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“Speak the Language of Your Flag”: Speech, Language, and Oralism During the First World War

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Abstract

With the United States’ entrance into the First World War, linguistic and cultural cohesiveness became imperative, compelling everyone—from immigrants with foreign accents to people with speech problems and hearing loss—to “sound American” by fluently speaking the language of their flag.

This article examines lip-reading, speech, and auricular training prescribed to deaf and hard-of-hearing children as well as for servicemen deafened in the war to demonstrate how World War I demanded all Americans to contribute to and participate in shared national soundscapes, regardless of their hearing status. Use of American Sign Language was considered a conspicuous sign of one’s failure to integrate into hearing society, and it shared parallels with immigrants who failed to learn English and fully assimilate into American culture. Indeed, rehabilitation of deafened soldiers of the First World War through speech training and lip-reading instruction at Hospital No. 11 at Cape May, New Jersey, coincided with broader national efforts to improve Americans’ speech and language use, and in turn, their patriotism and productivity.

Keywords: World War I; deafness; language; disability; sound

Introduction

The October 1919 edition of the *Detroit Educational Bulletin*, a short monthly newsletter published by the Detroit Board of Education for its teachers, brimmed with content preparing for the first observance of National Speech Week. The campaign, initiated by the National Council of Teachers of English and first conceived during the First World War, sought to revive national pride in proper English usage through a weeklong celebration in schools throughout the country in early November. American patriotism and enthusiasm for English-language use swelled during the war and continued in its wake.

Among the newsletter’s suggested class material and schedule of events for the upcoming National Speech Week, two short articles appeared on opposite pages. In the first, entitled “Americanization,” English-instruction supervisor Nina J. Beglinger explained the importance of the campaign.¹ To instill American values in recent

immigrants and encourage them to learn English, she explained, native-born Americans must first demonstrate their own fluency in and respect for the English language. The war against Germany had intensified this urgency. In the second brief article, Principal Gertrude Van Adestine pledged the Detroit School for the Deaf's commitment to National Speech Week through careful study of lip-reading and speech—an approach to deaf education called oralism.² These articles demonstrate that the organizers of National Speech Week held speech and language as integral to national identity. Good Americans, it was understood, spoke English and spoke it well.

In April 1917, the U.S. Congress, at the urging of President Woodrow Wilson, declared war against Germany. During the First World War, Americans waged war not only on Germany but on all things German. The New York Metropolitan Opera removed works by Wagner, Mozart, Gluck, and Beethoven from its repertoire; Americans even renamed hamburgers “liberty sandwiches” and sauerkraut “liberty cabbage.”³ Nativists particularly resented Germans’ and German Americans’ use of their native tongue and launched a war against the language.

Concern over language use grew over the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries but reached a crescendo at the outbreak of war, when loyalty and national belonging seemed contingent upon one’s spoken English proficiency. Historian Christopher Capozzola explains how American citizenship expanded beyond a mere legal category during the First World War to reflect a fluid set of “cultural and discursive practices.”⁴ This article examines language use, speech instruction, and lip-reading to ask what it meant to “sound American” during World War I. It argues that wartime American citizenship hinged on the ability to speak clear, standardized English in order to facilitate communication among other Americans.⁵ The war state demanded that all Americans contribute to and participate in shared national soundscapes, regardless of their hearing status. Use of American Sign Language (ASL) was considered a conspicuous stigma of one’s failure to integrate into hearing society, and it shared parallels with immigrants who failed to learn English and fully assimilate into American culture. Indeed, rehabilitation of deafened soldiers of the First World War through speech training and lip-reading instruction at Hospital No. 11 at Cape May, New Jersey, coincided with broader national efforts to improve Americans’ speech and language use, and in turn, their patriotism and productivity.⁶

English Only: 1880s to the First World War

With the onset of the First World War, nativists grew intensely suspicious of foreign languages—and of German, the language of America’s chief enemy, in particular. Nativism and xenophobia intensified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as increasing numbers of immigrants, primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe, entered the United States. Debates around language were common before the First World War, particularly concerning education. The Bennett School Law in 1889, for instance, required that instruction in Wisconsin public and private schools be conducted in English only.⁷ The state of Wisconsin experienced an influx of German immigrants, and by 1900 over one-third of its population traced its heritage to Germany.⁸ This increasing population and use of the German language alarmed nativists and prompted implementation of the Bennett School Law. However, following German American protest in defense of German use in parochial schools, the law was quickly repealed. Opponents of the law argued that German “was no more a *foreign* language than the English language, which

like the German was not spoken by the natives of this Country, but was imported from foreign lands.”⁹ Thus, they emphasized that what became the de facto official language of the United States began as the foreign language spoken by immigrants from England.

Language played a fundamental role in preserving immigrant cultures, and many recently-arrived Americans believed that the United States—as a nation of immigrants—should allow for cultural and linguistic diversity. Yet nativists doubted the loyalty of immigrant families who clung to their native tongues, and many called for their full assimilation. Wisconsin was not alone in its efforts to curb foreign language instruction. Illinois passed a similar measure also in 1889 called the Edwards Law, which was likewise promptly repealed. Midwestern states like Wisconsin and Illinois experienced the bulk of German influx, which peaked during the 1880s with over one million Germans arriving between 1881 and 1885. There was no clear consensus around foreign language use, as the Bennett School and Edwards laws and other similar measures were ultimately repealed or overturned. However, these pre-war debates around the place of non-English languages in American public life set the stage for vociferous opposition to German language use once the United States declared war on Germany in 1917. On the eve of war, seventeen states had laws mandating English as the language of instruction.¹⁰

Articles and editorials on all sides of the debate surrounding foreign language instruction abounded. A 1918 article published by the *Modern Language Journal* encapsulated these arguments. Professor Frank C. Barnes, president of the New York State Modern Language Association, detailed the results of his survey of fifty-five professionals, scientists, and scholars on whether the United States should stop offering German classes at schools.¹¹ Responses highlighted various moral, economic, professional, and nationalist considerations. One prominent chemist supported the prohibition of German in American schools “until Germany has again shown herself worthy to be counted with civilized nations.”¹² George Eastman of Eastman Kodak fame was more ambivalent. While he predicted that the value of German-language knowledge as a commercial asset was diminished, he did not think the fact that the nation was at war with Germany should dictate changes in foreign language curriculum. Another chemist doubted that removing German from American schools would impact Germany at all but guaranteed that American research chemists lacking German language skills would be “handicapped at every point.”¹³ Regardless of their stance, most agreed that language instruction and national power were intimately linked.

