



DEAF HISTORY International

An Association for All Interested in the Study, Preservation, and Dissemination of Deaf People's History

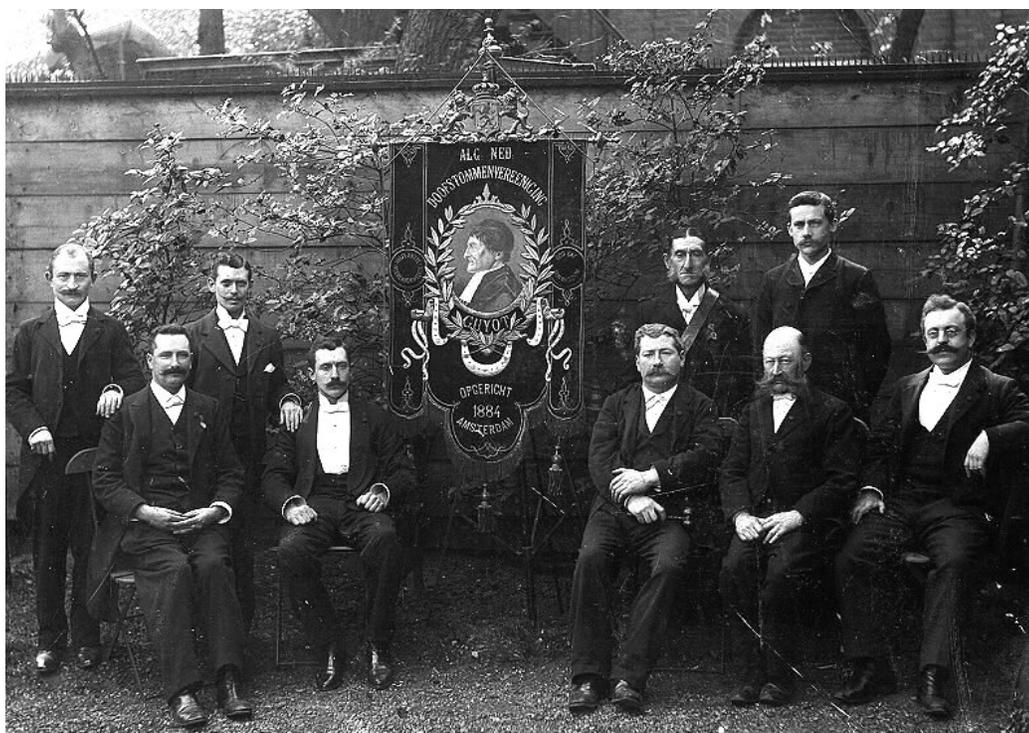
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SPRING 2007

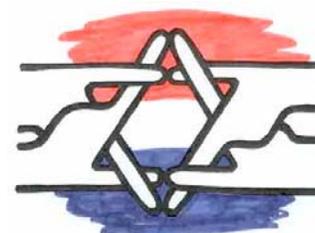
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Oldest & Still Active Dutch Club of the Deaf named "Guyot" (Photo taken in Amsterdam with its founders in 1884)

(See page 4)



Logo of
Amsterdamse DovenHistorie
(Deaf History Amsterdam)



The DHI Newsletter

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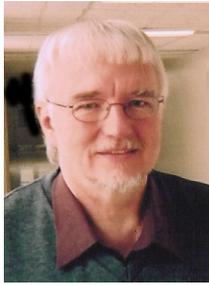
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Notes from the Editor



Technology rules! Recently, I purchased a new and much faster computer with a 22-inch flat monitor screen. I also bought the latest version of Microsoft Office Professional 2007 (which contains a Publisher program that I use to create our newsletters). Some e-mails with attachments, articles and/or photographs may have been inadvertently deleted or lost during this changeover. If for any reason, you submitted articles but did not see them published in this newsletter,

please do not hesitate to let me know. You can re-send them for review and consideration. However, before you do so, please look at page 3 and see if your article is listed under “Coming Up in Future Issues.”

There have been some inquiries about the next DHI Conference in the summer of 2009. As far as I know, our Swedish members and friends are currently in the process of selecting a definite date as well as a location in Stockholm to host this event. Once confirmed and approved by our DHI Bureau, details of the congress program, hotel information, registration fees, tours and so on will eventually become available for inclusion in future issues of *The DHI Newsletter*.



Dear Friends of Deaf History,

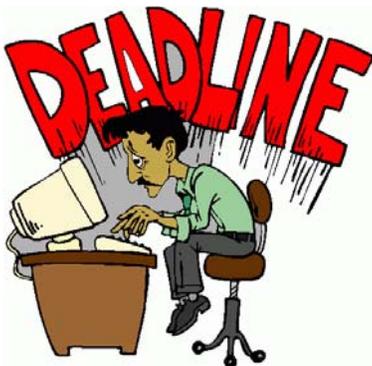
Last summer, on my 55th birthday just a week before our 2006 DHI Conference in Berlin, I decided to do something nice for myself. Not dye my hair, get a face lift, slim my thighs, or learn to sail. Instead, I decided to get rid of my birth name, which I never liked and never really was called by my friends and family. (Don't ask me what my nickname was!) What should the new name be? Well, I could take the last name of my husband of 13 years, Will Sayers. And for my first and middle names? Aha! My two grandmothers, Edna Rose and Edith Brösch. So please call me Edna, or Dr. Sayers, or “EE on the chin.”

Your DHI secretary,
Edna Edith Sayers

(Formerly known as Lois Bragg)

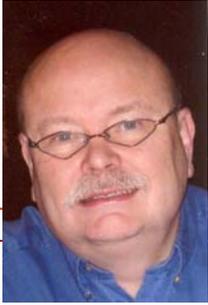
The Deaf History International Newsletter welcomes Deaf History-related submissions of news, articles and essays, book and film reviews, images and photographs, newspaper clippings, conference and workshop announcements, websites, and other readings of interest for possible inclusion.

