Origin and Early Beginnings of Utah School for the Deaf

Part II

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While state schools for the deaf were being established across the nation, August 1884 marked the beginning of a new era for the deaf in Utah territory. In 1884, three major factors influenced the establishment of Utah School for the Deaf

1. The widespread interest in the education of the Deaf throughout the United States,
2. The deep-rooted love for education in general felt by the early settlers of Utah, and
3. The homogenous religious nature of the communities (Pace, 1946, p. 9)

Utah School for the Deaf was initially founded in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1884. From 1884 to 1896, enrollment increased from fourteen to fifty-five students. Instruction was given in speech and lip-reading, printing, carpentry, shoemaking, cooking, sewing, and housework. Due to growing number of students, the school was moved to Ogden in 1896. It became an independent educational institution serving the Deaf students in the states of Utah and Idaho and the territory of Arizona (January 4, 1896 is when Utah became a state).

During those years, the school functioned with three objectives:

1. Provided instruction in both oral and sign language for the Deaf,
2. Provided vocational training for students, and
3. Taught educational skills like any other public schools.

These skills allowed the deaf to lead a productive life within a larger society (Roberts, 1994).

Interest in Education of the Deaf

When the American School for the Deaf, the first Deaf school was established in 1817, by 1875 twenty-three more schools were founded in the nation. This movement influenced Utah with interest and enthusiasm to explore the Deaf Education within the Utah territory (Pace, 1946).

General Education in Utah

The early Latter-day settlers were deeply interested in education. They entered Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. Despite extreme hardships of the pioneer life, they established a school three months later (Pace, 1946)

In 1850, the Legislative Assembly met and created University of Deseret. This university basically operated as a board of education for the Utah territory and was primarily a policy-making organization. Under its leadership, local schools were established throughout the region and led to the provision of education of its children with disabilities (Pace, 1946).

Religion as a Factor

The Utah pioneers were a deeply religious people. The parents of Deaf children wished for them to get education within the Utah territory. It was expensive to send children to Deaf schools outside of the territory. The closest school was Colorado School for the Deaf. The long period of separation from the family and church was unfavorable (Pace, 1946).

Loran Pratt
God Made Me Deaf Accounts from Deaf Latter-day Saints, 1846-1916

After founding Utah School for the Deaf, the students originally attended the Protestant church because teachers who came to Utah were from Protestant backgrounds (Roberts, 1994). The Protestant influence on children concerned several Latter-day Saint parents. They asked the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to organize a Sunday School for their children. On January 10, 1892, the Church officially organized the first Sunday School in Salt Lake City with a membership of eleven boys and sixteen girls. Elder H.C. Barrell was appointed as first Superintendent

of Sunday School with Elder Laron Pratt (Deaf) as his assistant (The Daily Enquirer, February 11, 1892). When the Utah School for the Deaf was moved to Ogden, the same Sunday School was offered for Deaf/blind students and adults on November 16, 1896. It was held in the old 4th Ward Amusement Hall in Ogden (Deseret News, November 21, 1896). Eventually, the Ogden Branch for the Deaf, a Deaf-friendly designed meetinghouse for Deaf members in Ogden, was established February 14, 1917. The signing branch was made into an independent branch of the Ogden Stake. Ultimately, the branch was a model for future units for the Deaf, such as the Salt Lake Valley Deaf Ward, Los Angeles Deaf Branch, Portland Heights Deaf Branch, Fremont Deaf Branch, Gooding Deaf Branch and others all around the world (Walker, 2006).

Work of John Beck and William Wood

The first effort to establish a school for the Deaf in Utah was made by John Beck and William Wood. Both of them were parents of Deaf children. John Beck had three Deaf sons, Joseph, John A., and Jacob who were attending the California School for the Deaf. William Wood's Deaf daughter, Elizabeth was attending the Colorado School for the Deaf in Colorado Springs (Metcalf, 1900; Pace, 1947; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure; Roberts, 1994). They wanted their children to live closer to home (Evans, 1999). Mr. Beck and Mr. Wood were credited for originating the idea of instructing the Deaf of Utah and working together to form a school for the Deaf in Utah (Clarke, 1897; Metcalf, 1898).

John Beck
Photo courtesy of the National Cyclopedia of American Biography

While Mr. Beck, the owner of the Bullion-Beck Mine and Beck's Hot Springs, was in the process of establishing a Deaf school in the Utah territory, he collected the 1880 United States census. As a result, 118 Deaf persons were reported living in the territory. In 1883, he circulated a letter throughout the territory to find out how many of these Deaf children were of school age. He received a list of fifty school age Deaf children (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure, Evans, 1999).

At about the same time, the length of the journey and the expense for sending Elizabeth Wood to Colorado Springs led William Wood to decide and try to establish a school for the Deaf in Utah. He learned about Mr. Beck's efforts and visited him in his home regarding the matter. They worked together collecting statistics on the status of the Deaf in Utah and petitioning the legislature for the establishment of a school for the Deaf (Metcalf, 1898; Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure). With the support of statistics, they decided to lobby the territorial legislature (Evans, 1999).

Utah Governor Eli Murray
Source: Wikipedia

During the 1883 legislative session, Governor Eli Murray became interested in the cause. He called the attention of the territorial legislature concerning the condition of the Deaf in the territory and the need for a school where the Deaf children could be properly educated (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure).

