

than from some mystical determination to "express group identity," the attraction of the slang style for many Americans springs from the stresses of life in a depersonalizing society, where there is plenty to be irreverent, cynical, and angry about. The startling associations of much slang warrant its value, for more than ever stridency, ridicule, and hyperbole appear to be the verbal strategies most likely to win popular attention or, indeed, to be taken seriously at all.

FURTHER READING

Partly because of the not very distinct nature of the subject, little that has been written about American slang offers significant analysis, cultural context, or theory; slang dictionaries, unless scrupulously edited, can be quite misleading as to the meaning and currency of many entries. Though now outdated, Mencken (1936, 535-89; 1948, 643-786) has long been a starting point for students. Flexner (Wentworth and Flexner 1960) provides an influential general discussion, whereas the Introduction to Lighter (1994) attempts to clarify the place of slang in American linguistic history. In the context of world English, R. Bailey (1996) treats many of the issues addressed in the present chapter. Illuminating book-length works from various perspectives include those by Dalzell (1996), Eble (1996), Folb (1980), and, for colloquial innovation in general, Sornig (1981).

7 DIALECTS

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7.1 Introduction

American dialects record the contents of the English language as social facts realized in a geographic framework. As complete linguistic systems, all dialects report speech within the context of larger constructs - a language or a national variety of a language at a given point in the history of its development. American dialects transmit a national variety of Modern English in a distinctive pattern of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.

The first speakers of American English received the language in a plastic state and shaped it according to their experience. Current regional and social dialects of American speech reflect the experiences of explorers and settlers on the Atlantic seaboard, of Western pioneers who followed them, and of later immigrants who energized the society as it moved across the continent. The dialects echo developments in the English language at critical historical junctures. They mirror cultural interaction - distinguishing Northern, Southern, Midland, and Western divisions of American geography, stratified according to the racial caste, sex, age, and education of American society. And they unite in the formation of American English, unmistakable to any speaker of the English language today.

The sounds, syntactic structures, and lexicon of American English unite in an integrated system. The phonology provides a system of contrastive sets (phonemes) that distinguish consonants, vowels, and units of intonation (stress, pitch, and juncture). The grammar outlines the arrangement, selection, and inflection of speech parts. And the vocabulary records a cultural index through distinctive words that identify the artifacts, ideas, and behavior of the American people. Each regional and social variety forms a contrastive set within the national pattern. Because word study lends itself most easily to written description, dialect study traditionally concentrates on vocabulary, rather than pronunciation or grammar, as

14: Jelic Ajece (ed.) (2001). The Cambridge History of the English Language. Vol IV. CUP. 253-291.

a matter of convenience. Dialect perception, however, invariably begins with the reception of the sounds of those words, the pronunciation of consonants and vowels realized in a distinctive intonational contour of stress, pitch, and juncture. And, as communication, dialect interpretation depends upon grammar for the organization and transmission of those words in syntactic structures. The union of these phonological, grammatical, and lexical systems forms the dialects that distinguish speakers as Northerners, as Southerners, or as members of one social group or another. And although this report concentrates on regional speech, the evidence implies social variation within every geographic construct of American English.

As integrated linguistic systems, these dialects share essential structural characteristics realized in all varieties of Modern English. This common core includes phonemes (contrastive phonological units), a basic grammar, and a general vocabulary that make communication possible among all English-speaking peoples. Their shared cultural experience has given rise to the language itself. Defined as sets of dialects within national varieties, a language reveals its organization and substance through the expression of its regional and social patterns. Within a large and complex language, such as English, national varieties form its primary divisions — specifically, British, Scottish, Irish, Canadian, Australian, and American. Within each of these political domains, dialects emerge, but all of these preserve the basic features that make them English.

As vernaculars, spoken varieties of American English, these dialects transmit social experience through patterns of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. They record the cultural contributions of the earliest settlers and the migration routes established by those who followed them. They reflect old political and ecclesiastical boundaries, often coinciding with zones of physical geography and climate. And they outline cultural centers, illustrate social structure, and demonstrate the impact of later immigrants who helped reshape the English language in the New World.

