



Missouri Association of the Deaf, Inc.

The Reverend James Henry Cloud

(April 26, 1862 – October 20, 1926)

The Missouri Association of the Deaf (MoAD) has a long history of people serving the organization from time to time through the years. One of the people we are remembering is the Reverend James Henry Cloud, a man of deep faith and vision. He was the voice and leader of the deaf and hard of hearing community in his time. To those people, he was the driving force and champion of their lives and rights.

The journey of his life began when James Henry Cloud was born in Chambersburg, Indiana on April 26, 1862. He was seven years old when he became deaf. It did not prevent him from continuing his education in the public schools until the age of 14. In 1876 he entered the Illinois School for the Deaf, graduated four years later, and entered Gallaudet College. Illness forced James to discontinue his studies before the end of his first year at Gallaudet. He eventually returned to Gallaudet in 1882, and later graduated in 1886 with a degree of Bachelor of Arts. James took the position as supervisor and culture instructor in the Illinois school.

While a student at Gallaudet College, James became interested in the Episcopal Church – a decision that led him to a lifetime career not only in the church, but also in the service to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. In 1884 he was confirmed by Bishop Randolph of Virginia. During his senior year, he set up a Bible class for the Deaf at the Church of Ascension, Washington, D.C. His work with the church earned him the respect of the educators who awarded him with the Bishop Pinckney Scholarship for a course at Seabury Divinity School. He declined the offer in order to earn a living without delay. However James undertook the studies for the ministry privately while juggling the duties at the Illinois School. In 1889, he was ordained deacon by Bishop Seymour of the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois at Trinity School in Jacksonville, Illinois. In the same year, he received his Master's degree from Gallaudet.

Later in 1890, James resigned his position at the school in order to become assistant to the Reverend J.M. Koehler, vicar of All-Souls' Church for the Deaf, Philadelphia. He served there only a few months because in the fall he accepted appointment as principal of the new public school for the deaf in St. Louis, Missouri. He held this position until the very end of his life on October 20, 1926 after a long illness. At the same time, he continued church work there. James married Lulu O. Herdman in 1892 and had a family of four children.

Dr. James Cloud's church work gave him a chance to travel far and wide to help not only other dioceses and missions, but also the deaf community. He was elevated to the priesthood by Bishop Tuttle of Missouri in January, 1893. He spent some time serving St. Thomas Mission Church (later named St. Thomas Episcopal Church for the Deaf). While being involved in the Missouri Association of the Deaf, he started a campaign for home fund with a donation of \$1.00 and encouraged everyone to participate. Originally it was for a home for the aged and infirm deaf to live in. As the fund grew and the time quickly flew, HUD came into existence. The dream for independent living at low cost became reality as 40-unit low-income housing project, with assistance from HUD, was built in Fulton, Missouri.

Dr. James Cloud also served as the president of National Association of the Deaf (NAD) from 1917 to 1923. He touched the lives of everyone with his talents, his strong personality, and leadership.

To everyone, he was a lecturer, preacher, missionary, and a writer of the journals of the deaf. To them, he was beloved as a pastor and a friend.

At that time, the Missouri Association of the Deaf was very fortunate and blessed to have among one of its members, a man of remarkable talents and of long distinguished career, as the Reverend Dr. James Henry Cloud.

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Author

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