Please submit them to the editor by the following deadlines:



**FOR
FUTURE ISSUES**

DHI ISSUES	SUBMISSION DEADLINE	DISTRIBUTION DATE
SPRING	March 15	April 15– 30
SUMMER	June 15	July 15 – August 15
FALL	September 15	October 15 – 31
WINTER	December 15	January 15 – 31



President's Column

By Douglas Bahl (USA), DHI President

Welcome to spring: a time for warmth, new beginnings and growth!

Since two important milestones have occurred in America recently, I thought we should bring you up-to-date.

First, a two-hour documentary film *THROUGH DEAF EYES* was aired nationally in USA on PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) last March. This film provides insight into the Deaf Community and their 200-year history in America. I have watched many blogs and vlogs in response to *THROUGH DEAF EYES* on deafread.com website. The reaction is varied. Overall, I think it was a good start for the public to catch a small glimpse into our Deaf World.

If you missed seeing *THROUGH DEAF EYES*, you can check out the website (www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes.com). This was produced by WETA Washington, D.C. and Florentine Films/Hott Productions, Inc. in association with Gallaudet University. Throughout this site, you will find a discussion guide and video clips about Deaf life in America. There will be a DVD sale of *THROUGH DEAF EYES* starting on May 2, 2007. Another new product is the hardcover book "Through Deaf Eyes: A Photographic History of an American Community" by Douglas C. Baynton, Jack R. Gannon and Jean Lindquist Bergey. It is available for purchase online.

Second, I have just returned from a conference called "150 Years on Kendall Green: Celebrating Deaf History and Gallaudet," sponsored by Gallaudet University Press Institute in Washington, D.C. on April 11-13, 2007. The conference brought together a slate of presenters from USA and abroad to share their topics related to Gallaudet and Kendall School

(originally known as the Columbia Institution for Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb),

More than 200 participants were in attendance and I was pleased to see so many young Deaf scholars there. Two other DHI Bureau members, Edna Sayers (USA) and Ali Behmanesh (Canada), were there, too. It was truly an honor for me to be asked to serve as a panel moderator for the Friday afternoon session.

If you are looking for more detailed reports on this conference, you can find an article written by Diana Gates (USA) in this issue or go to David Evans' website: "150 Years on Kendall Green: The Blog."

All in all, I think this conference proved to be a great success, with many participants commenting on the excellent attention to detail and professionalism of the staff at Gallaudet University. Once again, I would like to extend my thanks to Brian Greenwald (USA) and his planning committee for their warm welcome, and contributions towards making this conference a valuable experience for all of us.

Our DHI world-wide web site has not yet reached its full potential as Gordon Hay (United Kingdom) is now at work improving the contents. We are making good process in preparing to print the 1997 and 2000 DHI Conference proceedings.

The next DHI Conference and Bureau meeting, which will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, is only two years away. Watch for further details in future issues of this newsletter. Please start saving your money for this trip in 2009!



— COMING UP IN FUTURE ISSUES —

EELKE JELLES EELKEMA: The Dutch Deaf Master of Still Life Painting
by Henk Betten (Netherlands)

UNHEARD PAST – FLEMISH DEAF HISTORY CONGRESS GHENT
by Ingeborg Scheeris (Belgium)

HISTORY of DEAF EDUCATION
by Helmut Vogel (Germany)

EDUCATION of the DEAF in the NETHERLANDS.
by Corrie Tijsseling (Netherlands)

FIRST CANADIAN SCHOOL for the DEAF
by Clifton F. Carbin (Canada)

THE AVENUE: A History of the Claremont Institution
A Book Review by Edna E. Sayers (USA)

Do you have something to submit for inclusion in our newsletter?

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Delving into the History of the Deaf in Amsterdam

By

Werkgroep Amsterdamse DovenHistorie
(Study Group Deaf History Amsterdam)

A Rich History

There have always been a great number of Deaf people in and around Amsterdam. All of them have made history, either on their own or together with others. Because they belong to the Netherlands, their history is also part of Dutch history in general. Dutch Deaf History deserves more attention and should be made public.

The Deaf community in Amsterdam has a long and rich history. At one time, Amsterdam and its surroundings boasted some 50 Deaf clubs! Most of these were aimed at social and sports activities. Nowadays, only a handful of these clubs are left. The history of these clubs should be preserved so that Deaf people from present and future generations have something to be proud of!

In 1996, the study group **Deaf History Amsterdam** (in Dutch: Werkgroep Amsterdamse DovenHistorie [ADH]) was set up with the support of the Foundation Welfare for the Deaf of Amsterdam (in Dutch: Stichting Welzijn Doven Amsterdam [SWDA]). Its aim is to collect and preserve important information, images and objects related to the history of the Deaf community in Amsterdam. The collection shows how rich the Deaf culture in Amsterdam was and still is.

Deaf History Amsterdam intends to publish books and place information on film (video/DVD) and the internet. Such publications will stimulate recognition of the identify of Deaf people in Amsterdam and the Netherlands. The collection can also be used in teaching Deaf children and young people to encourage them to develop a strong Deaf identity.



A "Deaf and Dumb" Adult Club
in Amsterdam prior to World War II

Goals

The aim of **Deaf History Amsterdam** is to show the history of the Deaf community in general, as well as the history of its clubs and individuals. This can be accompanied by:

- ◆ Collecting everything that Deaf clubs have preserved over the

years, such as records, club journals, photographs, trophies, banners, etc. All these items will be preserved at the Deaf Club of Amsterdam.

- ◆ Setting up a museum or exhibition to show part of the collection to the Deaf and hearing public.
- ◆ Interviewing elderly Deaf people who can tell many stories about life in Amsterdam in times past. Whenever possible, these interviews will be archived on film.
- ◆ Organizing informative meetings for Deaf clubs.
- ◆ Carrying out research into specific topics concerning the Deaf community in Amsterdam, such as Deaf Jews, Deaf sports clubs, etc.
- ◆ Developing teaching aids for Deaf pupils.

Deaf History Amsterdam consists entirely of Deaf volunteers, mainly from the Amsterdam area. Each one has his or her own task, such as managing the archives, holding interviews, setting up the museum, filing data into the computer and developing teaching aids. Every month, the group holds a meeting at the Deaf Club in Amsterdam.

