

Schein, J. S. (1984). *Speaking the language of sign*.  
Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc.

## APPENDIX A

# Annotated List of Sign Dictionaries

This listing is arranged alphabetically by author to indicate that the entries are not competing with each other. They serve different purposes. Some are general presentations of Ameslan; some describe special sign systems; others concentrate on particular sign collections. The entries are briefly annotated and include estimates of the size of the vocabulary. As pointed out in the text, counting signs can be misleading, because a particular sign may stand for several words in English; for example, the sign in Figure 1 can be glossed as "work," "working," "worked," "labor," "laboring," "labored," and so on. It could, therefore, be counted as one sign, or six, or more. On the other hand, one word may be represented by two or more signs; for example, "husband" in Figure 14 is made up of the signs for "man" and "marry." The estimated number of signs, then, is only intended to give some idea of the extent of the coverage.

Probably the first published dictionary of signs in the United States was James S. Brown's *A Vocabulary of Mute Signs*, printed in 1856 by a Louisiana newspaper, the *Morning Comet* of Baton Rouge. In 1884, L. R. Harmsley & Co. (Philadelphia) published W. P. Clark's *The Indian Sign Language*, which contained about one thousand entries verbally described and relating each to the equivalent Ameslan sign, thus making it a dictionary of both Indian and American sign. No other significant work appeared until 1909, the year *The Sign Language: A Manual of Signs* was published by J. Schuyler Long, then a principal at the Iowa School for the Deaf. Daniel D. Higgins followed, in 1923, with *How to Talk to the Deaf*, which he published himself. These four dictionaries are now largely of historical interest, since many of the signs depicted have been altered so much that they are as archaic to the modern signer as Chaucerian speech is to modern English speakers. Since 1960, there has been an explosion of sign dictionaries, with more than thirty collections published. Not every currently available compilation appears below, the idea of this listing being to introduce the range of possible sources, not to delimit them. For some other examples, see the review prepared by Bornstein and Hamilton (1972).

In reviewing these sign dictionaries one should be tolerant, as they strive to counter the long neglect of semiology. It might be well to keep in mind the wise words of the scholar Charlton Laird when referring to dictionaries generally he says:

A dictionary, at its best, is a mine of incomplete answers, but in a world where profound answers are vague and most answers are partly wrong, a collection of well-founded answers about man's most useful tool, language, can be a boon.\*

\*Laird 1970, p. xxx.



Anthony, D. *Seeing Essential English*. Vol. I and II. Anaheim, Cal.: Educational Services Division, Anaheim Union School District, 1971. One of the earliest versions of Manual English in this country, illustrated by line drawings of 1,000 signs.

Babbini, Barbara E. *An Introductory Course in Manual Communication*. Northridge, Cal.: San Fernando State College, 1965. The student version of this work, though not precisely a dictionary, can be useful for self-study; teachers will have no difficulty seeing its relevance to them. Arranged in twenty-two lessons are 600 signs, which are carefully described but not illustrated.

Becker, V. A. "Sign language," *Silent Worker*, 1956, 8(7), 4-7. Describes forty signs for use under water by skindivers. The U.S. Navy has trained underwater demolition teams to sign.

Charlip, Remy, Mary Beth Miller, and George Ancona. *Handtalk: An ABC of Finger Spelling & Sign Language*. New York: Parents Magazine Press, 1974. A picture book to introduce children to manual communication. Each letter of the alphabet is illustrated by color photographs of its fingerspelled equivalent and of a sign with the same initial letter for the English translation. Pictorial sequences also illustrate occasional signed sentences.

Cohen, E., L. Namir, and L. Schlesinger. *A New Dictionary of Sign Language*. The Hague: Mouton, 1977. The 1,400 Israeli signs are arranged by handshape and body part. In place of illustrations, English words and the Eshkol-Wachmann Movement Notation are used to describe the signs. The book demonstrates fully the notational system for those with an interest in representing signs in print.

Fant, L. J. *Ameslan: An Introduction to American Sign Language*. Northridge, Cal.: Joyce Motion Picture Co., 1977. Lou Fant is an accomplished actor familiar to TV viewers; his photographs not only depict the 400 signs but also clearly illustrate the role of facial expression in signing. Like Babbini (above), Fant has arranged the book in the form of lesson plans; he emphasizes putting the signs together meaningfully, rather than presenting them in isolation.

*Gestuno: International Sign Language of the Deaf*. Carlisle, England: British Deaf Association, 1975. An official publication of the World Federation of the Deaf, the book contains 1,470 signs depicted in photographs, each of which is defined by one French and one English word, and indexed in French, English, and Italian. A brief text describes the work of the WFD's Unification of Signs Commission and gives some clues to use of the signs in multilingual settings.

Gustason, G., D. Pfitzing, and E. Zawolkow. *Signing Exact English*. Rossmoor, Cal.: Modern Signs Press, 1972. This is the official guide to SEE II. It contains line drawings of 3,000 signs, including suffixes and prefixes.

