being used to improve communication.

Section 4: Impacting Lives and Culture for 200 Years

Wall quote *"If it wasn't for ASD, where would I be now? I was able to get an education, I was able to communicate and able to write. I drive, I'm able to do everything, all the things that I learned here."*
Dorothy Bellizzi, ASD Class of 1945

Section 4 label **Impacting Lives and Culture for 200 Years**

The Deaf Community that grew out of Hartford helped shape a new identity for deaf and hard of hearing people—how they perceive themselves, how the hearing community perceives them, and how these groups connect as American and global citizens. ASD students graduated and went on to form Deaf clubs and organizations across the country. These influenced movements to demand new rights for Americans with disabilities, and led to organizations such as the National Association of the Deaf (founded in 1880).

The Deaf Community is diverse and full of unique individuals and stories. Some strongly identify with Deaf Culture, connecting deeply with the rich history and use of American Sign Language. Others consider themselves more a part of the hearing community, and many feel connected to both. For 200 years, students of ASD have shaped history, influenced their communities, overcome obstacles, and experienced everyday struggles and triumphs.

Wall Quote *"Now we can read, write, and converse with others, and I think this makes us happy and free. . . I hope we shall never forget you all when we part with you. I trust that if you are constantly faithful, industrious, and ardent to teach your pupils, and that if they follow your good examples and also are very attentive to you, they will improve better than ourselves, and if so, indeed, I will rejoice and not be jealous."*
Unidentified female student in a farewell address to her teachers, 1839

Wall Quote *"Often I have been asked if I were happy, and if I wished to speak and hear. I have answered that I was as happy as any man and that I never wished very much to speak and hear. The persons who asked me these questions said, that if they were in my situation, they should be very unhappy. All the living creatures God has made are happy on account of his benevolence. Are deaf mutes excepted? No. He has provided means by which knowledge, so essential to happiness and virtue, can be imported to them."*
Ohio School for the Deaf graduate, 1849

Wall Quote *"When I was in public school, sometimes I felt like there was something more that I was missing, and that there would be better communication access somewhere else, and better ways and easier ways to make friends."*
Dylan, ASD 8th grade student

Wall Quote *"After I graduate from ASD, I'd like to go to college. I'd love to travel and live independently, or maybe find a roommate. I want to become a nurse or a nurse's*

assistant in pediatrics. I love babies. I'm always taking care of my little cousin." Shyanne, ASD 10th grade student

Wall Quote *"My dad could fingerspell. I was able to hear some out of my left ear, and I used a hearing aid for many years, and that's the reason I'm able to speak. But my brother was completely deaf. My mom wanted to be able to communicate with him, so she decided to take ASL classes here at school."*
Kathy Darby, ASD Class of 1963

Story Label **Offensive Words**

Minority groups, including the Deaf Community, have often experienced ridicule, misunderstanding, and marginalization. Some words used in the past reflect how hearing people once perceived deaf people. For example, an "idiot" was an uneducated person who may have been unable to learn. A "heathen" was a person unaware of the Christian faith.

Lydia H. Sigourney's 19th-century poem "Instruction for the Idiot" was meant to encourage charity for people who were deaf, blind, or in need. Her use of the word "idiot" was not meant to be offensive, but it may be unsettling to us today. It is a reminder of society's progress since 1817 in understanding and respecting human difference.

Object IDs "Instruction for the idiot," poem by Lydia H. Sigourney, early 1800s. CHS collection.

*Philanthropy, that at the Cross
Hath knelt in humble prayer,
What zeal and wisdom doth she gain
To cope with ignorance and pain,
Or conquer stern despair.*

*Eyes to the blind, she strives to lend
The erring soul to reach,
Relumine Reason's wasted fire
With hope the Prisoner's heart inspire,
The silent lip with speech*

Wall quote *"Deaf and hard of hearing people have the right to choose what they wish to be called."* National Association of the Deaf website, 2016

Area label **Establishing a National Deaf Identity**

St. Ann's Church for the Deaf in New York City, the first of its kind, was founded in 1852 by the Reverend Thomas Gallaudet (the son of ASD's founder). The country's first newspaper for deaf people, *The Gallaudet Guide and Deaf-Mute's Companion*, was founded in 1860 by ASD graduate William M. Chamberlain. The National Theatre of the Deaf began in Waterford, CT in 1967. As the Deaf Community established itself, it formed organizations and joined social and political movements.

