



# Communication Controversy in Deaf Education

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Speech interpreted by:  
Karen Steed, Librarian  
Poland Branch Library

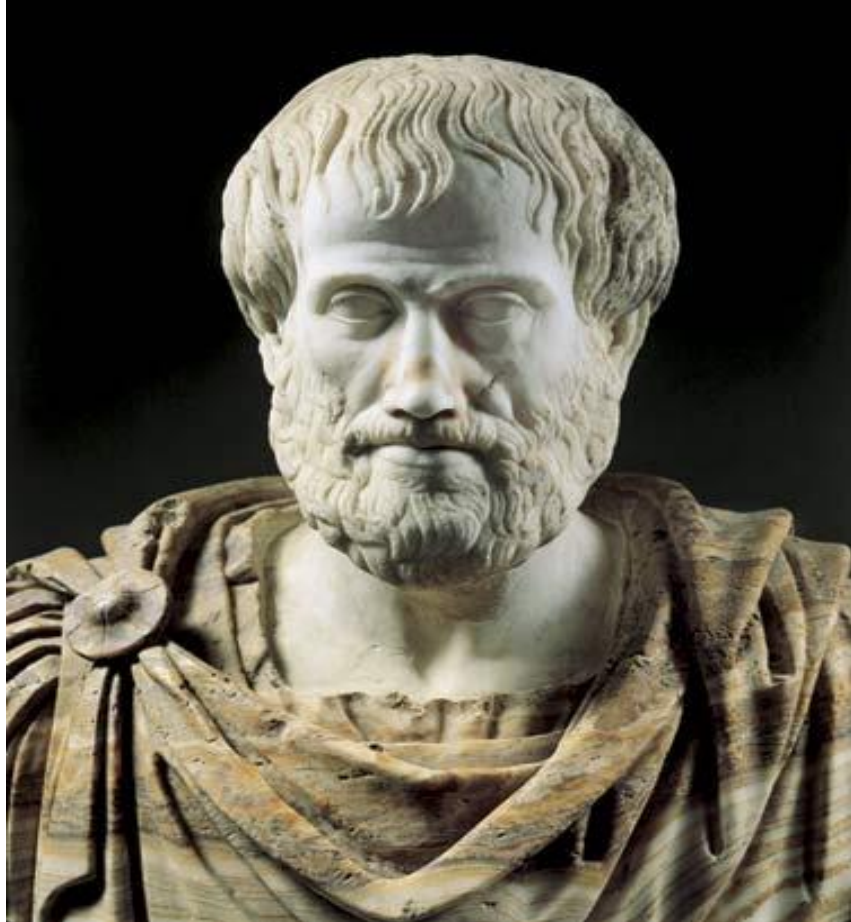
May 10, 2019

Painting Credit: Nancy Rourke  
3-26-2019

# HISTORY OF DEAF EDUCATION

The history of deaf education dates back to ancient Greece where the deaf were harshly oppressed and were denied fundamental rights such as: not permitted to own a property or marry. They were considered a burden to society and were sent to a sanitarium or put to the mountains to die. (Winefield, 1987)

# Aristotle's Perspective of Deaf Children



Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), ancient Greek philosopher, spent considerable time interacting with deaf children in Greece and determined that those born deaf were incapable of speech and reasoning. His words echoed throughout Europe until the 1500s.

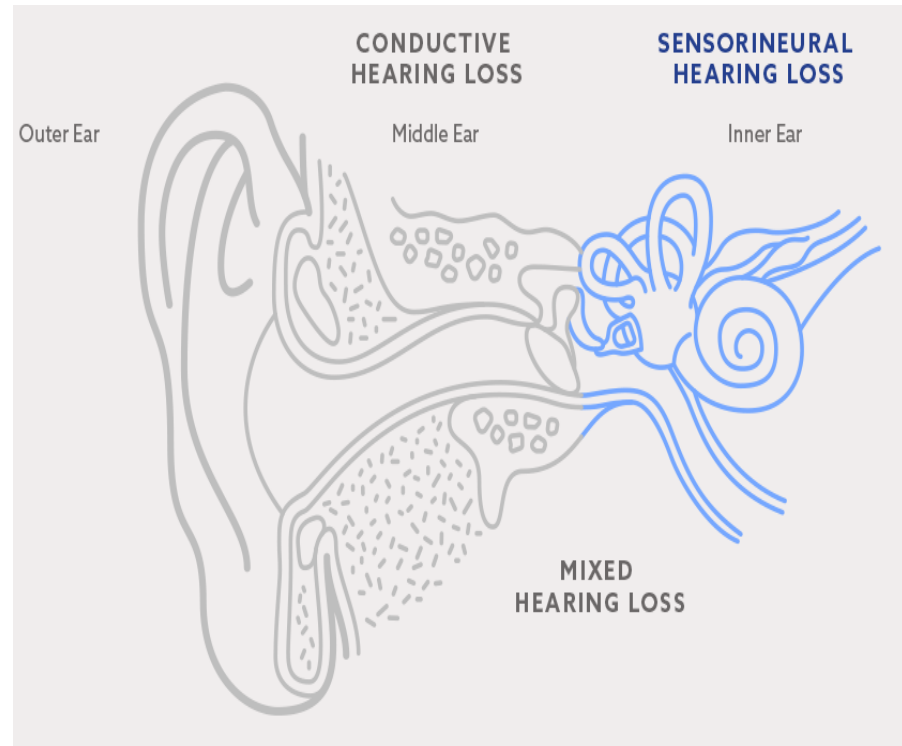
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aristotle>

# Definitions of Deafness

**Hard-of-Hearing** – refers to persons who experience a slight to moderate hearing loss. Although some may be able to understand speech, they may be prevented from conversing with those who are soft-spoken, and may be prevented from comprehending messages expressed over the telephone.

**Deaf** – In 1972 the term “Deaf” began appearing in the literature pertaining to deafness. During that time, James Woodward proposed the idea that the word, “deaf” be capitalized when referring to a particular group of people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) and a culture.

**deaf** – Audiologists use the term “deaf” to identify individuals who have varying degrees of hearing loss. This medical term means the individual’s hearing needs to be “fixed” through hearing devices such as: hearing aids or cochlear implants.



<https://lhac.com/hearing-loss/>

## Statistics

- Over 36 million deaf and hard of hearing people in America
- 30-40% of the population 65 y/o and older have some type of hearing loss
- \*300,000 to 500,000 sign language users in U.S.
- 5 in every 1,000 babies born deaf
- Over 90% of deaf children have hearing parents

“Facts about Hearing Loss.” *Center for Hearing and Communication*. June 2010

\*no definitive numbers have been verified



<https://slideplayer.com/slide/6051573/>

## Statistics: Hearing Loss in U.S. Deaf Population





**Juan Pablo Bonet** (1573-1633) was a Spanish priest and pioneer of education for the deaf. Many people thought oralism originated in Germany. Oralism originated in Spain. Juan Pablo Bonet felt that oralism was the best way to educate deaf children. However, Bonet's system of signs and manual alphabet has influenced many signed languages, such as Spanish Sign Language, French Sign Language and American Sign Language. <http://historytrendsanddeafeducation.pbworks.com>



# First Recorded Deaf Education in Spain 1550

Pedro Ponce de Leon  
(1510 – 1584)

- a. Benedictine Monk
- b. Established the first school for the deaf in a Benedictine Monastery of San Salvador near Madrid, Spain.
- c. First teacher of deaf students
- d. Taught fingerspelling, writing and speech.