Foundation DeafSHOAH

(in Dutch: Stichting DovenShoah)

Deaf History Amsterdam discovered that a considerable number of Jewish Deaf people took part in clubs like *Guyot* (1884–present), *Door Liefde Saamgebracht* [in English: Brought Together by Love] (1889–?) and various sports clubs. They were ordinary members as well as committee members. Before World War II, they played an important part in the Deaf community in Amsterdam. During the war, they were transported to Germany and massacred in concentration camps because they were Jewish. This was a heavy blow to the Deaf community and left them bereaved.

In 2003, **DeafSHOAH** was set up. It started as a committee and transformed into a foundation in 2005. "Shoah" (calamity, disaster) is the Hebrew word for the "holocaust." In its research into the history of Deaf Jews, **DeafSHOAH** works together with **Deaf History Amsterdam**. The group consists mainly of Deaf Jews who have an interest in the Shoah in one way or another. Its main

aim is to commemorate the **DeafSHOAH** and to establish a monument to keep the memory of the **DeafSHOAH** alive. More information can be found on this website: www.dovenshoah.nl



Amsterdam Building of
Door Liefde Saamgebracht

National Study Group

Also, on a national level Deaf people are working on recording the history of the Dutch Deaf community. In 2004, *Dovenschap* (in English: Deafship) — a national organization of, and for, Deaf people in the Netherlands — started a project on this.

The Deaf community in Amsterdam is part of the entire Deaf community in the Netherlands. Therefore, **Deaf History Amsterdam** joined *Dovenschap* as a regional study group. Other places in the Netherlands with such regional groups are Groningen, Eindhoven and Rotterdam. As in Amsterdam, these are based in the local Deaf club.

Deaf History International

Deaf History Amsterdam has also joined **Deaf History International** (DHI) which was formed in 1991. Through DHI, Deaf historians belonging to study groups in different countries work together on an international level. **Deaf History Amsterdam** takes the view that it is important to exchange experiences and ideas with other countries in order to learn from each other.

Every three years, a DHI Conference is held (*Editor's note: see page 11*). During these congresses, associate members have the opportunity to present the results of their research. **Deaf History Amsterdam** attended the following congresses — in 2000 entitled "Researching, Preserving and Teaching Deaf People's History"; in 2003 regarding "Collecting Stories from the Deaf"; and in 2006 about "To Overcome the Past to Determine Consequences and Solutions for the Present." The DHI congresses are an important source of information for **Deaf History Amsterdam**.

How to contact Deaf History Amsterdam

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Deaf Presence in Literature¹

By Anja Becker,
Post-Doctoral Visiting Fellow in History,
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee USA

In *Playing in the Dark* (1992), Toni Morrison traced an 'African-American presence' in American literature that accords Blacks a decisive albeit nearly invisible place in white American society. She wrote: "I was interested [...] in the way black people ignite critical moments of discovery or change or emphasis in literature not written by them."²

It occurred to me that Morrison's approach might also serve to trace a 'Deaf presence' in 'hearing literature', thus tracing hearing images of the Deaf in the course of time. Indeed, a literary 'deaf presence' generally stands as a metaphor for problematic communication, though there is much more variety to that notion than I had anticipated. The following examples were taken from American, British and German novels and autobiographical writings since the late 19th century. This article is not meant to be an exhaustive study, but simply food for thoughts.

Let me start by drawing another parallel between African-American and Deaf history. In his *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), James Weldon Johnson observed:

the main difficulty of the race question does not lie so much in the actual condition of the blacks as it does in the mental attitude of the whites; and a mental attitude, especially one not based on truth, can be changed more easily than actual conditions. That is to say, [...] the whites [...] are unwilling to open certain doors of opportunity [...]. So, when the white race assumes as a hypothesis that it is the main object of the creation, and that all things else are merely subsidiary to its well being [...] all its dealings with other races become indeed a problem, a problem which I, if based on a hypothesis of common humanity, could be solved by the simple rule of justice.³

By exchanging 'white' with 'hearing' and 'black' with 'deaf', Johnson's observation would reflect hearing attitudes towards the hearing-impaired. Relations among human beings are based on constructed identities above all. More precisely, they often consist of hardly questioned out-group images of the 'other'; i.e., the majority creates minority images, whereby the majority often is unwilling to reconsider these images or to adopted minority perspectives.

However, applying methods from one field of minority studies uncritically to another may also be problematic. African-Americans fought a long struggle to reverse the 'separate-but-equal'

doctrine of the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision, which was finally achieved with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. Yet while for an African-American the same opportunities in education meant integrated schools, the situation for Deaf Americans is different as in contrast to African-Americans, English is a foreign language for a Deaf person and thus means disadvantages in hearing schools. Wouldn't integration of the Deaf mean that the hearing make an effort to acquire sign language? This brings us back to the idea of deafness as a failure to communicate — only that the problem lies with the hearing, not with the Deaf.

Still, the fact that references to deafness appear in literary works written by hearing authors suggests that a certain fascination with 'other bodies' is alive. Deafness sets persons apart from their hearing environment, thus stigmatizing them as different: "His vague response to her betrayed [...] his deafness" even before Minna said "You must raise your voice!"⁴ It implies that communication can only be successful when all parties resort to vocal speech.

In his 1925 novel *Arrowsmith*, Sinclair Lewis made fun of a German-trained professor at a Mid-Western American university around 1900. Lewis started off by referring to the man as "rather deaf,"⁵ then proceeded to describe him as outdated and far removed from the reality of the students whom he is supposed to educate. His inability to hear thus refers to an inability to understand his students both literally and by consequence also in a metaphorical sense. 'Deafness' thus illustrates isolation, whereby the deaf professor is a curiosity who lives in a different universe. He is subject to (hearing) pranks and jokes.

