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## Article Title: Nebraska's Oral Law of 1911 and the Deaf Community

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Article Summary: A 1911 law required the state residential school for the deaf at Omaha to teach students to lip read and to speak. Its supporters felt that this method would more easily integrate the deaf into the hearing world. Opponents argued that sign language and finger spelling were more easily mastered.

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Presidents of the National Association of the Deaf: E J Babcock, Edwin A Hodgson, George W Veditz, Isaac Goldberg, Jay Howard, Olof Hanson

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Photographs / Images: Nebraska School for the Deaf 4th grade, March 1904; School for the Deaf instruction during the 1940s; School for the Deaf, 1909; School for the Deaf instruction in printing, early 1900s

## Nebraska's Oral Law of 1911 and the Deaf Community

*By John V. Van Cleve*

In 1911 Nebraska legislators attempted to resolve a complex argument that had vexed and divided educators and deaf people for over 100 years, as it still does today. Chapter 17, Section 40, of the Revised Statutes of the State of Nebraska, passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Chester H. Aldrich, required the state residential school for the deaf at Omaha to use the "oral, aural, and lipreading method" instead of the "deaf alphabet and sign language" to educate its students.<sup>1</sup> In this way, Nebraska lawmakers believed, Nebraska's deaf people would be brought into the mainstream of American society—assimilated—through their use of spoken English.

This law unleashed a heated controversy. It arrayed educated deaf Americans against the Nebraska Legislature, two governors, educational leaders, and parents of deaf children. An understanding of the struggle over this law is important for what it reveals about the American deaf community's attempts to preserve its separate culture and its linguistic identity. Thus it forms part of the record of other American minorities to resist assimilation, to preserve habits, mores, or languages that had special meaning or utility.<sup>2</sup> And yet the controversy needs to be understood as well for the contrasts it demonstrates between the experience of the American deaf community and America's ethnic minorities. Deaf people argued that total assimilation was impossible for them. Lacking hearing, they could never speak English perfectly, and they could never read it from the lips with total accuracy. To the extent that these claims were true, trying to guide deaf people into the American melting pot was frequently unsuccessful.

The debate over the best method to teach deaf children—whether to use sign language and the manual alphabet or to employ voice and lip reading as mandated by the 1911 Nebraska law—originated in the intellectual ferment of Enlightenment Europe when new theories of pedagogy abounded. Its first protagonists were both hearing persons and pioneers in the education of deaf people: the Abbe de l'Epee, who operated a school for deaf pupils in Paris, and Samuel Heinicke, who taught deaf children at his private school in Leipzig.

Heinicke might be viewed as the intellectual father of the Nebraska law, for he first articulated arguments in favor of oral communication and against manual methods. He believed that the thinking process depended on the perception of sound, that neither deaf nor hearing persons could learn from visual stimulation alone. "Written or printed words," he wrote to l'Epee, "are like heaps of flies' feet or spiders' legs: they are not forms or figures which can be presented as fixed or abstracted in our imagination."<sup>3</sup> If deaf people were to develop sophisticated thinking skills they needed to practice speech and speech reading, for "Abstract concepts cannot be developed through the aid of writing and methodical signs."<sup>4</sup> Rather, Heinicke believed, they depended upon the action of sound on the mind:

Tones are . . . the dark mainsprings which play upon our faculties of desire, bringing about random notions, and lifting our reason to what is grounded in these, namely, universal, abstract, transcendental forms of thought in which throughout our lives we must think, judge, and reason, but always in a tone-like (*tonhaft*) manner.<sup>5</sup>

The Abbe de l'Epee disagreed. He denied that sounds had any meaning themselves. "It is not," he wrote, "by the mere pronunciation of words, in any language, that we are taught their signification." Instead, meaning derived from the "objects designated" by the sounds.<sup>6</sup> L'Epee reasoned, in the tradition of John Locke, that there was no "natural connection between metaphysical ideas and the articulate sounds which strike the ear."<sup>7</sup> Given this assumption, l'Epee believed that there was no reason why signs, which use distinct body movements to express particular ideas, and finger-spelling, which spells out words on the fingers letter-by-letter, should not be used to teach deaf children. In a letter to Heinicke, he

refuted all the former's claims about the benefits of speech and lip reading as pedagogical tools for deaf pupils, insisting that for persons who cannot hear, vision can replace hearing, abstract ideas can be conveyed by signs and writing, and neither signed nor written words are more quickly forgotten than heard, spoken, or read-from-the-lips words.<sup>8</sup>

In his defense of sign language and finger-spelling, l'Eppe advanced a further significant argument, one which was later taken up by deaf people and used in the struggle over the Nebraska law. L'Eppe insisted that neither speech nor lip reading represented a natural language for persons who cannot hear. Instead, he wrote, "The natural language of the Deaf and Dumb is the language of signs."<sup>9</sup>

Until the beginning of the 20th century, most American schools for deaf persons operated under the principles set forth by l'Eppe.<sup>10</sup> Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a hearing person from Hartford, Connecticut, and Laurent Clerc, a deaf person and former student of the French Institute for the Deaf and Dumb at Paris, the school that l'Eppe founded, established the first permanent school for deaf pupils in the United States in 1817. Originally named the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, this school eventually became the American School for the Deaf, located in West Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>11</sup>

The American School was a model and a training center for many teachers of deaf pupils in the early 19th century, and its method was thoroughly manual, that is, in the tradition of l'Eppe. Clerc and Gallaudet both believed that sign language, rather than speech, was the natural medium of communication for deaf persons, and, as Gallaudet wrote, "in this case, as well as, in all others which relate to education generally, it is the part of wisdom to find the path which nature points out, and to follow it."<sup>12</sup> The problem with using speech and lip reading, Gallaudet believed, was that this method was successful in "comparatively few cases."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, he argued, speech teaching was a "long and laborious process" that retarded pupils' intellectual progress.<sup>14</sup> It required training of "two or three years, in not a few cases more" before student and teacher could communicate well enough to commence

real education.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the views of Gallaudet, Clerc, and others in the manual tradition did not go unchallenged by those who wished to assimilate deaf persons and eliminate their rapidly developing subculture and language of signs.

