

Our Name Is . . .

by Shane Dundas

Drumroll . . . our new name is the *National Deaf Life Museum*. The name change was announced last June through social media. Since our founding in 2007 by Director Emerita Dr. Jane Norman, we have been called the Gallaudet University Museum.



NATIONAL DEAF LIFE MUSEUM

A new logo that bears the new name.

Several reasons exist for the name change:

- 1) The name helps to clearly communicate the museum's message, especially as our exhibits have never been limited to the scope of Gallaudet University;
- 2) It can enhance fundraising abilities, especially in grantwriting;
- 3) It puts us on equal footing with other museums in District of Columbia.

The name change process took nearly three years, as it took time to discuss with various

stakeholders, including Alumni and the Gallaudet campus community. Changing the name is a step that we don't take lightly; we considered every possible name that would match what the Museum stands for.

The next plan is to change our signage, update our image campaign, and host a re-dedication ceremony, which will take place during Homecoming this fall. Please follow our social media for the latest announcements and updates relating to the re-dedication ceremony.

This year has been a good and busy year so far for the Museum - first we had the great news of getting a certificate from the Museum Accreditation Program (MAP), development of an online exhibit (more information on page 3), and now we have a new name that breathes new life into the museum! There will be many exciting possibilities for the Museum - and as always we rely on your [donations](#) and support to help the Museum improve.

The Museum staff want to thank all of you for your help and support in this process. Your ideas and feedback were instrumental in creating this new name. Remember, this Museum belongs to you - it belongs to all of us, why? Because it contains our story. As Dr. Norman always said, "*Together we will tell our story.*"

International Connections

by Meredith Peruzzi



Meredith Peruzzi,
Manager.

Photo courtesy of National Deaf Life Museum.

As a globally recognized institution, Gallaudet University has a strong tradition of international relations. For us, this means participating in the global museum community. In 2017, I traveled to Trnava, Slovakia, and joined colleagues from Canada, France, and Israel to help foster the development of a Deaf heritage museum. In 2018, our staff welcomed Jaroslav Cehlárik to the Gallaudet campus to view our exhibitions and continue the discussion of building a museum in Slovakia. We have also hosted a conversation with representatives from the Argentinian National Directorate of Museums, and met with the curator of the University of Nottingham Museum in the United Kingdom.

Now, in 2019, we are taking more steps into the global museum community. Thanks to a travel grant from the US committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), I will be attending the triennial [ICOM General Conference](#) in (con't page 3)

Time Capsule

History as Narratives of Perspectives

by Trevor De Rosch

Editor's note: The *Time Capsule* is a series of articles featuring the people and places of Gallaudet University's history.

I often see people, while discussing history in the museum, sharing historical stories with one another. Whether it is in reference to the death of President James A. Garfield; Chapel Hall's role on campus in the early years; the villainy of various historical figures, such as Senator Randall, who opposed funding Gallaudet in the late 1880s; these narratives have entered our collective consciousness and been passed around as truth. Unfortunately, in efforts to simplify the stories, these truths become distorted, or even become falsehoods.

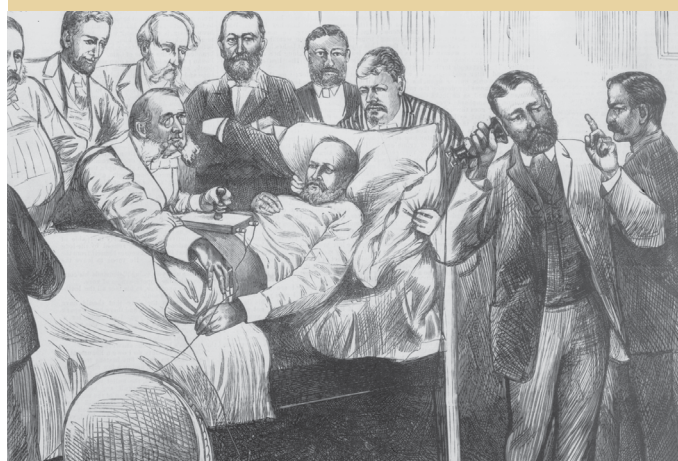
One common myth I have seen is the story of Thomas H. Gallaudet's trips to England and France in 1815. The short story I have seen relayed is that Gallaudet went to London to view their methods, and then, after being turned away and running into Abbé Sicard, went to Paris before returning home to Hartford with Laurent Clerc. The truth is rather more complicated. While Gallaudet did indeed meet Abbé Sicard while in England, as well as the Paris Institute teachers Clerc and Massieu, he then returned to Hartford to get approval from the Hartford committee before going to Paris to study the methods used there.

Another common myth is the story of President James A. Garfield's death. A proponent of deaf education and supporter of the National Deaf-Mute College, Garfield, as patron of the institution, attended the 1881 graduation ceremony in Chapel Hall. The myth I see most often is that as soon as he left the ceremony he was assassinated. This is a misconception. Garfield was present at the 1881 graduation ceremony, but that was in early May. Garfield was shot on July 2nd, two months later, outside the train station (where the National Gallery of Art's West Building [can't page 4] is today), and died in September. It is believed that the



Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, 1842. (Daguerreotype)

Image courtesy of Gallaudet University Archives.



A print show Alexander Graham Bell using his induction-balance device to locate the bullet in President Garfield's body. August 20, 1881.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, v. 52, no. 1351
Sketch by William A. Skinkle.

[Image courtesy of Library of Congress.]

(con't from page 1.)

Kyoto, Japan in September. More than 3,000 participants from all over the world are expected to attend; while a conference of this size in the US would easily have more than one Deaf participant, we have no information on whether other Deaf museum staff from around the world will attend the ICOM conference.