Anti-German-language sentiment extended beyond the classroom and prompted reevaluation of First Amendment rights. In May 1918, Republican Governor William Lloyd Harding of Iowa declared that American protection of free speech applied only “to the language of this country—the English language.”¹⁴ In the opening of his decree, which became known as the Babel Proclamation, Harding stated that Iowans had clashed over the use of foreign languages during wartime. He claimed that he intended to restore peace and order by issuing his proclamation. Hostility against Germans and German Americans would lessen, his logic went, if everyone spoke English in public settings. In reality, this meant fighting xenophobia through discriminatory measures. For instance, Harding stated that freedom of expression did not “entitle the person who cannot speak or understand the English language to employ a foreign language, when to do so tends, in times of national peril, to create discord among neighbors and citizens, or to disturb the peace and quiet of the community.”¹⁵ He blamed immigrants’ use of their native languages for the wartime discord that Iowa experienced. The governor laid out four rules regarding language use in public spaces:

First: English should and must be the only medium for instruction in public, private, denominational or other similar schools.

Second: Conversation in public places, on trains and over the telephone should be in the English language.

Third: All public addresses should be in the English language.

Fourth: Let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes.¹⁶

Thus, all foreign language use—whether for educational, religious, professional, or personal purposes—should be contained within the private sphere of the home. In a lengthy and heated correspondence with New York constitutional and civil rights lawyer Louis Marshall published in the *Des Moines Register*, Harding claimed to have information that foreign languages had been employed in Iowa “to spread enemy propaganda.”¹⁷ Marshall’s rejoinder encapsulated many of the criticisms of the Babel Proclamation. In addition to his work as a lawyer, Marshall was a prominent New York Jewish leader who took personal offense to Harding’s mandate for English-only religious worship and instruction in Iowa. Responding to Harding’s charge of foreign language enemy propaganda, he argued that the most egregious instances of sedition had in fact been committed in English. Thus, suppression of foreign languages would not eliminate enemy propaganda.

Moreover, Marshall pointed out that Harding was preoccupied with the vernacular—and not the content—of speech. If form was so integral to American safety, “Why,” Marshall wondered, “should not its grammatical construction, the vocabulary employed, the pronunciation, the accuracy of speech be likewise regulated?” Finally, Marshall questioned the necessity of such a provision when Iowa was leading the states in enthusiasm for military enlistments, donations, and the purchase of Liberty bonds. The story might be different if “any principle of Americanism [were] at stake, if the people of Iowa were un-American, or unpatriotic,” but that was not the case.¹⁸ Simply put, Marshall argued that foreign language use did not prompt disloyalty. But Harding’s supporters, many of them nativists and fellow Republicans, disagreed. Affirming the link between language use and national loyalty, the *Educator-Journal* expected that Harding’s proclamation “will mean not merely more grammar, or composition, or literature, but more patriotism, more of the ideals which our great statesmen have found the English language amply able to express.”¹⁹ The legislature ultimately repealed the statute one month after armistice in December 1918, but Harding continued to speak out against foreign language use.

Iowa was not alone. Nebraska enacted a similar law, known as the Siman Act, in April 1919. After his arrest in May 1920 for the “direct and intentional teaching” of German in his Nebraska classroom, elementary-school teacher Robert Meyer appealed his conviction.²⁰ His case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck down the conviction in 1923.²¹ In the *Meyer v. Nebraska* ruling, Justice James C. McReynolds declared:

The protection of the Constitution extends to all, to those who speak other languages as well as to those born with English on the tongue. Perhaps it would be highly advantageous if all had ready understanding of our ordinary speech, but this cannot be coerced by methods which conflict with the Constitution—a desirable end cannot be promoted by prohibited means.²²

Although Meyer's conviction was ultimately overturned, the ruling admitted the prospective advantage of one shared common language. In response to the decision, opponents stressed the state's right to dictate curriculum for any school receiving public or state support. Others protested the ruling as an impediment to the work of assimilation through the schools. But despite the "present state of affairs in the United States, with millions of foreign born unassimilated," *Meyer v. Nebraska* protected foreign language use and education.

The Better Speech Movement

While efforts to prohibit foreign language use during the war encountered much resistance, other means—including the promotion of English—were implemented more successfully. Yet mere proficiency in the language was considered just the first prerequisite. Primary- and secondary-school English educators sought to improve American grammar, vocabulary, elocution, and even vocal quality. Throughout the war and in its immediate aftershocks, this attention to language revealed how nationalism coalesced with the professionalization of speech and language associations.

Although the war brought into focus the link between English fluency and patriotism, organizations in the nascent fields of speech pathology and elocution were making this connection even before the war. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) best reveals this early link. The NCTE was founded in 1911 by a group of public secondary teachers and administrators as well as university instructors in opposition to the growing domination of high school curricula by colleges and universities.²³ Students hoping to attend college were required to study long lists of literary works, which varied across colleges. Time spent working through these lists meant less time devoted to grammar, elocution, rhetoric, or composition in the high school classroom. While English as an academic subject as we understand it today had not yet crystallized, many public-school teachers resented its assumed synonymy with literature to the exclusion of other essential skills, such as proper speech. Members of the NCTE met to discuss curricular requirements, practical assessments of student competency, and other proficiencies necessary for preparing students for college and beyond.

The NCTE organized the Committee on American Speech in 1915 dedicated to "conserving our melodious English tongue and improving our national speech manners."²⁴ While the NCTE was concerned with foreign languages, it was primarily alarmed by the degradation of English by careless speakers. John Clapp, a founder of the NCTE, lamented that "in America, nearly all talk is bad—bad as respects voice and pronunciation."²⁵ Both immigrants and native-born Americans were responsible for the corruption of the English language. As one popular children's reading textbook put it, "We have local faults and peculiarities of pronunciation or 'provincialisms' in every section of the land. Besides these, the constant influx into this country of foreigners from every nation upon the earth has a tendency to corrupt our speech."²⁶ While the NCTE took the lead in addressing the "language problem" through discussions in its official publication, *The English Journal*, articles and letters to the editors in more popular literature also expressed anxiety over the potential harms that poor speech posed to the nation. One article entitled "A Plea for Good Speech" in *The Continent*, a Chicago-based Presbyterian journal, worriedly asked, "may consistent carelessness in speech grow into consistent lack of patriotism?"²⁷

While an immigrant's use of foreign or "enemy" language was suspect, even native-born Americans' misuse of English alarmed English and speech educators. The *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education*, the official organ of the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (NAATPS), lamented in 1919 that "American speech is too often slovenly, high pitched, jerky, and harsh" and its "grammar and rhetoric are seriously defective."²⁸ Many instructors, particularly members of the NCTE, recognized the significant role that schools played in both improving language and speaking skills and fashioning pupils into dutiful citizens. Of the English instructor, one New York high school teacher wrote, "His is the greatest opportunity for service in the making of loyal American citizens for the future."²⁹ This was the goal of the Better Speech Movement. The first weeklong program for better speech was held in 1915 at the Eastern District High School in Brooklyn. The following year, programs were held at New Haven High School in Connecticut and the Alabama Girls' Technical Institute, Montevallo.³⁰ The schools and communities considered each a success, so the NCTE geared up for an official National Speech Week.