(Easterbrooks & Baker, 2002, pp. 3-4)

# The Father of Sign Language and Deaf Education



## Abbe' Charles Michel de L' Epee

1712 - 1789

- a. **French pioneer teacher**
- b. **Philanthropic Catholic priest**
- c. **Developed the French Sign Language**
- d. **Was known as “Father of Sign Language”**
- e. **Started a free public school for deaf students in Paris**

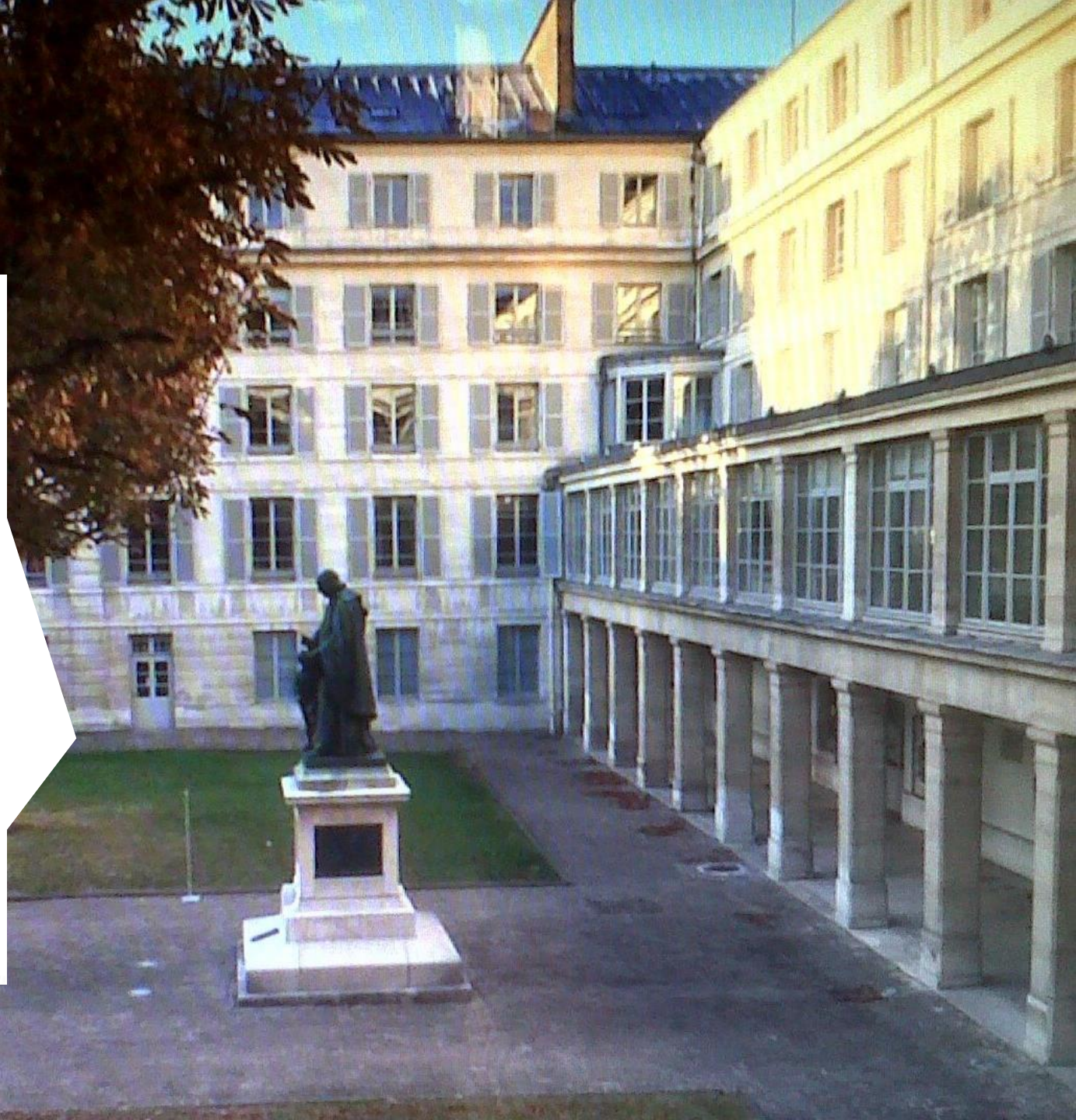
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles-Michel\\_de\\_l%27%C3%89%C3%A9e](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles-Michel_de_l%27%C3%89%C3%A9e)



# National Institute for the Deaf of Paris



Magasin & Huetzel del.      Jap. Goulet's Paris.      Albert Charney del.



[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Alphabet-of-French-sign-language\\_fig10\\_316560415](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Alphabet-of-French-sign-language_fig10_316560415)



**Abbe' De L'Epee Giving a Demonstration on Deaf Children's Writing Skills at the National Institute for the Deaf in Paris**

# THE RISE OF ORALISM IN GERMANY

## Samuel Heinecke

**1727- 1790**

- Born in Nautschütz, Germany on April 14, 1727
- Served in Saxon army and studied Latin and French
- German chaplain saw a scholar in Heinecke and provided him with many books
- Many officers asked Heinecke to tutor their own children; one of whom was a young deaf boy
- Heinecke tried the sign language method developed by Abbe' Charles de L' Epee, but it did not work
- Taught deaf students how to speak by having them feel the vibrations of his throat when he spoke
- Opened an Oral School for the Deaf in Leipzig, Germany in 1778. The school was named "Electoral Saxon Institute for Mutes and Other Persons Afflicted with Speech Defects"



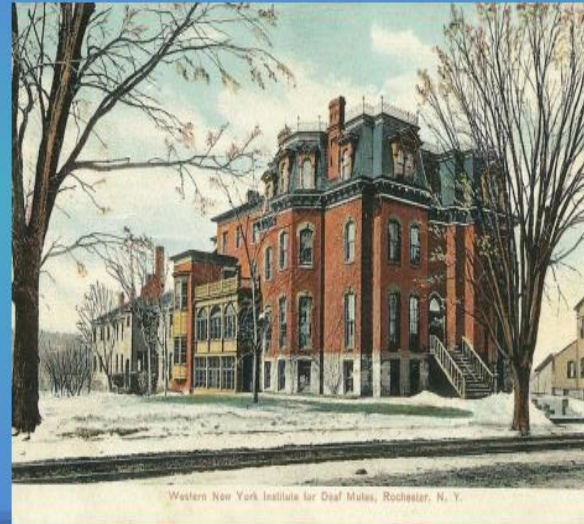
# SAMUEL HEINECKE

## FATHER OF ORAL DEAF EDUCATION



1778

- Samuel Heinicke, “Father of the German Method” (pure oralism) established a deaf school in Leipzig.