Attending an international conference creates challenges for accessibility, but also the opportunity to educate hearing museum professionals about best practices for Deaf visitors. Although the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has been signed by 162 nations, its implementation is varied, and I look forward to talking with colleagues about how their museums currently serve Deaf visitors.

I am especially looking forward to the conference's day of offsite meetings, when I will head to the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies to attend workshops and interact with fellow members of ICOM's University Museums and Collections (UMAC). Like Gallaudet, universities around the world have museums that showcase



Yasaka Shrine in the Gion district of Kyoto, Japan.
Photo courtesy of Meredith Peruzzi.

art, science, and culture. Having seen UMAC member presentations while attending the 2018 Association of Academic Museums and Galleries (AAMG) conference in Miami, I am excited to learn more about international academic museums.

This article is just the beginning - stay tuned to our social media the first week of September to get direct reports from the ICOM General Conference, and I'll share my insights afterward in the next issue of *Our Story*.

*The Museum staff wish Meredith
a prosperous and safe journey.*

Exploring Exhibits from Home

by Shane Dundas

Many of you may have missed seeing exhibits that have been taken down after a period of time - a total of at least three exhibits so far, with more coming at some point, when current exhibits are taken down. We have had visitors express their dismay at missing the opportunity to view past exhibits. We have great news for you - the Museum team have been working hard creating conceptual design and functions for online versions of past exhibits.

After countless months of exploring various museum websites searching for inspiration of design and layouts that best fit with the National Deaf Life Museum, we have created a design "blueprint." We had several meetings with Gallaudet Technology Services (GTS) to create a document outlining all specific functions of the website. The website development will be done by University Communications, and it may not be until this fall or winter when they begin developing the website. Once that is completed, museum staff Shane Dundas, with



(L to R) Shane Dundas, James Cromer, and Rani Alameh.

Photo courtesy of Jean Lindquist Bergey.

the help of staff member Rani Alameh, will begin to create online exhibits. We anticipate exciting interactive features, especially in looking at the artifacts. We will keep you informed of any developments. Your [ongoing support](#) is vital towards this effort. Thank you.

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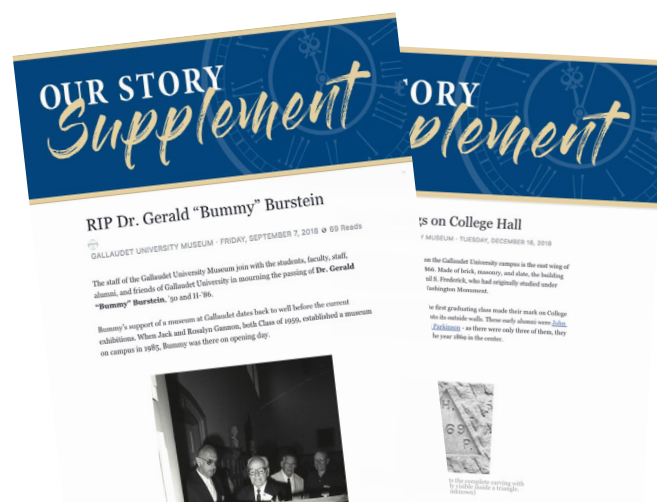
graduation was his last public address, but this may also be a myth; further research is needed.

One last myth (or assumption) I have been asked about is the role of Chapel Hall as a church. Many people (often from the general public) come in under the assumption that this is a church, and are therefore shocked to see a museum instead. While Chapel Hall was used for church services (a *Buff and Blue* editorials from the 1890s mention these services), it generally served as a multipurpose room. In addition to religious services attended by all levels of the college (including elementary to high school students), Chapel Hall hosted lecture series, graduation ceremonies, dances, wrestling competitions, and other events. Outside of these, Chapel Hall functioned as a place to relax, a large lounge room to sit and read or gather and chat. Today, of course, it houses the *Gallaudet at 150 and Beyond* and *We Are Equal* exhibits, but it still serves its purpose of hosting events on campus, though other buildings (Kellogg Conference Center, Foster Auditorium, Elstad Auditorium, SAC's Multipurpose Room, and others) can serve as venues for events and lectures nowadays.

While stories about history can be fun, and speculation is an intriguing tool for historians, misinformation is another issue altogether. At the same time, condensing history down to basics is how we remember what we do. The average American would probably know the American Revolution came out of an issue over taxation. Start throwing in information about repaying a debt for the earlier French and Indian War, or go into the complexities of the Revolution, and most people would probably be over their heads. As a historian, I know I would be lost in a discussion of which chemical elements to combine, or how to solve complex mathematical equations I have not seen in a decade. Maybe knowing Garfield was on campus prior to being shot is good enough. Perhaps knowing Gallaudet went to England and then to France more than satisfies the lessons of history. Where do we draw the line between "good enough" and "actually..."? After a decade of historical study and practice, I am still looking for the answer.

Our Story Supplement

In the past *Our Story* has been produced more than a few times a year, but due to increasing work load on the Museum Team on various projects, we reduced our newsletter releases down to two times per year. In between issues, *Our Story Supplement* is part of the Museum's Facebook page. Whenever there are stories that cannot wait to be released, we produce articles along with photographs in there. Since our Facebook page is set for public, there is no need to create an account in Facebook just to have access to *Our Story Supplement*.



The National Deaf Life Museum publishes the [Our Story](#) newsletter bi-annually. For more news in between newsletter issues, please visit our [Facebook](#) page.

You are receiving this newsletter because you were a donor, or you filled out a contact form in the past. If you do not want to receive newsletters from us, please e-mail museum@gallaudet.edu to unsubscribe. Learn more about the [National Deaf Life Museum Mission and Vision](#).

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