In the late 19th century, oralists—the followers of Heinicke's methods—made inroads in American education of deaf students. Led by Alexander Graham Bell, whose wife, Mabel Hubbard Bell, was a thoroughly assimilated deaf person who abhorred signs and avoided other deaf people, they argued that speech and lip reading had many advantages over signing. Orally trained deaf persons, oralists believed, were more easily integrated with the hearing world; they had less of a tendency to intermarry, and thus, Bell reasoned, perpetuate genetically caused deafness; they were not as clannish as signers; they used English more accurately and readily than their manually trained counterparts; and they did not become alienated from their families.<sup>16</sup> In short, proponents claimed that orally educated deaf children became normal, no longer seriously handicapped, no longer “dummies,” no longer objects of pity or contempt.<sup>17</sup>

This claim had a powerful attraction for parents of deaf children.<sup>18</sup> When deaf sons and daughters returned home from manual schools with their new language of signs and finger-spelling, which few parents knew, they were like strangers. Their children often longed to return to their institutions where communication in signs was quick, easy, and fluid. An English parent expressed clearly parental concerns about the social effects of l'Epee's method after he and his wife had visited both manual and oral schools for deaf children:

What struck us most was the contrast in the love of home. Those taught under the 'French System' care, comparatively, little for the 'holidays,' for home, and relations. Why? Because the institution is their home; the principal, matron, and teachers, their parents and relations. And this is natural, for there is no easy or sufficient means of communication between the pupils and the outside world.<sup>19</sup>

The Nebraska law, which required the exclusive use of oral methods in the state residential institution, was originally the product of such parental fears.

The concerned parents who initiated the Nebraska law

were A. N. Dafoe of Tecumseh and E. J. Babcock of North Loup, both of whom had two deaf children. According to Dafoe, some time before 1911 he had discussed the Omaha school's provisions for oral teaching with Superintendent Reuben Stewart, who "advised absolutely against the oral method." Thus, Dafoe wrote in 1911, "I paid no more attention to the Omaha school."<sup>20</sup> Instead, Dafoe sent his deaf children, Frank, in 1909, and Ruth, in 1910, to the Clarke School in Northampton, Massachusetts.<sup>21</sup> Sending his children so far away to a residential school, the oldest and most respected private oral school in the United States, was undoubtedly a considerable expense for Dafoe, a fact that would be used later to question his motives in promoting Nebraska's oral law. Babcock, on the other hand, had tried to educate his two deaf children at home, at best a frustrating task.<sup>22</sup>

Dafoe's attitude toward his children's disability, his desire to deny that it in fact existed, was typical of many parents and helps to explain his enthusiasm for the oral method. In 1916 after he had become a state legislator himself, Dafoe defended oral teaching of deaf children, saying: "When my children come home [from the Clarke School], they play with the other children of the town like normal children."<sup>23</sup> In Dafoe's mind, then, a child who could speak, though he could not hear, was "normal" — able to interact routinely with his hearing peers.

In early 1911 Dafoe and Babcock met with Nebraska's newly elected governor, Chester H. Aldrich, to try to get his support for a bill to require oral methods and eliminate manual teaching at the Nebraska school. According to Dafoe, they were successful.<sup>24</sup> They also met with a Senate committee in charge of the school, and the committee advised them to draft a bill containing language that would force the Nebraska school to use oral methods exclusively.<sup>25</sup> Such a bill was drawn up and introduced on February 1, 1911, as Senate File 173.<sup>26</sup>

Dafoe and Babcock then moved quickly to develop an interest group to support the oral bill. They organized with two other parents of deaf children, J. F. McLane of Florence and C. F. Scharman of Omaha, the Nebraska Parents' Association for the Promotion of the Teaching of Speech to

the Deaf, taking its name from the American Association for the Promotion of the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf (AAPTSD), a group organized by Bell in 1890.<sup>27</sup> They also presented to members of the Legislature copies of the *Association Review*, the official organ of the AAPTSD, and solicited letters of support from AAPTSD leaders.<sup>28</sup> These activities soon were noticed in Omaha.

The oral bill alarmed deaf teachers at the Omaha school. Almost unanimously deaf people in the United States and Europe traditionally opposed any form of instruction that denied deaf students the right to communicate with signs and finger-spelling. Again and again in national and international conventions, organized deaf persons had declared their preference for an educational method, called the combined system, that allowed those children who could not master speech or lip reading to receive instruction manually.<sup>29</sup> One such convention called the oral method "a system of tyranny" for deaf children, "opposed to their instincts, inimical to their happiness, and detrimental to their moral and intellectual development."<sup>30</sup>

Deaf people realized that adoption of the proposed law would have a major impact on the Nebraska school. Under Superintendent Stewart the school had prided itself on its flexibility in teaching method. "The Method to Fit the Child—Not the Child the Method" was the school's motto.<sup>31</sup> In 1910 Stewart explained the school's position on the debate between oralists and manualists:

The methods of instruction employed are those that have received the stamp of approval of the foremost educators of the deaf . . . called the Combined System. . . . Under this system every child who can profit by it is given thorough and efficient instruction in articulation and lip-reading. All others who cannot, with profit, be taught by this method are instructed by means of writing and fingerspelling.<sup>32</sup>

Signs, though supposedly not used in the classrooms, were used at student gatherings and chapel services, and the school officially recognized their value.<sup>33</sup> This flexible approach, permitting deaf pupils to sign and finger-spell if they wished, had the effect of perpetuating the deaf subculture that had developed in 19th century America.

Converting the Nebraska school to pure oralism not only

would deny deaf children the special means of communication they preferred. Deaf teachers feared that it would jeopardize their jobs as well. In 1910 eight of 24 teachers, or 33 percent of the total, were deaf.<sup>34</sup>

Both logic and subsequent experience proved these fears well founded. Deaf teachers could not teach articulation. They would have no way of recognizing when the students' pronunciation was correct, for many English sounds, particularly consonants, cannot be read from the lips. Furthermore, they would have a very difficult time understanding their students if the pupils could neither sign nor finger-spell to them. The Nebraska law did allow some students, those with "mental defects or malformation of the vocal cords," to be taught manually, but the number of these would be tiny. In fact, the number of deaf teachers dropped from eight to four, from 33 to 17 percent, at the end of the first full year of the law's operation.<sup>35</sup>

The potential loss of positions for deaf teachers at the Omaha school had several adverse implications for the small (280 persons according to the 1910 census) Nebraska deaf community.<sup>36</sup> For one thing, of course, it would mean that there would be fewer responsible—even if low-paying— jobs for deaf persons who had received higher education. It also meant that deaf students would not have as many adult role models with whom they could identify. Finally, it meant that the traditions, culture, and most importantly the language of the American deaf community would not be passed on to new generations of deaf children, for most of these (modern studies indicate about 90 percent) had hearing parents.<sup>37</sup> Olof Hanson, a Seattle architect and president of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), articulated the concern of many deaf Americans when he wrote that the sign language that had evolved in the United States was "a uniform, expressive, and beautiful means of conveying thought." If not used in the schools, it would "degenerate into the crude forms used in Europe" or into local dialects.<sup>38</sup>

Fear that the Nebraska law would establish a precedent for other state-supported schools was cause for special concern among deaf leaders. Edwin A. Hodgson, a former president of the NAD and editor of the influential *Deaf-Mute's*



*Nebraska School for the Deaf, 4th grade, March, 1904. All photos courtesy of Nebraska School for the Deaf, Omaha. . . . (Below) School for the Deaf instruction during the 1940s.*