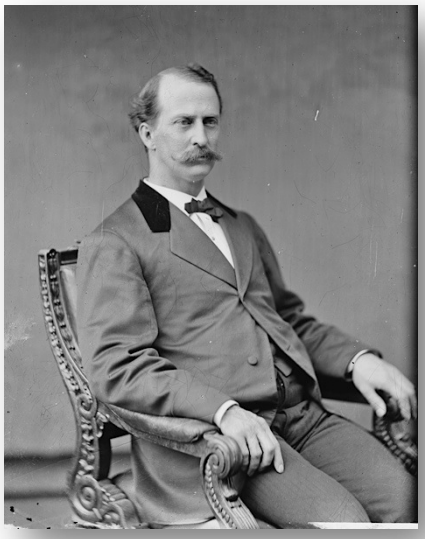
On February 17, 1883, Mr. Wood presented the petition which led to legislature's appropriation approval of $4,000 ($2,000 per annum for two years) to start a class for Deaf students under the administration of the University of Deseret in

Salt Lake City (Clarke, 1897; Metcalf, 1900, Utah School for the Deaf Brochure; Evans, 1999). Mr. Wood donated $250 and Mr. Beck gave $500 towards the founding of a class for Deaf children (Clarke, 1897). The school connection with a university was the first of its kind in the nation.

Opening of the School

After the establishment of a classroom for Deaf students and enactment of the appropriation bill, the matter was left in the hands of Dr. John Rocky Park, president of the University of Deseret, to make arrangements to start a class for Deaf students in connection with the University. He attempted to find a competent teacher of the Deaf within the territory. Failing in this, he made a trip to the East in 1884 and met Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet, president of Gallaudet College. Dr. Gallaudet recommended employing Henry C. White, a Deaf man from Boston and an 1880 graduate of the National Deaf-Mute College (later known as Gallaudet University), as a teacher to take charge of the class. Upon Dr. Gallaudet's recommendation, Mr. White was appointed principal of the Utah School for the Deaf by Dr. Park (The Utah Eagle, February 1922; Evans, 1999).

Dr. John R. Park
Source: Wikipedia



Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet
Source: Wikipedia

On August 26, 1884, the class was opened in a room in the University building. At the time, the system of instruction used

was the Combined System (Fay, 1893; Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure). Professor White served as the first school principal and remained there as a teacher, principal and head teacher until 1890 (Fay, 1893; Clarke, 1897; Metcalf, 1900; The Utah Eagle, February 1922; Pace, 1946).

Henry C. White
Photo courtesy of the Gallaudet University Archives

There, Professor White started a class with Elizabeth Wood, the first pupil in attendance. The Beck brothers soon followed (Evans, 1999). By the end of September, four students were enrolled. The total enrollment for the first year was fourteen. During the second year, it increased to eighteen. The aim of the school was to make the-graduates competent for the business and social world (Fay, 1893; Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

During the first two years, 1884 - 1886, USD was conducted as a day school without dormitory rooms. Many students did not live in Salt Lake City, but resided in various parts of the state. Professor White was successful in establishing a home for Deaf children who lived outside the Salt Lake City area. However, this was not found to be satisfactory for parents (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure). Professor White, a non-LDS member, wrote a letter to Dr. Edward Miner Gallaudet about the newly established school. In his letter, he noted, "[t]he

Elizabeth Wood

organization of the school is peculiar like all the methods of the Mormons" (Evans, 1999, p. 24). He also observed the school was more like a day school than a residential school. Additionally, Professor White noticed that unlike other residential schools, his students had to board with neighborhood families, attend school from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM without a break and eat dinner at 2:00 or 3:00 PM (Evans, 1999).

During the 1886 legislative session, Professor White presented two petitions. In his first petition, he requested an appropriation of $25,000 for the permanent establishment of a school for Deaf children. Later, he made an amendment requesting $38,000 rather than the original sum. However, both of his petition requests were rejected. The annual appropriation was raised from $2,000 to $3,000. Nonetheless, the funding was never granted, as the entire appropriation bill was vetoed by Governor Eli Houston Murray for political reasons (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure; Evans, 1999).

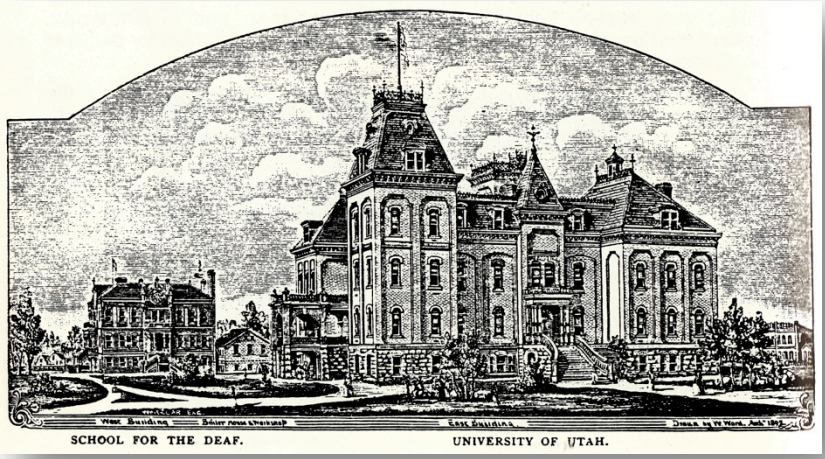
Utah School for the Deaf at the University of Deseret in Salt Lake City, Utah. First home of the school in 1886
Photo courtesy of the American School for the Deaf, 1817-1893

In spite of lack of funding support from the legislature, it did not interrupt the sessions of the school. The university regents assumed the financial responsibility of conducting the school until the legislature came to their aid (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure; Evans, 1999).

With Professor White's own funds, he boarded the students in his home in 1886. For its support, he also received reimbursement from parents and donations from individuals and support from Salt Lake County to cover the children's education

needs (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure; Evans, 1999). As the head of the school, Professor White assumed the sole responsibility for running the department (Evans, 1999).

In 1887, the USD was moved to the spacious mansion and beautiful grounds of Hooper place, formerly the residence of Captain W.H. Hooper in Salt Lake City. This school remained at the Hooper place for three years while it was still connected to the University of Deseret (American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, January 1888; American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, October 1889; Fay, 1893).


SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF. UNIVERSITY OF UTAH.

Enabling Act of the School

After four years of struggling to collect funding for school, the Legislative Assembly finally enacted a law in 1888 to officially establish and maintain the Deaf school, as a branch in connection with the University of Deseret (Pace, 1946). In addition, the Utah Territorial Legislature broadened the school ages of Deaf students under the age of thirty who were unable to benefit from instruction in regular schools (Roberts, 1994). The school received annual funds of $5,000 and was allocated $20,000 to build a school for the Deaf. At the time, Eli Murray was no longer governor and the legislature was free to fund the school (Evans, 1999). Apparently, he did not support for appropriating funds for the school.

The school became known as Institute of Deaf-Mutes. It was later changed to School for the Deaf and Dumb and finally to Utah School for the Deaf. For eleven years, the Institution of Deaf-Mutes continued as a part of University of Deseret. It was the only school for the Deaf in the United States that was connected with a university at that time (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure; Roberts, 1994).

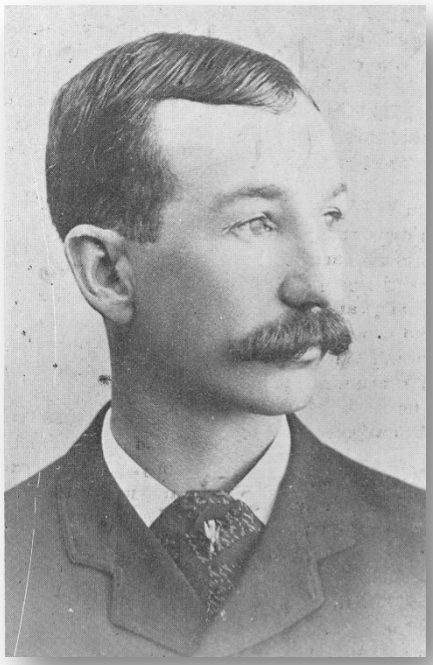
At school, the students were taught reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar and geography (Evans, 1999).

Did You Know?

The first copy of a small paper, "The Deseret Eagle" was published on October 10, 1889 (Pace, 1946; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure).

Replacement of Unpopular Principal

Professor White remained as principal of the school for five years. After the 1880 infamous Milan Conference passed a resolution requiring the oral method be used in Deaf Education, the influence of oralism became a trend across the country. Professor White's job was impacted. In 1889, the oral movement in Utah influenced Professor White's replacement as principal by a hearing teacher, Frank W. Metcalf from Kansas School for the Deaf (Evans, 1999).



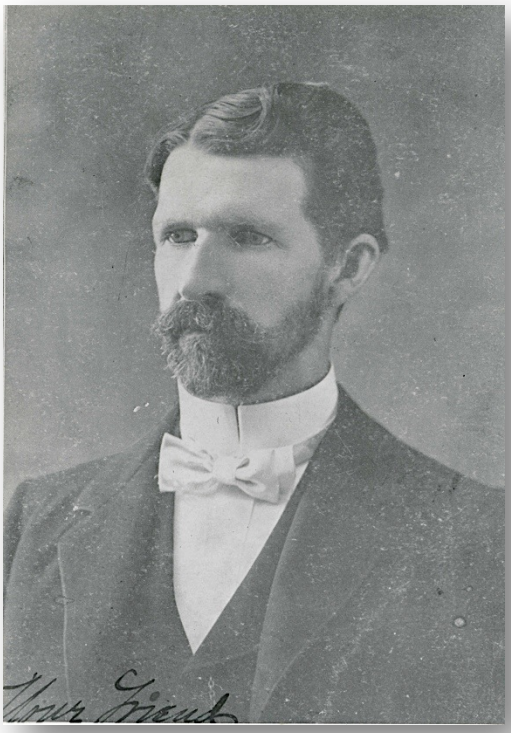
Henry C. White
The Utah Eagle, February 1922

Professor White, as a Deaf person, acquired little to no popularity during his place as principal (The Silent Worker,

September 1897). Despite being a versatile writer, it was probably because of his unclear speech. He was forced to give up his position to Mr. Metcalf (American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, October 1889; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure).

Apparently, the students liked Professor White. On his 33rd birthday on December 18, 1889, his students surprised him by presenting him with a pretty double inkstand and a Russia leather wallet. He was "unspeakably" happy (The Silent Worker, December 1889, p. 4).

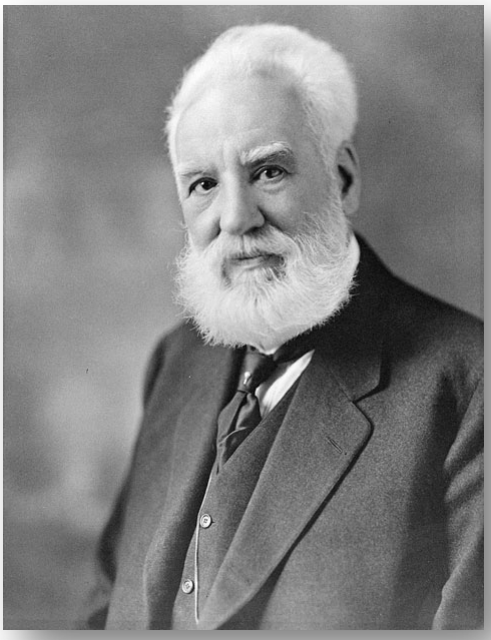
When Mr. Metcalf was appointed principal in 1889, Professor White became head teacher. Professor White was very bitter against his successor and this bitterness caused strife between these two men. The Board of Regents investigated the situation and ended Professor White's services with the school (The Utah Eagle, February 1922).