Occasionally, the 'otherness' of the deaf arouses fascination rather than ridicule. In a sketch of her father's life preceding his pre-Civil-War reminiscences, Mary Cray Weller described him — he was 60 years her senior — and his brother as deprived of their sense of hearing. She remembered: "I shall never forget seeing the two old white-haired men talking and laughing together like boys. My uncle was very deaf and we had to talk to him through a tube."⁶ She did not specify how the two hard-of-hearing men communicated with one another.

In Elfrieda Hochbaum's autobiographical novel *Burning Arrows* (1963), fascination borders on mystification as a little girl in a late 19th century German immigrant neighborhood in Chicago watches her deaf uncle communicate with her mother:

Uncle Conrad always came late for supper and after they all had finished.

Mama asked when he entered — but why did she seem so troubled about the diurnal question — whether he would

have some tea. At least one guessed that it was the usual inquiry. How mysteriously they understood each other by means of quick and fantastic finger manipulations, the deaf brother and his elder sister. For one's self, one had to be satisfied with slowly spelling things out on the beautiful little pads of paper that Uncle Conrad always carried with him.

Uncle Conrad's charm spread itself at once. There were other uncles, other brothers of Mama [...]. But they had not Uncle Conrad's fascination. The high lamp now shone into his brown eyes. How mysteriously bright, how happy they looked. As if his deafness had moved inward upon treasures he secreted.

There was the mystery, too, of his printer's trade. There was the touching grotesqueness of his attempts at speech, half a raucous, half a whispered staccato. There was his sweet and silent smile, when one looked at him, that made speech and writing on pads superfluous. There was the curious fact that you wrote only English words on the pad, that Mama's fingered words were English, that you even pronounced his name in the English way. This all came from his being the only one of [grandma's] children who had been born in America. Or, perhaps, if one were deaf and dumb, one could learn only a single language.

[...] Then [...] Uncle Conrad was gone to visit a brother deaf-mute [...].⁷

The deaf uncle is turned into an alien by the little girl's unquestioned difficulty to communicate with him — even though her mother apparently knows signs to speak with and understand him, the little girl does not learn such signs. She speculates rather than becoming a part of his deaf world by learning the language. She voices the theory that the deaf possibly can learn only one language — English — while the family language is German, thus ignoring his signed communication. Ironically, it is the hearing little girl and not the deaf uncle who is linguistically less well-versed. In the end, Conrad returns where he apparently belongs — to a Deaf community. A stranger in his own hearing family, he eventually leaves for Alaska hoping for a rapid fortune; the little girl marks the absence of his "mutely eloquent eyes."

Curiously, for the most part deafness in literature does not even refer to the deaf. It actually serves to discuss aspects of hearing society. For example, in her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), Harper Lee exposes racism. In the course of the trial of a black man who is accused of raping a white woman, the white eight-year-old first-person narrator and daughter of the defendant's lawyer comes to realize the significance of the scene she is witnessing as her father raises his voice in court. She observes: "I never heard Atticus raise his voice in my life, except to a deaf witness."⁸ As he is now raising his voice at a hearing person, she realizes that the issue at hand — racism — is one of extraordinary importance. At the same time, the question of why one should raise one's voice at a person who has no sense of

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hearing remains unanswered. Sounds will not reach her no matter if uttered softly or aloud. It illustrates a frustration to reach a person speaking a foreign language without realizing that the person speaks a foreign language.

In Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920), the ability to communicate without spoken language actually becomes an admirable quality that is lost to the younger generation:

You [and Mother] never did ask each other anything, did you? And you never told each other anything. You just sat and watched each other, and guessed at what was going on underneath. A deaf-and-dumb asylum, in fact! Well, I back your generation for knowing more about each other's private thoughts than we ever have time to find out about our own.⁹

The 'guesswork' in deducing each other's thoughts is evidently rather successful, insinuating at the same time that there might be more to Deaf culture than the hearing would know.

In his book on the 1999/2000 women's basketball season at Gallaudet University, the world's only university for the Deaf, sportswriter Wayne Coffey described the following scene:

Ronda Johnson, a junior from Deer River, Minnesota, sat hunched in front of her locker and covered her ears with her hands. [...] Kitty [the coach] tapped her on the arm.
"What's the matter, are you afraid of going deaf?"
"No, I'm afraid of going hearing," Ronda said. Everybody laughed.¹⁰

The exchange was transcribed from American Sign Language (ASL). To any hearing person who is unfamiliar with Deaf culture, Ronda's punch-line might appear bewildering: why should anyone be afraid of experiencing the world through sound? Ronda turns upside down a concept of the hearing world by drawing attention to the fact that in certain situations the Deaf are actually at an advantage, such as when loud noise hurts hearing ears.

Indeed, in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1939), the taking of Atlanta during the Civil War is described with "the sky aflame and the air deafening with explosions."¹¹ Hence, the horrors of war and battle are heightened by the terrifying sounds accompanying explosions. However, in spite of the unpleasant 'deafening noise', an almost irrational hearing fear of losing the ability to hear may be noted, implying that deafness means losing much of life's quality, such as the ability to listen to a Beethoven sonata.

However, there is a deaf percussionist, Evelyn Glennie, whose life's story was made

into a documentary entitled *Touch the Sound* (2004). Ever since finding out about her, I have begun to listen to music not simply with my hearing ears, but with my entire body — sense the sound, feel the vibration; it is a much more intense musical experience. Actually, in the late 19th century, the hard-of-hearing resorted to mechanically reinforcing sound and thus to 'hear' through experiencing the vibration. Writing about her aged father, Weller described such a scene:

When I was older and could accompany him on the piano he loved to sing with me. He was very hard of hearing and I would follow him with my accompaniment. Sometimes he would [get] his pocket knife, place the blade between his teeth and the handle on the keyboard and would say, "May, I can hear it." It was the principle of vibration and bone conduction, long before that idea gave relief to many.¹²