*Journal*, editorialized that the law represented a "swelling wave of ultra-oralism that threatens disaster to coming generations of deaf children." <sup>39</sup> Another former NAD president, George W. Veditz, wrote in the *Deaf-Mute's Journal* in 1911 that "the evil that overtook Nebraska yesterday may overtake your own state tomorrow." <sup>40</sup> Isaac Goldberg wrote that the "iniquity" of the Nebraska law "should serve us the cause of arousing the deaf of this country." <sup>41</sup> Jay Howard of Minnesota, who would become president of the NAD in 1913, agreed, arguing that "the oralists will not stop with Nebraska. They will seek out other states . . . and endeavor to repeat the Nebraska trick." <sup>42</sup>

Leaders of the deaf community also believed that passage of the Nebraska law was part of a sinister, well-financed, conspiracy of Bell's AAPTSD. Goldberg claimed that an "oralistic cabal" used "underhand influences" to convince legislators to support the bill. <sup>43</sup> Veditz believed that the bill passed because of "money," "falsehood," and "misrepresentation." <sup>44</sup> Even Stewart, the hearing superintendent of the Nebraska school, wrote that he was "morally certain" that "Speech Association Money" was necessary to convince the Nebraska Legislature to support the oral law. <sup>45</sup> Because of these concerns, the NAD under Hanson's dynamic leadership began a campaign first to defeat the law, then to ameliorate its effects, and finally to repeal it.

The first evidence of the NAD's interest in Nebraska is a letter of January 31, 1911, from Hanson to P. E. Seely, the president of the Nebraska School for the Deaf Alumni Association and an instructor at the school. Seely apparently had written to Hanson about the impending legislation, and Hanson responded with offers of help from the NAD to defeat it. He offered to send Seely NAD-prepared circulars and leaflets in support of sign language, finger-spelling, and the combined system. He also volunteered to write to "the governor and chairman of the committee, if the circumstances call for it." <sup>46</sup>

They did, and Hanson responded as promised, writing Seely that "we must win this fight." <sup>47</sup> Hanson sent letters to Governor Aldrich, the speaker of the House, and the president of the Senate. <sup>48</sup> He told the governor that he spoke for the NAD, "which has among its members the most intelligent and best

educated deaf in all parts of the country, including many educated by the method proposed in the bill, who strongly object to the proposed abolition of the sign language," and suggested that Aldrich veto the bill.<sup>49</sup>

Hanson's letters to the speaker of the House and president of the Senate stated many of the arguments that subsequently would be repeated by the NAD. Hanson lauded the combined system, claiming that it allowed those who could to learn speech and lip reading but guaranteed others "the privilege of learning sign language." He said that the combined system was used in 80 percent of the schools in the United States and "approved by 95 per cent of the deaf themselves." The proposed law, he believed, "would do far more harm than good to the deaf of Nebraska." Moreover, the state Legislature had no business involving itself in this issue. Instead, "The question of methods should be left to experts. . . . It would be just as sensible for the legislature to enact that all sick persons must take Osteopathic treatment and no other."<sup>50</sup>

At first Hanson's arguments seemed persuasive. Seely reported to Hanson on February 28 that the bill had died in committee.<sup>51</sup> Seely also remarked that the governor would have killed the bill anyway, for "we [presumably the Alumni Association] had his assurance that he would veto the bill."<sup>52</sup> Hanson, clearly in a triumphant mood, then sent Seely a letter—which also was set to Hodgson to print in the *Deaf-Mute's Journal*—congratulating Seely, the NAD, and the Nebraska Association of the Deaf for defeating the bill.<sup>53</sup> But the congratulations were premature.

On March 20 Seely sent Hansen an almost panic-stricken letter. "I regret very much to report," he wrote, "the passage of Senate File 173. It came as a shocking surprise." He blamed "the moneyed set of Oralists" for the bill's passage by the Senate and asked Hanson "to turn the N.A.D.'s guns on our House of Representatives. . . . *We teachers are in a difficult position.*"<sup>54</sup>

They were indeed. Seely and the other deaf teachers realized that the jobs of at least some of them were at stake. If the law did pass, it was safe to assume that those who had spoken out most strongly against it would be the first to go. And Seely by late March was beginning to fear that it would pass.

On March 31 Seely raised the specter of the AAPTSD at

work in Lincoln with its supposed plot to convert all schools to oralism. He told Hanson: "[The] oralists have *money* (Bell's millions I presume) in this fight. Latest developments uncover the fact that they have a room and an agent or agents on the ground all the time, while we (deaf) have no one to defend our cause."<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Seely claimed, he would fight on despite orders, probably from Superintendent Stewart, who also was worried about his job, because he believed that the "deaf teachers may have to go" anyway if the bill passed.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the efforts of Seely and the NAD, the oral bill did pass and was signed by the governor. Unfortunately, the extant manuscripts of the major participants do not explain exactly what swayed the Legislature or the governor. There is no evidence, for example, that the AAPTSD spent "millions" or hired lobbyists. Still, we may surmise that the Legislature responded to pressure from the Nebraska Parents' Association, to the apparent logic of their case, and to the "expert" opinions expressed in the *Association Review*, the official journal of the AAPTSD. Then, too, the primary opposition to the bill came from politically weak groups: deaf teachers and the NAD. Whatever the strength of the NAD within the deaf community, outside of it the NAD had no political power or prestige. The AAPTSD, on the other hand, benefited from its identification with the inventor of the telephone and the fact that other luminaries, such as Andrew Carnegie and Thomas Edison, were among its members.<sup>57</sup>

Hanson and the NAD, though, did not give up the fight, for they saw the issues as too important and the precedent too serious. Instead, they began another tactic familiar to politicians and interest groups: they tried to get the law interpreted in such a way that its effects would be negligible.

J. W. Sowell initiated this new tactic. Head teacher at the Omaha school, editor of the school paper, the *Nebraska Journal*, and president of the Nebraska Association of the Deaf, Sowell was both influential and vulnerable. While editorializing in March that passage of the bill threatened the "welfare of the deaf child, from an educational, spiritual, and even self-supporting point of view. . . as never before was it threatened," in April after the bill passed, he took a moderate stand.<sup>58</sup> He reassured his readers—and the *Nebraska Journal* like most residential school newspapers had a nation-wide deaf

readership—that “the Governor took a rather broad view of the interpretation of the law,” intending merely “to secure a little more stress upon oral teaching; [the governor] did not propose to see the manual method of instruction done away with.”<sup>59</sup> If Sowell truly believed this, however, he sorely underestimated the political influence of the Nebraska Parents’ Association.