Frank W. Metcalf

In February 1890, Professor White severed his connection with the school (White, 1890; Fay, 1893; Pace, 1946; Burdett; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure). During Professor White's last year with the school, Frank M. Driggs, then boys' supervisor and a long-time superintendent, became acquainted with him, whom 'he found to be well-educated, bright, alert and active.' Mr. Driggs praised 'his efforts to keep the school going during those early years when it required money and courage' (The Utah Eagle, February 1922, p. 2). See Appendix A of USDB Superintendents Over The Years.

In reality, Professor White was not alone in this situation. The Deaf men who founded state schools for the Deaf faced a similar obstacle and were removed from their positions as principals for no other cause than being Deaf. It was viewed by the Deaf community that hearing people wanted hearing people to have the positions. Professor White, along with three other Deaf principals, J.M. Koehler of Pennsylvania, A.R. Spear of North Dakota, and Mr. Long of the Indian Territory were recognized by the Deaf Community as 'shining lights in this particular, all men who built on firm foundations at the price of great discomfort and in the face of great sacrifices, only to be told to "get out" and make room for hearing men' (The Silent Worker, March 1900, p. 101). At the time, the Deaf community in the nation viewed Professor White as one of the founders, totally unaware of the involvement of two parents, John Beck and William Wood with the establishment of the Utah School for the Deaf.



Alexander Graham Bell
Source: Wikipedia

While the Deaf leaders were battling against Alexander Graham Bell and attempting to block the expansion of oral day schools across the United States in 1894, Henry C. White, a gifted rhetorician, faulted school administrators for their failure to consult directly with Deaf adults. He asked, "What of the Deaf themselves? "Have they no say in a matter which means intellectual life and death to them?" (Buchanan, 1850-1950, p. 28). During this period, Mr. White was one of the most farsighted Deaf activists and envisioned that the Deaf activists were unable to mount the type of national campaign. Buchanan (1850-1950) added that Mr. White "believed that Deaf instructors had a moral claim in teaching positions, but he understood that such assertions were nothing if they were not based in law and

protected by vigilant Deaf adults" (p. 32). While Mr. White was employed at the Utah School for the Deaf in Salt Lake City in 1885, he urged his peers to define, organize, and defend a new set of rights. He maintained, "One thing must be made plain and if we wish to combat this lingering prejudice and secure justice…we must assert our claims to justice, or we will never receive it (p. 32)." Obviously, Mr. White hadn't forgotten about the incident in Utah.

On September 15, 1894, Laron Pratt, an early Utah Deaf leader and assistant superintendent of the Deaf Mute Sunday School in Salt Lake City, made his comments in his first sermon. He "pointed out to his attentive audience the Divine providence in his behalf in placing him under what most people regarded as an affliction, but in which he realized a blessing for the situation in life which he had occupied" and "remark by him to the effect that his apparent affliction was proving a blessing from which the disguise was being removed to his own comprehension" (Deseret News, September 15, 1894, p. 399). Doug Stringham, a long-time and well-known Deaf LDS History researcher, stated, "These sentences considering the climate against manualist approaches at the time, represent some pretty brazen Deaf advocacy, 1894 style. It is significant that Laron Pratt stood before a large audience and said, "Yeah, it's ok for me to be deaf, in fact, it's a blessing to be deaf. I didn't realize it earlier, but, yeah, it's good to be deaf" (Doug Stringham, personal communication, June 2, 2011).

Loran Pratt
Photo courtesy of God Made Me Deaf Account from Deaf Latter-day Saints, 1846-1916

Under the direction of Mr. Metcalf, enrollment increased to 37 students and the work began on a building at the cost of $50,000 (Chronology of USDB).

Did You Know?

> The Deseret Eagle stated that the Utah School for the Deaf had two pupils enrolled who were forty years of age, and quite a number who were over thirty, while the average age of new pupils was twenty-one. This disparity in the age of pupils was due to the comparatively short time. Utah had a school for the Deaf, and even now after give years of existence, it had not become generally known that an educational institution of the kind was in operation (The Silent Worker, November 1889).

Beginning of Speech Training

Since founding the Utah School for the Deaf in 1884, little effort was made to teach the students articulation until 1891. Articulation – speech and lip-reading - training was introduced because the school believed that a large number of students could benefit from the oral method. About two-thirds of the students received speech training (Evans, 1999, p. 29). Speech and lip-reading were used as the method of instruction in one class and "combined system" which used sign language and speech was taught in other two classes (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999). The school's first Superintendent Frank W. Metcalf's wife, Florence Crandall Metcalf, also a former teacher at Kansas School for the Deaf, became a teacher of the oral program. A class of pupils was taught totally by the oral method (Fay, 1893).

Florence Crandall Metcalf

An example of what Deaf Education was like at this time, the Utah Eagle magazine published on February 15, 1893, explained the relationship among three aspects of Deaf Education to advocates and parents:

> "Our method of instruction is known as the American or combined method, as distinguished from the

oral method. The combined method includes every means, which it is possible to use to reach the mind and intelligence of the child. We use the sign language as a medium through which to teach written language to reach the understanding. We use the manual alphabet; teach by means of objects, actions, and pictures, anything to develop the child's mind.

Top L-R: Frances N. Eddy, Edward P. Clarke, Sarah Whalem, M. Frances Walker. Bottom L-R: Katherine King, Frank W. Metcalf, Florence Crandall Metcalf, and Frank M. Driggs, 1900

We employ a special teacher to [teach] speech and speech reading. A class of our pupils is taught entirely by the oral method. Others are taught to speak and read lips…After our pupils have finished a course of instruction in our school, the college [Gallaudet] at Washington is open to them, where college courses can be pursued. A Deaf child can thus be lifted from mental darkness into full light of knowledge and understanding.

