

**ADDRESSES DELIVERED ON PRESENTATION DAY,  
MAY 6, 1914.**

**ADDRESS OF EMERITUS PRESIDENT E. M. GALLAUDET.**

*The Prenatal History of the College.*

I have been asked to tell how it came about that the college for the deaf was authorized and sustained by the Congress of the United States. I have hesitated to do this, because the story necessarily required much allusion to myself, and I have not wished to seem to make my part prominent. And so I must ask those who hear to believe that I have no desire to magnify my office, but wish only to have the facts of history known, with sincere thanks to the helping Providence, which enabled me to bring about the establishment of an institution which has proved a benefaction to many worthy young people.

As I was about to graduate from the Hartford High School, at the age of 14, a prominent business man offered me a position which I was very eager to take. My father objected on account of my youth, and said he wished to give me a college education, and that he hoped I might be disposed to be a teacher of the deaf. His suggestion did not appeal to me, and I assured him my ambition was to be a business man and amass a fortune. He said that if I must go into business he hoped I would not be a banker, as he regarded that profession as narrowing to the mind.

A few weeks later my father died, and I was left to make my way in the world. Very shortly after my father's death the president of a bank in Hartford offered me a position, which I accepted in spite of what my father had said as to the narrowing influence of banking.

Continuing in the bank three years, I came to realize the justice of my father's judgment and resigned my position to enter college.

Before the completion of my college course I was offered a position as instructor in the school for the deaf, which my father had founded 40 years before, and took up with enthusiasm the work my father hoped I would engage in.

Among my colleagues in the school for the deaf there was a man a few years older than myself, with whom I became intimate and with whom I often talked of the possibility of establishing, somewhere, a college for the deaf. We agreed that as soon as some wealthy person could be found who would furnish the requisite endowment we would undertake the organization of the much to be desired college.

When I had been connected with the Hartford School for the Deaf but a little more than a year I received a letter from the Hon. Amos Kendall, of Washington, D. C., formerly Postmaster General, asking me if I would accept the superintendency of a school for the deaf and the blind of the District of Columbia, which had already been chartered by Congress.