Dafoe, even while the oral bill was still pending in the Legislature, began to take steps to assure that its effects would not be ameliorated. In early 1911 he contacted Frank W. Booth, editor of the *Association Review*, general secretary of the AAPTSD, and superintendent of Bell’s Volta Bureau, to see if Booth would be interested in assuming the superintendency of the Nebraska School for the Deaf if the oral bill passed.<sup>60</sup>

Booth is an interesting figure. Though a hearing person, both his parents were deaf, and his father, Edmund Booth, helped organize the NAD in 1880. Unlike many oralists, Booth knew signs and finger-spelling. Nevertheless, he was strongly in favor of oral methods, and his negative opinions about sign language were widely known. In 1905 he published an article, “The Degeneracy of the Sign-Language and its Doom,” in which he argued that it was an old fashioned communication method that would soon disappear.<sup>61</sup> And he would welcome this, he wrote in 1906, because sign language held students “on the lowest thought language level that exists.”<sup>62</sup> “To claim, then,” he continued in the *Association Review*, “that the crude, vague pictures of the sign-language are of themselves in any considerable degree educational, is to assert a manifest absurdity.”<sup>63</sup> Still, when Dafoe contacted Booth in early 1911, he was not interested in the Nebraska superintendency. Booth was comfortably ensconced in his lucrative position with the AAPTSD and told Dafoe he would not leave Washington for Omaha.<sup>64</sup> He soon changed his mind.

On December 31, 1910, the executive committee of the AAPTSD recommended that Booth be fired, effective March 1, 1911.<sup>65</sup> The committee, apparently without dissent from Bell who was out of the country at the time, listed numerous reasons for this sudden action.<sup>66</sup> For one thing, Booth had not enlarged the subscription base of the *Association Review*, causing the journal to be a constant financial drain.<sup>67</sup> For

another, he was careless in answering correspondence, lost valuable engravings, neglected to index the holdings of the Volta Bureau's library, and lacked judgement in the purchase of supplies. He was, the committee's report said, "entirely lacking in the qualifications needed by an able superintendent." The report's authors concluded: "We have no hesitation in saying that during the year 1910 the Association did not receive 20 per cent in value for the \$2,750 salary paid Mr. Booth."<sup>68</sup>

There is no evidence that Dafoe, Governor Aldrich, or anyone else in Nebraska was aware of this report, but the Nebraska Parents' Association did know that Booth was a prominent, dedicated oralist, who could be expected to see that the oral law was enforced strictly. Thus, with Booth now available in the spring of 1911, the Parents' Association urged Governor Aldrich to dismiss Stewart and replace him with Booth. The governor did so.<sup>69</sup>

The governor's action apparently was motivated either by political pressure from Dafoe and his cohorts or by genuine interest in the oral law. The evidence is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, Aldrich wrote to Missouri Governor H. S. Hadley that Stewart's "management in the school was in every way a success and I displaced him against my own judgement and inclination." On the other, he also told Hadley that following the passage of the oral bill, "I deemed it my duty to get an instructor or superintendent who was a specialist in that particular system."<sup>70</sup> In any case a nationally recognized proponent of the oral teaching method now headed the Nebraska school.

Aldrich's naming of Booth as the new superintendent was not, publicly at least, condemned by deaf leaders. Sowell wrote that the "Governor was greatly misinformed though he acted in good faith."<sup>71</sup> Hodgson, in an editorial in the *Deaf-Mute's Journal*, seemed optimistic, or at least open-minded, about Booth:

Frank Booth is a fairly-good sign maker, a first-class fingerspeller and an ardent oralist. Perhaps his appointment to the head of the Nebraska Institution will prove him broader than the narrowness of his vision [as executive secretary of the AAPTSD] for many years has allowed him to be.<sup>72</sup>

Immediately following Booth's appointment, Hanson kept a low profile, as did the deaf teachers at the Nebraska school.

They were waiting to see what path Booth would take when he assumed the superintendency, and there was some indication that he would not move too quickly against the deaf teachers. Sowell, for example, received a letter from Booth early in the summer of 1911 promising that Booth would retain him as head teacher and editor of the *Nebraska Journal*. Therefore, Sowell wrote to Hanson, he could not speak out on the teaching methods controversy. He felt that he owed "Mr. Booth the same unswerving loyalty I have given Mr. Stewart and must be careful how I act in this matter of methods."<sup>73</sup> Other deaf people not associated with the Nebraska school were less reticent.

During the summer of 1911, various state associations of the deaf, which had at that time no formal relationship with the NAD, protested against the Nebraska law. The Minnesota Association of the Deaf took the lead in June, passing a resolution to "condemn the action of the Legislature and Governor of the State of Nebraska in revolutionizing the system of educating the deaf. . . by suppressing the sign language and the manual alphabet."<sup>74</sup> Other state associations as close as Kansas and as far away as Mississippi and South Carolina passed similar resolutions. The Mississippi Association called the law "unwarranted," and South Carolina labeled it "outrageous."<sup>75</sup>

In the fall of 1911, Hanson again turned his efforts to Nebraska. He was an old acquaintance of Booth, as were many prominent deaf people, and began correspondence with him, probably to try to persuade Booth to commit himself to a flexible interpretation of the oral law, one that would preserve sign language or at least finger-spelling as a teaching method.

Booth remained adamant. He told Hanson that he would "change this school into an oral school as rapidly as it can be done with the best interests of the children carefully conserved at every stage." Booth's attitude toward signs was clear: "With regard to the sign-language that language is not now used in the school-room. . . and I hope to do away with its use outside of the school-room."<sup>76</sup> The Nebraska school still had manual classes, of course, but Booth meant that finger-spelling, not sign language, was used in those classes.

On the same day that Booth sent this disappointing letter to Hanson, the cause of oralism in Nebraska received a boost from the National Education Association (NEA) in the person

of Carrol G. Pearse. Pearse was superintendent of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, public schools and the NEA president. On November 9, 1911, he delivered an address to the Nebraska Teachers Association in Omaha titled "The Oral Teaching of the Deaf."<sup>77</sup> The address fit perfectly the designs of Booth and the Nebraska Parents' Association because of its strong defense of oral teaching. It also raised the ire of Hanson, however, and showed Pearse's insensitivity to deaf people and his commitment to the idea that the function of education is to assimilate those who are different.

Pearse began innocuously enough. Playing to his audience's vanity, he said that passage of the oral law put "Nebraska in the forefront of the sisterhood of states. . . great credit is due to the clear-sighted and courageous officials and citizens who have brought this about." Then Pearse expanded on the purpose of public education, including the education of deaf children, which he said, was "not to develop special types—freaks requiring special material conditions or special associates; the purpose is to so train young people that they may take their places and be useful in society." Manually trained deaf people, those who use sign language, "cannot do this; they tend to segregate themselves from society—to intermarry." Signers, he continued, are "freaks,—dummies" who, outside of school, "have no friends or acquaintances." These wretched creatures, however, are rescued from their sad fate by oral teaching methods, a veritable "revelation from heaven."<sup>78</sup> Without this training, Pearse implied in a crude analogy, a deaf person was like a trained "spaniel" who can "for a brief time stand on his hind feet. . . but as soon as the restraint of his master's will is removed he capers about again on four feet." He remains "a peculiar person,—a member of a class apart." In a completely oral school, however, the deaf child's voice, "at first unnatural and artificial as though squeaked out by a machine, becomes more and more nearly natural. . . until he shows very little, by his voice, that he cannot hear."<sup>79</sup>

Pearse, like many hearing educators and anxious parents, apparently believed that learning to speak—and thus to be "normal"—was the object of education for deaf children. Deaf people, of course, had encountered these arguments before. What made Pearse's stating of them so objectionable, and

what probably caused Hanson to respond, was their timing and Pearse's influential position. As head of the prestigious and powerful NEA, Pearse's comments could be used to sway legislators in other states who might in the face of pressure from well-meaning parents or the AAPTSD be tempted to follow the Nebraska example. Therefore, Hanson tried to enlighten Pearse.