Hearing people tend to turn 'deaf ears' on the plight of the deaf, which is another metaphorical use for 'deaf'. Hence, when in *Gone with the Wind* Scarlett O'Hara turns "a sullen face and a deaf ear"¹³ on the pleadings of her mother to postpone marriage, the 'deaf ear' refers to an unwillingness to listen to advice. Similarly, it might simply be an unwillingness to listen to unwanted discourse, as is the case in Erskine Childers 1903 novel *The Riddle of the Sands*: "I looked at Clara and found her talking gaily to von Brüning, deaf seemingly to our little dialogue."¹⁴ Then again, Wharton's van der Luydens feel a social obligation to entertain. They "could not remain deaf to such a call, and reluctantly but heroically they had come to town, unmuffled the house, sent out invitations for two dinners and an evening reception."¹⁵

In Tom Wolfe's more recent novels, deafness serves a similar purpose in society, though it is much more aggressive. Mark this scene from Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987):

"Do ... you ... hear ...that?" said the little judge, pointing toward the rear of the van.
"Whuh?" says the driver. "Whaddaya?" He didn't know what to say.
"Are you fucking deaf?" said Kovitsky. "Your prisoners ... your ... prisoners ... You're an officer of the Department of Corrections..."¹⁶

The driver of a van full of prisoners does not hear any of the insults they yell. The (Jewish) judge, in turn, is offended. Deafness thus becomes a sign of both incompetence and carelessness — the situation is beyond hope, why bother? Likewise, in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968), policemen are described as 'deaf' as they mercilessly fight a counter-culture and thus a minority: "whereupon the Deaf policemen descend on the whole psychedelic movement with knouts

flailing..."¹⁷ Wolfe thus uses deafness as a metaphor for the power of the state, which turns a deaf ear on those who do not fit in. It is ironic that in doing so he uses a minority as a metaphor to strike down another minority that does not lead the lives of the mainstream. Wolfe's idea of 'deafness' consequently illustrates a treatment that the Deaf themselves have experienced.

In a variant of this theme, in Heinrich Mann's *Professor Unrat* (1905), the deaf oldest professor of the school speaks for the establishment when he reminds the social offender of his obligations in society.¹⁸ Again, 'deafness' is taken as a metaphor for authority, this time in the form of conventions. Yet Unrat keeps up his defiant behavior and retorts that his personal comportment is "none of anyone's business". The hearing reading public tends to be with the underdog that thus experiences what it is like to be unable to communicate with a dominant, uncommunicative power that effectively infringes upon the rights of a minority.

The idea of being deaf is therefore also used as a literary technique to convey messages and meanings to the reader that escape the protagonists. In *Gone with the Wind*, a character appears who has lost hearing with old age: "Can't nobody do nothin' with old man McRae because he's deaf as a post and can't hear folks tryin' to shut him up."¹⁹ Yet while he is prevented from communicating with his neighbors in the novel, the author uses him as a sort of 'seer' who speaks truths that others do not wish to see:

Under the arbor, the deaf old gentleman from Fayetteville punched India.

"What's it all about? What are they saying?"

"War!" shouted India, cupping her hand to his ear. "They want to fight the Yankees!"

"War, is it?" he cried, fumbling about him for his cane and heaving himself out of his chair with more energy than he had shown in years. "I'll tell 'um about war. I've been there." It was not often that Mr. McRae had the opportunity to talk about war, the way the women folks shushed him.

He stumped rapidly to the group, waving his cane and shouting and, because he could not hear the voices about him, he soon had undisputed possession of the field.

"You fire-eating young bucks, listen to me. You don't want to fight. I fought and I know. Went out in the Seminole War and was a big enough fool to go to the Mexican War, too. You all don't know what war is. You think it's riding a pretty horse and having the girls throw flowers at you and coming home a hero. Well, it ain't. No, sir! It's going hungry, and getting measles and pneumonia from sleeping in the wet. And if it ain't measles and pneumonia, it's your bowels. Yes, sir, what war does to a man's bowels—dysentery and things like that—"

The ladies were pink with blushes. Mr. McRae was a reminder of a cruder era, like

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(Continued from page 6)

Grandma Fontaine and her embarrassingly loud belches, an era everyone would like to forget.

"Run get your grandpa," hissed one of the old gentle-man's daughters to a young girl standing near by. "I declare," she whispered to the fluttering matrons about her, "he gets worse every day [...]."

The deaf old man sees the true horrors of war; yet his hearing audience does not hear his warning; they cannot see beyond his 'otherness'. His advice is lost; the hearing thus fail to acquire new perspectives that might have changed their enthusiasm about war. The deaf man thereby becomes a symbol of a helpless attempt to overcome single-mindedness and intolerance.

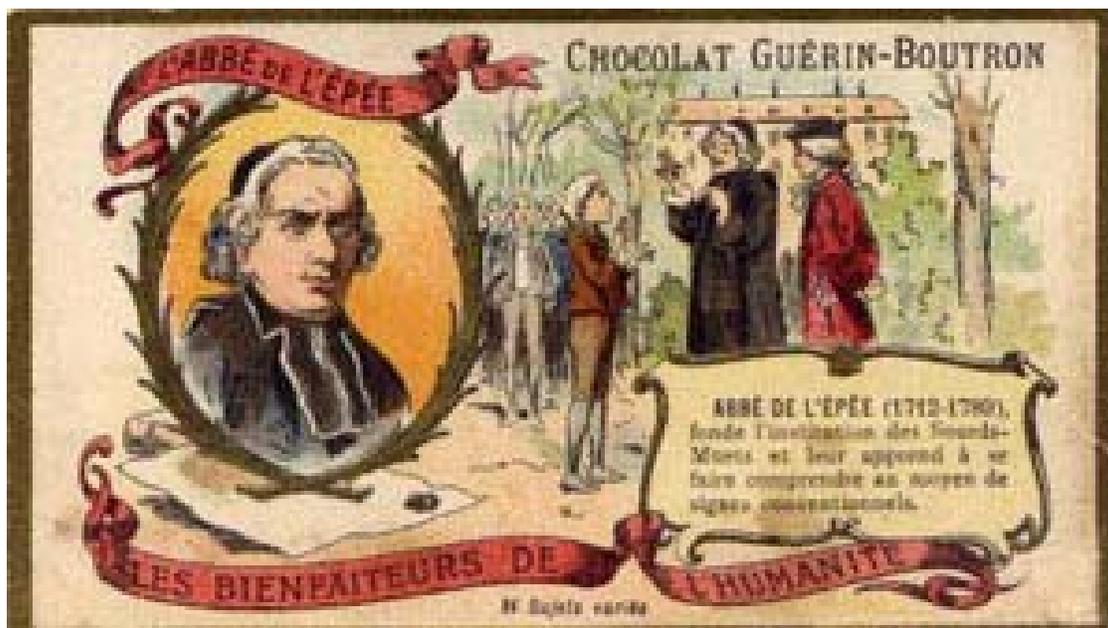
Deafness in literature is a way to express insights into life that the hearing (or at least some hearing persons) do not wish to acknowledge. As the old man is designated as deaf from the beginning, he is rendered ineffective even before he has spoken. Yet within hindsight for the reader, the deaf man becomes a 'seer'. His deafness is turned into an important tool to communicate truth, which means that the deaf presence is ambiguous to say the least; it is, when thoroughly considered, an actual communicator beyond the limits of the story, communicating a message between the world of fiction and the real world by addressing the reader directly.

