

A Brief History Of The American Asylum, At Hartford, For The Education And Instruction Of The Deaf And Dumb

DATE: 1893

¹In the year 1807 Alice, the youngest daughter of Mason F. Cogswell, M.D., of Hartford, Conn., a man eminent in his profession and in philanthropic works, became deaf through scarlet fever. Anxious for the education of this beloved child, Dr. Cogswell appealed to the General Association of the Congregational Clergymen of Connecticut to aid him in ascertaining the number of persons in the State afflicted in like manner, and at a meeting of the association, held at Sharon, in June, 1812, it was reported by a committee previously appointed for the purpose, that there were *eighty-four* deaf and dumb persons within the limits of the State. If a like proportion of deaf-dumbness existed in other States there were probably *four hundred* such persons in New England, and in all the United States about *two thousand*. Surely enough of these must be of school age to sustain a good school on this side of the Atlantic.

²Bringing these facts to the attention of his wealthy and influential friends, Dr. Cogswell succeeded in interesting them in the project of establishing a school for their education.

³**On the 13th of April, 1815**, the following gentlemen met by invitation at his house, viz.: “Ward Woodbridge, Esq., Daniel Wadsworth, Esq., Henry Hudson, Esq., **Hon. Nathaniel Terry**, John Caldwell, Esq., Daniel Buck, Esq., Joseph Battell, Esq. (of Norfolk), Rev. Nathan Strong, D.D., and **Rev. Thos. H. Gallaudet**.” After prayer by Dr. Strong invoking the Divine blessing upon their deliberations, and after a full discussion of the practicability of sending some suitable person to Europe to study the art of instructing the deaf and dumb, Dr. Cogswell and Mr. Woodbridge were appointed a committee to ascertain the name of some suitable person, who would consent to go, and to obtain subscriptions to defray his expenses. In one day Mr. Woodbridge, who was one of the leading business men of Hartford, raised sufficient funds for the purpose. The Rev. Thos. H. Gallaudet, a graduate of Yale College and of Andover Theological Seminary, was solicited to make the journey and fit himself to take up the new enterprise. On the 15th of April, 1815, he signified to the committee his willingness to do so, and on the 25th day of May he sailed for Europe. It is not necessary in this brief history to recount the story so often told of the obstacles encountered by Mr. Gallaudet in England and Scotland in his