

Abraham Lincoln papers

From Edward M. Gallaudet to Abraham Lincoln¹, June 20, 1864

¹ Gallaudet, the son of a noted teacher of the deaf, was invited to become superintendent of the Columbia Institute when the school was founded by Amos Kendall and his associates in the late 1850's. Although a proponent of the teaching of sign language, Gallaudet was one of the first in the nation to promote instruction in lip reading to deaf children.

Columbia Institution for the

Deaf and Dumb and the Blind.

Washington June 20th 1864.

Sir,

Under the provisions of a law of Congress, approved by your Excellency April 8th 1864, the Directors of this institution are about organizing a College for the Deaf and Dumb.

It is intended to inaugurate this new department of our institution in a public manner on Tuesday the 28th instant, at eleven o'clock A. M. in the Four-and-a-half street Presbyterian Church.

A College for the Deaf and Dumb is without precedent in the history of the world, and it would seem appropriate that the Chief-Magistrate of a nation so devoted to the elevation of the human race, as ours, should give his personal benediction to the foundation of an institution at the National Capital, whose influence will be felt for good not only in our own land, but in every civilized nation.

The law organizing this institution names the President of the United States as it's Patron, and is it not fitting, that when the institution is making so important an advance as the establishment of a College, it's Patron should give his sanction to such a step?

I would therefore respectfully extend to your Excellency an invitation to attend the exercises of inauguration of our College, and to honor the occasion with an address.²

² Lincoln did not attend the ceremonies.

With sentiments of profound respect,



I have the honor to be

Your Excellency's obedient servant

E. M. Gallaudet.

Superintendent.