THE DEAF DO NOT BEG

The Struggle for Citizenship

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pardon my intrusion. My deafness forces me to make my living by selling the Best First Aid Bandages for 25c.

Would you like to Buy One?

Thank You!

I AM AN AMERICAN

KINDLY RETURN THIS CARD
CONVERSATION

- Sue Schweik: *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*
  - Passive Objects
  - Disability as a Category
  - Deaf *Ethnos*
Defining the Deaf Community
National Organizations
  - National Association of the Deaf (NAD)
  - National Fraternal Society of the Deaf (NFSD)
Oralism and the Manual Method
The Extended Family
Deaf elites engaged in a campaign against deaf peddlers in an effort to improve their own status as citizens by representing themselves as able-bodied—both in body and in mind—in order to achieve their ideal of *American citizenship*.

The driving question: what did normalcy and citizenship mean for those Deaf elites?
DEAF LEADERS

- Elite
- White
- Male
- Heteronormative
- Middle-Class/Upper Class
- Educated
DRIVING CONCERNS: THE BIG PICTURE

- Oralism
- Eugenics
- Economic Opportunities
- Citizenship
DEFINING ‘PEDDLING’

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THE VAGABOND EVIL: WHY WERE PEDDLERS A THREAT?

- Public Perception
- Objects of Charity
- Deaf Education as a Failure
- Employment Discrimination
  - Poor workers
  - Unprepared for the Work Force
  - Disabled=Unable to Work
- Ableist Rhetoric
STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

- Community Uplift and Self-Help
  - Education
  - Work
  - Mutual Aid
- Eliminating Peddlers
STRATEGIES

- 1880s-1910
  - Blame Peddlers
  - Shunning (Community Accountability)

- 1911-1930
  - NAD Bureau
  - Legislation
  - Citizen Police
  - Target ABC Card Peddlers
  - Labor Bureaus

- 1930s
  - Great Depression

- 1940s-1950s
  - Beggar Kings
  - Winding down the campaigns
ANTI-PEDDLING STRATEGIES:
1880s-1910

- Rhetoric
- Shunning
- Shift to Impostors

“Any lame or blind person can easily be distinguished by his appearance, but the deaf cannot so be, because he looks just like any other hearing person. That is why the pretense of being deaf and dumb is popularly adopted as an easy means of getting money from the public.”

-NAD Bulletin, 1910

- Local and State Action
ANTI-PEDDLING STRATEGIES: 1911-1920

- NAD Impostor Bureau Established 1911
- Shunning
- Legislation
- “Citizen Police”
- Publicity
- Federal legislation
ANTI-PEDDLING STRATEGIES: 1920-1930s

- Existing Legislation
- Target Alphabet Card Peddlers
- Shift to Real Deaf Peddlers
- Labor Bureaus
- Great Depression
Focus Shifts to Peddling Rings
White Slavery and Beggar Kings
Compensation
- “Tips”
- Run Down Housing
- Promises of “Savings”
- Exclusive Peddling Turf
- Violence

Krakover and Paxton Gangs
LEON KRAKOVER-
NFSD MEMBERSHIP CARD
WINDING DOWN THE CAMPAIGNS

- Federal Agencies
- Leon Krakover Lawsuit
- Code of Regulation of Itinerant Sellers, 1956
  - Lewd Pictures
  - Alphabet Cards
  - Pleas for Sympathy
  - Traffic in Women
  - Licensure
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- American Sign Language and Deafness as a Commodity
- Intersections, Deaf *Ethnos*, and Redefining Ethnicity as a Category of Study
- Schism between Disability Studies and Deaf Studies
Thank you!

- E-mail: orobinso@holycross.edu
- Feel free to e-mail me if you have further questions, comments, or would like to discuss my work further.