

Hotchkiss, J.B. (1915, April). Historical Address. *Buff and Blue : Semi -Centennial of Gallaudet College (1864-1914) Issue*, 23 (7). From the minutes of the Ninth Meeting of the Gallaudet Alumni Association (1914, June 22-25).

Dr. John B. Hotchkiss was next introduced, and he delivered in signs the Historical Address, which was read orally by Mrs. Hotchkiss.

DR. HOTCHKISS' ADDRESS.

The main enabling acts, legislative and otherwise, that created and breathed into Gallaudet College the breath of life, have been so often iterated, and reiterated, that it would be superfluous for me to dwell upon them here.

You will expect me rather to set forth those lesser incidents and circumstances, that have marked and shaped the destiny of our beloved Alma Mater, and have been, perhaps, to the thoughtful mind, much the more significant.

Born in the throes of the closing years of our great Civil War; inaugurated when the guns of Grant were thundering at the gates of the Confederacy, our beloved Alma Mater was a harbinger of the "happier day" that has since dawned upon our country and justified the faith of the great men who then

turned aside from the perplexities and anxieties of a national crisis, to consider and set the seal of their approval upon the aspirations of the deaf people of the land toward a higher spiritual and intellectual life.

Incorporated April 8, 1864, and inaugurated June 28 following, by the installation of E. M. Gallaudet as President, the College then first exercised its newly-delegated authority by conferring the degree of Master of Arts upon John Carlin, an eminent deaf-mute artist of New York City, and a graduate of the Pennsylvania Institution. Mr. Carlin had by his own exertions become well versed in the arts and sciences, and had ten years before contributed to *The American Annals of the Deaf* a strong plea for the establishment of a college for his fellow-deaf. It was eminently fitting, therefore, that he should be the recipient of the first degree bestowed by the college of his dreams. You may be interested in knowing that there is on the wall behind you a fine specimen of Mr. Carlin's work as an artist, in the crayon portrait of Laurent Clerc; and that, in 1871, he was found advocating publicly the establishment of another college.

The quick fruition, as history goes, of the elder Gallaudet's hope for the establishment of a college for the deaf, is brought home to us by the fact that Laurent Clerc, Gallaudet's associate, was present at the inauguration of this college, and delivered a short address.

In closing that address, Mr. Clerc showed his appreciation of the magnitude and importance of the occasion by addressing President Gallaudet in these words: "Let me express to you, my dear young friend, the 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."

And so, as it were, by direct lineage on both sides, our Alma Mater comes down from that earlier day of deaf-mute education. Indeed, our College Mother has other intimate connection with the founders and forerunners of the education of the deaf in this country: she being made tangible and a real mother to us, personified in Sophia Fowler Gallaudet, who ministered to the domestic needs of the College in those infant days—she of beloved memory, wife of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, and mother of our Gracchi. Her kindly, sympathetic mother-wisdom still blossoms here, in hearts that then called her friend and mother. Would that this hall contained some memorial of her!

Encouraged by such expression of approval by the deaf, as were uttered by Carlin and Clerc, and others, and by a warm greeting from other colleges, as represented by the Hon. J. W. Patterson, of Dartmouth College and Dr. Daniel R. Goodwin, President of the University of Pennsylvania, our young College threw open its doors in September, 1864. We cannot say that there was any suffocating crush of entrants, one lone young man matriculating in the college proper, and six entering the preparatory class. This number was increased to thirteen in the second year, four of them robbing Mr. Ballard of the lonely distinction of being the "whole thing," by matriculating as Freshmen.

Of the first six in the preparatory class, the ladies present will please note that two were young women, and that there was at least one young woman in that class continuously until 1871, when their matriculation was discouraged, because the increase of the number of girls in the primary department made it hard to house them. They were again admitted in 1887. So, the dear old Alma Mater has from the start loved sons and daughters with equal fervor, altho', in poverty of house and sorrow of heart, compelled to put the latter from her for a time; and the rich heritage of these fifty years, that we welcome today, belongs equally to the boys and girls.

The boys of those days were housed in discarded cottages that went with the acres donated to the Institution by the Hon. Mr. Kendall, and they had more room than the girls in which to grow. But grim-faced poverty barred the way to most of those who would take the college course, and President Gallaudet, mindful of this, secured the generous co-operation of a number of gentlemen in founding eleven private scholarships, yielding \$150 a year. Four of these were to be perpetual, provided ten similar endowments were obtained. They were offered by the Hon. Mr. Kendall, and Messrs. Jay Cooke & Co., of Washington; and by Thomas Smith, Esq., and Edson Fessenden, Esq., of Hartford, Conn. The remaining seven were temporary scholarships, to continue only during the life of one college generation. They were given by Mr. Geo. W. Riggs, Jr., the Hon. B. B. French, and Mr. Charles Knapp, of Washington, D. C., the Honorable Wm. Sprague, of R. I., Mr. George Merriam, of Mass., and a generous person whose name was withheld, doubtless from fear that his left hand would find out what his right hand was doing.

The number of these scholarships was not increased, and all lapsed when it became evident that Congress had definitely adopted the policy of giving scholarships to worthy students

who were unable to bear all the expense of a college course. But Congress did not adopt this policy without a struggle. In 1867 it granted ten scholarships; in 1868 it increased the number to twenty-five; but in 1870 it blotted out all this good work by refusing to appropriate money for this purpose. This was one of the crises in the history of the college; for a continuance of this refusal meant not only the withdrawal of most of the students in attendance, but the permanent limitation of the opportunity for advanced study to a very few persons; more than this, it is not putting it too strongly, probably, to say that it meant the extinction of the college. But this was not to be; for Dr. Gallaudet appreciated the seriousness of the situation, and by persistent presentation of bold and able reasoning, and the exercise of tact and good sense, he won back, in 1871, those twenty-five scholarships; and then, in a few years, secured an increase to sixty, and finally to a hundred.

The Faculty of the College during the first year, besides President Gallaudet, consisted of Richard S. Storrs, an honor graduate of Amherst College, Professor of Languages and Philosophy; and Rosewell Parish, Instructor in Mathematics and Elementary Sciences. Mr. Parish left after one year, and, in time, became Superintendent of Public Schools in Norwich, Conn.

The second year, Professor Llewellyn Pratt became Professor of Mathematics and Science, and the third year the Faculty was doubled in number and quadrupled in learning by the addition of Professors Porter and Fay. And so our Alma Mater steadily has grown, until now it has a Faculty of fifteen, and an attendance of about one hundred and ten.

During these fifty years, twelve hundred and thirty-two young men and women have matriculated, and four hundred and seventy-eight, or nearly thirty-nine per cent, have graduated. Of these, 1,216 have come from forty-seven States and Territories, eleven from Canada, and five from the British Isles.

Since that auspicious day, when John Carlin was honored with a degree, Gallaudet College has bestowed *Five hundred and fifty-six* degrees on *Five hundred and five* persons. Of this number three hundred and sixty-seven were Bachelor degrees for study in course, and of these forty-seven afterwards received the Master's degree for advanced study. Eighty-one Master degrees have been bestowed upon graduates in the Normal Department. Sixty-one honorary degrees have been given, being confined almost exclusively to persons who have been distinguished for service in the uplift of the deaf.