He wrote to Pearse on February 26 after reading his address in the *Nebraska Journal*. Hanson explained that deaf people were opposed to oral methods only if they were used exclusively, as seemingly required by the Nebraska law. "We favor speech for those who can profit by it," but, he continued, a "large proportion of the deaf" could not master speech and lip reading. These children, Hanson wrote, would be deprived of an education in an exclusively oral school. Hanson also defended the use of signs directly, by comparing the educational success of those trained orally with those manually:

The deaf who use signs may get less speech, but they develop more brains. This is shown by the records of Gallaudet College [at that time the world's only college for deaf people], where not a single student trained by the oral method has been able to land the valedictory or lead his class.<sup>80</sup>

Hanson's arguments fell on deaf ears. Pearse believed that signs were old-fashioned educational tools and that the important thing was for deaf people to be fully integrated members of society, made "normal" by learning speech and lip reading. His response to Hanson was brief to the point of rudeness, merely acknowledging receipt of Hanson's letter and printed NAD information, which, he incorrectly surmised, "was apparently printed long ago."<sup>81</sup>

Hanson had no better luck with Booth. The latter wrote Hanson on April 1, 1912, that he was "sorry indeed that we cannot agree upon the question of sign language. . . . But it is my experiance [*sic*] that the sign-language in its use is a serious hindrance to the accomplishment of the best educational results." Booth went on to say that he could not "conscientiously" permit the use of sign language "as a substitute for English."<sup>82</sup>

This last comment angered Hanson. Booth was blurring the distinction between speech and language, implying that a person who could not speak English could not use it. He wrote back on April 27:

Who asks you to employ the sign language "as a substitute for English"? . . . You oralists are persistently and deliberately spreading the impression that schools which use signs do not teach English. You know that this is not true. The Combined System schools teach English as fully and thoroughly as oral schools.<sup>83</sup>

Appealing to Booth's family ties, Hanson stated that he was filled with "sorrow," even "indignant," that a person with deaf parents "should be so utterly indifferent to the openly expressed desires of the intelligent and educated deaf."<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, Booth was indifferent or at least unconvinced, and he was tired of the argument with Hanson. "As you and I can never agree on the subject of signs and their proper field," Booth wrote on May 8, "further correspondence between us seems to me futile."<sup>85</sup> Thus thwarted by Booth, Hanson and the NAD shifted the focus of their struggle back to the governor and Legislature in Lincoln.

During 1912 the NAD began to raise money to have the 1911 oral law repealed or amended, seeing this as the last resort to save sign language and the jobs of deaf teachers in Nebraska. By the end of the year, Hanson's assistant, P. L. Axling, reported that the NAD had collected "between 1,500 and 1,700" names on petitions protesting the Nebraska law and had raised \$122.35 from its members to fight the law.<sup>86</sup> This was a paltry sum, whether compared with the \$5,000 Veditz had suggested should be raised or compared with the "millions" some deaf people believed was behind the oralists.<sup>87</sup> It was difficult, however, to get money from chronically poor, unemployed, or under-employed deaf people, especially for a cause that would not affect directly any adults other than teachers in state residential schools. Nevertheless, near the end of 1912 there was some cause for optimism in the NAD, for they began to receive help from an unexpected source—a hearing person named William E. Davis.

Davis was manager of the Omaha Gas Works and a former steward of the Nebraska School for the Deaf. The surviving documents do not explain clearly why he was interested in the cause of sign language or deaf people, although Hanson at one point asked him about this.<sup>88</sup> Davis' wife had taught at the Nebraska school, however, and this fact may help to explain his motivations.<sup>89</sup> Whatever his reasons, his assistance was warmly welcomed by Hanson.



*Nebraska School for the Deaf, 1909. . . . (Below) School for the Deaf instruction in printing, early 1900s.*



On December 12, 1912 Davis initiated a long-running correspondence with Hanson. He told the president of the NAD that the time was ripe for repeal of the 1911 oral law, for Nebraska had just elected a new governor, J. H. Morehead, who might be more amenable to arguments in favor of manual teaching methods. Davis even went beyond this, mapping out a strategy to get the oral law repealed. Hanson or the NAD, Davis suggested, should begin writing to Morehead, send letters in favor of the combined method to the three Omaha newspapers, hire a lobbyist to work in Lincoln for repeal of the 1911 law, and try to get other parents, who might support signs in addition to speech for their children, to become involved in the fight.<sup>90</sup>

At about the same time, Hanson received similar advice from W. H. Rothert, a deaf teacher at Omaha. Rothert cautioned that he, personally, could "not do anything directly or indirectly in encouraging opposition to the oral law" because of his position at the school. The NAD, however, could "do much to have the law changed." Specifically, the NAD should send "some good man to Nebraska" to lobby the legislators, and Hanson "must ask some speaking persons to help you. You cannot depend on the deaf wholly."<sup>91</sup>

Hanson followed the advice of Davis and Rothert. On December 30 he sent letters to Omaha's three papers, the *Bee*, *World Herald*, and *Daily News*, explaining why the NAD and most deaf people favored the combined method. In these letters he said that Nebraska had 11 students at Gallaudet College, more than any state except Kansas, which also had 11 and whose state school used the combined method. "No oral school," he wrote, "and no state where the oral method is largely used can equal this record." The reason was that "oral schools spend so much time trying to teach speech that they do not have time to teach other studies." The large number of Nebraska students at Gallaudet College, Hanson continued, was "an excellent testimonial to the efficiency of the former superintendent, Mr. Stewart, and to the Combined System used by him." Hanson's letters also questioned the motives of the sponsors of the 1911 oral law, especially Dafoe who had two children at the Clarke School in Massachusetts, because Section 2 of the law provided that Nebraska would pay an allowance to any parents with deaf children in an oral school

pending conversion of the Nebraska school to the pure oral method. "This is graft," Hanson wrote. "No other state would stand for it."<sup>92</sup>

On January 1, 1913, Hanson continued his efforts to have the 1911 law repealed, amended, or interpreted more broadly by writing to Governor-elect Morehead. His letter to Morehead contained the usual arguments in support of the combined method, saying that most deaf people favored it over a strictly oral approach. He warned that this was "more than a local issue," and asked Morehead "to keep your mind open for the truth and see for yourself" which teaching method better served deaf people.<sup>93</sup> Hanson also hired a lobbyist, Lyman M. Hunt of Koshkonong, Missouri.

