

## **Rosa Hampton Halpen (1861-1939)**

Pioneering Student and Educator

Quote: ““Everyone here seems to be of the opinion that the experiment has been a success, and that the college will continue to receive women..”—1889

“...It meant a great and radical change when signs were forbidden and all were required to use English spelled on the fingers or spoken...” –1926



[From: The Rochester School for the Deaf Archives]

Born: January 8, 1861  
South Grove, Ill.

Died: April 30, 1939  
Cremated at Mt Hope Cemetery  
Rochester, NY on May 4, 1939

### Family of origin:

Father John (b. 1820) and Mother Elizabeth J. Hampton (b. 1839-1909) from the United Kingdom. After emigration to the US, father was a farmer/farm laborer, living in Illinois for a time.

Four sisters, one brother: Mary, Bessie (Elizabeth), Katie (Catherine), Jeannie (Jane), ROSA and Willie (William). Parents had two other unnamed children who died in infancy.

Oldest sister, Mary (b. 1850 in England) was also Deaf. Rosa reported that Mary became Deaf at age 4 due to “uncertain reasons, perhaps a severe cold.” Mary Halpen attended the Illinois School for the Deaf (1863-1870) and married a Deaf man, Samuel Kee in Rochester, N Y in 1874.

Rosa became Deaf between 10 and 11 years of age after having spinal meningitis.

#### Contributions/Relationship with the Deaf Community:

One of the first students to attend Rochester School for the Deaf and the first graduate in 1884.

Teacher at Rochester School for the Deaf for 30 years

Part of an early group of women students educated at Gallaudet University

One of the founders of the RSD Alumni Association

Was listed as a member of the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech and American Instructors of the Deaf

Wrote a book on the history of Rochester School for the Deaf.

#### Schooling:

1873 or 1874-1876 attended Fanwood School for the Deaf

1876-1884 attended Rochester School for the Deaf (entering October 4 1876 as STUDENT #9 and being the first to graduate in 1884, graduating “with honors”).

member of a missionary society and literary/debating club at Rochester School for the Deaf

member of the group that formed the Alumni association (1904) and actively involved as officer in the Alumni association for many years

1888-1890 took a two-year program of courses at Gallaudet University

#### Professional Experiences:

1884-1888 and 1890-1916 teacher at Rochester School for the Deaf  
taught kindergarten, reading/language and was on the editorial staff of the Rochester Advocate (school newspaper)

1936: Wrote an early history of the Rochester School for the Deaf (1878-1936)

#### Personal information:

Lived in Rochester with various family members most of her life (her mother and sister, Kate, and her sister Jeannie and her family).

Lived with her older Deaf sister when she was about 14 years old in Argyle, NY after enrolling in Fanwood.

*Silent worker* (1922) reported she was “an excellent speaker, lipreader, and signmaker.”

#### Original documents/Publications:

Halpen, Rosa H. (1884). George Eliot as a Woman and as a Writer (graduation essay). *Rochester Daily Paper for Our Little People*, 4 (264).

Halpen, Rosa (1890, December 13). Number Teaching. *Rochester Daily Paper for Our Little People*. 11, (84), pgs. 183-187.

Halpen, Rosa (1928). Early Impressions of "Georgie." *Silent Worker*, 40, (10), pg. 425.

Halpen, Rosa H. (1926) Reminiscences of Early Days. *Rochester Advocate*, 47, (2), pgs. 1-2.

Halpen, Rosa H. (1936). A History of Rochester School for the Deaf, 1876-1936. Rochester, NY: Rochester School for the Deaf.

#### References :

Who's Who in the Deaf World (1922). *Silent Worker*, 35 (3), pg. 119.

Rosa Hampden Halpen 1861-1939: Our First Graduate Passes. (1939, May). *Rochester Advocate*, 59 (8), pg. 8.

Alumni notes. (1939, June). *Rochester Advocate*, 59 (9), pgs. 4-5.