[https://www.verywellhealth.com/samuelheinecke-oral-education\\_1046549](https://www.verywellhealth.com/samuelheinecke-oral-education_1046549)

# The Teacher and the Student



**Laurent Clerc**

[www.findagrave.com/memorial/10984120/  
laurent-marie-clerc](http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/10984120/laurent-marie-clerc)



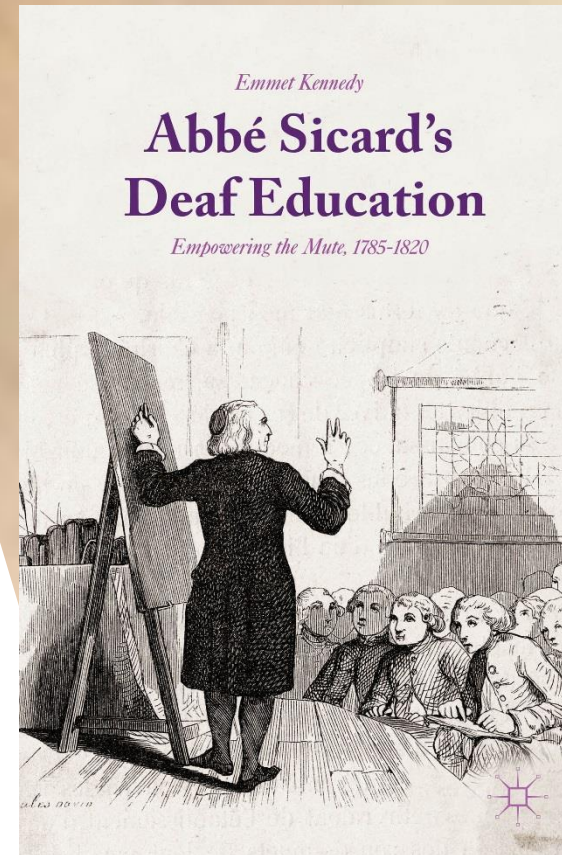
**Abbe' Sicard**

[www.birdvilleschools.net](http://www.birdvilleschools.net)

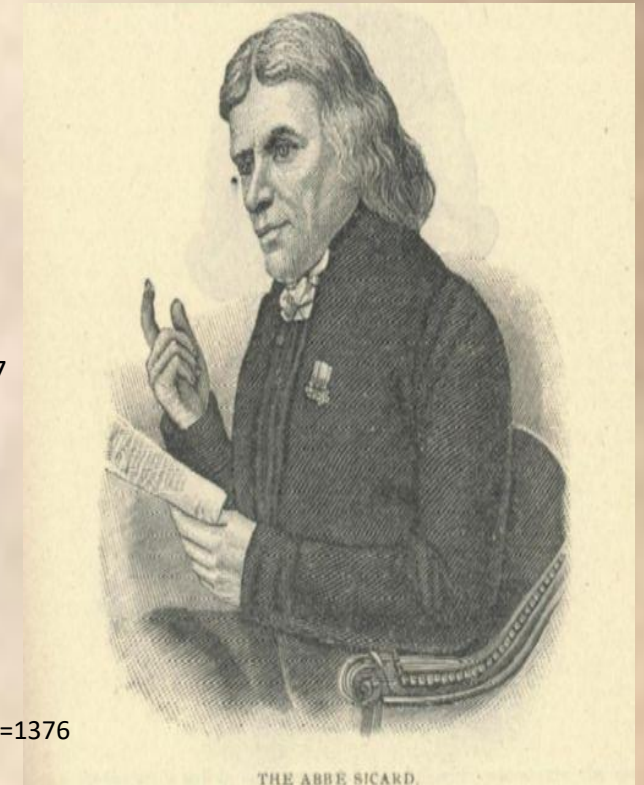
# Abbe' Roch Sicard

1742 - 1822

- Born in Fousseret, France on September 20, 1742
- An ordained Catholic priest and studied under Abbe' Charles de L'Epee. Taught at the National Institute of the Deaf in Paris from 1786-1789
- At the death of Abbe' de L'Epee, Abbe' Sicard became the head of the National Institute of the Deaf in Paris, a school founded by L'Epee.
- He and Laurent Clerc, his student, gave a demo of their program in London, England in 1815, and met Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet at a town hall one day.



<https://www.palgrave.com/br/book/981137512857>

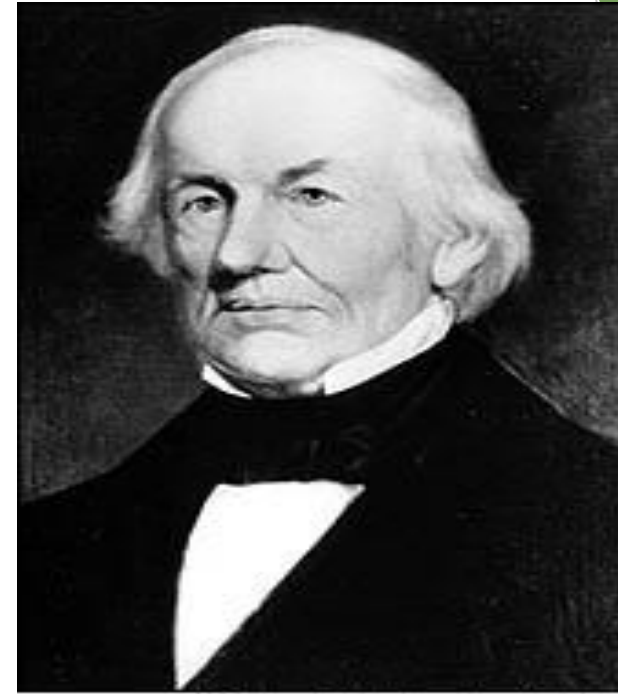


<https://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/lib/detail.html?id=1376>

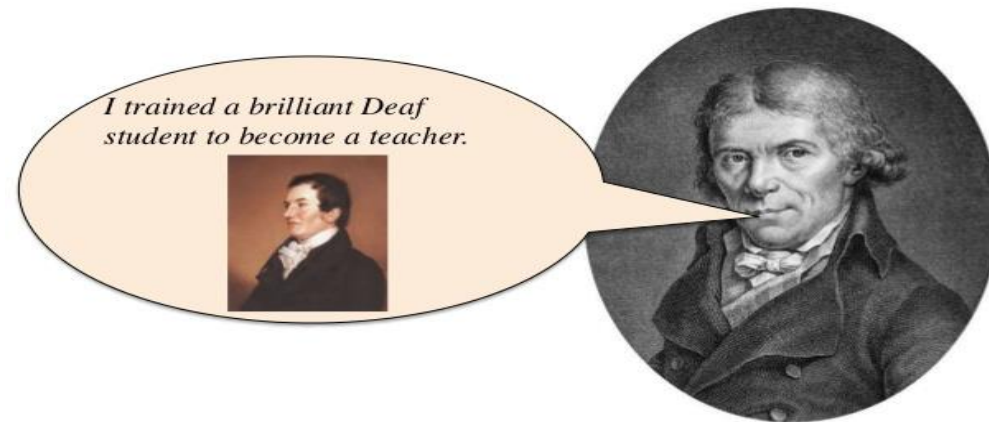
# LAURENT CLERC

1785 - 1869

- **Born in La Balme, a village in France. Became deaf at the age of one from falling off the chair by the fire in the kitchen of his home. The fire left a scar on his cheek. He lost his sense of smell and hearing.**
- **Began his education at the age of twelve because his family learned of a deaf school in Paris.**
- **First teacher and mentor was Jean Massieu, who taught at the National Institute of the Deaf in Paris.**
- **Worked under Abbe' Sicard at the National Institute of the Deaf in Paris.**
- **Met Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet in London in 1815, when Abbe' Sicard introduced Gallaudet to Laurent Clerc, a teacher, at a town hall where they gave a presentation about their school in Paris.**



