

Deaf Culture Question of the Week - January 26 - 30, 2009
Bill Newell, Principal, Washington School for the Deaf

Most people will recognize the names Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc with regard to the founding of the American School for the Deaf (ASD) in Hartford Connecticut in 1817. But, there was also a third influential person involved in founding this first school for the deaf in the United States. Who was this third founder of ASD?

- a) John MacGregor
- b) Amos Kendall
- c) Mason Cogswell
- d) Alexander Graham Bell

Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: "c" Mason Cogswell --- Dr. Mason Fitch Cogswell was the father of a deaf daughter, Alice Cogswell. He was the person who actually recruited Thomas Gallaudet to go to Europe to learn how to teach deaf children. Dr. Cogswell was responsible for developing the finances by which Gallaudet was supported to go to Europe and ultimately raising the money to start the school in Hartford. Thomas Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc get the most attention but without Dr. Mason Cogswell history of deaf education in America may have taken a completely different course.

Below are three websites that recount this history and provide pictures of Mason Fitch Cogswell.

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=6168694>
<http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/lib/stills/647card.htm>
<http://www.deafis.org/history/who/cogswell.php>

Question adapted from:
<http://deafness.about.com/od/deafheritage/a/heritagequiz.htm>