

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – October 11 - 15, 2010

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October 11 – 15 is Spirit Week and Homecoming on Friday at WSD.
Go Terriers!

Which influential person spearheaded the development of the first school for the Deaf in America?

- a. Mason Fitch Cogswell
- b. Horace Mann
- c. Abraham Lincoln
- d. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet

Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: “a” – Mason Fitch Cogswell was a successful medical doctor in Connecticut. He had four children. All of them were girls. His third child, Alice, was Deaf. Dr. Cogswell was the person who gathered together nine other influential leaders in Hartford Connecticut to sponsor Thomas H. Gallaudet’s trip to Europe to learn methods for teaching Deaf children. This group sent Thomas to England and then on to Paris where he learned about the use of sign language to teach Deaf children. At the Paris school Thomas met Laurent Clerc, a Deaf teacher at the school. The rest is history. Thomas and Laurent returned to America to found the American School for the Deaf in Hartford Connecticut in 1817. This story should be familiar to readers of DCQW.

To see a picture of Mason Fitch Cogswell and read more about his interesting life and to see a picture of a bronze statue sculpted in memory of the work of these ten citizens of Hartford go here:

<http://www.deafis.org/history/who/cogswell.php>

An interesting fact: Dr. Cogswell was the first doctor in America to perform a successful cataract surgery.