

2019 Going On 2020

by Shane Dundas



The Museum receives Museum Assessment Program Certificate.

From L to R: Shane Dundas, Meredith Peruzzi, Trevor De Rosch, and Rani Alameh. Photo courtesy of the National Deaf Life Museum.

The year 2019 has been a busy year for all of us working behind the scenes within Museum operations. Here's what we've been up to:

March: We received a Museum Assessment Program Certificate, putting us on the way toward national accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums. See a story from [2018](#) and another story from [2019](#) for more information.

March: Dr. James Lackner of the Ashton Graybiel Spatial Orientation Laboratory at Brandeis University visited the *Deaf Difference + Space Survival* exhibition. His tour was led by Harry Larson, who worked with Dr. Graybiel and is featured in the exhibit.

March: The [funeral service](#) for Bernard Bragg was hosted in the Museum.

April: We submitted a five-year strategic plan to the University, paving the way for future projects.

April: The Museum celebrated the fifth anniversary of the opening of our exhibition space in Chapel Hall.

May: Our staff hosted a meeting with professionals from the National Museum Directorate of Argentina.

June: Trevor De Rosch and Shane Dundas met with [René Legal](#), a volunteer with the Musée D'Histoire et de Culture des Sourds (Museum of History and Culture of the Deaf), located in Louhans, France.

June: The Museum celebrated Jack and Rosalyn Gannon's Diamond Anniversary and held a [fundraiser in their honor](#).

September: Museum manager, Meredith Peruzzi, attended the [International Council of Museums](#) (ICOM) Conference in Kyoto, Japan.

September: University of Nottingham Museum director, Dr. Clare Pickersgill from United Kingdom, [toured our museum](#) with Shane Dundas.

September: The Museum celebrated the 80th birthday of our beloved Dr. Jane Norman, Director and Curator Emerita, and launched a [fundraiser in her honor](#).

October: [Official rededication](#) of the Gallaudet University Museum as the National Deaf Life Museum at Gallaudet University.

October: The "I Am Psyched!" [exhibit](#), created by the American Psychological Association, was displayed on loan in Chapel Hall, in partnership with the Department of Psychology.

December: Museum Hack, a consulting company, donated a free audience development workshop, to be held in 2020.

Here's a sneak peek into our 2020:

Spring 2020: Our first online exhibitions will be launched.

June 2020: Meredith Peruzzi plans to attend the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries (AAMG) Conference in Lawrence, Kansas, and visit the [Museum of Deaf History, Arts, and Culture](#) (MDHAC) in Olathe, Kansas.



Time Capsule

Who was Senator Aaron H. Cragin?

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.

Recently, a Gallaudet Alum, Paul Gallien, '65, went to visit his childhood home state, New Hampshire. While he was there, he took the opportunity to locate a gravesite of New Hampshire's former Senator Aaron H. Cragin. He recently learned about Douglas Craig's connection with Senator Cragin from one of our staff. So what's the story here?

Many people know the story: Senator Aaron H. Cragin, while riding around DC, came across a young African-American boy in the streets. Upon stopping and finding out the boy was deaf, the Senator brought the boy to Edward Miner Gallaudet at the Columbia Institute. The boy, given the name Douglas Craig (in honor of both Frederick Douglass and the Senator who found him), became a student at the school for several years, and later became an employee on the campus performing a variety of jobs.

I was curious about this story, especially the man who found Douglas Craig. Who was Aaron H. Cragin? Why did he stop to help a young African-American child in the middle of DC? As Cragin was a Senator from New Hampshire, where I was raised, I was even more interested in this man's story.

Senator Cragin first became a lawyer in 1847, practicing in Lebanon, NH. He served in the NH House of Representatives from 1852 to 1855, the US House of Representatives from 1855 to 1859, and finally as a Senator from 1865 to 1877. He worked alongside Senator James W. Patterson of NH, who served on the National Deaf Mute College's Board of Directors between 1867 and 1873.

During his time in Congress he gave several speeches on topics addressing minorities. On May 24th, 1858, while serving in the House of Representatives,



*Paul Gallien, '65, at Senator Cragin's gravesite**

* See note at the end of the article on pg 4. *Image courtesy of Paul Gallien.*



Senator Aaron H. Cragin, Circa 1859 by McClees & Beck

Image courtesy of Library of Congress.



Douglas Craig, Circa 1930

Image courtesy of Gallaudet University Archives.

Historical Preservation: Missing in Action

by Shane Dundas

Editor's Note: There will be short series of articles relating to historical preservation. This is the first one – be on the lookout for upcoming issues of *Our Story*.

Have you ever wondered how events came to be, but can't find more information? Or have you wondered where are all the artifacts or documents have gone so you could take a look at them? Have you had any burning questions that you couldn't find answers to because the notes have disappeared?

