

## Deaf Culture Question of the Week – February 16 – 20, 2009

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We recently celebrated the birthday of President, Abraham Lincoln. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC is surrounded in a long standing controversy with regard to a connection to Deaf culture. What is this controversy?

Go to the bottom of the page for the answer.

Answer: Lincoln was president and signed the papers to establish Gallaudet University. But that's not controversial to most people. However, a controversy has swirled for years around the issue of whether Lincoln's hands as shown in the Lincoln Memorial are forming the manual alphabet letters "A" and "L" for Abraham Lincoln. Take a look for yourself at: <http://www.handspeak.com/byte/f/index.php?byte=frenchdaniel>. In another statue by the same sculptor, Daniel Chester French, created on the Gallaudet campus to memorialize Alice Cogswell and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet he did form Alice's hand in a manual alphabet letter "A". Over the years many people have believed that French worked the manual alphabet letters "A" and "L" into his famous statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial. It has never been proven however that it was his intention to do this. As reported in Deaf Digest this week, apparently French had a deaf son which tends to support that possibly French intentionally created Lincoln's hands in an "A" and "L". I can't confirm the source of the story reported in Deaf Digest that French had a deaf son. The controversy continues.... I guess we may never know. (Check out Deaf Digest at [www.deafdigest.com](http://www.deafdigest.com))

Read about this controversy surrounding the Lincoln Memorial at this Gallaudet University website.

[http://library.gallaudet.edu/Library/Deaf\\_Research\\_Help/Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions\\_\(FAQs\)/OtherMiscellaneous/Lincoln\\_Memorial\\_Statue.html](http://library.gallaudet.edu/Library/Deaf_Research_Help/Frequently_Asked_Questions_(FAQs)/OtherMiscellaneous/Lincoln_Memorial_Statue.html)