The idea of 'deafness' in Western literature since the 19th century above all centers on 'communication', yet in a surprising array of intriguing subtleties which in the end betray a struggle on the part of the hearing to come to terms with alternatives to spoken language.

However, in doing so, much carelessness as to implications for the Deaf in 'real life' may be detected. Actually, when hearing persons communicate, an overwhelming majority of information is conveyed by means of non-verbal communication. It is not simply the inflection of a voice and volume, it is gestures, facial expressions, body language such as the way in which a person positions herself to other participants in the discourse. How much is said by not uttering a sound at all; Simon and Garfunkel termed it the *Sound of Silence* in one of their songs.

1. This work was supported by a Postdoctoral fellowship of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).
2. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992; London: Picador, 1993); x.
3. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995); 78.
4. Elfrieda Hochbaum, *Burning Arrows* (Boston: Bruce Humphries Publishers, 1963); 292.
5. Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith* (1925; New York: Signet Classic, 1998); 19.
6. May Crary Weller, "Biographical Sketch," in John Williamson Crary, Sr., *Reminiscences of the Old South from 1834 to 1866*, with a biographical sketch by his daughter May Crary Weller, Southern History and Genealogy series vol. I, (Pensacola, Florida: The Perdido Bay Press, 1984); 26–27.

7. Hochbaum, *Burning Arrows*, 52–53. Following quote 131.
8. Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960; New York/Boston: Warner Books, 1982); 172.
9. Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* (1920; London/Guernsey: Everyman, 1996); 251.
10. Wayne Coffey, *Winning Sounds Like This. A Season with the Women's Basketball Team at Gallaudet, the World's Only University for the Deaf* (2002; New York: Three Rivers Press, 2003); 4.
11. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (1939; New York/Boston: Warner Books, 1993); 424.
12. Weller, "Biographical Sketch," in Crary, Sr., *Reminiscences of the Old South*, 25.
13. Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*, 131.
14. Erskine Childres, *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903; Oxford: University Press [Oxford's World Classics], 1998); 210.
15. Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*, 223.
16. Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987; Dial Press Trade Paperback, 2001); 45.
17. The same, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968; Bantam, 1982); 341.
18. Heinrich Mann, *Professor Unrat* (1905; Berlin, Weimar: Aufbau Verlag; 1975); 122.
19. Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*, 697. Following quote 111–112.





**“150 Years on Kendall Green:
Celebrating Deaf History and Gallaudet”**
Kellogg Conference Hotel, Gallaudet University
Washington, D.C.
April 11–13, 2007



By Diana Gates, Reference & Instruction Librarian, Gallaudet University Library

150 Years on Kendall Green conference opened with James McPherson, winner of the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for his *Battle Cry of Freedom*. His keynote address, *A Fair Chance in the Race of Life: the Spirit of Reform in the Age of Lincoln*, integrated Deaf history into American history. McPherson pointed out, when President Lincoln signed the bill to establish what is now known as Gallaudet University (GU), Lincoln’s goal was to give Deaf people a “fair chance” in the race of life. McPherson, a noted historian, is also a professor emeritus of U.S. History at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey.

Several presenters chose to discuss Gallaudet’s institutional history. David de Lorenzo (associate director of Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley; also former director of GU Archives) described Edward Miner Gallaudet’s (EMG) leadership style; EMG was the first president of GU (1864–1910). Christopher A. Kurz (associate professor of Secondary Education at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), Rochester, N.Y.) explained how EMG and Professor Amos Draper included mathematics into the curriculum. Ronald Sutcliffe (executive director of the National Deaf Business Institute at GU) gave a presentation on George E. Detmold (a former dean of instruction [1953–1970] of what is now GU) as an academic reformer.

Frederick Olmstead’s plan for the college campus [in 1866] was the subject of Hansel Bauman (a hearing architect from San Francisco) and Benjamin Bahan (professor of ASL and Deaf Studies at GU). Olmstead is remembered as the father of the 19th century American landscape architecture. In terms of a visucentric concept, his original plans of the college campus have been preserved. Today, Olmstead’s ideas are being integrated into the campus design as it changes.

One cannot overlook the minorities on Kendall Green who have their share of stories and role in Deaf history. Sandra Jowers-Barber (associate professor of History at the University of District of Columbia) provided background information on the *Miller v. Board of Education* case, where the policy that excluded Black Deaf students from Kendall School, and sent them to neighboring states for education, was reversed. Beloved Douglas Craig, a Black Deaf student from Kendall who later worked and lived on campus for many years, was the subject of Marietta Joyner’s (Ph.D. candidate, W.E.B. DuBois Department of Afro-American Studies, University of Massachusetts) presentation.