Gallaudet University Archives



Father Roche-Ambrose Cucuron Sicard

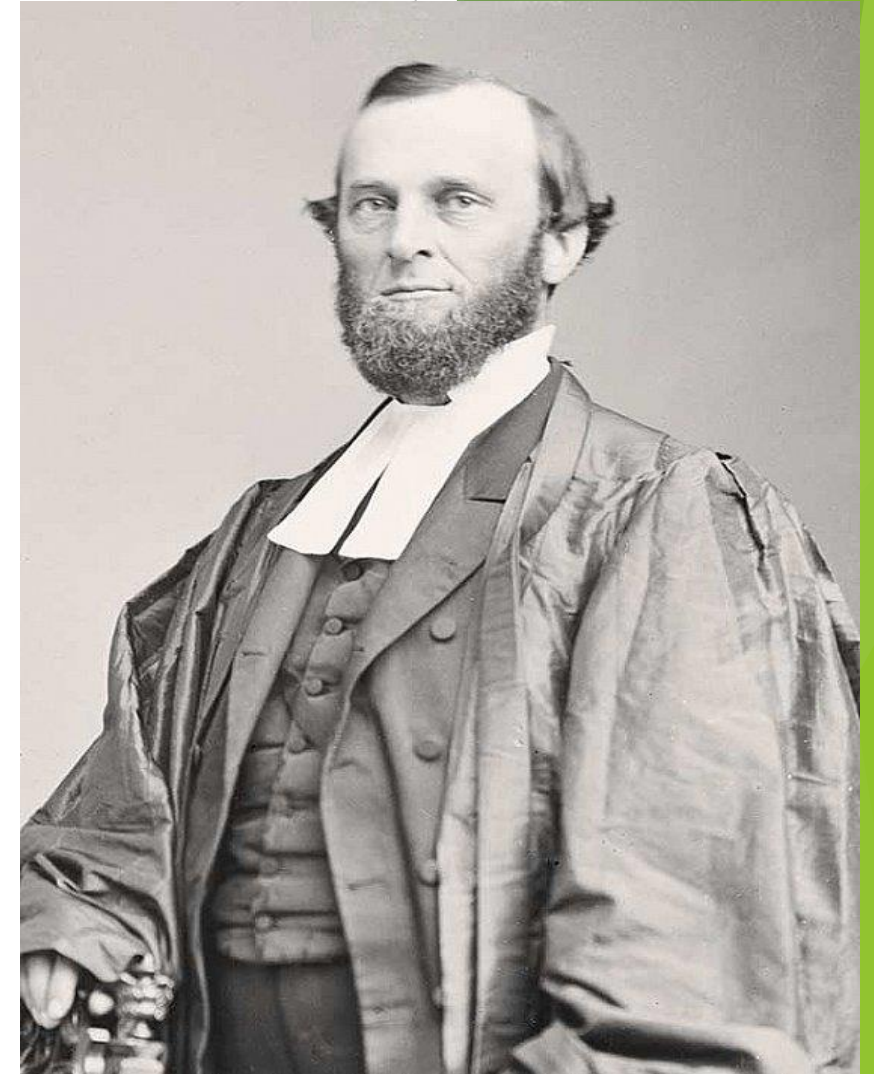
<http://blog.asl/deafined.com/2019/02/deafie-of-the-week-laurent-clerc/>

# Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet

1787 - 1851

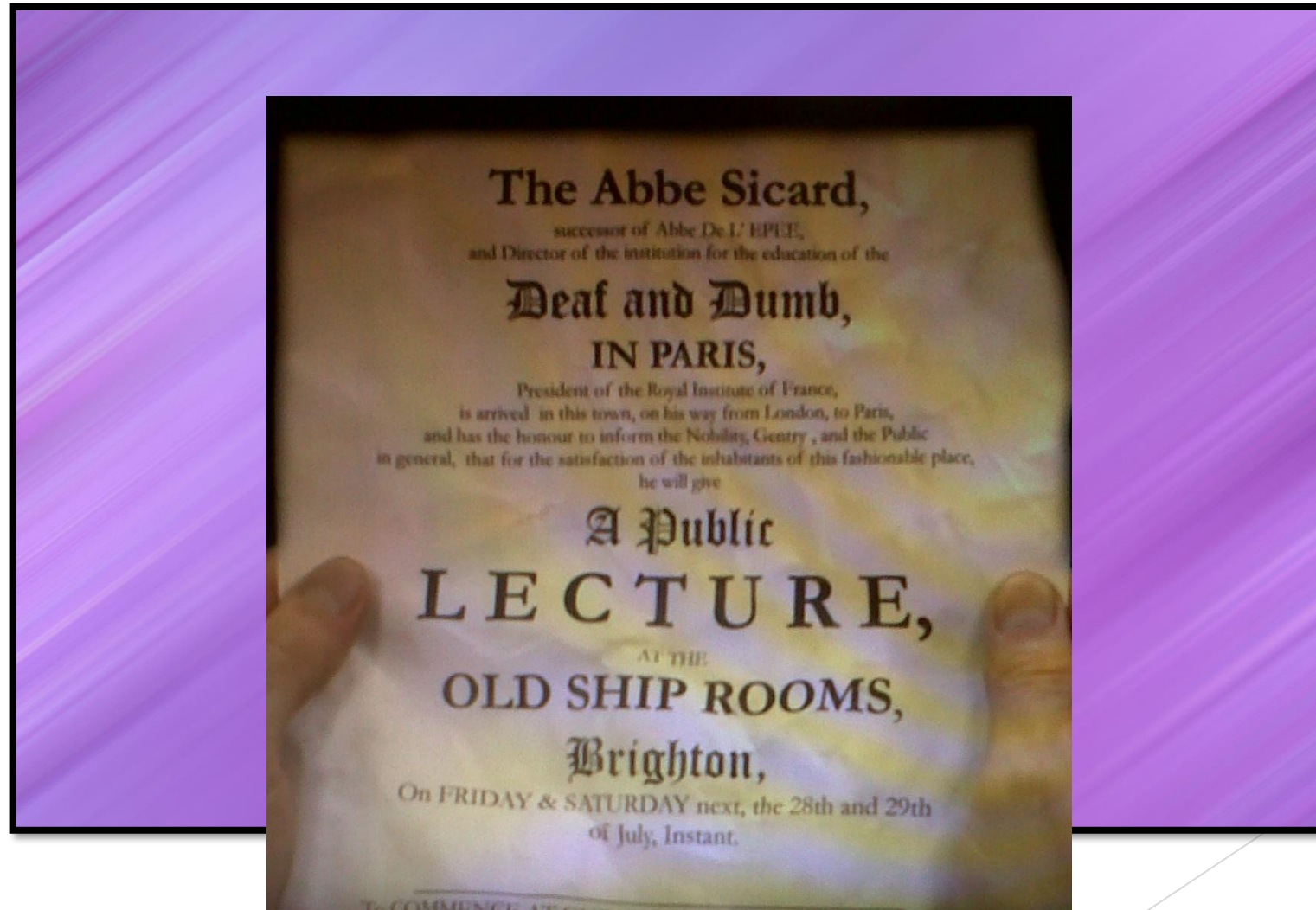
- Born in Philadelphia on December 10, 1787 . Yale-educated American educator and clergyman
- His future changed when he met Alice Cogswell, a 9 year old neighbor in 1814. Her father, Dr. Mason Cogswell, a family physician, and Alice's mother were not able to find a school for Alice because of her inability to hear and speak.
- Gallaudet and Dr. Mason Cogswell spoke to their church on the possibility of having a deaf school in Connecticut. Their church raised funds for Gallaudet's trip to Europe to learn more about teaching methods for deaf children.
- Visited Braidwood's Oral School in England. Was impressed with deaf students' ability to speak but Thomas Braidwood refused to give away his secret teaching methods.
- Met Abbe' Sicard and his students in England and was invited to Paris, France to learn more about teaching methods and the French Sign Language
- Brought Laurent Clerc, Abbe' Sicard's student, to the U.S. to start a new school for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut

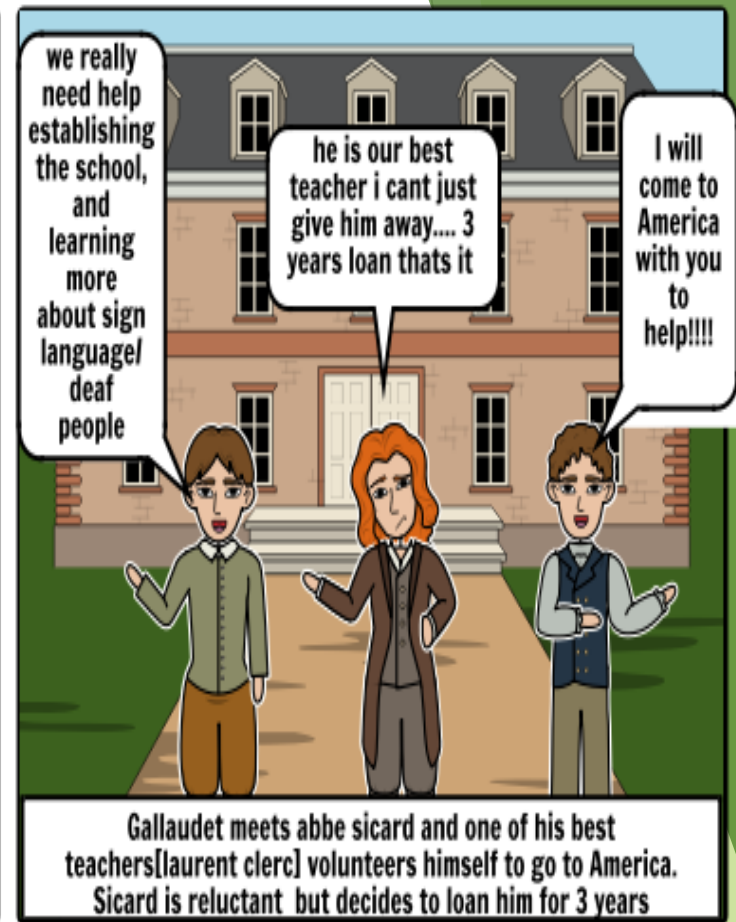
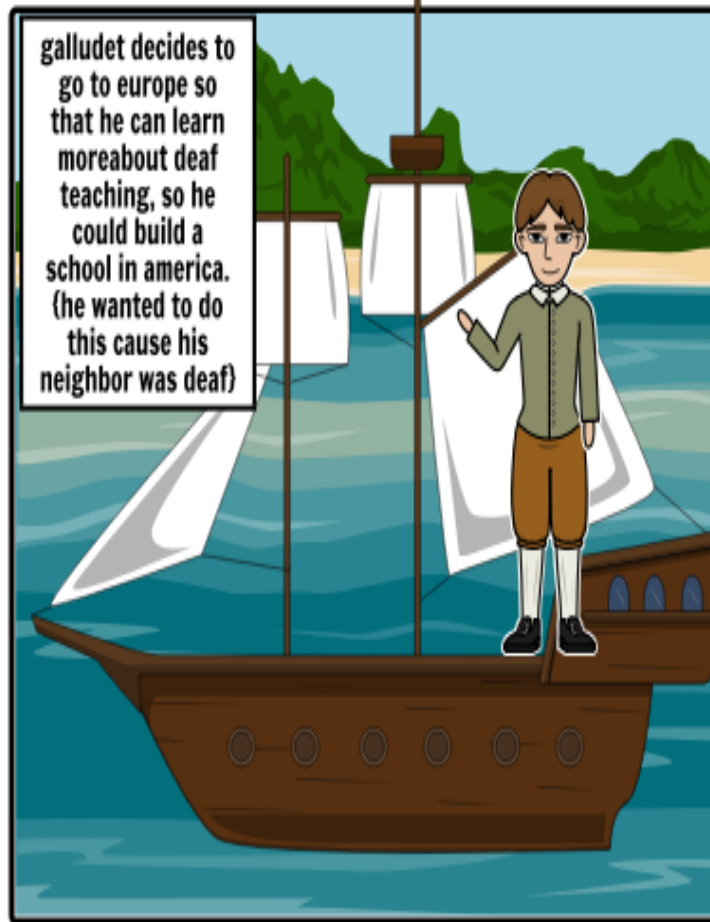
<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/it-happened-today/10/3>





# Gallaudet's Lucky Day...A Flyer He Found at a Park in London, England!





Create your own at Storyboard That

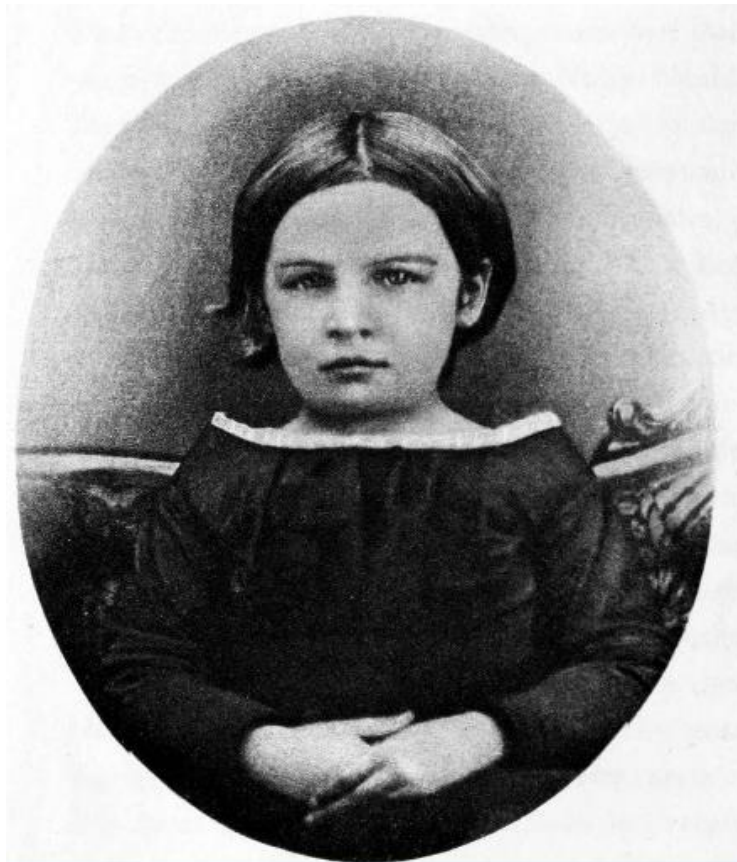
## Thomas Gallaudet's Journey to Europe to Seek Deaf Education Methods for Deaf Children

# Thomas Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc founded the first deaf school in Hartford, Connecticut on April 15, 1817

## American School for the Deaf



- Established in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817
- First public free school for deaf in America



Alice Cogswell, first deaf student taught by Thomas H. Gallaudet. She became the first student at the American School for the Deaf

# THOMAS BRAIDWOOD'S ORAL PHILOSOPHY IN WORK WITH DEAF STUDENTS



Thomas Braidwood (1715-1806)  
Founder, Braidwood Academy for the  
Deaf in London, England

[https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Thomas\\_Braidwood](https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Thomas_Braidwood)



Credit: Painting by Nancy Rourke

## Components of the Oral Method

- Lip-reading and speech reading
- Voicing words and phrases
- Touching a teacher's face to learn how letters of the alphabet sound
- Limited use of facial expression

# The Growth of the Oral Movement in the United States



By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Deaf cultural self-awareness was established and expanding. As a result, sign language as the chosen method of the Deaf in America became a central part of a developing deaf culture. Deaf people sprang from the schools and started alumni associations, churches and deaf publications. In 1864, Deaf people gained the opportunity for advanced education with the establishment of Gallaudet College.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, focused attacks on deaf culture and sign language intensified, nurtured by broader trends in America, including scientific development, eugenics and the Progressive movement. A potent network of oral advocates coalesced at this time.

