

Why are there so few deaf teachers  
teachers in France ?

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(March 17th 2015)

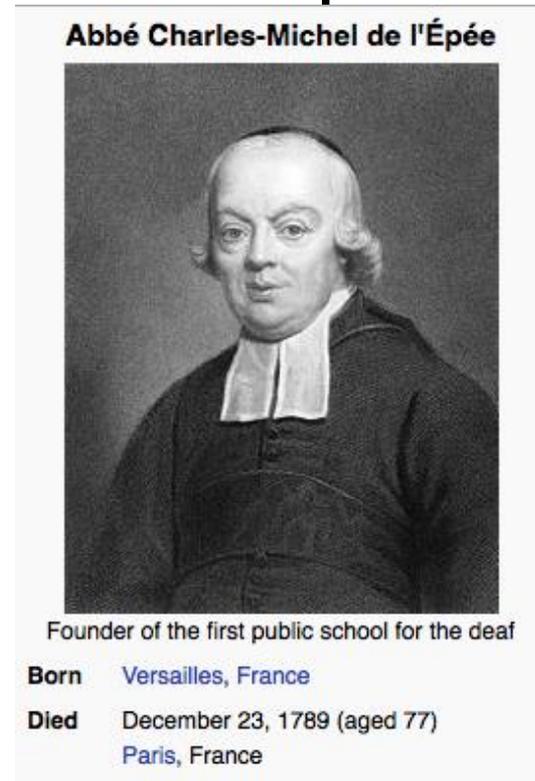
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# Short historical overview

- The Abbé Charles-Michel de l'Épée  
(nov 24, 1712 – dec 23, 1789)

He was a philanthropic educator of 18th-century, known as the « father of the Deaf »



# Short historical overview

- Thomas-H  
Gall

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet

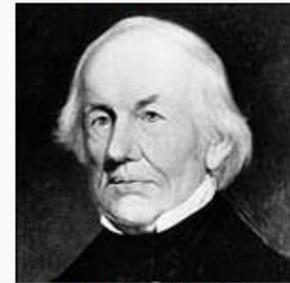


Painting by [George F. Wright](#) in 1851.

<b>Born</b>	December 10, 1787  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
<b>Died</b>	September 10, 1851 (aged 63)  Hartford, Connecticut
<b>Occupation</b>	Minister, educator, co-founder of the first permanent school for the deaf in North America.
<b>Religion</b>	Christianity
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	<a href="#">Sophia Fowler</a>

- Laurent Clerc

Laurent Clerc



[Teacher](#), co-founder of the first permanent school for the deaf in North America.

<b>Born</b>	Louis Laurent Marie Clerc December 26, 1785 <a href="#">La Balme, France</a>
<b>Died</b>	July 18, 1869 (aged 83) <a href="#">Hartford, Connecticut, United States</a>
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	<a href="#">Eliza Crocker Boardman</a>



**Th-H Gallaudet**  
married a woman  
called Sophie,  
and they had  
8 children

Statue de Thomas Hopkins  
Gallaudet et *Alice Cogswell, Université  
Gallaudet, Washington, (1889)*



# Short historical overview

- Thomas Gallaudet (1st son)



- Ed-Milner Gallaudet (8th son)

Edward Miner Gallaudet



Edward Miner Gallaudet, c. 1893

**Born** February 5, 1837

**Died** September 26, 1917 (aged 80)

# Short historical overview

- Ed-Milner Gallaudet (8th son)



Edward Miner Gallaudet



Edward Miner Gallaudet, c. 1893

**Born** February 5, 1837

**Died** September 26, 1917 (aged 80)

The founder  
of the current Gallaudet college  
in Washington

# Short geographical overview

- ✓ [USA, Gallaudet University](#): classes in American Sign Language from kindergarten to college. Trained deaf teachers work there. Education is one of the 5 most popular majors.
- ✓ [In Europe](#) : Acknowledgement of sign language varies depending on countries. There are certified Deaf teachers in Scandinavia, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia and the UK.
- ✓ [In Sweden, more particularly](#)

Currently in Europe, Sweden is one of the most advanced countries concerning:

- any foreign language
- education in Sign language for deaf children. They copied the American special needs linguistic policies and laws, but the Swedish 1995 disability act shows how deeply this state has become involved.

=> There are as many unemployed deaf people in Sweden as in the mainstream population whereas French deaf non-workers (39%) are four times more numerous than hearing non-workers (around 10%).

# What is the problem ?

- In France...

- ✓ Sign language has been:
  - potentially used for teaching deaf children, since 1991
  - an optional subject for hearing people, since 2008
- ✓ In special and in ordinary schools, deaf pupils often stop studying before high school graduation (A-level). Often, they never graduate.

An example in Pays de Loire, in 2007 (Statistic DREES):

=> hearing people aged 25-39 : 25%

=> deaf people aged 25-39 : 9.6%

were obtaining a higher diploma than high school graduation (Bachelor's degree, etc.)

