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Book Review

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Shroyer, E. H. & Shroyer, S.P. (1984). *A look at regional differences in American Sign Language: Signs across America*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet College Press.

If you, like this reviewer, have been provoked by sign language/manual communication students who always chide, "Well, I thought that the sign for "x" was "y"; that's what So and So taught me!" you may cherish this book. Hopefully, all sign language users realize that there are variations for particular signs but now the Shroyers have put many of those variations in print.

This reviewer took her first manual communication class in Florida, her first sign language class in North Carolina and then taught in both North Carolina and Wisconsin. When the differences in three states were not enough, she sought RID certification in South Carolina and a second degree in California. Thus, to such a transient, *Signs Across America* is interesting and adds credence to one's national flavor or seemingly potpourri of various regional signs.

The 305 page paperback book illustrates various signs for 130 words/concepts. Each word was found to have a minimum of three different signs used across America to represent the same

concept. Some readers may not like the idea that only 25 states were involved in the collection of signs but the Shroyers felt that they got a representative sampling of signs from across the United States and that the chosen states "represented a good cross section of the country."

In *Signs Across America* each sign drawing representing a particular concept is numbered, #1, #2, #3, etc., and these are said to be the signs used by "native speakers and those who associate with the deaf community." The variations are generally dependent upon one's geographical location. Thus, the book contains 22 different signs to represent "picnic." While interesting for the traveller or the experienced sign language user or even interpreter, the beginning signer would probably either be intrigued or overwhelmed by such a text.

This particular consumer sees *Signs Across America* as a good additional resource for the curious, advanced, or traveling signer, as well as for interpreters. Should one decide to construct a trivia game around sign language and systems and signs, Shroyers' book could surely provide material for the questions. Undoubtedly, a conversation piece.

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