Led by Alexander Graham Bell, the telephone inventor, oral educators sought to integrate Deaf people into hearing society by teaching them speech and lip-reading. Strict oralists demanded the elimination of sign language, believing it undermined English language acquisition and promoted Deaf separation. (Burch, 2002)



# Background of A.G. Bell and Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet

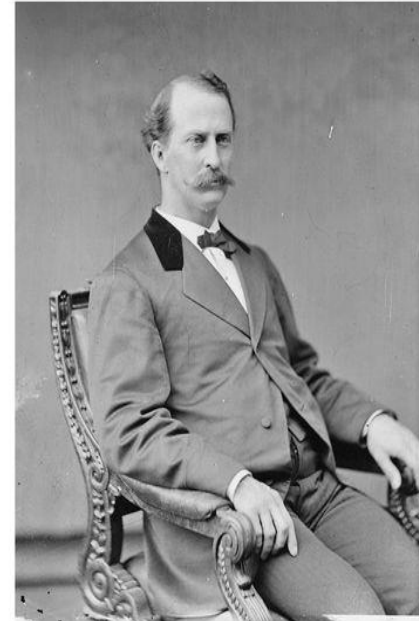
Alexander Graham Bell, America's telephone inventor, had a deaf mother. Bell's father, who could hear, taught speech to deaf children in Massachusetts. Alexander Graham Bell married a deaf woman named Mabel Hubbard whose father, a lawyer, was Bell's close friend.

Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet was the 8<sup>th</sup> child of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the founder of the first school for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. (1817). Dr. Edward Gallaudet's mother and wife were deaf.

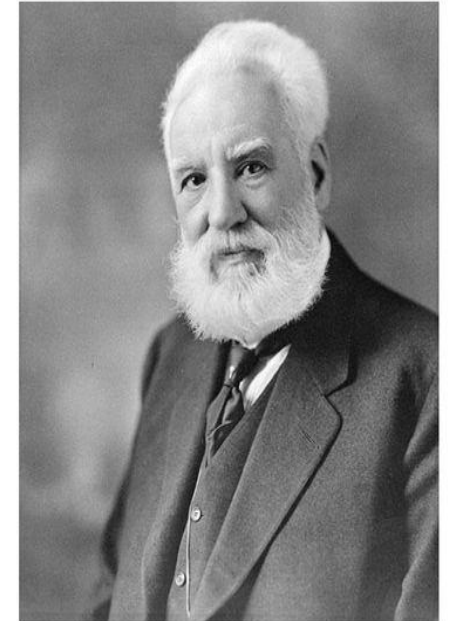
Dr. Edward M. Gallaudet started a college for the deaf in Washington, D.C. to honor his father's legacy. The college was named Gallaudet University. Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet was involved in a historic debate with Alexander Graham Bell over ASL and Oralism. Bell favored speech and lip-reading and was against sign language. Dr. Gallaudet favored the combined method (speech and ASL). Their historic debate took place at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. in 1886. Neither man won the debate. Teachers who supported Bell went with him. Other educators who favored the combined method, supported Dr. Edward Gallaudet's communication philosophy for deaf children.

## Manualism Versus Oralism

Edward Miner Gallaudet



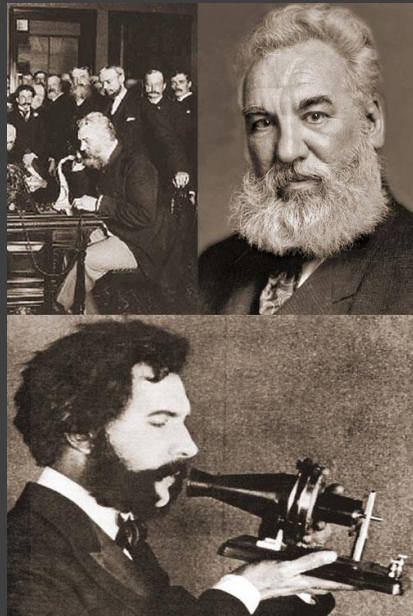
Alexander Graham Bell



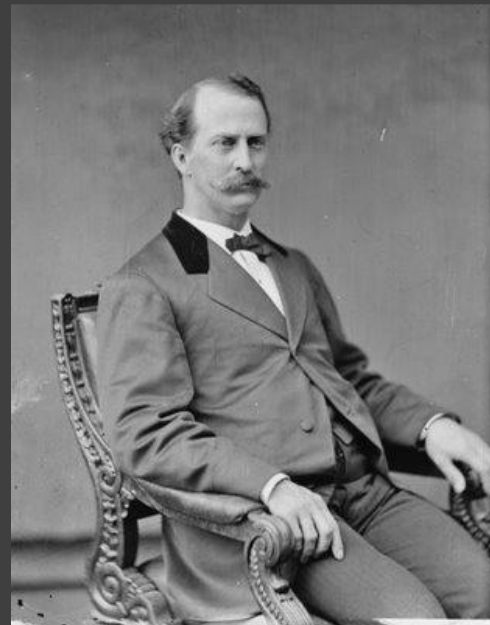
# FAMOUS DEAF EDUCATION PIONEERS AND THEIR HISTORIC DEBATE ON ASL VS. ORALISM, MAYFLOWER HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C. 1886

**Alexander Graham Bell and Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet**

**Their famous feud over ASL and Oralism**



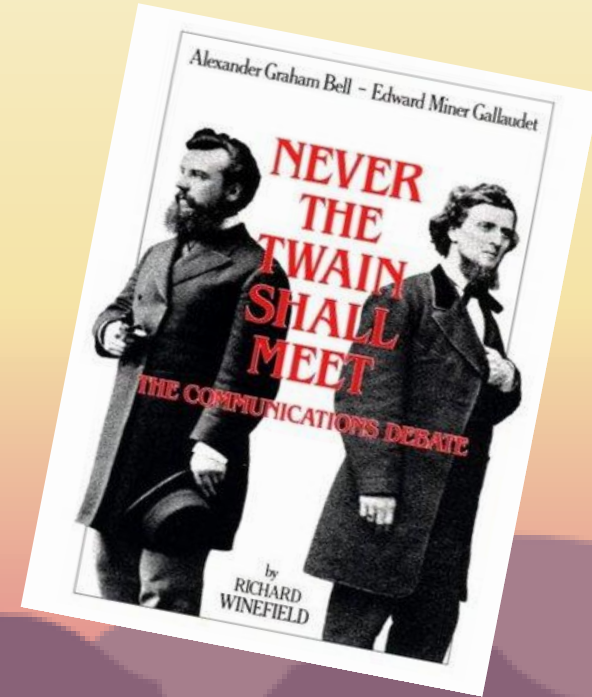
Alexander Graham Bell  
telephone inventor



Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet  
founded the 1<sup>st</sup> college for the Deaf

# Controversy at the 1880 Milan Conference 'Rocked the World'

- Early schools for the deaf used the sign language method
- Oral schools in the U.S. gained popularity
- A conference was held in Milan, Italy in 1880, and those who attended were Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet and Alexander Graham Bell
- Gallaudet and Bell argued on one's "best" method for deaf children. Oralism was "favored" over sign language
- American schools for the deaf "outlawed" signing. American Sign Language did not come back until the mid-1960s.