But we do not educate the mind alone, but the hand as well. Three trade classes are in successful operation. A class in printing, one in carpentry, and one in shoemaking " (Roberts, 1994, p. 63).

4th Grade Oral Class, 1919

With this intention, more and more hearing parents insisted on their children learning to speak and read lips. Deaf people, on the other hand, spoke loudly against it (Robert, 1994). Since then, the debate over the use of oral method or signing method in Deaf Education has been ongoing for than 150 years with no completely satisfactory compromise yet.

Did You Know?

> The Utah State Legislature enacted laws which provided for establishment of the School for the Blind which became operational two years later in 1896 (Chronology of USDB).

Deaf Employees of Utah School for the Deaf

During the first three decades of Utah School for the Deaf, they had at least four Deaf employees: Clara Eddy, Luella Stiffler, Elizabeth DeLong, all teachers and Nephi Larson, the carpentry instructor (Evans, 1999). It was not until 1934 when Kenneth C. Burdett, a 1929 alumnus and Gallaudet graduate, became a teacher. He served the school for four decades and is probably the longest Deaf teacher employed at this school.

Kenneth C. Burdett, 1958

Effort to Separate Utah School for the Deaf from the University

While the Utah School for the Deaf was connected with the University of Deseret), the school continued to grow (Evans, 1999). Apparently, the school and the university had little in common and it was appropriate to detach the school from the university (Fay, 1893; Evans, 1999). At various times, efforts were made to separate the school from the university. In 1890, the first attempt was made to have the school moved to Fort Cameron, an abandoned military post in Beaver City, in the southern part of the territory (Fay, 1893). While the press and civil leaders supported this plan, Superintendent Metcalf did not. He felt Fort Cameron was too isolated and lacked the necessary rail connection (Evans, 1999). This effort failed (Fay, 1893; Evans, 1999).

Industrial Home
Deseret Eagle, March 1, 1892

Under Superintendent Metcalf's administration, he introduced vocation-training programs: carpentry, printing and shoemaking. As for girls, cooking, sewing and housework were offered (Evans, 1999).

During the same year in 1890, the legislature appropriated an additional sum of

Utah School for the Deaf, 1899

$35,000 to complete the $50,000 building that was initially built in 1889 on the university campus (Fay 1893; Utah School for the Deaf Brochure). The building was occupied in December 1890. Previous to this time, the school occupied the rental buildings for dormitories and had schoolrooms on the university campus (Fay, 1893).

During the construction between June and December of 1890, the school was temporarily housed at 267 West Second South Street, Salt Lake City. On December 24 of that year, the school occupied the newly constructed building on the university campus (Fay, 1893).

In 1892, a second attempt was made to separate the school from the University of Territory and relocate it to the unoccupied "Industrial Home," a building in Salt Lake City owned by the federal government. The territorial legislature requested the United States Congress to permit this building to be used as a school for the Deaf for up to three years. The request met with approval of the House of Representative but failed to pass in the Senate (Fay, 1893; Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

Teachers of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, 1900

While the students lived in the newly constructed building on the university campus in 1892, the name of the "University of Deseret" was changed by the territorial legislature to the "University of Utah." Through the Board of Regents, the university continued to retain its jurisdiction over the Utah School for the Deaf (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

While the territorial legislature was made-plans to establish a new school for both the Deaf and the blind in a new location, Deaf students who lived in rural areas faced challenges. One of the rural residents, John H. Clark, a 13 ½ years old editor of the Eaglet, wrote an article on February 15, 1894 sharing how thankful the pupils were with the plans of legislature. In his article, he wrote,

John H. Clark

> "The legislature however was in doubt as to where they will have the school for the Deaf erected. There was constant conversation among the pupils about their preferred locations. Some of the pupils who lived in the north area preferred that the legislature would have the building erected at Logan. Others who also lived in the north area wished the legislature would have the school erected near Fort Douglas where there was plenty of ground for all kind of sports. Most of the pupils who lived in the southern part of the Utah Territory were in favor of having it erected in Provo. Those who lived in that area expressed concerns that it would cost much money to get to Logan. They recognized that there were many Deaf children living in the southern Utah, but their parents were too poor to afford to send their children to school in Salt Lake City. The concerns were expressed if the school is established in Logan, it will probably be far beyond the reach of the people in Southern Utah and it could lose some of the most promising pupils for their parents cannot afford to pay the expenses of such a long trip. They felt Provo would help reach the promising pupils to enroll at the school nearby" (Clark, 1894, p. 1-2).

One year later in 1895, the attempt of Utah Constitutional Convention at separating the Utah School for the Deaf from the University of Utah met with success. The US Congress passed the Enabling Act and gave the school an endowment of 100,000 acres which made it finally financially possible to separate the Utah School for the Deaf and University of Utah (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999). With over fifty students and the potential acreage or income from selling the land, the school was prepared to find a place of its own (Evans, 1999).

Utah School for the Deaf and the Blind
Photo courtesy of APH Callhan Museum

In 1896, Utah School for the Deaf was finally granted separation from the University of Utah. The question of a suitable location arose for the newly independent school included Ogden, Ephraim, Fort Cameron and Fillmore. A number of locations attempted to secure the school in Ogden (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

The Utah Constitutional Convention decided that Ogden, the second-largest city, offered the greatest advantages and voted to locate the school there. The legislature carried out the provisions of the Utah Constitution Convention by occupying the former Territorial Reform School in Ogden (Pace, 1946). They also decided to combine the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind into Utah School for the Deaf and Blind (USDB) (Chronology of USDB).