The events for Better Speech Week were scheduled for November 2–8, 1919, almost exactly one year after armistice. The campaign targeted careless pronunciation, poor grammar and word choice, and the use of slang and profanity. Organizers' goals for the American Speech Week were widespread, as its various names and slogans indicated. Official NCTE publications referred to the campaign as American Speech Week, but other names appeared in newspapers and journals throughout the country, including Better Speech Week and Better English Week. However, the promotion of American patriotism predominated. Schoolchildren learned catchy phrases such as "Watch your speech!", "American speech means American loyalty," "Better speech for better Americans," and "Show your patriotism by improving your speech." Students also vowed to practice and protect proper American English by reciting "The English Creed" or the "Watch Your Speech" pledge:

I love the United States of America. I love my country's flag. I love my country's language. I promise:

- 1) That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllable of words.
- 2) That I will say good American "yes" and "no" in place of an Indian grunt "umhum" and "nup-um" or a foreign "ya" or "yeh" and "nope."
- 3) That I will do my best to improve American speech by enunciating distinctly and by speaking clearly, pleasantly and sincerely.
- 4) That I will try to make my country's language beautiful for the many boys and girls of foreign nations who come here to live.³¹

The Better Speech Movement prompted Americans to recommit not only to their language but to their flag as well.

The pledge's reference to Indian "grunts" highlighted educators' hierarchy of American dialects. Claudia E. Crumpton, a Detroit-based high school teacher who served as secretary of the Committee on American Speech, praised the Tuskegee Institute for its participation in Better Speech Week but also blamed African American dialects for corrupting American speech.³² She stated that "the most embarrassing deficiency, even among many of our cultured people, is a tendency toward slovenliness of speech" and was "due to the influence of negro dialect, to the imitation of the negro just for fun, and to the

children's imitation of the nurse's speech."³³ As the disfavor for American Indian and African American dialects demonstrated, "Better Speech" meant speech more closely aligned with that spoken by NCTE members, who were largely white, middle-class, college-educated English instructors. Region also mattered, and the New England dialect had long been the preferred. However, one NCTE member claimed in 1916 that the hierarchy of dialects was beginning to crumble. Southern speech patterns no longer required defending, and the New England dialect was in a state of transformation. As proof, he pointed out that now "the most cultivated New Englander, when he warms up, pronounces his 'r' just as distinctly as his 'p' and 'q'."³⁴ Nonetheless, the speech habits of certain communities were held up as exemplary, while the speech practices of others were blamed for corrupting the English language.

Several unexpected benefits arose from more careful attention to speech. As one lip-reading instructor explained, "the greatest handicap of the deaf or partially deaf in trying to understand the speech of others is not their deafness but the slovenly speech of the American people."³⁵ The campaign to improve speech, then, promised better communication between deaf and hearing people. For example, as principal of the Detroit Day School for the Deaf Gertrude Van Adestine pledged in *The Detroit Educational Bulletin* edition dedicated to National Speech Week, "the slogan in the School for [the] Deaf is 'Watch Your Speech!'"³⁶ This motto, which both the deaf school and the National Speech Week employed, indicated the dual responsibility of deaf and hearing individuals for clear communication. While deaf people, as lip-readers, literally watched the speech of others, their hearing interlocutors had to mind their speech habits in return. "The movement for better speech," Principal Van Adestine explained, "is a great boon to the deaf and hard of hearing since clear speech and distinct enunciation form the basis of easy lip-reading.... To our pupils the spoken word comes through the eye instead of the ear, and any movement which will improve the speech of hearing persons will be of great benefit to the speech reading deaf."³⁷ However, as citizenship and patriotism depended on proper English usage—and more specifically, on clear speech—those with hearing loss or speech defects occupied a precarious position.

Speech Defectives: "An Annoyance to Others and A Curse to Themselves"

Because proper speech was so integral to ideal citizenship, speech problems disqualified individuals from the full opportunities and responsibilities of civic membership, including military service. Speech defects had threatened immigrants' entry into the country even before the war. The U.S. Public Health Service trained inspectors to discern the physical, mental, and emotional health of prospective immigrants. Amy Fairchild argues that, while indeed concerned with contagious disease, officers focused more on identifying and banning burdensome immigrants who were ineligible or unable to work. Officials scrutinized their speech not only for English language competency but also for speech defects that might interfere with their productivity or capacity to work. Fairchild noted one Boston officer's record in 1919 of an immigrant's "very defective speech."³⁸ Similarly, Dr. E. H. Mullan, a Public Health Service surgeon at Ellis Island, recorded various notes that inspectors wrote on the "hold cards" of immigrants they suspected of mental illness. These notes reveal that examiners suspected that stuttering and other speech problems often indicated mental or psychological disabilities.³⁹ Even vocal quality might raise concern over characteristics undesirable in future Americans.

One immigration inspector explained in 1914 that a man's feminine-sounding voice might arouse "the suspicion of arrested sexual development," while "a tremulous voice often found in alcoholics, scanning speech or hoarseness make us at once turn off a case for more detailed examination."⁴⁰ One's very entry or admission into the United States hinged on sounding comprehensible, healthy, and hard-working.

During the war, this requirement of clear speech extended to the armed services as well. The U.S. military often rejected enlistees with speech defects from military service. Major Harry D. Orr of the medical corps, First Illinois Calvary, outlined wartime recruitment requirements in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 1917. Conditions impeding clear speech, including hearing loss, were disqualifiable. "Unless an applicant has at least four serviceable double (bicuspid or molar) teeth, two above and two below, and so opposed as to serve the purpose of mastication," Orr explained, "he should be rejected. Deformities of the mouth interfering with mastication or speech, or enlargement of the tonsils sufficient to interfere with the voice or swallowing, disqualify."⁴¹ Experimental psychologist and speech scientist Edward Wheeler Scripture, who founded the Vanderbilt Speech Clinic at the Columbia Medical Center, wrote to the editor of *The Lancet* in 1916: "Stutterers are usually refused admission to the Army. In munition works their efficiency is lessened by their difficulty in communication. In ordinary civilian life they are an annoyance to others and a curse to themselves."⁴²

Despite the military's prohibition of individuals with speech defects, one of the most popular war songs to emerge during the First World War was Geoffrey O'Hara's "K-K-K-Katy," or "The Sensational Stammering Song Success Sung by the Soldiers and Sailors," with the stuttering refrain:

K-K-K-Katy, beautiful Katy,
You're the only g-g-g-girl that I adore,
When the m-m-m-moon shines, over the cow shed,
I'll be waiting at the k-k-k-kitchen door.⁴³

The song was from the perspective of Jimmy, a tongue-tied doughboy fighting in France but dreaming of his sweetheart back home. While a real Katy, a friend of O'Hara's sister, inspired the song, he invented the love-struck stutterer.

Advertisements marketed it as a clever gimmick, encouraging listeners to stammer along with the chorus, as "that's where the fun comes in."⁴⁴ *Boston Post* coverage of a local event reported that a performance of the song "had all the children laughing and sing-stuttering" along.⁴⁵ And one witty Kansas insurance company advertised that "Yes, Katy had that cowshed insured."⁴⁶ However, some people viewed the spread of the popular war song from the trenches to the home front as detrimental to the language that Better Speech Week sought to protect. One father reported that his young son began stuttering after singing the song.⁴⁷ Similarly, a supervisor at a Pennsylvania class for children with speech defects warned of an epidemic in stuttering and claimed the condition was as contagious as the measles. The cause? "A surprisingly large number of children have become stammerers," the supervisor claimed, "after singing such songs as 'K-K-K-Katy.'"⁴⁸

Bell's Ringing Endorsement of Proper Speech and Oralism

Emphasis on clear-spoken English dominated curricula in American schools for the deaf across the nation as well. By World War I, 80 percent of deaf children in the United States were taught through the oralist approach, or the exclusive emphasis on intensive speech training and lip-reading to teach spoken language.⁴⁹ So important was clear-spoken English that oralism governed rehabilitation of soldiers deafened in the war. Manualism, or communication through sign language, had largely fallen out of favor by the early twentieth century in response to claims by deaf educators who cautioned that the use of ASL prevented deaf Americans from acquiring the clear speaking and lip-reading skills deemed requisite for national belonging. One such vocal opponent of manualism was Alexander Graham Bell.

While best known for his invention of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell was actively involved in deaf education and championed the German method of oralism. Clear speech and lip-reading mastery, he believed, would facilitate communication between deaf and hearing people and prevent the emergence of what he called a separate “Deaf Variety of the Human Race.” Bell and other eugenicists feared that Deaf people who used sign language and avoided assimilating into mainstream hearing culture would intermarry and produce more deaf offspring.⁵⁰ Bell's fame and lifelong work with the deaf earned him tremendous influence over deaf education in the United States. Bell's parents, elocutionist and phonetics expert Alexander Melville Bell and Eliza Grace Symonds Bell, greatly impacted his conceptions of sound, speech, and deafness. His mother's hearing loss undoubtedly inspired Bell's work. Though often referred to as deaf, she was likely hard of hearing. As evidence of this, Bell's mother was able to utilize a hearing tube for successful one-on-one conversations; after receiving an improved model of a hearing tube from her son, Eliza told him, “I must use it for company and strangers, it being too powerful for everyday use.”⁵¹ Though she never learned sign language and struggled with lip-reading, Eliza maintained excellent speaking skills and taught her children to play the piano. A. G. Bell thus had in his mother a model of a deaf person able to conform to hearing culture and practices—the ultimate goal of deaf education at the time.

As an elocutionist, Bell's father dedicated himself to the improvement of enunciation and inflection of speech. To instruct others in proper diction, he developed a system in the 1860s called Visible Speech, which was a written notation of oral sounds.⁵² To establish the utility of Visible Speech, Alexander Melville Bell brought his sons along to public demonstrations during the 1860s. The children would wait in a separate room while audience members suggested a series of complex sounds, including phrases in foreign languages, nonsensical utterances, and nonspeech expressions such as kissing and laughing. When summoned, the Bell children assessed their father's notations and, observers affirmed, faithfully replicated the sounds.⁵³ His father's work on speech improvement had a lasting impact on A. G. Bell, who claimed to have taught the family dog to speak the phrase “How are you, grandmamma?”⁵⁴ He believed that deaf people could learn to speak, too, and to understand speech.

Bell's own work on sound and deaf education eventually led to his invention of the telephone. He derived inspiration from his wife and former pupil, Mabel Gardiner Hubbard; it was to help her hear that Bell's work on the telephone began. Like her mother-in-law, Hubbard had excellent speech and lip-reading skills. She had been deafened by scarlet fever at the age of five. Thus, she had already learned to speak before losing her hearing. In a private letter she admitted that she “never quite lost the power of speech.”⁵⁵ But while their post-lingual deafness and usable residual hearing distinguished

them from the profoundly deaf, his wife's and mother's successful oral communication surely fueled Bell's belief that, with much practice, all deaf people could successfully learn to speak and "pass" as hearing.

For his invention of the telephone, Bell won the Volta Prize, an honor bestowed by the French government for scientific achievement, in 1880. With the money from the Volta Prize, Bell established the Volta Laboratory and the Volta Bureau in Washington, D.C., for further research on telecommunication, information relating to deafness, and other technologies. He also used the money to publish a monthly journal entitled *The Volta Review: The Speech-Reading and Speech Magazine*, first released in 1899.⁵⁶ The journal examined research on deafness and deaf education in the United States and abroad. It also investigated fierce late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century disputes over which approach to deaf education—oralism, manualism, or a combined method—the country should take. This debate would prove to be as much about nationalism and politics as it was about pedagogy.

While Bell had become the face of oralism by the close of the nineteenth century, oralist approaches to deaf education had a long tradition from which Bell and his contemporaries drew. American educators of the deaf in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries looked to Germany for models of instruction to facilitate language and communication among their pupils. Germany was hailed not only as the leader of scientific research but also as the birthplace of the "Father of the Oralist Method," Samuel Heinicke, whose Leipzig school for the deaf had opened in 1778. Heinicke had argued that signs were unable to communicate abstract concepts, and that the sense of sight could not replace hearing.⁵⁷

Heinicke's French contemporary and rival was the Abbé Charles-Michel de l'Épée, who founded the Institution Nationale des Sourds-Muets in Paris in 1760. He promoted the use of *signes méthodiques*, or methodical signs, to educate deaf pupils and teach them written French. Outside the classroom, he encouraged the use of French Sign Language, which he himself learned and used, as the natural means of communication among the deaf. His promotion of gestures and signing in the education of the deaf resulted in manualism becoming synonymous with "the French method."

The pedagogic debates between oralists and manualists greatly influenced deaf education in the United States. After an unsuccessful attempt to study oralism and a serendipitous encounter with representatives from the Paris Institute, the Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet founded the first permanent American school for the deaf in 1817 in Hartford, Connecticut. The school's success was possible only through the dedicated support of Deaf Frenchman Laurent Clerc, who left his position at the Paris Institute to teach deaf children in America. Consequently, instruction at the Hartford school was based on the French model of manualism.⁵⁸ Several subsequent American schools also followed this model. However, interest quickly mounted in methods that promised to enable the deaf to speak and understand speech. In 1843, Samuel Gridley Howe, principal of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, and Massachusetts Secretary of the Board of Education Horace Mann toured German schools for children with disabilities, including speech and hearing difficulties. Both men concluded that the German method was superior to the use of sign language. Subsequently, the Clarke School for the Deaf opened in 1867 in Northampton, Massachusetts, based on the oral method. Just over a decade later, this approach became standardized across Europe and the United States in the infamous Milan Congress.

In September 1880, European and American teachers met at the Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf in Milan, Italy, to discuss pedagogic concerns.

An overwhelming majority—160 to 4—voted in favor of a resolution declaring the “incontestable superiority of speech over signs.”⁵⁹ As a result of the Milan Congress, administrators of deaf schools throughout Europe and the United States banned the use of signing in the classroom. Alexander Graham Bell and others warned that the use of signing jeopardized the potential of deaf people to fully integrate with mainstream hearing society.

The Milan declaration fell upon an American society susceptible to oralism, with increasing immigration in the late nineteenth century and the fears of foreign languages and cultures that attended it. While it carried no legal weight, the Milan resolution, like the Bennett School and Edwards laws of the same decade, effectively prohibited any language besides English in the American classroom. By the First World War, oralism dominated deaf education in the United States and complemented efforts at cultural and linguistic homogenization. The war highlighted the idea that linguistic diversity fell suspect when interpreted as a danger to ideological unity. As a cultural and linguistic minority, the signing Deaf community could be perceived to threaten this unity. Opponents of manualism could point not only to eugenic concerns over hereditary deafness but also to the example of the eccentric Deaf teacher John Flournoy, who had planned to lead a Deaf separatist movement and establish a Deaf state out West in the late 1850s.⁶⁰ However, a majority of deaf people considered his scheme impractical, as it would require excluding their hearing children and other family members. The ASL-based Deaf Commonwealth never materialized.

But the Milan Congress failed to eliminate the use of ASL altogether.⁶¹ The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), a Deaf civil rights organization, emerged in 1880 in the aftermath of the Milan Congress. A chief goal of NAD members in its early years was to protect ASL from extinction. By 1913, the NAD had produced eighteen films, all in ASL.⁶² The most famous among these short films was by NAD president George W. Veditz, the title of which, “The Preservation of the Sign Language,” reflected the aim of the project. “False prophets,” Veditz lamented, “are arising, spreading the word that our American way of teaching the deaf is all wrong. These men are trying to convince people that the oral method is the true and single best way for teaching the deaf. But we American deaf people know, the French deaf people know, the German deaf people know, that the oral method is the poorest way.”⁶³

While the manualist and oralist feud endured, hearing and deaf Americans shared a patriotic soundscape at the turn of the century that intensified with the First World War. The earliest known NAD film was one entitled “Deaf Mute Girl Reciting Star Spangled Banner” from 1902 that featured a woman performing the national anthem in ASL with a massive American flag as her backdrop.⁶⁴ The Deaf community, the war would show, was connected with mainstream hearing culture by shared nationalism.

Army Lip-Reading School

While the emphasis on lip-reading and speech reflected the tradition of the German method, oralism offered the opportunity and obligation for both American lip-readers and their teachers to perform patriotic work by facilitating communication between deafened servicemen and the nation’s hearing majority. Newly deafened soldiers’ and sailors’ lip-reading proficiency, the military believed, would preserve their social and cultural competencies and their capacity for work despite their new disability. Lip-reading emerged as the logical choice for rehabilitating American soldiers, as hearing technology

was limited. Hearing aids would not become commercially available until the 1930s. Moreover, ASL was an impractical choice for rehabilitation purposes. Not only was it banned in American classrooms, but the use of ASL involved learning a new language that most of society—including a deafened serviceman's friends, family, employer, and coworkers—did not know. The military ultimately aimed through rehabilitation programs to prevent servicemen from remaining dependents on government disability pensions.⁶⁵ Lip-reading and speech training, then, seemed to offer deafened servicemen the greatest chance at resuming life as productive American citizens.

Because the war had raged for three years before U.S. entry, American doctors and military officials had the benefit of carefully observing Allied casualties and treatments, and the Medical Department of the U.S. Army planned extensively in preparation for the war wounded. The United States looked to European figures to estimate the number of hearing casualties to expect, particularly those provided by the British Pension Bureau. One report revealed that between the outbreak of war and August 31, 1918, nearly eight thousand British servicemen qualified for pensions for acquired deafness.⁶⁶ Americans assumed that the United States would welcome fewer deafened soldiers home because of its thorough medical examination of enlistees. The military rejected those found to have hearing defects; the very few who were accepted were restricted to domestic service. The U.S. military also predicted fewer hearing casualties than its European counterparts because trench warfare—the major cause of hearing casualties—diminished with America's entrance into the war.⁶⁷

Initially, soldiers experiencing defects in vision, hearing, and speech were grouped together in the same section in the Division of Physical Reconstruction. This changed in March 1918, when the Medical Department divided the section into two: one for the blind and the other for hearing and speech defects, under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Richardson.⁶⁸ Richardson was a prominent otologist from Washington, D.C. Though his training was in medicine and otology, Richardson quickly became enmeshed in the politics of deaf education and emerged as a champion of the oralist method. He was elected to the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf in early 1918, just as he assumed direction of the Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech.⁶⁹

The section treated a variety of conditions requiring different courses of treatment. Speech defects were classified as congenital, neurotic, or traumatic, and represented either recurrences of earlier episodes or new cases arising from the strains and stresses of war.⁷⁰ The department attributed mutism to shock, affection of voice, including stuttering and stammering, to nervous conditions or to head and upper air tract injuries, and aphonia—the inability to produce voiced sound—to either psychogenic or organic causes. Speech defects also frequently accompanied hearing loss. Deafened patients were classified by two etiologies: those deafened by common disease, such as meningitis, chronic mastoiditis, or catarrh of the middle ear; and those deafened by warfare. This latter etiology was subdivided into four categories: 1) shock concussion; 2) concussion deafness; 3) gradual, progressive deafness common among artillerymen; and 4) traumatic injury to the ear or head. Shock concussion involved exposure to a single, nearby high-explosive shell, while concussion deafness resulted from continuous exposure to explosions and artillery fire and often caused permanent, organic changes to the internal ear.⁷¹ Doctors also encountered cases of the psychogenic condition variously called shell-shock deafness, hysterical deafness, or non-organic deafness. Though shell-shock deafness often raised suspicion of malingering, many doctors recognized the condition as legitimate and necessitating psychiatric treatment.⁷²

Two main types of treatment for deafened veterans were provided. Otological staff performed surgical and medical treatment, while the section also offered lip-reading instruction and speech training. Already familiar with the oralist methods used in the instruction of deaf children, the United States examined the lip-reading training that the Allies, and the French in particular, provided their deafened soldiers. The French military expected the average patient required approximately three months of lip-reading training. The British military expected that courses of four months were necessary. The United States avoided imposing firm deadlines for achieving proficiency. What remained inflexible, however, was Richardson's commitment to lip-reading. He pledged that Cape May staff would "employ only one method—that of speech reading—in the reeducation of the near deaf or the completely deaf, except in the few cases in which the manual method might be necessary."⁷³ Yet despite the prohibition against sign language, the touch method, or tactile lip-reading, utilized by the deaf-blind was also offered to several patients who desired to learn, citing the ability to communicate with others in the dark as motivation to study the method.⁷⁴

