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Inside Deaf Culture

Carol A. Padden, Tom L. Humphries

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In this absorbing story of the changing life of a community, the authors of *Deaf in America* reveal historical events and forces that have shaped the ways that Deaf people define themselves today. *Inside Deaf Culture* relates Deaf people's search for a voice of their own, and their proud self-discovery and self-description as a flourishing culture.

Padden and Humphries show how the nineteenth-century schools for the deaf, with their denigration of sign language and their insistence on oralist teaching, shaped the lives of Deaf people for generations to come. They describe how Deaf culture and art thrived in mid-twentieth century Deaf clubs and Deaf theatre, and profile controversial contemporary technologies.

Most triumphant is the story of the survival of the rich and complex language American Sign Language, long misunderstood but finally recently recognized by a hearing world that could not conceive of language in a form other than speech. In a moving conclusion, the authors describe their own very different pathways into the Deaf community, and reveal the confidence and anxiety of the people of this tenuous community as it faces the future.

Inside Deaf Culture celebrates the experience of a minority culture--its common past, present debates, and promise for the future. From these pages emerge clear and bold voices, speaking out from inside this once silenced community.

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