

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 17, 1896, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Hotel Marinette, Marinette, Wis. Tuesday, March 17th, 1896. My darling:

I have been made very happy by receipt of a budget of letters from you — with enclosures of various kinds. One addressed to Post-office Oshkosh — the others forwarded from Milwaukee.

I am troubled however by your treatment of President Gallaudet. I don't think it at all necessary to go the length of ignoring him in public. I don't see why you can't at least bow to him, and treat him with the same politeness you would treat any stranger. You can make a stranger of him without being rude to him — or mortifying him in a public manner. That he did not treat me courteously in public is no reason why we should act in a similar way. Why not treat him as you would like to be treated if you were in his place?

I don't approve of your carrying your resentment so far — at all. I am very seriously of the opinion that he is only partly responsible for his actions — and that the future will reveal the fact of insanity taking the form of mono-mania against myself.

Let him alone — and simply treat him as a stranger — with perfect courtesy and politeness. Surely that is far enough to carry your feeling.

I examined the school at Oshkosh today — with great pleasure. Mrs. Holden turns out to be all I hoped — a good teacher as well as a good organizer. She has accomplished 2 a wonderful work here. A few of the people who are desirous of forming a Parents' Association, met in Oshkosh at the school at three o'clock.

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Some of the mothers had to go home with their children so that when the time came for organization there was only one parent present! Mr. R. C. Thiel. However, he proved to be equal to the occasion. He declared himself "The Oshkosh Association of Parents of deaf children" and proceeded to adopt my suggested "Constitution." Needless to say this was adopted unanimously! It was a regular case of —

"I am a cook, and a captain bold, and the mate of the Nancy Brig; And a boatswain tight, and a midshipmite, And the crew of the captain's gig."

Mr. Thiel — as the Association — then proceeded to the election of associate members — electing all present in the room and all whose names were handed in at the public meeting last night. He — the Association — then elected a Board of Directors. The board then met and elected officers as follows:

President: R. H. Halsey — Supt. of Public Schools. (present)

Vice-President: Mrs. G. S. Richmond (present)

Judge C. D. Cleveland (present)

Hon. G. A. Buckstaff (Legislator in Wis. Legislature, present last night — and expressed his desire to join)

Mrs. Geo. Gilkey (present last night and expressed desire to join.)

Mr. R. C. Thiel (present and the only parent on the Board)

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The Association will start with about 12 or 14 active members, and about 25 associate members as nearly as I can judge.

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Mr. Halsey, Supt. of Schools is much interested and accepted the Presidency. I think they will do a good work.

I think I will try to write you a letter of explanation upon the subject to get it into shape for publication — when the proper time comes.

Love to Deidume and ever so much to yourself my dear little wife. Don't give too many dinner parties and receptions before the April dividends come in.

Your loving husband, Alec. Mrs. A. G. Bell, 1331 Conn. Ave., Washington, D. C.