Richardson hired eleven instructors to teach lip-reading full time in the section, though he received over twice as many applications. Other teachers volunteered to work part time or from their homes once the servicemen were discharged.⁷⁵ These army lip-reading instructors, and the three speech instructors at Cape May, were all women. This was consistent with the predominance of women among primary and secondary school teachers since the latter half of the nineteenth century, when teaching was reframed as an extension of women's maternal roles. At the same time, this gender dynamic also reflected the fact that many hearing male lip-reading instructors left their jobs to fight in the war. The *American Annals of the Deaf*, for example, proudly announced the names of instructors and principals of deaf schools who enlisted in the military in a regular segment called "Our Roll of Honor."⁷⁶ Women lip-reading instructors who left their positions at schools for the deaf to teach servicemen were not included in the Roll of Honor, but the *Annals* often noted these transfers in its regular updates on American deaf schools.⁷⁷ Likewise, the *Volta Review* in 1918 commended the patriotism and "war work" of Louise I. Morgenstern, who closed her Manhattan School for the Hard of Hearing during the war in order to devote her energy to helping deafened servicemen.⁷⁸

As the *Volta Review's* praise of Morgenstern suggests, training deafened soldiers in the art of lip-reading was a way for women to perform patriotic service, and the section emphasized this duty in their recruitment of instructors. Dr. Clarence Blake, emeritus professor of otology at Harvard University, wrote in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1918 that "it is upon the American women, teachers of lip-reading to the deaf, that we can rely not only for that particular form of instruction of which they are capable, but for the infusion of new courage, the opening of the vision of uplift and of achievement, to the war deaf who are coming home."⁷⁹ Thus, the lip-reading teachers of Cape May were charged as well with cultivating optimism and resilience in the deafened soldiers they trained. Simultaneously, the job required the purportedly feminine attributes of sympathy and nurturing. Frustration during lip-reading training often caused men to break down crying, and according to one report, "none but these urging, patient, enthusiastic women could have won through."⁸⁰

The Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech at General Hospital no. 11 in Cape May officially opened on July 24, 1918. Otolaryngologists were on hand to examine the new patients and determine their course of treatment. The section automatically assigned the completely deafened, the extremely hard of hearing, or those with progressive deafness in both ears to lip-reading courses.⁸¹ Seventeen patients reluctantly began training in lip-

reading that day. Two of these men had to be disciplined in order “to bring them to the proper appreciation of the necessities for the treatment.”⁸² Understandably, these injured soldiers were eager to return home to their families and likely doubted the effectiveness of lip-reading training. But once several students starting lip-reading proficiently, enthusiasm for the prospective benefits of the training burgeoned. In a 1922 *Laryngoscope* report, otologist Gordon Berry detailed the work of the Army Lip-Reading School and attributed its success to both its exceptional teachers and its military control over the soldiers’ activities.⁸³ The United States had learned from the examples of European armies that, when re-education was voluntary, many disabled veterans opted out. In the British case, 74 percent of disabled servicemen skipped re-education services.⁸⁴ In the French and Italian militaries, re-education was required before discharge. The United States implemented this mandatory method of rehabilitation.

At the Army Lip-Reading School, courses averaged 2.7 months and consisted of individual lessons. Men typically trained twice each day for thirty-minute periods with their instructors, who were rotated continually so the men could study different lips and speech patterns.⁸⁵ Class time was purposefully short in order to avoid mental fatigue. The department also provided each patient with a mirror with which to practice observing their own lip movements in their spare time.

The ultimate goal was for these deafened men to pass as hearing people. While many struggled—6 percent of men were reported to have understood less than 60 percent of speech—over half were considered to have excelled.⁸⁶ Success bred further motivation and optimism. For instance, one more experienced serviceman who recovered from spinal meningitis wrote an encouraging note to a new arrival:

A fellow don’t need to hear. They learn you how to read the lips here. It is surprising how well you can learn it. I have not took many lessons but I can read the lips a little now. I see a fellow here the other day. You wouldn’t know he was totally deaf [sic]. He could read the lips so good. He was home on a furlough and his parents didn’t know he was deaf. You can be learned.⁸⁷

There were several other success stories of girlfriends and family members not initially believing that their newly deafened, yet skillfully conversant loved ones could not hear. Miss Enfield Joiner, principal of the Army Lip-Reading School, received a letter from a soldier just discharged from Cape May after completing his training. He reported that he had been home for three days before his own mother became “the least bit suspicious” of his hearing loss.⁸⁸ Such imperceptible deafness was the goal of lip-reading instruction.

Another measure of success was a lip-reader’s postwar employment. One lip-reading student from Cape May successfully returned to his job as a bank cashier following his treatment.⁸⁹ Similarly, Thomas R. Baker lost his hearing during the heavy fire of the Aisne-Marne Offensive during the summer of 1918.⁹⁰ But after completing a course in lip-reading through the newly formed Veterans’ Bureau, Baker became a horticulturalist at the University of Nebraska.⁹¹ Another example was Edward H. Murphy, who relearned to speak and went on to study agriculture at Cornell University. Yet successful employment also included much humbler occupations. Most servicemen who studied lip-reading at Cape May had been farmers and laborers before their military service.⁹² The section provided vocational rehabilitation to provide classes in carpentry, gardening, and a variety of craftwork and offered occupational advice from civilians with speech or hearing defects. The men devoted their mornings to lip-reading and speech practice but

had the option of vocational training in the afternoon to help them reclaim their former jobs or develop skills for positions amenable to their deafness.

One serviceman eager to return to his job as a shoe stitcher was Private Isadore Warshoevsky of the Eleventh Engineer Battalion.⁹³ Warshoevsky was born in Kiev but had fled to the United States alone at the age of fifteen after his family was slaughtered in the 1904–1905 riots. He had no formal education, having spent his childhood fighting to eat and survive rather than learning to read and write. Warshoevsky apprenticed for a shoe shop in Brooklyn before going off to war, in which he lost his hearing entirely. After training at Cape May, he returned to his shoe shop, in the opinion of the *Muskogee County Democrat*, “a better American and a more valuable citizen than he was when his country called him to war.”⁹⁴

Many deafened servicemen like Warshoevsky were illiterate or were English-language learners. Of the 108 lip-reading students at Cape May, twenty-seven were classified as illiterate, and only sixteen had high school educations. Illiteracy had plagued the military at large, yet illiterates could not be spared. An order of the War Department in April 1917 permitted illiterate men to enlist, and an estimated seven hundred thousand American men unable to read or write were registered for army service.⁹⁵ According to NCTE co-founder James F. Hosis, “The amount of illiteracy and slovenly speech discovered by army tests has served to awaken educators to our language defects.”⁹⁶ The section initially assumed that illiteracy posed a unique challenge to prospective lip-readers, though it provided little explanation for this belief.⁹⁷ This turned out not to be the case. Berry ultimately concluded that book-learning did not help one become a better lip-reader. In fact, the illiterate or uneducated servicemen ostensibly made particularly skilled lip-readers. Miss Enfield Joiner, principal of the Army Lip-Reading School, claimed that “the uneducated have shown a natural aptitude for lip-reading, with very few exceptions, which the trained mind frequently did not possess.”⁹⁸ Richardson expanded the duties of the speech correction aides, whom he determined to be underutilized, to teach these men basic reading, writing, and math skills. The section reported great success: “Men who could neither read, write nor figure,” Richardson exclaimed, “would acquire elements of speech reading with a week or ten days, and then we would begin on them with the three R’s, and usually a week thereafter we would have them writing, reading and doing simple problems in addition, subtraction, division and fractions.”⁹⁹