#### Other documents/Information/Pictures:

Image below from RSD enrollment book (Rochester School for the Deaf Archives):

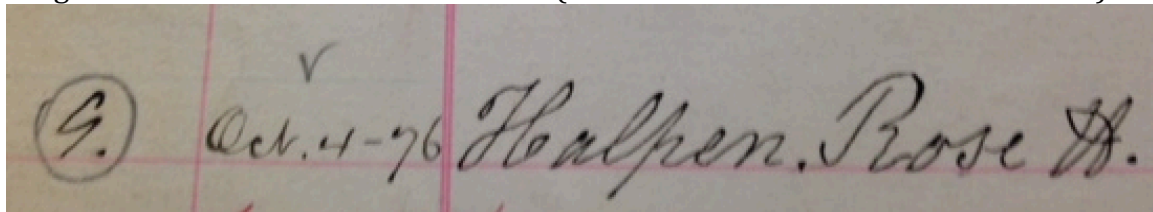


Image below from 1875 Census:

Rosa is about 14 years old she is living with her sister (Mary Kee, now married with an infant) in Argyle New York (near Saratoga Springs). Her older sister Mary was Deaf and as well as her husband Samuel Kee (age 35—cabinet maker?).

Samuel H. Kee	35	A	Orange	1		Manhattan				Deaf & dumb
Mary H. Kee	23	F	England	1						Deaf & dumb
Rosa Halpen	14	F	Michigan		1					Deaf
John H. Kee	2	F	England		1					

Image below from US special census on Deaf hearing marriages (note):

Rosa Halpen took down the information for the form about her sister, Mary Halpen (Kee) in January 1890. She worked for Dr. Fay as one of the Gallaudet students

collecting demographic information during this time.

[Please answer the questions as fully as possible, and return the record to E. A. Fay,  
Kendall Green, Washington, D. C.]

no. 2068

## MARRIAGE RECORD

OF

Samuel H. Kee (husband) and Mary Halpern (wife.)

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**I. DETAILS RELATING TO MARRIAGE.**

1. Date of Marriage? June 16. 1890 Place of Marriage? Rochester N.Y.

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Date of information, Jan 1890. (Signed) Rosa H. Halpern.

Below picture of group of teachers from Williams, Lynne D. (1976). One Hundred years: The Rochester School for the Deaf 1876-1976. Written and printed by RSD Board of Trustees.





Below document from the 1881 Western New York Institute for Deaf-Mutes' Principal's Report in the Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Volume 3 (1882). Albany: Weed, Parsons & Company Legislative Printers.

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*To the Board of Trustees of the Western New York Institution for Deaf-mutes.*

GENTLEMEN — I herewith present you the annual report of the institution under my care.

The attendance for the year has been one hundred and thirty-two; average attendance, one hundred and seventeen. Pupils have returned promptly after vacations and have remained through the term with no serious interruption to the regular work of school; the absences on account of sickness or for other cause being comparatively few and of short duration. The accompanying report by Dr. Mallory, the attending physician, gives our health record in full.

Our school is graded into four divisions, viz.: the kindergarten, primary, grammar, and high class. The high class receives its first member by appointment in Miss Rosa Halpen, in regard to whose appointment Dr. M. B. Anderson, President of the University of Rochester, in a letter to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, says:

“Miss Rosa Halpen for some years has been a *protégée* of myself and Mrs. Anderson. It is the opinion of the trustees and the teachers here that she ought to have a course of high school instruction, and that this instruction can be successfully imparted here, without injury to the school and without additional expense to the State. In this opinion of the gentlemen in charge I most heartily concur. Two of the teachers are college graduates, and all that are employed are fully competent to give high school instruction in any situation. There are three other pupils whose term of appointment has not expired, who need similar training, and who can be put in the same class with the young woman of whom I speak.

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Below photograph from Rochester School for the Deaf Archives:

