



# TDHHC Connections

## Tyler Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center

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This newsletter is dedicated to uniting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of East Texas and all supporters by providing information and reporting events that enhance our lives and our community.

To receive a newsletter, mail your name and address to:

TDHHC at P.O. Box 6134  
Tyler, TX 75711-6134,  
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## “The History of Sign Language” Series - Part 4 of 5

by Sara Seamons (April 2017) <https://aslblog.goreact.com/>

**Spreading Sign Across North America**  
With Dr. Cogswell’s help, Gallaudet and Clerc opened the first American public school for the deaf on April 15, 1817, in Hartford’s Bennett’s City Hotel. Gallaudet and Clerc’s first class had just nine students in it—Alice Cogswell among them—but soon their numbers grew.

In 1817, the American School for the Deaf opened at Hartford’s old Bennett’s City Hotel. Gallaudet and Clerc’s first class had nine students.



As the school’s reputation spread, young deaf students from across the country journeyed to Hartford to learn Clerc and Gallaudet’s unique mixture of signs. Eventually their signing developed into the American Sign Language (ASL) that the Deaf community uses today. By 1863, twenty-two deaf schools were in operation around the U.S., most founded and run by Clerc and Gallaudet’s students. Gallaudet’s youngest son, Edward Miner Gallaudet, continued his father’s legacy in deaf education. After teaching at the Hartford school for a number of years, Edward Gallaudet was instrumental in establishing the first college for the deaf in 1864, the Columbia Institution for the Deaf at Washington, D.C. (later renamed Gallaudet College in 1893).

## The Rise of the Oralists

Despite the momentum sign was gaining in America, there were still many that didn’t view this widespread acceptance of sign language teaching as a positive development. Like the oralists in Europe, many American leaders and teachers falsely thought that sign was holding back deaf students. They believed it only hampered their development and encouraged deaf people to be isolated from the rest of hearing society. For the oralists, the only way to truly teach deaf pupils was to require them to speak English and abandon sign altogether.

By 1867, major schools in America began using oral methods of teaching with no sign language at all.

Misguided advocates like Alexander



Graham Bell—the same Bell who invented the telephone—were convinced that oral education was the best and only way for deaf children to learn. More and more

schools started teaching deaf students orally or trying out combination methods that still used sign language but mainly focused on lip-reading and learning speech. This ongoing conflict between oral and manual education culminated in the infamous Milan Conference of 1880. Deaf educators from seven different countries all gathered in Milan, Italy, to make decisions about the future of deaf education.

*continues*

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The majority of the delegates firmly believed that oral methods were superior to sign language. Edward Miner Gallaudet was among the minority who knew without a doubt that sign language was the primary mode of communication for deaf people and should be the primary means of teaching them. Sadly the oral delegates won the vote, and the Milan Conference decided that sign language would be banned from all schools.

This decision rocked the deaf education world. In the next ten years sign language drastically declined, and by 1920 nearly 80% of all deaf programs were using oral methods. In some classrooms the signing ban was enforced through cruel methods like tying deaf students' hands behind their backs to force them to speak. Perhaps the most regrettable consequence of the Milan Conference was the decline of deaf instructors in deaf classrooms, which dropped from 40% to a mere 15%.

But despite the ban, sign language still lived on. Deaf people were still signing outside of school or under tables, and the language continued to grow, develop, and build relationships. On a more official level, America's National Association of the Deaf was created in response to the Milan Conference. The association stood as a guardian of American Sign Language to make sure sign and Deaf culture would be protected and preserved for future generations. They fought relentlessly to restore sign language in the classroom, but it was nearly a century later before sign made a comeback.



### SPOTLIGHT

Che Wyalle receives two prizes at the TMAD Fishing Tournament: “Most Fish Caught” and “Biggest Fish Caught,” October 14th at Hideaway Lake.



### APACHE ALERT

TJC student, Dayson Carey, is awarded the TDHHC Scholarship Award for his dedication in studying to become a professional interpreter. Congratulations!



### OUT TO LUNCH

Seniors eat at Aspen Creek Grill.



# November



| Sunday                | Monday | Tuesday                     | Wednesday | Thursday                         | Friday                | Saturday  |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                       |        |                             | 1         | 2                                | 3                     | 4<br><br>TMAD POTLUCK<br>THANKSGIVING<br>FELLOWSHIP |
| 5 DAYLIGHT SAVING<br> | 6      | 7<br>TDHHC Board<br>Meeting | 8         | 9 Senior Citizen<br>Luncheon<br> | 10                    | 11<br><br>Veterans Day                              |
| 12                    | 13     | 14                          | 15        | 16                               | 17<br><br>WHATABURGER | 18<br>ASL<br>GAMES<br>                              |
| 19                    | 20     | 21                          | 22        | 23<br><br>Happy<br>Thanksgiving  | 24                    | 25  |
| 26                    | 27     | 28                          | 29        | 30                               |                       |   |
|                       |        |                             |           |                                  |                       |   |

**November 4:** TMAD Potluck Thanksgiving Fellowship at TASCA in Whitehouse, 10:30AM – 4PM. If you want to bring a covered dish, contact Rhoda Gardner via Facebook. Also, bring a cake to join the famed TMAD Cake Walk.

**November 17:** Coffee Chat at Whataburger in Lindale, 7PM – 9PM.

**November 18:** ASL Games at TJC Pirtle building, 1PM – 4PM. Come hang out with ITP students!

**Congratulations to local high school student, Lexi Hill, who was a finalist for the Convo “Never Stop Dreaming” 2017 Contest! To view the video, visit YouTube**

**November 4:** Coffee Chat at Starbucks in Tyler (East SE Loop 323), 7PM – 9PM.

**November 23:** Thanksgiving

**November 5:** Daylight Savings

**November 7:** TDHHC Board Meeting at TJC Pirtle room 108, 5:15PM.

**November 9:** Senior Citizens Luncheon at Olive Garden in Tyler, 10:45AM – 1PM.

**November 11:** Veterans Day

*Please email your FAVORITE RECIPES to us at: [coordinator@tdhhc.org](mailto:coordinator@tdhhc.org). We will be collecting those for a cookbook fundraiser to support the East Texas Deaf Festival in 2019. Thank you!*





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