The section reported similar success among men, like Warshoevsky, whose first language was not English. Nine of the lip-readers trained at Cape May were born in eight different foreign countries and demonstrated varying degrees of literacy and proficiency in the English language.¹⁰⁰ The staff worried that these men would struggle excessively to lip-read a language less familiar to them than their native languages. Yet according to *Carry On: A Magazine on the Reconstruction of Disabled Soldiers and Sailors*, Warshoevsky picked up lip-reading quickly. Not only that, but after just one week at Cape May, the unlettered Warshoevsky successfully read newspaper headlines and penned a letter to his wife back home.¹⁰¹ Richardson even claimed that, with their speech reading instructors’ guidance, foreign-born men corrected their poor English pronunciation and “within a couple of weeks could speak as correct English nearly as their teachers and with a wonderfully enlarged vocabulary.”¹⁰² Citing the predominance of illiteracy among American troops, he further advised that the Cape May model be extended to other army general hospitals.

Another group that particularly concerned section officers were African Americans, both because of their higher rates of illiteracy and for what Richardson called the “color question.”¹⁰³ Records of the patients treated at Cape May do not indicate race, so the

number of African Americans enrolled in lip-reading courses is unknown. However, there were enough for Richardson to mention the practice of segregating white from Black patients at Cape May as the solution to the “color question.” The entire U.S. military, in fact, practiced segregation until after the Second World War, with President Truman’s Executive Order 9981 ending the practice in 1948. During the First World War, psychologists Edward Thorndike and Robert Yerkes issued intelligence tests to the troops and determined African Americans to be mentally inferior to their white counterparts.¹⁰⁴ However, the African American lip-readers at Cape May surprised the staff with their natural aptitude. Richardson praised the skills of one African American in particular, Charles Morris, along with those of the foreign-born Warshoevsky, as evidence of the impressive work that Cape May staff performed in even the most difficult of cases. Principal Joiner claimed that “our negro patients, all of them absolutely unlettered, have made marvelous lip-readers.”¹⁰⁵ Some observers went as far as to claim that African Americans were superior lip-readers. For instance, Mrs. George T. Sanders, a contributor to *The Silent Worker*, claimed after visiting Cape May that “colored men are the quickest to learn speech-reading.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, the section heralded the oral method as suitable for all patients regardless of race, etiology of deafness, education, or socioeconomic background.

Overall, the section boasted overwhelming success in producing masterful lip-readers and better citizens. Some claims likely exaggerated students’ fluency, while other reports of the men’s abilities seem to contradict one another. For instance, the staff concluded that the young man who wrote the optimistic note to an incoming patient about the viability of mastering lip-reading would himself unfortunately “never be a good lip-reader.”¹⁰⁷ Yet oralism emerged from the section’s self-aggrandizement as the true victor, as the success and intelligence of the servicemen seemed to hinge on their lip-reading and speaking skills. While Richardson had championed the oral method for deafened soldiers at Cape May, he had reserved sign language as a dismal last resort reserved for “those who are too obtuse to acquire the oral method.”¹⁰⁸ These unfortunate cases, Richardson explained, would be transferred to a class to study the manual alphabet. Yet Richardson ultimately boasted that not a single serviceman at Cape May required manual teaching. “Even cases of the most unpromising character,” he wrote, “seemingly of the lowest type of mentality, acquired the speech-reading art with unusual facility.”¹⁰⁹ However, hints that some sign language was in fact used emerge in the recognition of Cape May instructor Lula May Bruce. A Danville, Kentucky, native, Bruce’s service was featured on the front page of the local Danville *Advocate-Messenger* in 1920. The paper commended her work teaching deafened servicemen “to read the lip language and how to talk on their fingers.”¹¹⁰ But with Richardson’s equation of manualism with failure and the pervasive rejection of the manual method following the Milan Congress, very few reports of its use at Cape May were publicized.

With armistice in November 1918, and the number of patients dwindling, the section transferred to General Hospital No. 41 at Fox Hills in Staten Island on July 7, 1919 temporarily until it, too, closed on December 15, 1919. In all, fifty-four cases of speech defects and 112 cases of deafness were treated at Cape May, though many more soldiers had experienced some degree of hearing loss.¹¹¹ After graduating from Cape May, the patients were either discharged or retained for limited service. The Provost Marshal General classified servicemen into four categories based on their physical conditions.¹¹² Those fully fit for general military service comprised class A. The next group, class B, consisted of “remediables,” or those whose injuries or conditions could likely be entirely treated. Class C indicated capacity for limited service only. Deaf or severely hard of hearing patients proficient in reading lips were typically discharged or assigned to class C

to undertake work not involving any motion.¹¹³ Class D, or those “disqualified for military service,” consisted of patients whose hearing fell below 75 percent of normal but who still detected loud sounds, and were both deafened in the line of duty and proficient at lip-reading. Deafened men still experiencing occasional suppurations of the ears were discharged, regardless of their lip-reading ability. Also assigned to class D were those who, “from want of concentration or from intellectual inability,” were unable to read lips and had to “depend upon other methods of communication after due effort has been made on our part.”¹¹⁴ Here again, manualism was linked to inferior intelligence and failure.

Upon discharge, the section provided each patient with the contact information of a lip-reading instructor or school nearest his home so that he may continue practicing.¹¹⁵ Additionally, lip-reading societies opened across the country for deaf and hard of hearing adults during this period and especially welcomed war veterans to their communities. For instance, the Chicago League for the Hard of Hearing, founded in 1916, reported having taught lip-reading to fifteen soldiers in 1922.¹¹⁶ The use of sign language was strictly prohibited during classes. Likewise, the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* promised in December 1918 that deaf and hard of hearing servicemen would always be met with “a sympathetic, an appreciative, and a hearty welcome” at the Boston Speech-Readers’ Guild, which also opened in 1916.¹¹⁷ After Cape May closed, Principal Joiner joined the Bureau of Rehabilitation, eventually identifying five hundred men not served at Cape May or Fox Hills and providing further services to deafened veterans.¹¹⁸ She checked in with former patients periodically and reported in 1922 that “all did as well financially and some better than they had before they became deafened.”¹¹⁹ Thus, through the work done by the Army Lip-Reading School, the military concluded that its ultimate goal for rehabilitation—to ensure that wounded servicemen remained productive members of society rather than dependents on government disability pensions—was largely successful concerning deafened veterans.

