

The aim of the present thesis is to cover the issue of deafness from historical perspective, analyze the mutual relationship between hearing and deaf society and to bring to explanation the sociocultural specifics of the deaf in the Czech republic. The thesis views the issue of the deaf from the point of holistic cross-field perspective which takes account of findings from sociology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, psychology and pedagogy. The first chapter deals with hearing impairment from the medical point of view; we take a brief account on the etiology of hearing impairment and consider the effects of hearing loss on the ontogeny of the individual. In the second chapter we center on the issue of deafness as a subject of pedagogy, linguistics and sociology and their complementary themes: deaf education, sign language and socialization and enculturation of the deaf; the fourth part of the chapter synthesizes the findings of the fields mentioned into three hypothetical models of deafness – medical, social-integrating and cultural – and brings them into comparison. The third chapter concerns about social attitudes toward deafness in the course of history, we consider the philosophical roots of particular concepts of deafness and draw attention to the milestones in deaf history. The fourth chapter contains an outline of history of education, associations and social life of the deaf community in Bohemia and Moravia starting with the foundation of the first deaf school in Prague in 1786.