7.2 History and geography

Atlantic and Gulf coastal communities form the primary settlement areas of American dialects, from Massachusetts Bay to New Orleans. Out of northeastern focal areas came pioneers who settled Upstate New York, western New England, and the Inland North westward, as well as the Shenandoah Valley through Virginia into North Carolina and east Tennessee. To the south, planters occupied the piedmont, the coastal

plains, and ultimately the delta divisions of the Mississippi River. Routes south and west gained force from the religious and political influence of Puritans in New England, Quakers in Pennsylvania, and Mormons in the Middle West. Later, sectionalism divided the country, North and South, on the issue of slavery, but before that the geography of the eastern half of the continent channeled migration along practical routes.

Climate determined the northern limits of the Cotton Kingdom with the 180-day growing season. It also marked the western limits of conventional eastern agriculture with twenty-two inches of annual rainfall at the ninety-eighth meridian. Intensive settlement beyond that line, from the Red River in the Upper Midwest to the Pecos River in Texas, followed the conclusion of the Civil War, Indian removal, and specialized rural occupations unknown in the East, as, for example, large-scale cattle and sheep production, as well as "dry farming" to feed those animals.

These processes led to the development of great centers of American culture at Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Charleston, New Orleans, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Phoenix, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, Salt Lake City, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. As focal areas, each of these controls a domain of urban influence, hosts a complex social structure, and attracts newcomers from virtually every country in the world. As a result, geographic dialects and their history record the divisions of a national language and demonstrate the impossibility of either a national standard of correctness or a descriptive simplex, sometimes posited as a fictional "General American" pattern.

Although much work remains to be done, especially in the Western states, American dialect research has outlined the principal characteristics of major regional dialects and their urban focal areas. Following the aforementioned facts of physical, social, and linguistic geography, current dialect study suggests four major speech areas in the United States: Northern, Southern, Midland, and Western.

Virtually every group of immigrants to the New World brought a substantial set of dialect features. The most complicated of these emerge from the English-speaking varieties of the British Isles — from England, Scotland, and Ireland. When these can be sorted out and identified with authority across the United States and Canada, such definition will surely clarify the geographic and social patterns of American English. Because all of these sources formed speech in the early focal areas in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas, a convincing discrimination of British, Irish, and Scottish contributions would help outline the language

that gave rise to modern dialects. For definitive identification, such description will require characterization of the rural and urban varieties of Elizabethan and Jacobean English in England and Scotland, as well as the development of English in Ireland in the seventeenth century from British and Scottish sources.

American dialects reflect the evolution of Modern English from the early seventeenth century to the present. They suggest the impact of social forces that directed several courses of development. And, most important, they illustrate the history and the contents of a major national variety of the most influential language in the world today. These dialects — regional and social lexical, grammatical, and phonological patterns — report the form and substance of American English and imply the social history from which they emerge.

American dialects originated in the seventeenth century during the most unsettled period in the history of the language. Early Modern English accepted more words into its lexicon and demonstrated more variety in its grammar and pronunciation than at any time before or since. These facts mirror a society under equally dramatic social change. Like the rest of Europe, England had undergone a cultural renaissance that brought with it a conviction that the speech of the people should be the official language of the land. England also shared the experience of its neighbors in educational, political, religious, and intellectual developments that reorganized its culture. Those social forces produced a civil war, a modification of the monarchy, large-scale immigration to the New World, and a remarkable era of experimentation with, and practical applications of, scientific theory.

Supported by the formation of modern mathematics, this era witnessed the greatest concentration of intellectual development in human history. This contribution proceeded from a belief, first, in a natural order underlying surface irregularity and confusion and, second, in the perfection of thought through rational habits of the mind. Neither assumption was new to Western thought, but, when harnessed with the idea of progress, they gave shape to a modern mindset. The emergence of New World settlements logically projected those beliefs, providing a rationale, as well as faith and courage to establish order in a wilderness through the application of reason, energy, and social reform. This legacy laid the foundations of American society.

That society and its experience gave rise to these distinctive dialects. As the realization of the English language in America, these varieties illustrate the same sensitivity to social forces found in all cultural institutions. As Frederick Jackson Turner (1894) explained:

Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people, to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life.

