



THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

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WHAT IS ASL?

- American Sign Language is a visual-gestural language based on the naturally evolved system of articulated hand gestures and their placement relative to the body, along with non-manual markers such as facial expressions, head movements, shoulder raises, mouth morphemes and movements of the body.
- ASL is NOT a derivative of English
 - Originated independently of English linguistic influence
 - Is its own language with its own set of rules



DEAF CULTURE: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

- The Deaf community/ culture is an identity
 - This language serves as an exclusive membership
- Breaking down stigmas
 - Capitalization of the word deaf
 - Being deaf is NOT being disabled
- Perspective
 - When you are deaf you see the world in a different way
 - Seeking out other deaf individuals
- Deaf gain
 - Many Deaf individuals view their deafness as a communication advantage



THE ORIGIN OF ASL

- If you were to ask who invented sign language and where did it come from, it is likely you wouldn't get an exact answer.
- The first person(s) to use basic sign language was most likely early man
- The first to use a more complex sign language as a means of communication were deaf people
- Some believe that sign language was invented by those living on Martha's Vineyard
- A common belief is that sign language was invented by Abbe Charles Michel de L'Epee
 - Established the first free public school for the deaf
 - Created a system and developed into a language
- Laurent Clerc and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet introduced American Sign Language
 - Most often credited with the creation of ASL
 - First American school for the deaf

17th century

1771

1817

DEAF HISTORY

- Deaf history in America is intertwined with all American history but is often ignored in historical perspectives. The following is a list of some of the most important historical events that affected the deaf community and ASL

1600's Deaf Education Develops

Physician Geronimo of Padua, Italy, is the first to teach his students using a code of manual signs. Pedro Ponce de Leon, a Benedictine monk, successfully taught speech to deaf children since birth.

1620

Juan Pablo Bonet, an advocate of early sign language, writes the first well-known book of manual alphabetic signs for the deaf in 1620.

1760 French Sign Language Established

A French priest, Charles Michel De L'Eppe, establishes the first free public school for the deaf in France. De L'Eppe tries to develop a bridge between the deaf and hearing worlds through a system of standardized signs and finger spelling.

1760

At the same time, oral educators make strides in Spain, Germany, France, Holland and England. Among the most successful oral teachers of the deaf is Samuel Heinicke, a German educator. Heinicke teaches pupils speech by having them feel his throat while he speaks; his techniques are called "the German Method."

1788

Charles Michel De L'Eppe publishes a dictionary of French sign language.

1817- First American School for the Deaf Founded

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, an American interested in deaf education, travels to Europe where he meets the Archbishop Roche Sicard, the author of "Theory of Signs," and successor to De L'Eppe. Sicard sends one of his instructors, Laurent Clerc, and the pair found the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut.

1818

The New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb is founded.

1820

Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is founded.

1823

Kentucky School for the Deaf, the first school supported by the state, opens.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

- Located on an island off the coast of Massachusetts
- Very high population of hereditary deaf individuals
- First to use a more complex sign language as a means of communication
- Created Martha's Vineyard Sign Language
- Impacted deaf schools soon to come

1714

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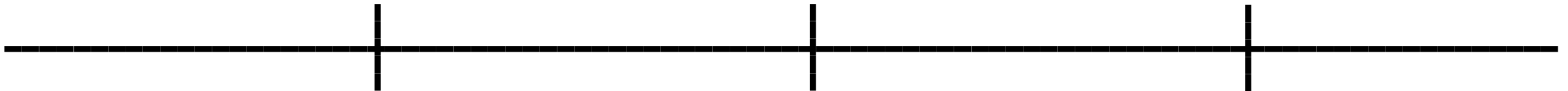
START OF FRENCH SIGN LANGUAGE

- French Sign Language was founded in 1760. leading to education for the deaf
- Abbe Charles Michel de L'Epee
 - Established first free public school for the deaf In Paris in 1771
 - L'Epee created a system based off signs from the children attending the school



