

## **DEAF HISTORY & CULTURE**

### **The Impact of Deaf History: Keynote Conference Speech by Jack Gannon, International Conference on Deaf History**

**Video Review by Chris Wixtrom © 1999 A Window Reflecting Morning Light**

### **The Impact of Deaf History, Keynote Conference Speech by Jack Gannon, International Conference on Deaf History**

VHS, 60 minutes 1992 Sign Media, Inc.

It's just a lecture, you might say. Just a man standing in front of a crowd, reminding the people of old stories they already know. But to this crowd at Gallaudet University, Jack Gannon is not just a man, he is a Deaf man, and a hero. He is the one who searched out Deaf America's past and transformed it into a thick book, *Deaf Heritage* (1981), giving them a chance to hold their own history in their hands, and feel its weight. He is the traveler who was welcomed into their homes. His are the hands that asked them about their lives, their thoughts, their goals, and his are the eyes that lit up at their answers. His is the smile that responded to their bittersweet humor. His stories are their stories. His language is their language. As Mr. Gannon stood to begin his presentation to the first International Conference on Deaf History, a hand reached up to remove the microphone (passing it to a voice interpreter) so that the speaker might freely express himself in the language of his people, Sign Language. This man stands very tall in the eyes of his audience. He inspires as he points to three light sources: a window to a cherished history, a mirror reflecting Deaf achievers and shared victories, and a glow over the horizon, hinting at a new day for Deaf people.

### **The Films of Charles Krauel**

### **Video Review by Richard L. Cohen, M.S., Nationally Certified Deaf Interpreter, American Sign Language Instructor © 2002**

The Films of Charles Krauel

Produced by David H. Pierce and Jerry Strom

DAVIDEO Productions

VHS 68 minutes, film transferred to video, no audio, no captions

Historical /Deaf Studies Rating: A+ General Interest: B

Recommended for public and academic libraries. Of most interest to students of history, sign language and Deaf culture.

Watching "The Films of Charles Krauel" is akin to looking at old vacation movies spanning a period of 1925 to 1940. There is no pretense by Krauel to anything else - yet, as a stream-of-consciousness set of "reality takes" from times past, we have in this video a tremendous gift - clear evidence of the enduring and socially satisfying strengths of the Deaf community. Serious students of ASL and the Deaf community will glimpse some precious footage. Unless interested in viewing Americana in general, though, one is tempted to fast forward through many scenes to

experience the visual delights of Deaf institutions and people of the early to mid 1900's. This film would make an excellent companion to the 30-minute Dawn Sign Press video title, "Charles Krauel, A Profile of a Deaf Filmmaker," which includes some of the key ASL and Deaf community excerpts, supplemented with ASL commentary. While the DAVIDEO Productions title is a completely visual experience (there is no audio), the Dawn Sign Press video includes both voice-over and open captions, making it accessible to a wider audience. Each of these videos featuring Krauel's films has lasting value and delivers strong messages. Watching "The Films of Charles Krauel" makes two of these messages abundantly clear. Deaf people are full of life. Sign language is the expression of that full life.

With appropriate background knowledge, the viewer will get the sense that "the more things change, the more they remain the same." Deaf audiences will especially appreciate this affirmation. Mainstream (non-Deaf) people will come away feeling convinced that the Deaf community actually exists, although not necessarily at a fixed geographical location. Further, the films demonstrate that Deaf people, no matter how scattered, will find each other. No one watching "The Films of Charles Krauel" could ever think of Deaf people as isolated! Rather, one sees Deaf individuals enjoying life to the fullest, as part of a vibrant community. Therein lies the reason Charles Krauel filmed ... so that Deaf people could share what they experienced during the various gatherings of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf and other celebrations of Deaf fellowship. After scanning scene after scene of this kind of community, courtesy of Charles Krauel, one comes away feeling that life is good.

#### **A Documentary: Charles Krauel - Profile of a Deaf Filmmaker**

**Video review by Margaret Klotz**

#### **A Documentary: Charles Krauel - Profile of a Deaf Filmmaker**

hosted by Ted Suppala

ASL, open captions, voice-over, distributed by Dawn Sign Press

What better way to learn about history than to see it? Welcome to America's Deaf community circa 1930. Charles Krauel was a Deaf film maker in the days before home video recorders. Krauel had the foresight to know how important it was to document ASL, schools for the Deaf, travels and important social events of the day. This video would be wonderful for secondary students and adults, both deaf and hearing. I found the video to be entertaining and educational. It is so rare to see such early footage of the Deaf community. A real treat.

#### **A Tribute to Art Kruger**

**Video Review by Richard L. Cohen, M.S., Nationally Certified Deaf Interpreter, American Sign Language Instructor © 2002**

#### **The Last Interview with Art**

Published by the American Athletic Association of the Deaf (AAAD), later called the USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF)

VHS 38 minutes, ASL only

Overall rating: A+. Recommended for a wide variety of ASL audiences.

If there was ever a video that could be enjoyed or utilized by Deaf history buffs, Deaf sports aficionados, ASL students, working interpreters, and, especially, grassroots Deaf people, this film fits the bill. We should be eternally grateful to AAAD for making this interview possible in the nick of time, as Art Kruger passed away a mere 9 days later.

One will appreciate that Art's contribution to Deaf sports is legendary, perhaps be motivated to seek out more information from Deaf history books, and realize that this video interview brings life to dry historical facts. Much of the interview is typical Deaf culture, high context, hence, if not a Deaf sports aficionado, one may eagerly seek more information in order to understand more fully. Budding interpreters will realize the importance of being prepared by doing some background research before attempting to interpret material they are not familiar with. But, make no mistake, this video is tremendously enlightening by itself, even to those who abhor Deaf sports.

Missing from the Deaf History books, but vividly alive in the memories of many grassroots Deaf people, are the very important social aspects of Deaf sports among adults at a national level. Art talks about all this, and much more, making one aware that it was infinitely more difficult in the past to organize events on a national scale. After viewing this video, Art Kruger will likely be your new Deaf hero.

#### **LITERATURE: Original ASL literature and ASL translations of English literature**

##### **Tuck Everlasting, a novel by Natalie Babbitt**

##### **Translated in ASL by Adrian Blue**

VHS 4 hours, 39 minutes, 5 videocassettes

ASL, with voice-over

Accompanying book and teaching guide. Published by

Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing undertook a massive, but very valuable task: translating literature into ASL. This set of five VHS tapes presents an ASL translation of Tuck Everlasting (book by Natalie Babbitt), presented by Deaf professional actor, Adrian Blue. Scene, lighting, and camera angle changes creatively depict time and location changes. The ASL used in the story represents a rather high register. Adrian Blue incorporates an excellent use of space, non-manual signals, and classifiers, in addition to complex ASL sentence structure. From a technical viewpoint, the performance is superb.

This videotape has several potential uses. The primary stated goal of the translation is to encourage Deaf students to be "readers" of literature. That purpose offers many instructional possibilities for upper middle school and older students. The accompanying literature also points out that the makers hope parents will sit down with their children to "read" the book together (on videotape) and then discuss it.

A secondary use of the videotape would be for ASL language analysis. Students of the language could compare and contrast the written and ASL versions. This would be an advanced exercise for students already skilled in the language.