Hanson thought that Hunt, an alumnus of the Nebraska school and former teacher, could better represent the interests of deaf people from Lincoln than Hanson could from Seattle. Thus, he promised to pay Hunt's expenses with the money raised by the NAD and expected Hunt to go to Lincoln for at least two weeks in February.<sup>94</sup> His "mission," Hodgson said in the *Deaf-Mute's Journal*, would be "to win over legislators of that state to a broad and sane view of methods required to properly and successfully give an education to all the deaf."<sup>95</sup> To assist Hunt's efforts Hanson sent copies of an NAD-prepared "circular" that contained testimonials in favor of the combined method from various teachers, orally educated deaf persons, and others.<sup>96</sup>

Davis was busy too. On January 30 he reported to Hanson that two identical bills were introduced in the Legislature to repeal the 1911 law. J. Walker Fisher introduced the House bill, roll number 410, and J. H. Kemp the Senate bill, file number 229. Davis explained the choice of these two lawmakers thusly: "We took this course of having men outside of Douglas County to introduce these bills, believing [*sic*] it to our advantage, for political reasons, which I think you readily understand."<sup>97</sup>

Hanson tried to assist by writing more letters. He sent one to each of the four members of the Senate "Committee on Deaf, Dumb, and Blind" asking their support for the new bill. He explained: "The mistake of the [1911] law is in requiring the exclusive use of the oral method. The Combined System includes the oral method, but also includes other methods when

the oral methods fail."<sup>98</sup> He wrote a similar letter to Senator Henry H. Bartling, who had introduced the original 1911 law, adding that the oral law "surely will retard the *education* of a considerable number of the deaf, as what they will gain in speech does not come near what they would lose in mental progress."<sup>99</sup> But it was all for naught.

The 1913 attempt to repeal the oral law failed, as did a similar and last attempt in 1915.<sup>100</sup> There were several reasons for this outcome: Dafoe was now in the Legislature; Booth apparently was doing a satisfactory job as superintendent; there was growing national support for oral methods among educators; and the Nebraska Parents' Association parried every thrust of the NAD. In 1913 the Parents' Association published a propaganda gem in booklet form, "Opinions Upon the 'Nebraska Law' by Prominent Educators, Parents of Deaf Children and Graduates Under the Oral Method." The booklet opened with a letter from America's most famous deaf person, Helen Keller. She expressed her opinion "that every deaf child should have the opportunity to learn to speak" and that "the lack of speech is the most grievous loss caused by deafness"; hence, "no pains should be spared to prevent dumbness from being added to the already great burdens which the deaf child must carry through life."<sup>101</sup>

The booklet also included letters from several school superintendents and principals, hearing teachers, Pearse, parents of deaf children, graduates of the Clarke School, and even two deaf teachers at the completely oral Pennsylvania School for the Deaf at Mt. Airy. Though varying slightly in emphasis, all letters applauded the advantages of oral methods, especially in permitting deaf people to become fully assimilated in hearing society.<sup>102</sup> Faced with this strong testimony in favor of Nebraska's oral law, it is hard to imagine that the Legislature would have repealed its earlier decision. Ironically, though, this same Legislature passed the Mockett Law, permitting bilingual education in public schools.<sup>103</sup> In any case the deaf people of Nebraska and in the NAD went on protesting against the oral law but to no avail.<sup>104</sup> Booth went ahead with his plans to convert to oralism as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

By 1914 Booth felt that he was making progress. In January he wrote to Bell that "oral work" in the Nebraska school was

now on "a solid basis both in numbers and I hope in quality."<sup>105</sup> Later in 1914 Booth described the numbers, disposition, and quality of the students who had entered the school since he became superintendent. He said that 34 of 43 new students had been placed in oral classes. These children, he wrote, "are slow, to be sure, covering possibly [*sic*] one-third of a grade per year," but he believed that he was moving forward, for they "are surely learning the English language" by their "exclusive dependence upon it."<sup>106</sup>

Despite this "success" with his oral students, Booth did have to admit that oral methods would not work for all students, and he placed nine of the 43 in manual classes. To Booth's mind, however, this fact did not reflect negatively on the claims of oralism, for the nine students needing manual training were special cases. Two were "overaged," 16 and 19 years old. One of the others was "nearly blind," and the remaining 6 Booth described variously as "somewhat backward," "backward," "very backward," and "subnormal."<sup>107</sup>

Booth's attempts to follow the 1911 law and make Nebraska a leader in the oral teaching movement succeeded at least in part and were not in any way hindered by the pleas of the NAD. In 1910 only 28 percent of Nebraska's students had used speech and lip reading as their primary means of communication in the classroom.<sup>108</sup> By 1930 it had risen to 80.<sup>109</sup> Signs were prohibited at the school altogether. Instead of signs finger-spelling and writing were used for the 20 percent who—in the language of the 1911 law—were "incapacitated by mental defects" from using speech and lip reading. Predictably, the percentage of deaf teachers at the Nebraska school fell from 33 to 15 over the same period.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, in 1926 the Conference of Superintendents and Principals of American Schools for the Deaf, a venerable and prestigious organization, declared itself foursquare in favor of Nebraska's method.<sup>111</sup> Booth was honored by this group in 1928, when it elected him president.<sup>112</sup>

What transpired in Nebraska was special but not unique. Other schools for deaf students during the early 20th century also were converting to oralism, while minority groups of all kinds were being encouraged to surrender their distinctive cultural traits, to "Americanize," to blend into the melting pot.<sup>113</sup> The struggle in Nebraska, however, was a matter of

public law, not an isolated private action by individual superintendents or teachers; as such, it raised important issues and involved prominent people to an unusual degree.

## NOTES

1. The text of this law appeared very quickly in the major publication for teachers of the deaf. See Edward A. Fay, "Nebraska School," *American Annals of the Deaf*, 56 (1911), 34. Hereafter shortened to *Annals*.

2. For an excellent case study of resistance to language assimilation, see Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 122-153. For a broader perspective, see Joshua A. Fishman, *Language Loyalty in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

3. "Heinicke's First Letter to de l'Epee," November 8, 1781, in Christopher B. Barnett, Jr., *The Exchange of Letters between Samuel Heinicke and Abbe Charles Michel De L'Epee* (New York: Vantage Press, 1968), 23.

4. "From Heinicke's Letter to Stork," c. 1780, in Garnett, *The Exchange*, 15.

5. "Heinicke's First Letter," 26.

6. Abbe de l'Epee, *The True Method of Educating the Deaf and Dumb; Confirmed by Long Experience*, trans. unknown, reprinted in *Annals* 12 (1860), 6.

7. L'Epee, *True Method*, *Annals*, 12 (1860):62. For an excellent discussion of the philosophical basis of l'Epee's reasoning see Jules P. Seigel, "The Enlightenment and a Language of Signs in France and England," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 30 (1969), 96-115, esp. 107ff.