1760

1771



GALLAUDET

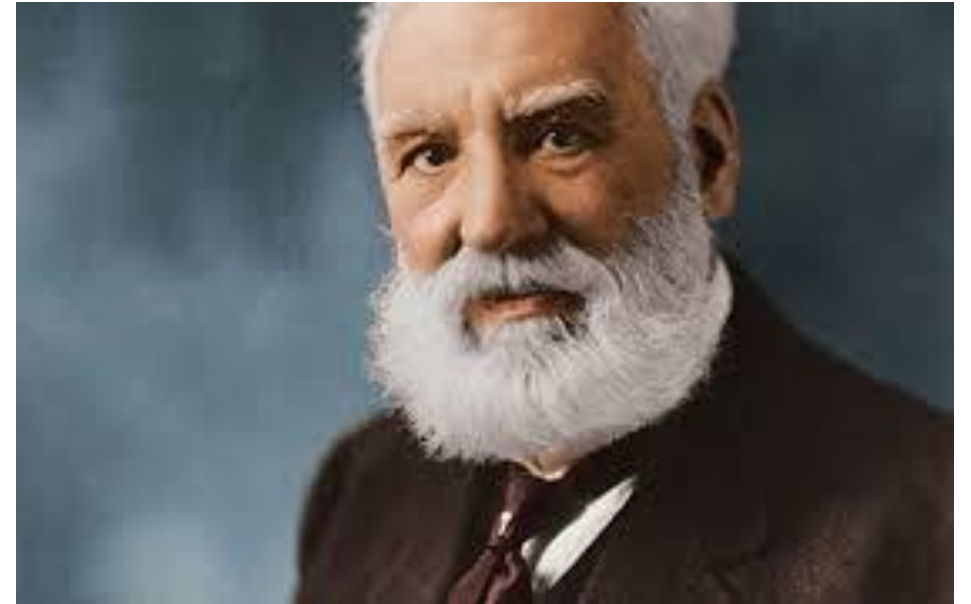
- Gallaudet- the first American school established for the deaf in 1864
- Signed off by President Lincoln
- Founded by Laurent Clerc and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet
- Clerc came from Europe to join Gallaudet
- The children's signs along combined with French Sign Language, became American Sign Language

1864



ORALIST SCHOOL

- Founded by alexander Graham Bell in 1872
 - Widely promoted both eugenics and oralism
 - His mother was deaf, and his father created 'visible speech', a system of symbols meant to assist people in speaking languages they could not hear.
 - Opened his own private school for the Deaf in Boston.



1872



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF



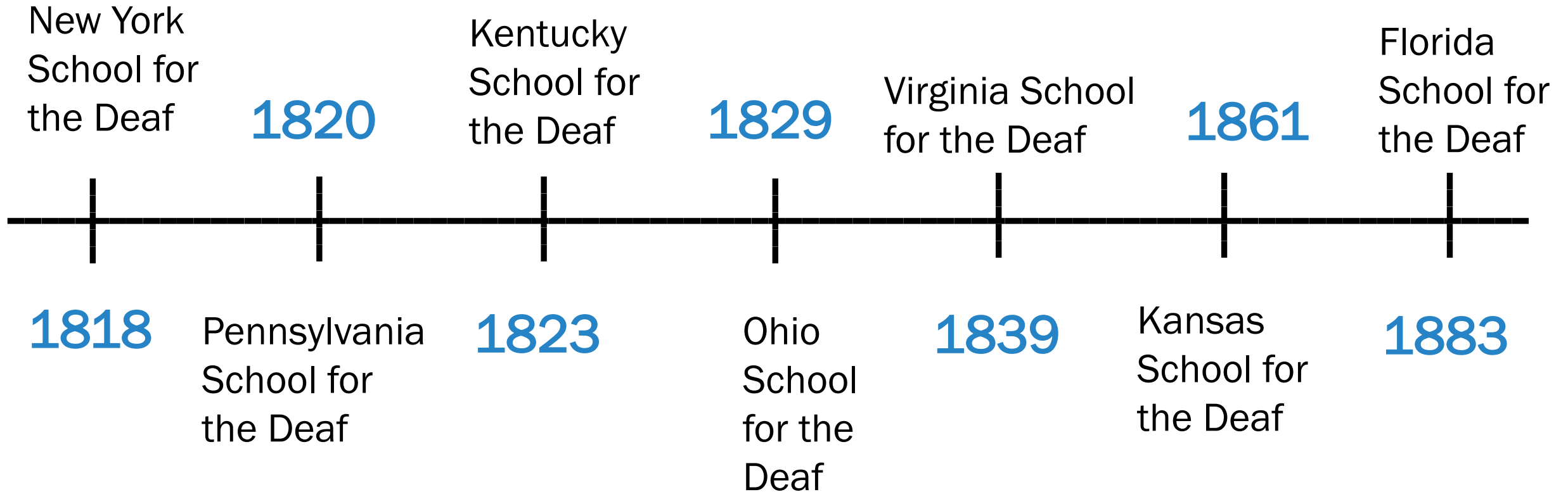
National Association of the Deaf

- NAD is an organization promoting the civil rights of deaf individuals in the United States.
- Created to defend the ability of the American deaf community to use sign language and organize around important issues
- Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1880
- Nonprofit organization advocating for deaf rights
- In 1910, President Taft passed a law banning all discrimination against deaf people in the workforce.