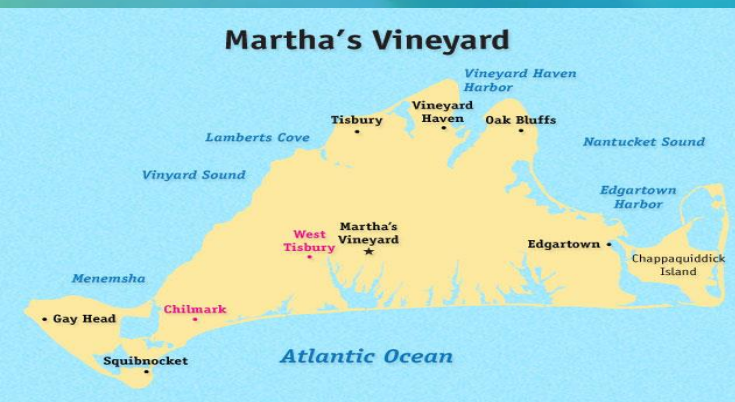
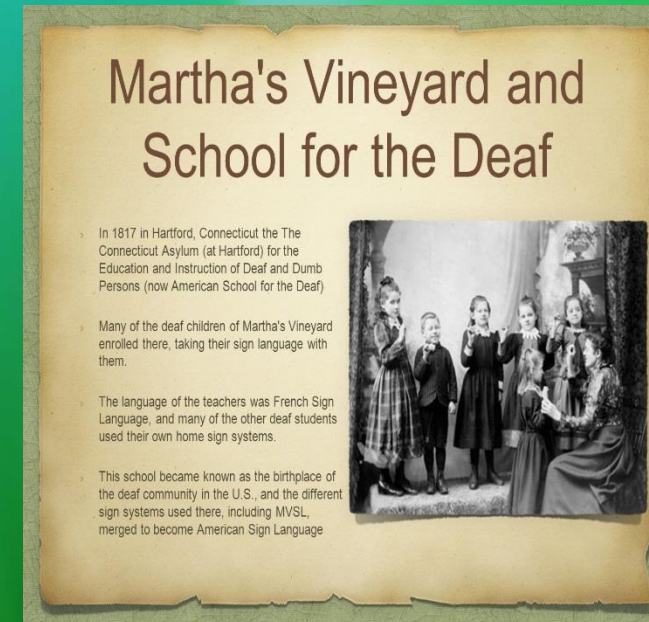
## **TUG-of-WAR... Oralism vs Manualism**

**Painting Credit: by: Nancy Rourke**

# SIGN LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN MARTHA'S VINEYARD, 1644 - 1950



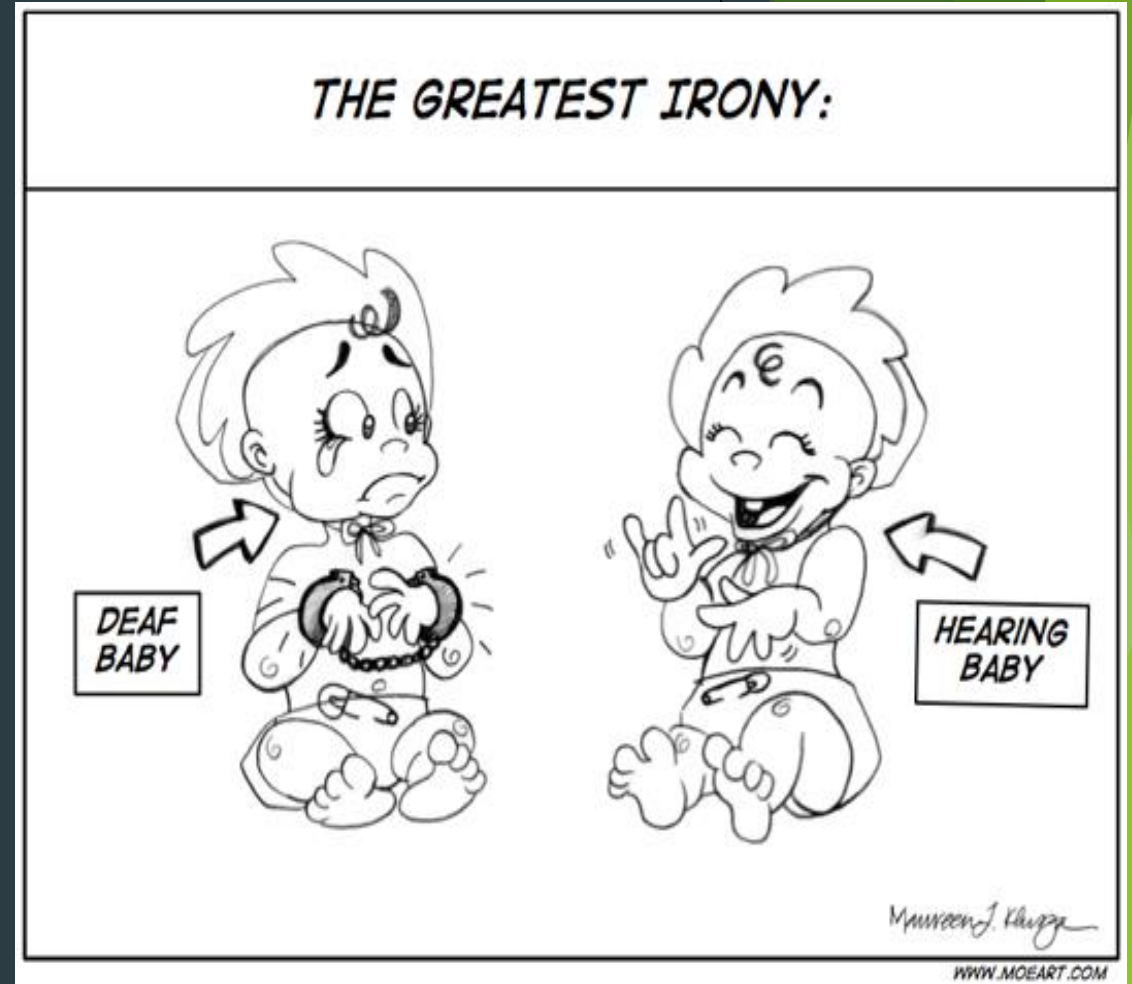
- **Martha's Vineyard, a small island south of Massachusetts.**
- **First settlers were deaf immigrants from Kentish Weald in the southeastern part of England where the initial gene for deafness occurred.**
- **In 1644, first recorded deaf settlers were Jonathan Lambert, his hearing wife Abigail and their seven children, two of whom were deaf.**
- **Chilmark, one of three regions had a sizable deaf population.**
- **Marriage between deaf and hearing islander were permitted.**
- **Sign language was used for communication.**
- **Deaf islanders made their living by sheep farming and whaling. They also took part in government affairs and held public office positions.**  
**(Groce, 1987)**



Deaf Babies in Many Hearing Families Struggle to Learn to Talk While Hearing Babies Are Given the Opportunity to Learn Signs of Some Words before They Reach the Age of One. Is this a Human Right?



