

PREFACE

This work was precipitated by a profound curiosity about the historical relationship between American Sign Language (ASL) and French Sign Language (LSF). Deaf people from regions throughout France, too numerous to be cited here, provided Yves with information about their dialects that ultimately enabled him to publish his *Dictionnaire étymologique et historique de la langue des signes française (Etymological and Historical Dictionary of French Sign Language)* in 2007. After meeting Emily, some of this information proved relevant to reconstructing the history of ASL. It is thus a pleasure to thank again those who showed Yves these undocumented forms, especially the old signs from Chambéry and Clermont-Ferrand.

In Paris and surrounding suburbs, special mention is accorded Chantal Callen and Jean Spitéri for the richness and diversity of their personal knowledge of LSF. In addition, thanks go to Armand and Yvette Pelletier in Bourgogne, whose collaboration with Yves resulted in the publication of two books and the establishment of a museum on the History and Culture of the Deaf. Yves also thanks Annie Ravent, Marie-Jo Page, Michel Poensin, and Évelyne Dubourdeau, who were responsible for collecting photographs of signs in the regions of Le Puy, Chambéry, and Saint-Laurent-en-Royans, allowing us to redraw them in this publication. Finally, Yves wishes to thank Françoise Bonnal-Vergès, director of the magnificent collection “Archives de la langue des signes française” published by

Lambert-Lucas, for her unwavering intellectual support.

Emily wishes to thank her Deaf neighbors and friends from her childhood home in Ohio, her ASL teachers in Columbus and Chicago who first exposed her to the language in a classroom, and her instructors in Paris at l'Académie de la Langue des Signes Française. She thanks her family, particularly Aimee Potter, for hosting her for extended periods of time during her research in France. Special thanks are due to Chantal Callen and Jean Spitéri, dear friends who generously embraced her and patiently introduced her to LSF. She also wishes to thank Edna Johnston whose initial interest in and passion about LSF's historical connection to ASL prompted her to pursue this research in more depth. Edna generously modeled the contemporary ASL signs and provided a wealth of information about ASL throughout the development of this work.

Emily collected regional forms of signs from numerous Deaf people across the U.S. She thanks especially Maude Nelson from Alabama, Sara Cardwell Johnston from Indiana, John and Clara Stafford from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and countless others too numerous to list who have shared their signs and stories with her. The librarians in the Motion Picture and Television Reading Room at the Library of Congress assisted Emily in the retrieval of the ASL films from the turn of the twentieth century and deserve her thanks. Ulf Hedberg and Michael J. Olson at the Gallaudet University Deaf Collections and Archives assisted Emily

in locating early documents of the American Deaf community, including early correspondences between Laurent Clerc and Thomas H. Gallaudet and the demographic data concerning the population of students at the American School for the Deaf (ASD). Their dedication to preserving and promoting Gallaudet's legacy is noteworthy.

The majority of the contemporary ASL signs in this dictionary were drawn by our dear friend Carole Marion, a talented Deaf French artist and graduate of the *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts* (French National College of Art and Architecture). Carole teaches sign language and visual arts in a school for the deaf. Her work was funded by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), thanks to Jean-Charles Depaule, director of the Urban Anthropology Lab.

Most of the contemporary Langue des Signes Française (LSF; French Sign Language) signs come from dictionaries produced by the International Visual Theater (IVT). IVT was founded at the end of the 1970s at the prompting of two Americans,

Alfredo Corrado (Deaf) and Bill Moody. Today, IVT is directed by the Deaf actress and comedienne, Emmanuelle Laborit. Thanks to her backing, the Éditions IVT authorized the reproduction of a large number of LSF signs from their publications. For that, we thank them.

Pat Mallet (1939–2012) became deaf at the age of nine. He was the author of numerous cartoons published in countless newspapers for children or adults. His hilarious comic strip *The Little Green Men* made him famous. Four collections of his drawings about deafness were published by Éditions du Fox: *As Long as There Are Deaf People*, *Over There Are the Deaf*, *The Hard of Hearing throughout History*, and *Without Words*. Pat was a dear friend. He produced charming illustrations for our dictionary that depict the etymologies of numerous signs much better than lengthy text.

Finally, we wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for helpful feedback regarding our work and Ivey Pittle Wallace from Gallaudet University Press for her patient and enthusiastic support.