Conclusion

“There is no doubt about it,” one former Cape May patient wrote to his teacher a year after completing his lip-reading course. “I have improved in character, in lip-reading, in fact everything. I needed it a great deal, too, and I honestly think that whoever or whatever is responsible for my loss of hearing, realized that it was the best way to teach me things.”¹²⁰ Such statements seemed to confirm the success of the Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech in treating servicemen deafened in the line of duty and the hope it offered in restoring wounded veterans into productive workers, social community members, and vital citizens.

While lip-reading and speech training were prescribed as rehabilitative treatment to help injured servicemen, these deafened soldiers were compelled to practice and improve these skills to avoid inconveniencing others. Use of sign language was considered the conspicuous stigma of weakness or failure to integrate into hearing society and had parallels with immigrants to the United States who failed to learn English and assimilate into American culture. Indeed, rehabilitation of deafened soldiers of the First World War through speech training and lip-reading instruction coincided with broader national efforts to improve Americans’ speech and language use, and in turn, their patriotism and productivity. English instructors and speech pathologists, responding to national concerns over immigration and the war, reinforced the link between American speech and

U.S. citizenship through campaigns like Better Speech/Better English Week. For Americans—immigrants or native, hearing or deaf— war demanded that full American citizenship hinged on their ability to “speak the language of their flag.”

Notes

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- 2 Gertrude Van Adestine, “School for Deaf,” *Detroit Educational Bulletin* 3 (Oct. 1919): 11.
- 3 J. E. Vacha, “When Wagner Was Verboten: The Campaign Against German Music in World War I,” *New York History* 64 (Apr. 1983): 171–188; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, 25th anniversary ed. (1980; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 68.
- 4 Christopher Capozzola, “Legacies for Citizenship: Pinpointing Americans during and after World War I,” *Diplomatic History* 38 (Sept. 2014): 713.
- 5 I use the term “lip-reading,” although “speech reading” more accurately conveys that the skill requires reading not only lips but also facial expressions and gestures. I do this to avoid confusion with “speech training,” which emphasizes clear speaking skills.
- 6 Deaf studies scholars have traditionally differentiated between the audiological condition of deafness and the cultural and linguistic category of Deafness. This distinction is notated by the capitalized “Deaf” indicating knowledge of American Sign Language and Deaf community membership and the lowercase “deaf” denoting the medical/pathological condition of hearing loss.
- 7 Louise Phelps Kellogg, “The Bennett Law in Wisconsin,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 2 (Sept. 1918): 3–25.
- 8 Juliane Jacobi, “Schoolmarm, *Volkersezieher*, *Kantor*, and *Schulschwester*: German Teachers Among Immigrants During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century” in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, eds. Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 115.
- 9 Quoted in Kellogg, “The Bennett Law in Wisconsin,” 12.
- 10 Arnold H. Leibowitz, “Language as a Means of Social Control: The United States Experience,” paper presented at the VIII World Congress of Sociology, University of Toronto, 1974 (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 093 168), 14.
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- 12 Barnes, “Shall German Be Dropped from Our Schools?” 188.
- 13 Barnes, “Shall German Be Dropped from Our Schools?” 191.
- 14 “Cut Out the Foreign Languages: The Use of One Language Will Make Our People a United Nation,” *American Municipalities* 35 (Apr. 1918): 59.
- 15 “Cut Out the Foreign Languages,” 59.
- 16 “Cut Out the Foreign Languages,” 59.
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- 18 *Des Moines Register*, Jul. 29, 1918.
- 19 “Only English to be Spoken,” *American Journal of Education* 52 (Oct. 1918): 43.
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- 22 Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 196.
- 23 J. N. Hook, *A Long Way Together: A Personal View of NCTE’s First Sixty-Seven Years* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1979), 3.
- 24 Claudia E. Crumpton, *Guide to American Speech Week: Prepared for Use in the Campaign for the National Observance of American Speech Week, November 2–8, 1919* (Chicago: The Council, 1919), 7.
- 25 Hook, *A Long Way Together*, 29.
- 26 Lewis B. Monroe, *Series of Readers* (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler and Co., 1907), preface.
- 27 “A Plea for Good Speech,” *Continent* 50 (Oct. 1919): 1298.

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- 30 Claudia E. Crumpton, "American Speech Week throughout the Nation," *English Journal* 8 (May 1919): 280.
- 31 Cited in Douglas A. Kibbee, *Language and the Law: Linguistic Inequality in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 141.
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- 35 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Nov. 13, 1924.
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- 37 Van Adestine, "School for Deaf," 11.
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- 48 *Shamokin (Pennsylvania) News-Dispatch*, Oct. 7, 1924.
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- 53 Harlan Lane, *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 346.
- 54 Lane, *When the Mind Hears*, 344.
- 55 Cited in Richard Winefield, *Never the Twain Shall Meet: Bell, Gallaudet, and the Communications Debate* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2000), 74.
- 56 The Volta Bureau is now the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, and the *Volta Review* is still in publication.
- 57 While Heinicke is often credited for inventing oralism, oralist approaches to deaf education trace back to sixteenth-century monastic Spain with the Benedictine Fray Pedro Ponce de León. Lane, *When the Mind Hears*, 111; Susan Plann, *A Silent Minority: Deaf Education in Spain, 1550–1835* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 81.
- 58 American Sign Language emerged from the combination of Clerc's French Sign Language with the home signs that American students brought to the Hartford school, particularly by those from Martha's Vineyard. See Nora Ellen Groce, *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).
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- 67 Crane, "In Hospitals Caring for Defects of Hearing and Speech," 183.
- 68 Charles W. Richardson, "Reconstruction of Defects of Hearing and Speech," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 80, Rehabilitation of the Wounded (Nov. 1918): 35–39.
- 69 "American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf," *American Annals of the Deaf* 63 (May 1918): 305.
- 70 Crane, "In Hospitals Caring for Defects of Hearing and Speech," 185.
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- 72 Charles W. Richardson, "Organization of the Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech," *Annals of Otology, Rhinology & Laryngology* 28, no. 2 (1919): 434.
- 73 Crane, "In Hospitals Caring for Defects of Hearing and Speech," 181.
- 74 Richardson, "Organization," 439.
- 75 Charles W. Richardson, "Some Notes on the Scope of the Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech, Division of Physical Reconstruction, Surgeon General's Office," *American Annals of the Deaf* 63 (Sept. 1918): 425. The lip-reading teachers were Enfield Joiner, Mary Louise Wimsatt, Margaret Bodycomb, Clara Louise Rockwell, Mary Thornton, Lula May Bruce, Doris Freeman, Susan Norris, and Margaret Roberts; the speech teachers were Katherine O'Connell, Esta V. Pastel, and Mary Thornton.
- 76 See, for example, "Our Roll of Honor," *American Annals of the Deaf* 63 (Sept. 1918): 375–76.
- 77 See, for instance, "North Carolina (Morganton) School," School Items, *American Annals of the Deaf* 63 (Sept. 1918): 388, which announces the resignation of Miss Enfield Joiner.
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