

Deaf Culture Question of the Week - May 5 – 9, 2008

Bill Newell, Principal, Washington School for the Deaf

Sign language saved a deaf man's life during the Civil War.

What is the name of this famous deaf man who was saved from being hung by the Union Army during the Civil War?

Do you know this famous story about how sign language saved a deaf man's life? Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: Eighteen-year-old **Joshua Davis** was squirrel hunting one day near his parents' home near Atlanta, Georgia during the Civil War. Suddenly he found himself surrounded by Union soldiers. Davis was deaf, but he could tell that they were shouting at him... The Union army was about to hang him when an Officer rode upon the scene. He asked the boy in sign language "Are you deaf?" When the boy answered, signing "Yes" the officer knew he was deaf and proceeded to have a conversation in sign language with him. . .

Read the entire story here:

<http://www.nad.org/site/pp.asp?c=foINKQMBF&b=186453>

This story is part of the folk literature in Deaf Culture and carries deeper meaning for most Deaf people who see it as an allegory for the meaning of American Sign Language in their own lives. Literally viewing American Sign Language (when they finally are able to have access to it) as life saving.