Object IDs Wall:

Deaf Awareness, ASD, and political buttons, 1980-2016. ASD Archives. *Note that "Hearing-impaired" is a well-meaning term that is not accepted or used by many deaf and hard of hearing people.*

Photograph of Algot Anderson, about 1970.

Original copy of *Gallaudet Guide and Deaf-Mute's Companion*, Boston, MA, 1861. Gallaudet University Archives. *First published in 1860, The Gallaudet Guide was the country's first Deaf paper, founded by and for Deaf people. The editor, William M. Chamberlain, attended ASD, and during his life he worked as a sailor, carpenter, shoemaker, printer, newspaper editor, and teacher.*

Top Shelf:

Sign Language Barbie, developed by Mattel, Inc. in consultation with the National Center on Deafness at California State University, 1999. ASD Archives.

Deaf Driving Movement publications. ASD Archives. *In the 1920s when states were adopting their first motor vehicle laws, legislatures began to enact laws denying Deaf people the right to obtain drivers licenses. The Deaf community had to fight for the right to drive.*

Left: "The Deaf and the Automobile" by Ignatius Bjorlee, Superintendent, Maryland State School for the Deaf, Frederick, MD, 1940

Center: "Stop! That Driver's Deaf!" by Robert M.

Greenmum, New Mexico School for the Deaf, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1952

Right: "Should the Deaf Be Allowed to Drive?" by Edwin Gallaudet Peterson, Superintendent, Saskatchewan School for the Deaf, Saskatoon, Canada

Bottom Shelf:

Early photographs of ASD graduates. Gallaudet University Archives.

Back row:

Elizabeth D. Stone, born in Dorchester, MA, attended ASD from 1825-1831. She married Edward W. Denny.

Edward W. Denny attended ASD from 1825-1830. He married Elizabeth D. Stone.

Mr. and Mrs. James Denison. James Denison enrolled at ASD in 1852. He began his teaching career at the Michigan School for the Deaf and later became the first principal of the Kendall School in Washington, D.C., organized by Edward Miner Gallaudet in 1857.

Middle row:

Melville Ballard, born in Fryeburg, ME, attended ASD from 1850-1858. Ballard was the first applicant and the first to earn B.S. and M.S. degrees from the Columbia Institution, now Gallaudet University.

George Webster, attended ASD from 1833-1837. He married Lydia Macomber.

Lydia Macomber, born in Westport, MA, attended ASD from 1832-1836. She married George Webster.

Front row:

Joseph and Ann Sanger and children. Joseph Sanger, born in Westborough, MA, attended ASD from 1836-1840.

Olive Macomber, born in Westport, MA, attended ASD from 1840-1846.

ASD Temperance Society members list and pledge, 1829. ASD Archives. *On July 6, 1829 the students at ASD organized a Temperance Society and each who pledged to abstain from "ardent spirits" signed their name as a member. Students continued to add their names until 1837.*

St. Ann's Church for the Deaf record of marriages, baptisms, and funeral services, 1853-1901. Gallaudet University Archives. *St. Ann's Church for the Deaf in New York City, the first of its kind, was founded in 1852 by the Reverend Thomas Gallaudet (the son of ASD's founder).*

Tickets to entertainment to support St. Ann's Church for the Deaf, 1870s. ASD Archives.

Object IDs "Deaf President Now" poster, 1988, published by *The*

Washington Post. ASD Archives.

The Deaf President Now movement was a student protest at Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. Gallaudet had always been led by a hearing president. The protest began on March 6, 1988 when the Board of Trustees announced its decision to appoint a hearing person unfamiliar with deafness as its seventh president. Students, backed by faculty and alumni, shut down the campus and demanded concessions from the Board. The protest ended on March 13, 1988 with the appointment of I. King Jordan, the university's first deaf president.