Painting Credit: Nancy Rourke, Maryland



# Sign Language Banned in U.S. Oral Schools



# The ASL Linguist Who Changed the World



**Dr. William C. Stokoe**  
**Gallaudet College Professor**

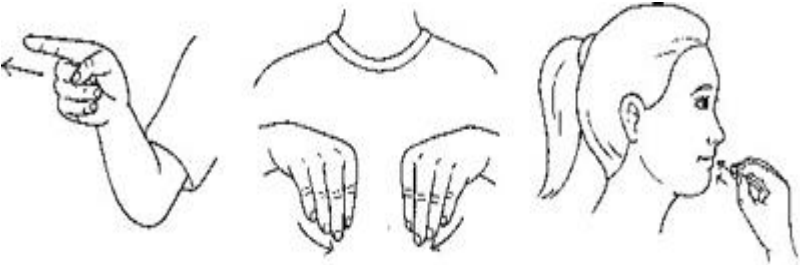
## William C. Stokoe, Jr. Founder of Sign Language Linguistics

- a. Born in Lancaster, New Hampshire
- b. Received his B.A. and Ph.D degrees in English from Cornell University
- c. Taught English at Wells College in Aurora, N.Y.
- d. Arrived at Gallaudet in 1955 and taught English to Deaf Students
- e. Proved that ASL was a language with its own syntax and grammar
- f. Showed that ASL was, in fact, a fully-formed English Language

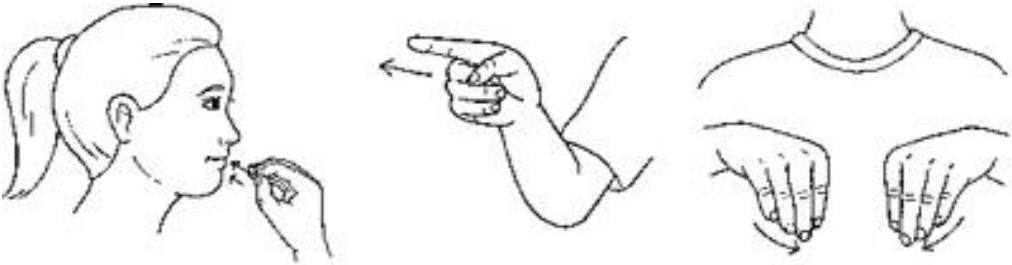
# Stokoe's Theory of ASL as a FULL Language



English: He sells food.  
Sign: HE SELLS FOOD



Sign: FOOD HE SELLS



# Facts About Oralists and Manualists

## Oralists

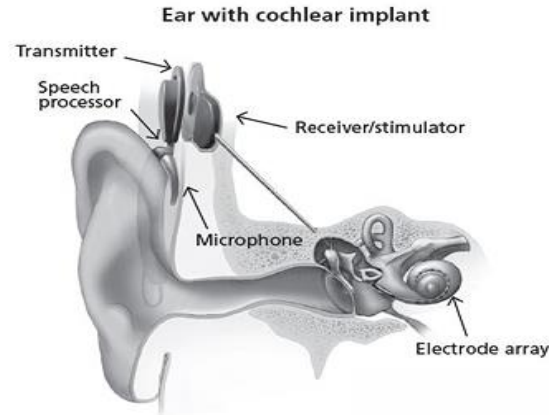
- a. Use speech and Lip-reading
- b. Mingle with the hearing & Oral Deaf
- c. Many don't join organizations that use ASL and support Deaf Culture
- d. Many use cochlear implants to help them stay in touch with the hearing
- e. Believe that they are superior to deaf persons who use ASL

## Manualists

- a. Use American Sign Language
- b. Mingle with those who use ASL
- c. Many are members of the National Association of the Deaf
- d. Many wear above the ear hearing device and some have the implant and still use ASL.
- e. Deafness as a cultural group; use ASL and sharing similar values

**SOURCES: Research Studies and Past Observations at AG Bell Conference in Rochester, N.Y. (1995) and at NAD-sponsored Conferences and Seminars**

# Statistics on Cochlear Implants



Ear with cochlear implant

**According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in December 2010, approximately 219,000 people worldwide have received cochlear implants, including approximately 42,600 adults and 28,400 children in the United States. Roughly 40 percent of children who are born profoundly deaf now receive a cochlear implant, which is a 25 percent increase from five years ago. The rise in cochlear implant use among eligible people between 2000 and 2010 exceeded the target set in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Healthy People 2010 (a set of science-based 10-year national health objectives), and a new target is being developed for Healthy People 2020.**

**<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing>**



# The risk of language deprivation by impairing sign language development in deaf children

Wyatte C. Hall, Ph.D. Maternal Child Health J. 2017 May; 21(5): 961-965.

- ▶ A long-standing belief is that sign language interferes with spoken language development in deaf children. Brain changes associated with language deprivation may be misrepresented as sign language interfering with spoken language outcomes of cochlear implants, which leads to professionals and organizations advocating for preventing sign language exposure before implantation and spreading misinformation. The existence of one – time-sensitive – language acquisition window means a strong possibility of permanent brain changes when spoken language is not fully accessible to the deaf child and sign language exposure is delayed, as is often standard practice.

There is no empirical evidence for the harm of sign language exposure but there is some evidence for its benefits, and there is growing evidence that lack of language access has negative implications. This includes cognitive delays, mental health difficulties, lower quality of life, higher trauma, and limited health literacy. Claims of cochlear implant- and spoken language-only approaches being more effective than sign language-inclusive approaches are not empirically supported. Cochlear implants are an unreliable standalone first-language intervention for deaf children. Priorities of deaf child development should focus on healthy growth of all developmental domains through a *fully-accessible* first language foundation such as sign language, rather than auditory deprivation and speech skills.

# Questions and Answers

- **Did Alexander Graham Bell make peace with Dr. Edward M. Gallaudet after their 1886 historic debate on Oralism and Sign Language?**

**Answer: No**

- **Had the communication controversy in Deaf Education been resolved after 130 years?**

**Answer: No**

- **Have Oralists and Manualists joined forces to bury the hatchet and start with a clean slate?**

**Answer: Some Oralists converted as Manualists. Most Oralists opt to stay in touch with the mainstream community. Many are affiliated with the Alexander G. Bell Association.**

- **Are Oral Schools for the Deaf in the U.S. still in service?**

**Answer: Yes. In Ohio, Texas, New York, California, Illinois and in some New England States**

**SOURCE: NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET by Richard Winefield  
(1987)**

# **RESOURCES**

**Alexander Graham Bell Association  
for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
3417 Volta Place, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007**

**National Association of the Deaf  
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 820  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910**

**American Society for Deaf Children  
800 Florida Avenue, N.E., #2047  
Washington, D.C. 20002**

**Hands & Voices National Chapter  
P.O. Box 3093  
Boulder, Colorado 80307**

**Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center  
11635 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106**

# References

**Baker, Charlotte & Battison, Robbin. Sign Language and the Deaf Community. National Association of the Deaf, Silver Spring, Maryland. 1980, pp. 1-267**

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**Groce, Nora Ellen. Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1986. pp. 1-163.**

**Lane, Harlan. The Mask of Benevolence. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1992. pp. 1-300.**

**Winefield, Richard. Never the Twain Shall Meet: The Communications Debate. Gallaudet University Press. Washington, D.C. 1987. pp. 1-129**