Recently, I spoke with a colleague, Michael Olson, from the Gallaudet University Archives. We discussed our shared values in preserving history, and how rapidly information is disappearing due to various factors. Losses of documents and artifacts may be caused by:

- being destroyed by natural causes (fires, storms, etc.)
- being discarded by family members or relatives of deceased owners
- reluctance to share or donate documents/artifacts to archives (such as the Gallaudet University Archives) or another place serving as a repository (such as schools for the Deaf)
- disintegration due to impractical storage
- disappearance or loss due to lack of tracking

These are the most common problems that can be avoided by simply donating them to archives, especially to the Gallaudet University Archives, which holds the world's largest collection of Deaf related documents and artifacts. They can be reached at archives@gallaudet.edu or visit their website for more information: <https://www.gallaudet.edu/archives-and-deaf-collections/about/donations>

Does donating your documents or artifacts mean you no longer have access to it? No. You can request the archives to make copies for you to keep and they keep the original – that way it will be preserved and appreciated for many generations to come. Not donating items can mean total loss of your legacy and a loss to the entire world of Deaf history.

Tip: If you are not ready or prepared to donate, please be sure to create a will or a notarized document. Instruct your family to send any items in your collection to the archives - that way it will be preserved and not lost.

I asked Mike what one thing he really wants to see in the Gallaudet University Archives collection – he replied, "All the original documents from the New England Gallaudet Association of the Deaf." Sadly no original documents have been found, only references to the organization that were recorded in the *Deaf Mute Journal*.

Mike returned the question to me, I replied, "I'd like to see the Charters of all the divisions of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf (NFS) in a similar manner that many diplomas were collected by the Archives in honor of Gallaudet University's 150th Anniversary Celebration."

What about you? What are the long-lost documents or artifacts that you want to see again, safely held and preserved in the Archives?



As of today there are less than ten original Charters out of 168 NFSD Divisions. Do you know anyone who has an original copy of your local division or a copy of it? Please contact us. Photo of Division #62 Charter courtesy of Gallaudet University Archives.

(con't from page 2.)

Cragin gave a speech, in which he addressed the violence in Kansas ("Bleeding Kansas") and argued against permitting slavery in the territory. Just two years prior to his finding Douglas Craig, on January 30th, 1868, Cragin spoke in the Senate on the issue of Reconstruction, arguing for the continued protection of the rights of African-Americans in the Southern states. Cragin equated the loss or obstruction of these rights to be equivalent to betraying the soldiers who died in the Civil War. These two speeches imply a general view by Cragin of African-Americans as deserving of citizenship and rights.

However, Cragin was by no means fully liberal. In a later speech, on May 18th, 1870, Cragin spoke in the Senate on the issue of the Territory of Utah, and the establishment of the Church of the Latter-Day Saints. His main focus was the practice of polygamy among the Mormons, which he found abhorrent. He discusses the issue by comparing Christian practices towards women with practices amongst other faiths and nations. "It is shocking to think that this infamous and degrading barbarism is practiced in an enlightened and Christian country...Heretofore polygamy has been practiced alone in heathen nations..."

Cragin certainly supports the rights of women (at least, the rights they had at the time), and has a very low opinion of other cultures around the globe. However, his charity towards the young Douglas Craig, in light of his stances in Congress, both prior to and after

the Civil War, show a man who, in public, supported the rights and capabilities of African-Americans.

Why he chose to stop for that boy that day, out of all the people of the District of Columbia struggling in the aftermath of the war, we may never know. However, he may have known of the National Deaf Mute College due to his years working alongside college board member and fellow Senator Patterson, putting him in a unique position to greatly benefit a young nine-year-old orphan.

If you are interested in learning more about the story of Douglas Craig, please refer to [A Fair Chance in the Race of Life](#). There is also an article on Douglas Craig in the [Fall 2013 issue of Gallaudet Today](#).

We thank Paul Gallien for sharing his photo with us. We also thank Paul Gallien and the Class of 1965 for their generous support by donating as a class to the National Deaf Life Museum during their 50th Reunion back in 2015.

***Note:**

Before its association with the Nazi party, the [swastika](#) was a symbol of luck and protection. This is why it was used on gravestones around the start of the 20th century.

References:

[Kansas Speech](#), 5/24/1858

[Loyal Supremacy Speech](#), 1/30/1868

[Laws in Utah Speech](#), 5/18/1870

Our Story Survey

Upcoming in 2020, be on the look out for a survey from us about *Our Story*. We will be revamping the newsletter to become more accessible and change from print (PDF) to electronic format.

The National Museum of Deaf Life 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 Museum of Deaf Life Mission & Vision](#).

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