Object IDs

National Theatre of the Deaf posters. ASD Archives.
The National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) was formed in Waterford, CT in 1967, funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Story label

Thomas Brown and the New England Gallaudet Association

Thomas Brown enrolled at ASD in 1822 at the age of 18. He attended for five years and then taught carpentry for two. After returning to his family's farm in Henniker, NH, he married Mary Smith, a deaf woman from Martha's Vineyard whom he had met at ASD. In 1854 he organized a group of ASD graduates and founded the New England Gallaudet Association (NEGA).

NEGA was the first formal organization of, by, and for deaf Americans. Brown hoped that such a group would "promote the intellectual, social, moral, temporal, and spiritual welfare of our mute

community.” It inspired the formation of many local deaf organizations and eventually the National Association of the Deaf in 1880.

Object IDs

Letter addressed to the New England Gallaudet Association from President Dwight Eisenhower regarding the dedication of Gallaudet Square Memorial in Hartford, 1953. ASD Archives.

Official program for the New England Gallaudet Association 100th Anniversary Celebration, Hartford, 1954. ASD Archives.

Area Title

The ASD Community: Students, Teachers, Parents, Alumni

Info Graphic

**ASD’s LEADERS
Contributions to the School and the Deaf
Community**

Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet
Principal from 1817-1830
As co-founder of ASD, Gallaudet helped secure the first state and federal funding for special education in America and authored the first deaf education books.

Reverend Lewis Weld
Principal from 1830-1853
Weld expanded ASD’s Hartford campus and in 1847 oversaw the publication of *The American Annals of the Deaf*, the oldest and most widely read English language publication for deaf persons.

Reverend William W. Turner

Principal from 1853-1863

Turner was an ordained minister who preached in sign language and served as a deacon at Hartford's Pearl Street Church. He taught at ASD for 33 years and introduced music into the school's education program.

Reverend Collins Stone

Principal from 1863-1870

Stone was a strong advocate of the "natural language of the signs" at ASD. His term was brief due to a fatal accident in which his carriage was struck by a train on Sigourney Street in Hartford.

Edward C. Stone

Principal from 1870-1878

Stone succeeded his father, Collins Stone, to lead ASD. He invited Alexander Graham Bell to introduce the system of "visible speech" to the school.

Job Williams

Principal from 1878-1913

Job Williams taught at ASD for 13 years before being named principal. He staunchly supported the use of manual sign language throughout the "oral vs. manual" debates at the turn of the century.

Frank R. Wheeler

Principal from 1913-1935

Wheeler oversaw ASD's move from Asylum Ave. to

its present West Hartford campus. Wheeler purchased ASD's first "motion picture machine," and was an advocate of the "combined system" of the oral method of lip reading and sign language.

Edmund B. Boatner

Superintendent from 1935-1970

Boatner had the longest tenure at ASD (35 years), during which he presided over the addition of 13 new structures on campus (eight buildings and five staff cottages), as well as the introduction of Captioned Films for the Deaf.

Ben E. Hoffmeyer

Headmaster from 1970-1981

Hoffmeyer oversaw the 1975 renovations to the Gallaudet Building, and broadened ASD's reach to include a new Birth-to-Three Program and instruction for deaf students with additional disabilities.

Winfield McChord, Jr.

Executive Director from 1981-2001

McChord expanded ASD's campus with two additional buildings and established the school's PACES (Positive Attitude Concerning Education and Socialization) Program to meet the needs of students with behavioral and/or emotional challenges.

Dr. Harvey Corson

Executive Director from 2001-2006

Corson was ASD's first Deaf president. He was also

one of two Deaf candidates for consideration to become Gallaudet University's first Deaf president during the Deaf President Now movement in 1988.

Edward F. Peltier

Executive Director from 2006-2014

Peltier oversaw the capital campaign, design, and construction of ASD's Gallaudet-Clerc Education Center (GCEC). He was instrumental in expanding ASD's mark overseas with professional presentations in Paris, Singapore, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Jeffrey S. Bravin

Executive Director from 2014-Present

Bravin manages all functions of the school's operations and has led the roll-out of the school's ASL/English Bilingual Approach. Bravin currently works on several state and national boards serving the Deaf community.