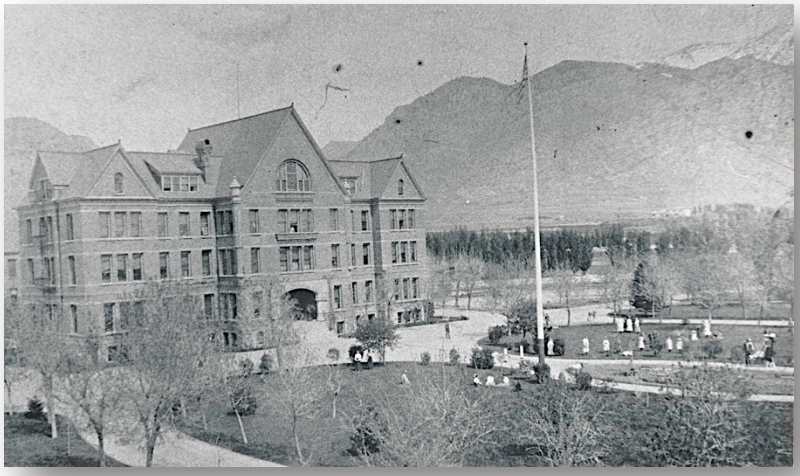
When Utah was admitted into the Union in 1896, the Utah School for the Deaf moved on September 15, 1896 into the Territorial Reform School on 57 acres in Ogden. For the first time, the school for the blind was added and the school became

Utah School for the Deaf and Blind. USDB shared facilities in Ogden (Pace, 1946; Roberts, 1994; Evans, 1999). In January 1969, the new facilities for the blind school were completed on another campus (Historical and Program Summary Program book). Since then, the Deaf school was located at 20th Street and Monroe Avenue while the blind school was at 7th Street and Harrison Boulevard (Pace, 1946). Utah was the 45th state admitted to the Union while USD was the 48th state school for the Deaf (Stringham & Leahy, personal communication, 2013).

Maud May Babcock
Photo courtesy of the National Communication Association

It was hoped the change would give Superintendent Metcalf and his staff more room and better facilities (The Silent Worker, October 1896). At the time, a governing board of five trustees was added. Both Deaf and blind schools were governed by the same board and had the same superintendent. One of the well-known trustees of twenty-two years was Maud May Babcock (Roberts, 1994).

Ogden City proved to be an excellent location for the Utah School for the Deaf. All lines of railroads in Utah and adjoining states centered there. From nearly every point in Utah, Idaho, Nevada, and adjoining states, Ogden could be reached without a change of cars. In this case, it was an



The Main Building of the Utah School for the Deaf

important consideration for Deaf and blind children. Ogden, at the time, had a population of about 20,000 people. The churches, schools and business houses in that area were excellent. Lines of electric streetcars were connected to all parts of the city, and one came within two blocks of the school main entrance (Pace, 1946).

Students of the Utah School for the Deaf, 1896

The Utah School for the Deaf property was comprised of 57 acres with garden, fruit orchard, pasture and agriculture areas (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

The students and staff finally settled into their permanent home, which consisted of two buildings. The Main Building was a three-story brick and was made of stone structure with a metal roof (Pace, 1947; Evans, 1999). This building had a frontage of 142 feet and was three stories above the basement. The first two floors were used for classrooms and offices. The two top floors were used as dormitory rooms (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

Deaf and blind students at USDB campus, 1896

The smaller two-story building known as Annex Building in the rear of the Main Building contained a

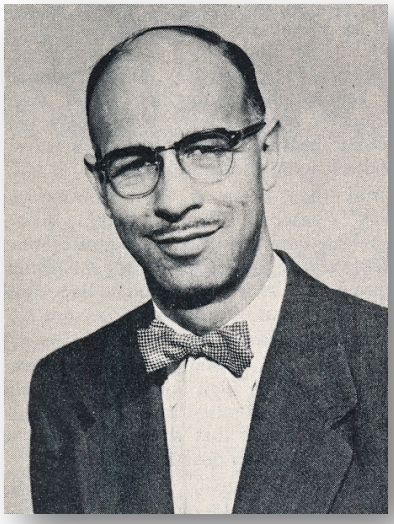
main dining hall, assembly room and chapel. The second floor was used for industrial classes but was later changed to classrooms and a dormitory for the blind students. The kitchen, pantries, and a small dining room were in an addition to the building (Pace, 1946; Evans, 1999).

Dining Room, 1903

The students were given the right to get education under age thirty and the instruction in vocational arts was provided at school (Evans, 1999).

Did You Know?

With the advent of statehood, Utah School for the Deaf fell heir to 100,000 acres of land and the school to be established for the blind to a like amount. As the constitution provided for the conduction of the two schools under the same management, the combined institution had 200,000 acres of land to its credit or more than ½ half the land area of the State of Rhode Island (The Silent Worker, March 1896).



Rodney W. Walker
The Utah Eagle, April 1955

Fire Escape Cylinder

Rodney W. Walker, 1933 USD alumnus, shared in his "My Life Story" book that the students enjoyed sliding down the tall, dark fire escape cylinder beside the Annex Building and behind the Main Building. It was attached to the second and third floors of the building and had a spiral slide metal by which any student could slide down and out of the door at the bottom of the cylinder. This

method was to help students get out of the building quickly in case of fire (Walker, 2006, p. 27).

Mr. Walker noted that the fire escape cylinder was several times higher than the slides found in public playgrounds. The students climbed up the slide to the second, third, or fourth floors, and then slid down. They had learned to stand up while sliding down and around the spiral with their hand on the center pole. Once in a while, one of them would become mischievous, knowing that someone was climbing up the slide, and they would wait for a minute and then pour some water from the third story level onto the slide. Then the boy would slip and slide down the watery surface as fast he could, down to the outlet of the cylinder. His pants would be soaking wet (Walker, 2006, p. 27).

Annex Building

The fire escape stairs were the subject of many wild stories. The example of one of the questions was, "What was the round tower behind the Blind building?"