No campus is without its politics; the following presentations provided a small glimpse of politics from several researchers. Michael Olson (GU Archives Technician) outlined the difficulties behind the Thomas H. Gallaudet (THG) and Alice Cogswell statue. THG, the father of EMG, was one of the

founders of the first permanent American school for the deaf and Alice was his first pupil. Noah D. Drezner’s (Ph.D. candidate in the Policy, Management and Evaluation Division at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education in Philadelphia) paper focused on the Gallaudet alumni support while Doris Stelle (an independent researcher) presented the history of Gallaudet’s Board of Trustees. Aaron Kelstone (associate professor of Culture and Creative Studies at Rochester Institute of Technology) covered the college theatrical activities on Kendall Green.

The keynote speaker for the second day was I. King Jordan (president emeritus of GU) who shared with the conference attendees on how the president’s role at Gallaudet evolved from the 1988 Deaf President Now Movement. Women’s roles on Kendall Green and girl’s experience in Deaf schools were the topics for Lindsay Parker (Ph.D. candidate, Department of American Sign Language and Deaf Studies at GU) and Jessica Lee (Ph.D. candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado at Boulder).

Three presentations focused on identity perceptions of individuals in the Deaf community. Christopher Krentz (assistant professor and director of the American Sign Language Program at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville) focused on Deaf painter/poet John Carlin’s struggle with Deaf and hearing identities, which Krentz called a double-consciousness. A paper by Edna Sayers (professor of English at GU) and Diana Gates (Reference & Instruction Librarian at GU) focused on the erasure of Alice Cogswell’s first teacher, Lydia Sigourney from Deaf history. *I Junked It and Never Wore it Since*, the title of Rebecca Edwards (associate professor of History at Rochester Institute of Technology) was about technology in Deaf people’s lives. The director of the Coastal Regional Outreach Center at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind in Spartanburg, Dorothy Bambach’s discussion of Reverend Jacob Koehler, and Kent Olney’s (professor/chair of Behavior Sciences Department at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois) paper on Philip Hasenstab presented a religious and biographical perspective as both men graduated from Gallaudet and went on to preach to the Deaf.

United Kingdom’s Paddy Ladd (director of Research Programmes at the University of Bristol) defined Deafhood and how it should be used as a direction for the future. His presentation was the keynote address for the conference’s last day. The newly released PSB documentary, *Through Deaf Eyes* was shown and followed by a panel discussion, which included Larry Hott, (producer/director, Florentine Films/Hott Productions); Sara Robinson (Ph.D. candidate in History at



A David Evans Photo



A David Evans Photo



Paddy Ladd

(Continued on page 9)

Two top photos courtesy of Gallaudet University Archives. This conference is sponsored by the Gallaudet University Press Institute, with additional support provided by the Gallaudet Research Institute, the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Gallaudet University Department of Government and History, and Gallaudet University Archives.

(Continued from page 8)

Ohio State University), Glenn Anderson (professor of Rehabilitation, Human Resources and Communication Disorders at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville), and Sam Supalla (associate professor and director of Sign Language and Deaf Studies at the University of Arizona, Tucson). Each panellist gave an interesting perspective of film.

As Deaf history continues to be interpreted by Deaf and hearing researchers, Harlan Lane (Matthews University Distinguished professor, Department of Psychology at Northeastern University, Boston), Ulf Hedberg (director of GU Archives), and Richard Pillard (professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine) presented genealogical research on the Deaf members of the Campbell family of Maine. The progressive era as it related to what was then known as Gallaudet College and Deaf citizenship was the discourse of Joseph Murray (director of Projects Division, Aal Folkehoyskole and Kurssenter in Aal Norway, and also a Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Iowa). Douglas Baynton (associate professor of History at the University of Iowa) explained immigration policies and how that generally affected Deaf immigrants and discussed how three Deaf immigrants were deported.

Deborah Ripley (art teacher at the Missouri School for the Deaf in Fulton), Lucille Blackwell (high school English teacher, Missouri School for the Deaf), and Harry Lang (professor and educational researcher at NTID) had presentations on Laura Redden, a Deaf poet and journalist from Missouri. Redden had the opportunity to meet with President Lincoln on a number of occasions.

To conclude the conference, two modern-day presentations focused

on how American Deaf education had a global influence. Rachel Hartig (professor of Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at GU) discussed the Gallaudet influence on the life of a French person, Emmanuelle Laborit. Benin-born, Victor Vodounou (assistant professor of Human Services at Stephan F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas) spoke on the Gallaudet influence on education, language, and culture in French-speaking West African countries.

In addition to the film, *Through Deaf Eyes*, the conference goers enjoyed seeing the GU Theatre Arts Department's production of *Sign Me Alice*. DHI President Douglas Bahl, in the original 1974 production, had the pleasure of seeing his daughter, Kari, perform as the hearing interpreter.

The presenters represented an array of backgrounds, doctoral graduate students, professors, teachers, independent researchers, archivists, a librarian and an architect. They came from various higher education institutes and Deaf schools from across the nation. The speakers represented a well-rounded and balanced background with a few more Deaf than hearing presenters. Although most presentations were limited to twenty minutes, they represented many long hours of research. The conference successfully celebrated 150 years of educating Deaf students.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

David Evans' "150 Years on Kendall Green: The Blog" has more coverage about this recent 3-day conference. It can be found at this website: <http://blog.deafread.com/kendallgreen150>

Faces of people at the "150 Years on Kendall Green: Celebrating Deaf History and Gallaudet" Conference



Christopher Krenz, Harry Lang, and Douglas Baynton



Michael Olson, Ali Behmanesh, and Doug Bahl



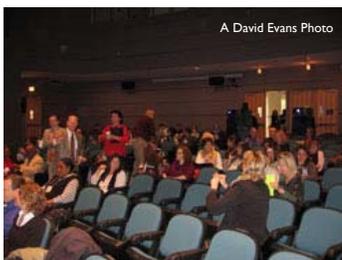
Mj Bienvenu and Barbara Kannapel



Lindsey Parker and Jessica Lee



Conference organizers: Brian Greenwald and John V. Van Cleve



A David Evans Photo



Patricia Durr (who had an interesting question for IKJ)