1880



FOUNDING OF DEAF SCHOOLS (1818 – 1883)



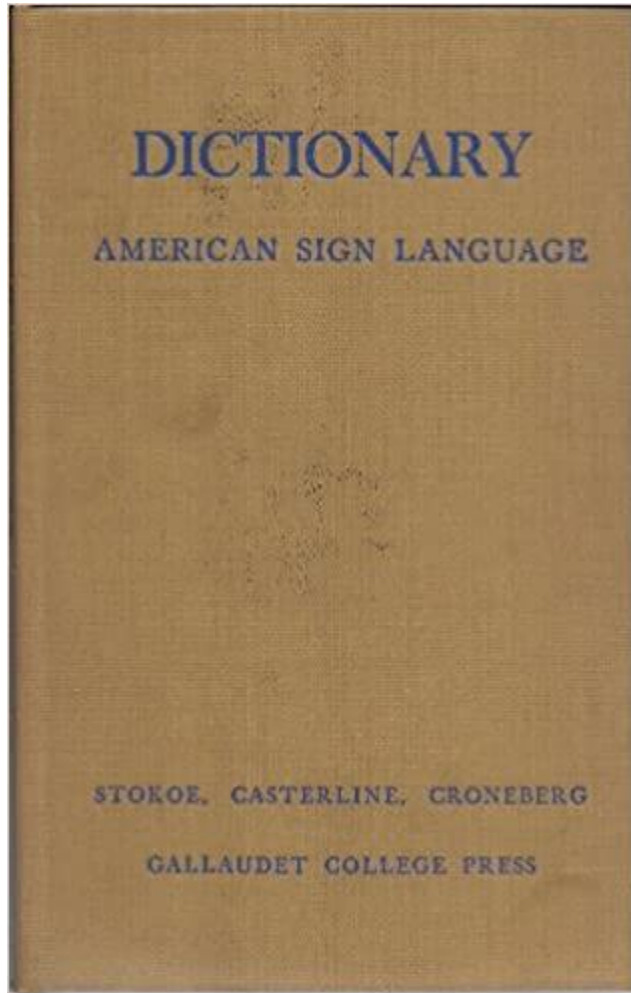
THE TELETYPEWRITER & VIDEO RELAY SERVICE

- The Teletypewriter and video Relay Service were both invented by Robert Weibrecht
- Teletypewriter 1960
 - The teletypewriter is an electromechanical typewriter paired with a communication channel
 - Allows for communication through typed messages
 - Can be used with either a landline or cell phone
- Video Relay Service 1964
 - Expanded the means of communication for the deaf
 - Enables ASL users to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than typed text



1960

1964



ASL DICTIONARY

- The ASL dictionary was completed by William Stokoe in 1965
 - Assisted by Croneberg and Dorothy Casterline
 - Stokoe wanted to show the world that ASL was not a visual translation of English, but rather a fully- formed language with its own grammatical structure and rich vocabulary
- Stokoe not only created the ASL dictionary but also established the Linguistic Research Laboratory at Gallaudet and founded the journal “Sign Language Studies”. He also for several years operated a small publishing house.

1965

REHABILITATION ACT AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

- The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving financial assistance, in federal employment and in the employment practices of federal contractors.
 - Passed in 1973
- The American with Disabilities Act was passed prohibiting discrimination based on disability.
 - Discrimination was prohibited in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places open to the general public.
 - Passed in 1990

1973

1990

THE 21ST CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO ACCESSIBILITY ACT

- This act mandates that all televised material be captioned, including its online distribution
- The CVAA made sure that accessibility laws enacted in the 1980's and 1990's are brought up to date with 21st century technologies.



2010

DEAF U

- “Deaf U” is a Netflix tv show following the lives of a group of deaf students who attend Gallaudet University.
- I personally have watched it and I really enjoyed it.
- I really enjoyed how real the whole thing was and the fact that deaf culture was a large part of it
- LINK TO TRAILER:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hr3wwPh5uKs>



THANK YOU!



~~MUTE~~

~~HEARING IMPAIRED~~

~~DUMB~~

~~HANDICAPPED~~

IT'S JUST
DEAF