Hackett, B. *Emergency Words for the Deaf and Hearing*. One of many collections of survival or emergency signs, this collection differs from most others in putting the signs into sentences such as "Don't move, you are hurt; breathe slowly." Because the author is a fireman, the signs tend to be those useful at a fire, but apply to medical emergencies as well. (Contact the sources in Appendix C for other lists or check with your local police, fire, or health department for emergency signs that may be in use in your locale.)

Jamison, S. L. *Signs for Computing Terminology*. Silver Spring, Md.: National Association of the Deaf, 1983. About 800 signs contributed by a panel of experts on computers and sign.

Kannapell, B., L. Hamilton, and H. Bornstein. *Signs for Instructional Purposes*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet College Press, 1969. Grouped under headings corresponding to college subjects, the 500 signs are those that have been invented at Gallaudet College for instruction of its students. Brief verbal descriptions accompany the line drawings. Indexed in English and French.

Kates, L., and J. D. Schein. *A Complete Guide to Communication with Deaf-Blind Persons*. Silver Spring, Md.: National Association of the Deaf, 1980. While not a dictionary, this book does introduce the seventy-five different ways now used to communicate with those who are both deaf and blind. In addition to describing each of the devices and methods, the book discusses some techniques for easing communication with and selecting a method suited to a particular deaf-blind person.

Meissner, M., and S. B. Philpott. "A Dictionary of Sawmill Workers' Signs," *Sign Language Studies*, 1975, 9, 309-47. The 150 signs are illustrated and described, with indications of their context. The signs are used not by deaf people but by Canadian sawmill workers, who need a visual system to communicate while the mill is operating. The signs are not limited to the transmission of technical, work-related information; they are also used for social conversation. The authors gathered the signs on the spot. They guess that other noisy workplaces (like steel rolling mills) also



have spontaneously generated sets of signs. The study is relevant for those considering the genesis of signs.

O'Rourke, T. J. *A Basic Course in Manual Communication*. Silver Spring, Md.: National Association of the Deaf, 1979. One of the two most popular sign dictionaries (Riekehof's being the other). The 750 entries are arranged by lessons and illustrated by line drawings, supplemented by verbal instructions for their reproduction by students.

Oléron, P. *Language Gestuel des Sourds-Muets*. Paris, France: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1974. The 1,000 signs are first described verbally and then illustrated by photographs. Since the dictionary is entirely in French, it will probably appeal to those interested in cross-cultural sign studies or planning a visit to France.

Riekehof, L. *The Joy of Signing*. Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1978. See O'Rourke (above) for the other bestselling dictionary of sign. This version is Riekehof's third. Each of the 1,500 signs is illustrated by a line drawing, described in words, and usually given a mnemonic (or etymological) clue.

Skelly, M., L. Schinsky, R. Donaldson, and R. W. Smith. *Handbook of Amerind Sign*. St. Louis: Veterans Administration Workshop, 1973. These one-handed signs were selected for use with aphasic veterans. The authors regard these signs as more suited to speech therapy than Ameslan or Manual English.

Springer, C. J. *Talking with the Deaf*. Baton Rouge, La.: Redemptorist Fathers, 1961. As a Catholic priest, Springer naturally includes signs for all concepts of importance in that religion. The 1,000 signs are shown in photographs accompanied by verbal descriptions. This work updates the popular text by Higgins (1942).

Statewide Project for the Deaf. *Preferred Signs for Instructional Purposes*. Austin, Tex.: Texas Education Agency, 1976. The 2,000 drawings are glossed in Spanish and English. The entries include affixes used in Manual English. The system is an attempt to standardize the use of signs in Texas classes for deaf students.

Stokoe, W., D. Casterline, and C. Croneberg. *A Dictionary of American Sign Language on Linguistic Principles*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet College Press, 1965 (copyright has now passed to Linstok Press, 9306 Mintwood Street, Silver Spring, Md. 20901). This book sets the standard against which to judge all other dictionaries in this field. The illustrations only explain the notational system invented by the authors (see Appendix B). It, rather than drawings, is used to describe the 2,000 entries. They are ordered by the elements of the system: tab, dez, sig. Those desiring to master this method of writing sign must begin with this book. A delightful bonus are its essays on Ameslan; they read as well today as they did at the beginning of the sign revolution.

Watson, D. *Talk with Your Hands*. Vols. I and II. Menasha, Wis.: George Banta, 1973. David Watson is a professional cartoonist who has combined his artistic skill with his interest in sign. He has chosen a cartoon format, with entire stories told in Ameslan. To tell these stories he uses about 3,000 signs. The book can be read without reference to the English captions, making it helpful in learning to read sign.

Woodward, J. *Signs of Sexual Behavior*. Silver Spring, Md.: TJ Publishers, 1979. The 150 signs displayed are carefully drawn. The verbal material focuses on when to use the signs rather than on how to make them. The collection is especially important to interpreters who work in medical-psychological settings.

Woodward, J. *Signs of Drug Use*. Silver Spring, Md.: TJ Publishers, 1980. As in the preceding book, the 150 signs are drawn, not described. This collection of signs will be of greatest value to those who work with teenagers and young adults.