Smokestack?
Devil's Pit?
Devil's Stove?
Don't Know? (USD Alumni Reunion, 2009).

Certainly, many students had fond memories sliding down the fire escape cylinder and telling stories about it as well.

A New Change in Superintendent And Its Impact on Enrollment

After Frank W. Metcalf served the Utah School for the Deaf and later Utah School for the Deaf and Blind in the capacity superintendent over twelve years, he resigned from his position on April 12, 1901. Under his direction, the school had grown from a department of the University of Utah with three teachers, a principal, and forty-one students to an independent institution, with a superintendent, eight teachers, and an enrollment of 76 students (Pace, 1946).

Dr. Frank M. Driggs became the second superintendent on June 15, 1901, succeeding Frank W. Metcalf. Dr. Driggs held this position until retiring in March 1941 (Pace, 1946). As a newly appointed superintendent, Dr. Driggs faced an enrollment challenge, since the early state law governing the school permitted any student up to age thirty to enroll at USDB. This policy created difficulties for the school (Evans, 1999).

Frank M. Driggs
The UAD Bulletin, Summer 1963

About 1890, the age of students began to drop dramatically as younger students enrolled at USD and older students gradually returned home. When Dr. Driggs became a superintendent, he changed the age limit to between the ages of six to twenty-one years. This marked a direct reversal of 1884 when only five of fourteen students enrolled before age fifteen (Roberts, 1994).

Ultimately, Dr. Driggs aimed to give to every Deaf child a good education, and to prepare those who desired high education and showed sufficient scholarship for entrance to Gallaudet College (Driggs, 1905). He explained that during the early years of Utah School for the Deaf, Deaf children from the age of six and up to any age were allowed to enroll the school. The object of the institution was to provide a thorough education where students were taught a course of study comprised of writing, reading, arithmetic, geography, grammar, history, physiology, civics, physics, and more. Courses in manual (trade) training, physical training and domestic science were also provided (Driggs, 1901).

However, in the first few years, the school accepted many students with additional disabilities. These students provided a challenge to the school because staff members did not have the expertise to deal with these students. Within a few weeks, many students were asked to return home because they could not learn or were disruptive. Others remained for a year or longer with no sign of progress (Roberts, 1994). An example-included a twenty-two-year-old English female student sent home, "unable to do good second grade work here. She had no desire to improve. Her influence over the younger girls was harmful" (Evans, 1999, p. 47). Another example that Clara Eddy, a Deaf teacher at USDB, shared about

Standing at left is Frank M. Driggs, Superintendent of the Utah School for the Deaf, 1903

an incident concerning a thirty-two-year-old female student, Rebecca who "had a violent temper" and chased a teaser with a knife, as follows:

> At that time students at the school ranged from six to thirty two years old of age. One girl named Rebecca was thirty two…Several of these students were in their twenties. These older students were often the most difficult to manage….Elmo Kemp, one of the star athletes, loved to tease and [he] began teasing her. Rebecca had a violent temper when aroused, [and] she chased Elmo around the table with [a] knife…
>
> After everyone left the room I went to her to talk to her for a few minutes [sic]. Finally she accompanied me to her room and I was in her good graces" (Roberts, 1999, p. 44).

USD Classroom, 1903

For this reason, some parents transferred a few students to specialized schools or mental institutions out of the state (Roberts, 1994).

Most parents did not have the education, experience, or resources to help their children. They did not know what to do, except to enroll them at USD for services no matter what their age or additional disability

USDB Library, 1903

was. In the meantime, USD had difficulty determining the differences between the Deaf, mentally disabled, mentally ill, and autistic (Roberts, 1994).

With all the enrollment problems going on, the staff members supported a separate institution for Deaf students with multiple disabilities. Hence, Superintendent Driggs took action in approaching legislature on the need of a new, separate institution. He stated in his report:

> Every year we receive a number of applications for the admission to our institution of feeble-minded children. These unfortunate boys and girls range in feeble mindedness from slightly below the normal child to the idiotic, imbecile, and insane. Almost all the applicants are dumb, or partly so, and usually have perfect hearing…Nearly every dumb child with perfect hearing is feeble minded" (Roberts, 1994, p. 44).

Superintendent Driggs clarified that the institution was a school, not an asylum as many thoughts. This school aimed to educate mentally, morally, and physically for all the Deaf students. Faculty members had expertise to train students for future employment opportunities (Driggs, 1901).

Class of 1902. L-R: Elmo V. Kemp, Peter G. Slot, Elgin Jacobson and Joseph Cameron, Jr.
The Utah Eagle, June 3, 1902

Despite Dr. Driggs' lobbying effort, the legislature failed to act in setting up a separate school. It took several years for the legislature to acknowledge the need for a school for the students with multiple disabilities. In 1907, the state of Utah finally

established the State Training School in American Fork. Thereafter, the number of students with multiple disabilities admitted to USD gradually diminished (Roberts, 1994).

In 1905, Superintendent Driggs also changed the name of the institution. In the Biennial Report for 1905-06, he made the following statement:

> From the fact that all dumb children who are not Deaf are feebleminded, and are, therefore, not eligible to admission to the Utah School or the Deaf and Dumb, and because of the fact that we have no dumb children in the school, I would recommend that the Legislature be requested to eliminate the word "Dumb" from the name of the school making it be Utah School for the Deaf. This will be more correct name and will meet the approval of public sentiment in this direction (The Utah Eagle, June 6, 1905.

During the 1907 legislative session, Superintendent Driggs' recommendation to change the name was approved. The official name of the school became Utah State School for the Deaf (Pace, 1946).

Students of the Utah School for the Deaf, Fall 1949

Apparently, Gallaudet College had influenced Superintendent Driggs's perspective on how Deaf students should be educated and noticed that Deaf people, whether or not their speech was clear, could be as intelligent and capable as hearing people.