Story label

John Brewster, Jr. (1766-1854)

Attended ASD: 1817-1820

John Brewster, Jr. was born in Hampton, CT, the son of a prominent physician and a descendant of one of New England's oldest Puritan families. Brewster learned to communicate through signs and writing, and he received instruction in painting from the Hartford portrait artist Joseph Steward. He had a successful and influential career painting the portraits of elite families in Maine, Connecticut, and eastern

New York. Brewster moved to Maine in 1796. In 1817, at the age of 51, he returned to Connecticut to enroll in the first class at ASD, where he attended for three years. Brewster's works can be found in museum collections in New York, Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, including the Connecticut Historical Society.

Object IDs Portrait of James Eldredge, painted by John Brewster, 1795. CHS collection, gift of Gift of Franklin Q. Brown, Jr., Sylvia E. Morss, Dorothy B. Hoar, Phillip B. French, Leigh H. French, and Jane Acheson Brown.

Object IDs Miniature portraits, attributed to John Brewster. ASD Archives.

Story label **Augustus Fuller (1812-1873)**
Attended ASD: 1824-1828

Augustus Fuller was born in Deerfield, MA and showed an early talent for painting. A childhood illness caused him to lose his hearing. While boarding at ASD, he received instruction in drawing and painting. After graduation, Fuller studied with the artist Chester Harding and worked as an itinerant portrait painter in towns along the Connecticut River Valley and in New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Illinois.

Few of Fuller’s portraits have survived. He painted full-size portraits, including those of some of his ASD classmates. He also produced miniatures—small watercolor portraits on ivory—including the rare miniature on display here.

Object IDs “Woman in Black,” portrait miniature, painted by Augustus Fuller, mid 1800s. ASD Archives.

Portrait of George H. Williams, painted by Augustus Fuller, 1854. Brad Moseley Foundation collection.

Story label **Adam Metrash (1837-1884)**
Attended ASD: 1851-1857

Born in Norwalk, CT, where his ancestors had settled in the 1790s, Adam Metrash was one of twelve African American students to attend ASD between 1825-1870. By attending ASD, Metrash had access to a better education than most free blacks in Connecticut before the Civil War. In 1861 he married Elizabeth Pepinger, a graduate of the New York School for the Deaf. They settled in Norwalk, where Adam worked as a fisherman. He purchased two acres of oyster beds from the town and harvested oysters from his boat, *The Silence*. The Metrashes had four children who lived to adulthood. One child, Robert, was also deaf and attended ASD from 1872-1880. All of the Metrash siblings learned sign language.

Story label **Samuel Thomas Greene (1843-1890)**
Attended ASD: 1855-1867

Samuel Greene was born deaf in Portland, ME. While a student at ASD, he was expelled for two years for his penchant for mischief, but was later readmitted. After graduating he went on to earn a bachelor's degree at the national Deaf-Mute College in Washington, D.C. (now Gallaudet University), and in 1870 became the first deaf teacher at the Ontario Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (now Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf).

Greene was well-known in the Deaf Community for his storytelling and his command of sign language as a public speaker. An avid sportsman who enjoyed bicycling and yachting, Greene died in an ice-boating accident at age 46.

Story label

Anna Marnock Brown (1870-1948)

Attended ASD: 1879-1887

Anna Marnock was born in Glover, VT in 1870. She lost her hearing at the age of 2, due to measles, and began attending ASD at the age of 10. As early as 1825, the state of Vermont provided financial help to families who sent their children to ASD. Marnock married Marcus Brown, also a graduate of ASD, in 1892. They settled in Hudson, MA, where Anna was a housekeeper and Marcus was a farmer and carpenter. Their son, Leslie, who was hearing, attended Dartmouth College and became a teacher and coach, and taught deaf students during his career. Anna Marnock outlived her husband and died in 1948 at the

age of 78 at the New England Home for the Deaf in Danvers, MA.

Story label **David Halberg (b. 1929)**
Attended ASD: 1934-1948

David “Dave” Halberg excelled in academics and sports at ASD, and fellow students described his most outstanding characteristic as “his cheerful willingness to help a friend.” After graduating, he majored in Deaf Education at Gallaudet College, was a three-letter athlete, captained the school’s football team, and was president of the student body government.

Halberg went on to teach at ASD for 39 years. A math teacher, counselor, scoutmaster, school photographer, historian, and coach, Halberg formed ASD’s wrestling team, which went on to win two national titles. He received the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America for his distinguished services to youth. Dave was so highly regarded at ASD that October 8, 1983 was proclaimed “David H. Halberg Day.”