8. "De l'Epee's First Letter to Heinicke," c. 1781, in Garnett, *The Exchange*, 17.

9. L'Epee, *True Method*, *Annals*, 12 (1860), 54.

10. Statistics on the numbers of deaf pupils taught by manual, oral methods, and combined methods were not compiled until 1881. Beginning the following year they were reported annually in the *Annals*.

11. For an extended discussion of the early history of this school see Job Williams, "The American Asylum at Hartford," in Edward A. Fay, ed., *Histories of American Schools for the Deaf*, I (Washington, DC: Volta Bureau, 1893), 9-28.

12. T. H. Gallaudet, "On the Natural Language of Signs; and its Value and Uses in the Instruction of Deaf and Dumb," *Annals*, 1 (1848), 87.

13. *Ibid.*, 84.

14. *Ibid.*, 85.

15. *Ibid.*, 86.

16. Alexander Graham Bell, *Memoir Upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race* (Washington, DC: The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, 1969), 41; Alexander Graham Bell, "Fallacies Concerning the Deaf," *Annals*, 29 (1884), 52, 55; S. G. Davidson, "The Relation of Language to Mental Development and of Speech to Language Teaching," *Association Review*, 1 (1899), 132; Frank W. Booth, "The Sign-Language—Neither a Cause Nor a Preventive of Deaf-Muteisms," *Association Review*, 8 (1906), 497-8.

17. For example, see G. Hudson-Makuen, "The Medico-Educational Problem of the Deaf Child," *Volta Review*, 12 (1911), 221.

18. Harvey P. Peet, "Notes of a Visit to the Clarke Institution . . . October, 1868," *Annals*, 14 (1869), 88; R. W. Jones, "Comments on an address given at the Eighth Summer Meeting of the AAPTSD, June 28-July 5, 1909," *Association Review* 11 (1909), 345.

19. B. St. John Ackers, "Letter from Mr. B. St. John Ackers," *Annals*, 19 (1874), 82.

20. Dafoe to J. W. Blattner, April 18, 1911, 1, General Correspondence, Jan. 2-Feb. 16, 1911, Volta Bureau Collection, Washington, DC. Hereafter abbreviated VBC, GC.

21. *Clarke School Alumni Register, 1867-1967* (Norwood, Mass.: Norwood Printing Co., n.d.), 242.

22. Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 1.

23. Printed in *Nebraska Journal*, 44, 6 (1916), 4.

24. Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 2.

25. "A Statement from the Nebraska Parents' Association to Promote the Oral Education of the Deaf," *Volta Review*, 15 (1913), 125; Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 1.

26. "Seven Bills Are Introduced at Wednesday's Session," *Omaha World-Herald*, Feb. 2, 1911, 3.

27. Robert V. Bruce, *Bell: Alexander Graham Bell and the Conquest of Solitude* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 391; E. J. Babcock, "How Nebraska Adopted the Oral Method," *Volta Review*, 22 (1920), 64; Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 1.

28. Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 2; Dafoe to Booth, Jan. 7, 1911, VBC, GC, Jan. 2-Feb. 16, 1911; Booth to Dafoe, Jan. 18, 1911, 1, VBC, GC, Jan. 2-Feb. 16, 1911.

29. "Resolutions Adopted by the Deaf Section of the Paris Congress of 1900," *Annals*, 46 (1901), 108, 109; "Second National Convention of Deaf-Mutes," *Annals*, 28 (1883), 271; Edward A. Fay, "The Third International Congress of the Deaf," *Annals* 41 (1896), 418. For a thorough discussion of the combined method or combined system see Edward A. Fay, "Tabular Statement of the Institutions of the Deaf and Dumb of the World," *Annals*, 27 (1882), 33.

30. Edward A. Fay, "The Suppression of the Sign-Language," *Annals* 43 (1898), 331-332.

31. R. E. Stewart, *The School Guide, 1910-1911. The Nebraska School for the Deaf* (Omaha: 1910), cover.

32. R. E. Stewart, "Nebraska School for the Deaf, Omaha, Nebraska," *Nebraska Journal*, 39, 1 (1910), 8.

33. C. E. White, *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent and Board of Trustees of the Nebraska Institute for the Deaf and Dumb for the years 1907 and 1908* (Omaha: 1908), 12.

34. "Tabular Statement of American Schools for the Deaf, November 10, 1910," *Annals*, 56 (1911), 20.

35. "Tabular Statement of American Schools for the Deaf, November 10, 1912," *Annals*, 58 (1913), 29.

36. United States Bureau of the Census, *Deaf-Mutes in the United States: Analysis of the Census of 1910 with Summary of State Laws Relative to the Deaf as of January 1, 1918* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1918), 111.

37. Jerome D. Schein, "Society and Culture of Hearing Impaired People," in *Hearing and Hearing Impairment*, ed. by Larry J. Bradford and William G. Hardy (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1979), 481.

38. Hanson to Booth, April 27, 1912, 1, "National Association of the Deaf, Business Correspondence, 1910-1913, Olof Hanson, President," folder 9, Gallaudet College, Archives. Hereafter abbreviated GCA, NAD.

39. Edwin A. Hodgson, Editorial, *Deaf-Mutes Journal*, Jan. 4, 1912, 2. Hereafter abbreviated *DMJ*.

40. George W. Veditz, "The Nebraska Iniquity," *DMJ*, May 18, 1911, 2.

41. Isaac Goldberg, "Governor Aldrich and the N.A.D.," *DMJ*, April 4, 1912, 3.

42. Jay C. Howard, "Exchanges," *Silent Worker*, 25, 8 (1913), 155.

43. Isaac Goldberg, "Convention Suggestions," *DMJ*, July 13, 1911, 2.

44. Veditz, "Iniquity," 2.

45. Stewart to Hanson, June 19, 1911, 3, GCA, NAD, folder 28. The Nebraska Parents' Association denied this charge, and this writer has found nothing to substantiate it. For the denial, see "A Statement from the Nebraska Parents' Association to Promote the Oral Education of the Deaf," *Volta Review*, 15 (1913), 126.

46. Hanson to Seely, Jan. 31, 1911, GCA, NAD, folder 15.

47. Hanson to Seely, Feb. 22, 1911, 1, GCA, NAD, folder 15; Seely to Hanson, Feb. 14, 1911, 1, GCA, NAD, folder 26.

48. Hanson to the President of the Nebraska Senate, Feb. 22, 1911, GCA, NAD, folder 7; Hanson to the Speaker of the House, Feb. 22, 1911, GCA, NAD, folder 7; Hanson to the Governor of Nebraska, Feb. 22, 1911, GCA, NAD, folder 7.

49. Hanson to the Governor, Feb. 22, 1911.

50. Hanson to President of the Senate, Feb. 22, 1911.

51. Seely to Hanson, Feb. 28, 1911, 1, GCA, NAD, folder 26.

52. *Ibid.*, 2.