Did You Know?

According to the Kansas Star, Frank W. Metcalf, superintendent of Utah School for the Deaf, had been displaced and Frank M. Driggs a teacher in that school stepped in his stead. The reason assigned for the change was that Metcalf is not a Mormon while his successor was one (The Silent Worker, May 1901, p. 139).

Did You Know?

During Superintendent Frank M. Driggs' administration, four new buildings were added to the USDB campus: the Infirmary, Primary Hall, Driggs Hall (girls' dormitory), and Woodbury Hall (boys' dormitory) (Chronology of USDB).

Dr. Grant B. Bitter and His Impact on Special Education Law in Utah

Under the administration of Superintendent Frank M. Driggs, the quality of education was provided to help the students prepare for college or vocational jobs. It was not until 1961 when the percentage of those who became Deaf later started to decrease while the percentage of those who were born Deaf started to increase. Half the adventitiously Deaf students at USD acquired a good language foundation prior to losing their hearing. The congenitally deaf, on the other hand, were increasing and their language development was affected. In addition, the proportion of deaf people with multiple disabilities was increasing (The UAD Bulletin, Spring 1961, p. 2). This situation eventually impacted the quality of education at USD.

Dr. Grant B. Bitter.
The Utah Eagle, 1967

In the 1960s and 1970s, the handful of deaf students with multiple disabilities at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind incrementally increased in numbers at the residential campus in Ogden while more and more deaf students without multiple disabilities were being mainstreamed.

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, 1936 USD alumnus and a long time Deaf Education advocate, observed that Utah was unique in doing the opposite of what most other state schools for the Deaf around the country did. Most other state schools tended to be center of education for the majority of Deaf and hard of hearing students within their state, mainstreaming relatively few students. In contrast, Utah's Deaf school was legislated to push the Deaf students out into the public school setting as soon as possible. That is, until the 2009 legislative session (Sanderson, *UAD Bulletin*, April 2001; Sanderson, *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, May 13, 2001).

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson
Photo courtesy of the Gallaudet University Achieves

Nevertheless, the cycle had repeated itself since Dr. Driggs' time. Similar to his time, teachers who were trained and certified in Deaf Education were not able to maximize their own teaching potential because of the loss of academically advanced students to the local school districts. Instead, there were too many students with multiple disabilities mixed into USD classrooms. Often teachers became full-time caregivers with the non-deaf disability determining the educational direction for the child. Often teachers had to give one-on-one attention to one student which resulted in holding back the progression of all other students. This problem occurred again and again, even with the addition in the classroom of a full-time teacher's aide (Sanderson, *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, May 13, 2001). Parents of Deaf children and the Utah Deaf

community recognized the problems, but they were unaware of the impact of eligibility requirement on who could attend USDB.

Shortly after the 2005 merger of Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind and Jean Massieu School of the Deaf, it was discovered that the eligibility requirement known as Utah Code 53A-25-104 negatively affected all Deaf and hard of hearing students, limiting their access to education. For many years, any Deaf, blind and Deaf-blind students served by USDB who achieved academically on grade-level, were automatically moved out of the USDB (including Jean Massieu School of the Deaf) system and placed in a mainstream setting at their local school district, where they no longer qualified for special education. However, during the transition of placement, students' social and communicati on needs were often overlooked and not always addressed in the mainstream setting (Kinner, *UAD Bulletin*, April 2008, p 1.)

Spring Clean-Up Day, 1944
Students in front of the Main Building of Utah School for the Deaf.
Superintendent Boyd Nelson is seated in the far right of the front row

With its emphasis on special education, Code 53A-25-104 actually added a barrier to promoting quality education at USDB/JMS. This barrier made USDB focus on placement choices only. Because of this focus, there could be no effective communication and language-driven educational goals developed for the students.

With this law mandating remedial education, it was impossible to improve the quality of Deaf Education, either at the state school or at the school district level. This law did not allow for a way to address the language or communication needs of the Deaf/hard of hearing student population (Siegel, 2007; Jodi B. Kinner, personal communication, April 14, 2007).

There was speculation that Dr. Grant B. Bitter, an ardent advocate for oral and mainstream education, played a big role in creating the Utah Code 53A-25-104 in the late 1970s (Bitter, 1977, p. 6). The federal government had passed Public Law 94-142 on November 29, 1975. The goal of PL 94-142 was to see special needs children mainstreamed into regular public schools. It seemed clear that the language in this Utah Code was purposefully designed to push mainstreaming of Deaf and hard of hearing students along.

All these developments hurt USD's ability to provide quality education, full language and communication accessibility, and critical mass numbers for the growing group of Deaf and hard of hearing students in the state.

USD students with their teacher, Kenneth C. Burdett, 1954

After two years, USDB Legislative workgroup updated the bill known as House Bill 296 to lift the gap on Deaf and hard of hearing students who wanted to remain at USDB. On April 30, 2009, Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. signed House Bill 296 into law. This new law complied with the updated Federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act by calling upon Section 504 for those students on grade-level who needed accommodations or by writing up IEPs for those students who were not on grade-level and needed modifications. It was a victory! More information can be found in "The Evolution of Deaf Education in Utah: Part IV" manuscript.

All things considered, USDB has come a long way in improving the quality of education for Deaf and hard of hearing students. Currently, education and skills are provided to assist them to function as a literate citizen in society after graduation.

HB 296 was signed into law by Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. on April 30, 2009

Notes

Doug Stringham, personal communication, June 2, 2011.

Jodi Becker Kinner, personal communication, April 14, 2007. Utah Code 53A – 25-104: Impacts USDB/JMS's ability to provide services. Paper presented at the 2007 USDB Institutional Council, Salt Lake City, UT.

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