# What is the problem?

## • In France

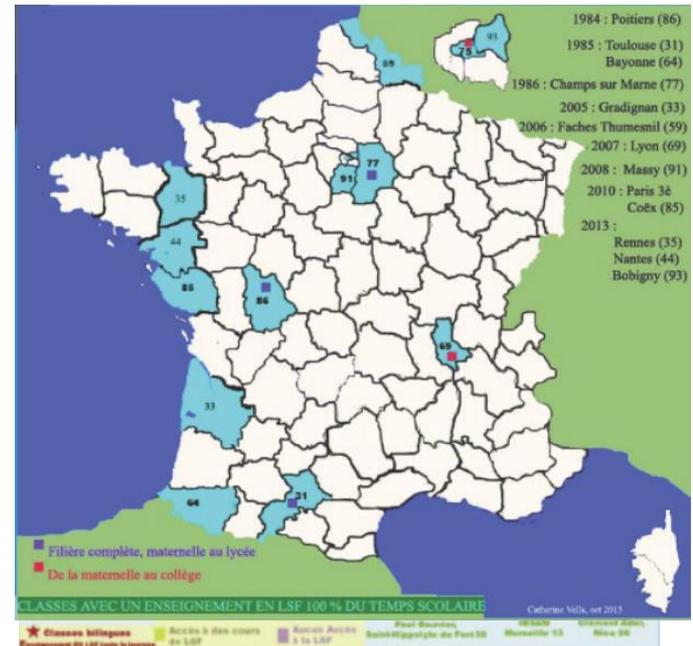
- ✓ These are the characteristics of deafness and hearing disability/impairment:
  - Hearing impaired: Having an average hearing loss of < 50dB
  - Deaf: Having an average hearing loss of > 50dB

### ✓ Schools

- Inclusive classes in ordinary schools
- Special schools (Health Ministry)
- **Only 10 bilingual places** (ordinary syllabuses)

### ✓ Training centers for teachers :

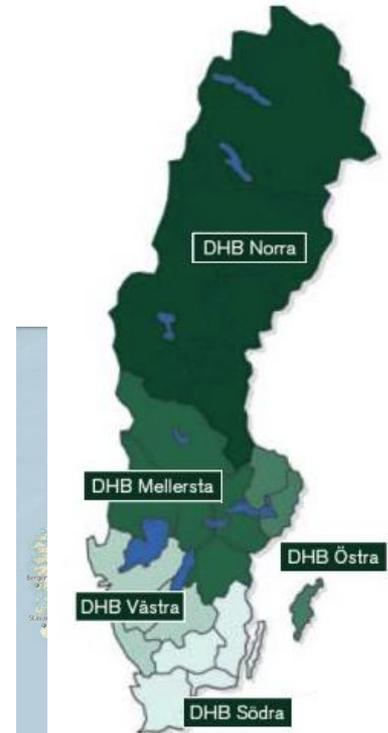
- a) by the National Education (here)
- b) by the Health Ministry Training Center



# ...comparing with Sweden

## • In Sweden

- ✓ Deaf: Having sign language as their first language  
Hearing impaired: Having an average hearing loss of >30dB
- ✓ Schools
  - 5 special schools
  - Deaf students are taught in Sign Language
  - Geographically organized
- ✓ one training centre only
  - Teaching Training Programme (Malmö University)
  - ⇔ 40% of Swedish teachers for deaf children are deaf too (in 2006)



Malmö →

*"When my teacher signs I hear everything she says"*

# My research

## • History of deaf education in France

- ✓ With l'abbé de l'Epée first, deaf adults were considered as contributing to deaf children's education, before 1880 (see Laurent Clerc...)
- ✓ From 1880 (Milan congress in Italy, where Gallaudet's sons came) to 1984, gestural communication was officially banned from deaf schools
  - ⇔ French society focused on the idea of PROGRESS  
(and to talk in French was part of it!)
  - ⇔ As a consequence, deaf teachers were banned from deaf schools
- ✓ Until 1984 with the very first associative bilingual classes

# My research

- **What are the perspectives of this research ?**

By encouraging more diverse teams of teachers (deaf and hearing)

=> deaf pupils could have a better level at school

=> pedagogical strategies could be more comfortable for all children  
(and not just for deaf children\*)

=> real accessibility for the deaf in teacher trainings

# Good luck !!!



# Good luck !!!

- ✓ A qualified teacher  
(certified elementary teacher)
  - ⇒ enroll a Master's degree program  
+ a national competitive examination + training curriculum
  - ⇒ permanently appointed teacher
  
- ✓ A teacher for foreign languages  
(certified language teacher)
  - ⇒ a Master's degree
    - + written exam in French
    - + exams in the foreign language  
(So, foreign language appointed teachers are often French natives)
  - ⇒ permanently appointed teacher in secondary schools
  
- ✓ A special education teacher is a regular certified teacher (permanently appointed)
  - + training curriculum for SEN children (certification)
  - + nothing about French Sign Language is required  
(no competence level required)
  
- ✓ A Sign language teacher  
(certified language teacher)
  - And hearing persons can be FSL teachers
  - ⇒ a Master's degree
    - + summarize in FSL the topics of a text in French
    - + exams in FSL about a video in sign language
  - ⇒ permanently appointed FSL teacher for hearing students (and some deaf students) in secondary schools

Thank you  
for your attention...

... and have a nice time in France

# ...comparing with Sweden

Level of educational attainment divided by sex (%)