A David Evans Photo

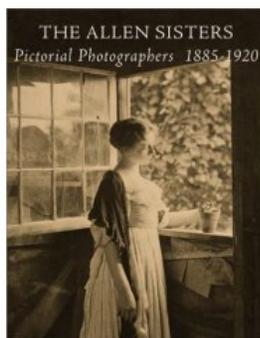
BOOK REVIEW

The Allen Sisters: Pictorial Photographers 1885–1920

Suzanne L. Flynt (2002), *The Allen Sisters: Pictorial Photographers 1885–1920*, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Massachusetts USA, Hardcover, 208 pages, ISBN 1882374045

Reviewed by
Monique Faye Crine, MFA Candidate, Fine Art Dept., Cornell University

Ranked among “The Foremost Women Photographers in America,” Frances and Mary Allen are finally receiving the attention they deserve in Suzanne L. Flynt’s finely researched publication *The Allen Sisters: Pictorial Photographers 1885–1920*. This selection of images and text is a tribute to the sisters’ artistic legacy, which has been lost from view for most of a century. The hardcover book is the catalogue that accompanied an exhibition of the sisters’ photographs.



The remarkable Allen sisters of Deerfield, Massachusetts USA, Frances (1854–1941) and Mary (1858–1941), overcame obstacles resulting from their adult-onset hearing loss, gender and rural isolation, to become two of the great female photographers of the early 20th century. Working within the Deerfield Arts and Crafts Movement, the Allen sisters created exquisite photographs of rural New England and of children, as well as figure studies. Upon the success of their photography, the sisters were able to travel abroad, adding landscapes of California and Great Britain to their rich collection of images.

Both sisters became deaf, or nearly so after they had begun their chosen profession as schoolteachers. As the oral movement was flourishing at the time, the sisters were fortunate that one of its centers, the Clarke School for the Deaf, was located only 12 miles away from Deerfield. Despite taking lip reading classes, they struggled in a hearing world, and communicated mainly through writing. This inability to hear encouraged them to pursue other opportunities for income. At that time, photography was becoming a popular means of expression

among homemakers because it was easily accessible, and one could develop images in their home. The sisters were self-taught and kept abreast of modern advances within photography through various publications and periodicals. As their techniques and skills improved, they began entering juried competition and local craft fairs where respect and admiration for their imagery grew.

The Allen sisters worked together, collaborating on compositions and development techniques. Their joint production expressed concerted efforts to compose imagery rich in subject matter, and meticulous in finish. Their resulting photographs show great skill and delicacy. It is with their portraits of children that the sisters capture their greatest subject. The children are photographed alone, or in groups, posed with great ease and comfort as the sisters photographed them in the most idealistic and rural settings. The images portray the joys of rural life, as well the innocence and potential of childhood. It is certainly a result of their experience as schoolteachers that Frances and Mary Allen were able to pose and interact with the children in a way that few photographers could.

Eventually, through the success at local craft fairs and juried competitions, the sisters received the opportunity to have their efforts published in books and magazines, such as *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping*. By November 1918, one of their nieces wrote, “the aunts have eleven National magazines using their pictures this month.” As their reputation grew, the Allen sisters began to exhibit with such renowned photographers as Alfred Steiglitz. Soon their images were shown in exhibitions internationally, including New York City, London, and even Paris.

Throughout the text of this first book about the Allen sisters, Flynt never depicts the sisters as heroic, but as determined, hardworking craftswomen. They supported themselves financially, always staying atop advances within their field, as well as the political climate around them. Neither sister ever married, but both found comfort in their vast array of family and friends, both in the United States and internationally. After completing this novel, one can’t help but be proud of the sisters, and hope their legacy will

one day reach the same acclaim.

This illustrated biography on Frances and Mary Allen includes 140 reproductions of idealized photographs of figure and child studies, country life, and landscapes of New England, Great Britain and California. The foreword is by Naomi Rosenblum, author of *The History of Women Photographers*. Flynt has served as Massachusetts Field Researcher for the National Portrait Gallery. Since April 1982, she has been curator responsible for the museum collections at Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, Massachusetts USA. Most recently, she curated the permanent MHM installation “Poetry to the Earth: The Arts and Crafts Movement.” Her previous publications include “Hadley Chests,” with Phil Zea (1992), and “Family, Home and Place: Nineteenth Century Prints” (1990).

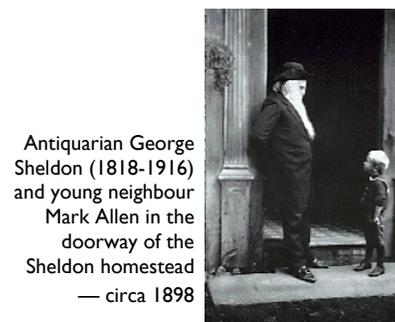
EDITOR’S NOTE: You can view several prints and glass negatives by the Allen Sisters at these websites:

<http://www.old-deerfield.org/allen.htm>

<http://www.flogris.org/exhibitions/2005/05AllenSisters.html>

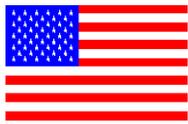


Hay Cart — circa 1899



Antiquarian George Sheldon (1818-1916) and young neighbour Mark Allen in the doorway of the Sheldon homestead — circa 1898

DHI CONFERENCES: Past and Future



First-Ever International Conference on Deaf History

Washington, D.C., USA / June 20–23, 1991



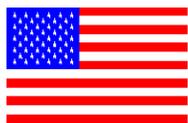
Second DHI Conference

Hamburg, Germany / October 8–11, 1994



Third DHI Conference

Trondheim, Norway / September 10–14, 1997



Fourth DHI Conference

Washington, D.C., USA / June 27–30, 2000



Fifth DHI Conference

Paris, France / June 30–July 4, 2003



Sixth DHI Conference

Berlin, Germany / July 31–August 5, 2006



Seventh DHI Conference

Stockholm, Sweden / Summer 2009



Eighth DHI Conference

Toronto, Canada / TBA 2012



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