Story label **Robert Panara (1920-2014)**
Attended ASD: 1939-1940

In April, 2017 the U.S. Post Office honored Robert Panara on its newest stamp in the Distinguished Americans series. Panara was a writer, poet, and scholar. Growing up in New York, Panara lost his hearing at the age of 10. He continued to

communicate through lip-reading and spoken English, and he attended mainstream public schools. After high school, Panara enrolled at ASD to learn American Sign Language and prepare for the entrance exam at Gallaudet University. He taught for nearly two decades at Gallaudet before becoming the first deaf professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, NY. At NTID he taught literature and creative interpretation through sign language, and started the institute's drama program. In the 1960s Panara helped found the Connecticut-based National Theater of the Deaf.

Story label

Peter L. Bailey (b. 1965)

Attended ASD: 1968-1983

Peter Bailey is Head of the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, the third oldest school for deaf students in the country, founded in Philadelphia in 1820. After graduating from ASD, Bailey earned a bachelor's degree in Human Services and a master's degree in Organizational Management and Leadership at Springfield College. Bailey's father and his siblings, as well as his own siblings, also graduated from ASD. "ASD has always made a huge impact on my personal and professional life. I believe that each student should be provided the opportunity to maximize his/her language skills and be encouraged to grow and thrive in an academic setting that is designed to meet his/her individual needs. Without any doubt, ASD created who I am and whom I serve!"

Story label **John Anthony Serrano (b. 1980)**

Attended ASD: 1986-1998

John A. Serrano came to ASD in first grade. After graduating, he earned a bachelor's and master's degree in Elementary Education and Deaf Education at Gallaudet University. He has served as a teacher and high school principal at Texas School for the Deaf, where he is currently Director of Academic Affairs. He is also a board member of ASD and of the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf.

“ASD gave me the confidence and tools I needed to grow to become the individual I am now. In my current role as a husband, father, and a school administrator, the life lessons ASD taught me still resonate within me and will remain a significant part of me.”

Story label **Megan Burgess (b. 1990)**

Attended ASD: 2006-2008

Megan Burgess became deaf at the age of 2 from meningitis. She attended school in Bermuda for ten years with an ASL interpreter before enrolling at ASD. After graduating, Burgess attended the National Technical Institute of the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), graduated from RIT's College of Imaging Arts & Sciences, and went on to become one of RIT's first deaf students to earn a master's degree in Visual Arts, in 2014.

Burgess received three college scholarships from ASD. “It has been a symbol of inspiration that my alma mater believed in me, believed that I would succeed, and that created a path for my success which I am thankful for.” Her art work has been displayed and sold in Bermuda.

Section 5: Highlighting Recent ASD Student Projects

Story label The Deaf Lens: A Deaf and Hard of Hearing Perspective on Photography and Writing

“Photoliteracy at ASD uses a student's original photography as a prompt to spark writing. The students learn about the many facets of photography such as composition, lighting, exposure, and styles. Upon analysis and selection of their best photograph based on specific criteria, the students begin the writing process. The writing always connects to the photography skill. For example, abstract photography may correspond with creating abstract language. The end result is a stunning photograph with a beautiful written piece. Deaf and hard of hearing students have a way of viewing the world unlike anyone else and that unique perspective is evident in their photography transcribed into their writing...through ‘The Deaf Lens.’”

Christa E. Bolen, M.S.
ASD Teacher of the Deaf and Creator of
“Photoliteracy”

Story label Robotics Competition

“ASD is a proud participant in the First Tech Challenge robotics competition. Our team were all rookies this year: coach and students! Nonetheless, we built a robot, collaborated with other experienced teams to write a program to run it, and brought it to

competition. ASD also successfully hosted its first FTC competition this year. The competition was well attended, livestreamed on Facebook, and our team took 9th position out of 22, which advanced us to States! At States we got to compete, interact, learn, travel, make new friends, and basically just enjoy the whole robotics process! The team is ready to give it a go again next year and has already started brainstorming our improvements!”

Cynthia J.B. Rumery
ASD Robotics/Transition Teacher

Thank You

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Exhibit Consultant: Gary Wait, American School for the Deaf archivist, retired

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