53. Olof Hanson, "Legislation Affecting the Deaf," *DMJ*, March 9, 1911, 1; Olof Hanson, "Success in Nebraska," *DMJ*, March 23, 1911, 1.

54. Seely to Hanson, March 20, 1911, 1-2, GCA, NAD, folder 26. Italics in original.

55. Seely to Hanson, March 31, 1911, 1, GCA, NAD, folder 26. Italics in original.

56. Seely to Hanson, March 31, 1911, 1-2.

57. Executive Committee of the AAPTSD to the Board of Directors of the AAPTSD, Dec. 31, 1910, 2, Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers, Box 174, folder "The American Association . . . the Deaf," "Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Hereafter abbreviated AGBFP.

58. J. W. Sowell, "The Light Turned On," *Nebraska Journal*, 39, 10 (1911), 3.

59. J. W. Sowell, "How We Were Treated by Our Legislature," *Nebraska Journal* 39, 11 (1911), 4.

60. Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 3.

61. Frank W. Booth, "The Degeneracy of the Sign-Language and its Doom," *Association Review* 7 (1905), 199.

62. Frank W. Booth, "The Sign-Language—Neither a Cause Nor a Preventive of Deaf-Muteisms," *Association Review*, 8 (1906), 498.

63. *Ibid.*, 499.

64. Dafoe to Blattner, April 18, 1911, 3.

65. Executive Committee of the AAPTSD to the Board of Directors of the AAPTSD, 1.

66. Bell to Booth, June 28, 1911, 1 AGBFP, Box 121, folder "American Association . . . the Deaf 1902—undated."

67. Executive Committee to Board of Directors, Dec. 30, 1910, 1.

68. *Ibid.*, 2.

69. Babcock, "How Nebraska Adopted," 65.

70. Aldrich to Hadley, July 18, 1911, RG1 SG24, Nebraska Governors, Chester H. Aldrich, Box 1, Correspondence, Archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

71. J. W. Sowell, "A Change," *Nebraska Journal*, 39 (1911), 4.

72. Editorial, *DMJ*, May 18, 1911, 2.

73. Sowell to Hanson, June 21, 1911, 2, GCA, NAD, folder 27.

74. V. R. Spence to Aldrich, July 5, 1911, 1, RG1 SG24, Nebraska Governors, Chester H. Aldrich, Box 1, Correspondence, Archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

75. "Mississippi," *DMJ*, Aug. 31, 1911, 4; "Kansas Association Convention," *DMJ*, Sept. 14, 1911, 2; "Resolutions," *The Silent Worker*, 14, 1 (1911), 16.

76. Booth to Hanson, Nov. 9, 1911, GCA, NAD, folder 3.

77. Carrol G. Pearce, "The Oral Teaching of the Deaf," *Nebraska Journal* 40, 4 (1912), 2-3.

78. *Ibid.*, 2.
79. *Ibid.*, 3.
80. Hanson to Pearse, Feb. 26, 1912, 2, GCA, NAD, folder 13; The letter also was printed in the *DMJ*, March 7, 1912, 2.
81. Pearse to Hanson, March 6, 1912, GCA, NAD, folder 22.
82. Booth to Hanson, April 1, 1912, GCA, NAD, folder 9.
83. Hanson to Booth, April 27, 1912, 1, GCA, NAD, folder 9.
84. *Ibid.*, 2.
85. Booth to Hanson, May 8, 1912, GCA, NAD, folder 3.
86. Axling to Hanson, Dec. 29, 1912, printed in *DMJ*, Jan. 16, 1913, 2.
87. Veditz, "Iniquity," 2.
88. Hanson to Davis, Dec. 30, 1912, GCA, NAD, folder 10.
89. Stewart to Hanson, Jan. 7, 1913, 1, GCA, NAD, folder 28.
90. Davis to Hanson, Dec. 12, 1912, 1-3, GCA, NAD, folder 4.
91. Rother to Hanson, Dec. 24, 1912, 1-2, GCA, NAD, folder 25.
92. Hanson to the editors of *Omaha Daily News*, *Omaha Bee*, and *Omaha World-Herald*, Dec. 30, 1912, GCA, NAD, folder 11.
93. Hanson to Morehead, Jan. 1, 1913, GCA, NAD, folder 7.
94. Hanson to Davis, Jan. 5, 1913, GCA, NAD, folder 10.
95. Editorial, *DMJ*, Jan. 30, 1912, 2.
96. "The Nebraska Fight," *DMJ*, Jan. 30, 1913, 1.
97. Davis to Hanson, Jan. 30, 1913, GCA, NAD, folder 4.
98. Hanson to John H. Grossman, J. M. McFarland, J. M. Talcott, and F. Haarman, Feb. 3, 1913, GCA, NAD, folder 7.
99. Hanson to H. H. Bartling, Feb. 3, 1913, GCA, NAD, folder 7.
100. Hanson to the Nebraska Association of the Deaf, June 26, 1913, GCA, NAD, folder 7; *Nebraska Journal*, 43, 6 (1915), 4. In the 1970s the Oral Law was repealed by LB 22, sponsored by State Senator Warren Swigart of Omaha.
101. Nebraska Parents' Association to Promote the Oral Education of the Deaf, *Opinions Upon the 'Nebraska Law' by Prominent Educators, Parents of Deaf Children and Graduates Under the Oral Method* (1913), title page.
102. *Ibid.*, 5-40.
103. Jack W. Rogers, "The Foreign Language Issue in Nebraska, 1918-1923," *Nebraska History*, 39 (1958), 8.
104. "Protest of the Deaf Against the Nebraska Law," *Nebraska Journal*, 43, 1 (1914), 4-5; Petra F. Fandrem, "Exchanges," *Silent Worker*, 26, 8 (1914), 161; Frank W. Booth, editorial, *Nebraska Journal*, 49, 1 (1919), 4.
105. Booth to Bell, Jan. 19, 1914, 2, AGBFP Box 175, folder "The Deaf American Association . . . the Deaf-Statistics."
106. Frank W. Booth, "The Problems of Percentages," *Nebraska Journal*, 43, 1 (1914), 2.
107. *Ibid.*, 2.
108. "Tabular Statement of American Schools for the Deaf, November 10, 1910," *Annals*, 56 (1911), 20.
109. "Tabular Statement of American Schools for the Deaf, October 20, 1930," *Annals*, 76 (1931), 12-13.
110. "Tabular Statement, 1910," 20; "Tabular Statement, 1930," 12-13.
111. Irving S. Fufeld, "A Code of Principles," *Annals*, 71 (1926), 440.
112. "Proceedings of the Fifteenth Conference of Superintendents and Principals of American Schools for the Deaf," *Annals*, 76 (1931), 104.
113. For a contemporary critique of forced assimilation of minority groups, see Horace M. Kaller, *Culture and Democracy in the United States: Studies in the Group Psychology of the American People* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924).