Those forces include reflexes not only of the Age of Reason coupled with the idea of Progress, but also of the Industrial Revolution, the theory of Manifest Destiny, and the discovery of electricity and its practical applications. All of these factors gave rise to an unprecedented development of a new society through the resources of modern transportation and mass communication.

7.3 American dialectology

Systematic American dialect research began with the formation of the American Dialect Society in 1889. Six volumes of *Dialect Notes* (1890–1939) record the contributions of its members. Later pioneering research continues to appear in the monograph series, Publication of the American Dialect Society, and the quarterly journal *American Speech*. Founded by Louise Pound and H. L. Mencken in 1925, *American Speech* remains the journal of record for American dialect studies, although the *Journal of English Linguistics* has more recently become an equally valuable resource. The early efforts of the American Dialect Society and the solid documentation of American dialect research in successive editions of H. L. Mencken's *American Language* laid the foundation for two great modern projects, the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada (Kurath 1939–43; H. Allen 1975–6; Pederson 1986–92) and the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (Cassidy and Hall).

Two bibliographical essays (H. Allen 1977; Pederson 1977b) document research in American regional dialects and pronunciation since 1945. During those first two decades after World War II, research virtually completed a general regional survey of the Eastern, Northern, Upper Midwestern, and Southern United States through American linguistic atlas projects, while the *Dictionary of American Regional English* or *DARE* (Cassidy and Hall) project extended a lexical survey across the entire country. Taken together, those efforts outline a regional pattern of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from the Atlantic States to the Mississippi Valley with a

substantial lexical record for the Western states. In 1988, the Linguistic Atlas of the Western States (LAWS) project initiated a systematic survey of those regions beyond the Upper Midwest in the north and Gulf States in the south (Pederson 1996b). As the bibliographical essays indicate, valuable independent studies outlined much information about Western pronunciation and grammar, but the work offers no integrated record to match the authoritative information on the regional vocabulary found in the *DARE* survey. For that reason, the following summary of Western dialects is a preliminary overview.

This report summarizes available evidence that characterizes American dialects. These sources include findings of American atlas projects, collateral research, and independent sociolinguistic investigations. Specifically, these include the linguistic atlases, the *DARE* project, and the subregional surveys, all described by Harold Allen (1977). The dependence upon atlas evidence follows the fact that these efforts produce systematically contrastive data across large target areas and yield a unified data base, however limited in range and resources.

All of this research records the findings of deductive word study. Focused on the phonological word, investigations have outlined patterns of usage according to lexical, morphological, and phonological (phonemic and phonetic) distribution. The approach reflects the fact that no method has yet demonstrated either a procedure for the contrastive analysis of large linguistic units – as, for example, phrase structures or sentences – or the fact that dialect features can be usefully described at this level of inquiry. Although the immediate future of linguistic geography will probably depend upon an integrated word geography, the recorded evidence, so far, yields autonomous sets of lexical, morphological, and phonological units. As a result, the findings are suggestive at best, and a review of American dialects today can promise no more than an opaque pattern of probable distribution. Essays that promise more require close and skeptical reading.

The study of American social dialects is equally inconclusive, but its findings offer a systematic approach that promises useful results. Wolfram (1969) documents the aims, methods, and findings of research conducted from this perspective. Its most compelling arguments proceed from the study of small sets of features, but such discussions communicate little information immediately useful in the identification, analysis, and description of general regional or social patterns of American English. Such work, nevertheless, has become the central preoccupation of many dialectologists today. Their findings offer a sensitivity to sociolinguistic reality that cannot be matched in regional surveys aimed at global coverage (even-

handed representation of lexical, grammatical, and phonological features). Combined with atlas investigations, however, these narrow studies offer depth, delicacy, and internal coherence. And those resources provide an evaluation procedure that tests the adequacy of the broad-gauge regional surveys. In the present overview, sociolinguistic findings demonstrate the implications of those general surveys and contribute most in outlining the varieties of American English dialects.

7.4 Historical background

Like all varieties of Modern English, American speech has its source in the dialects of Middle English (1100–1500). And like vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation evolved from the dialects of fifteenth-century England into those of early Modern English (1500–1700). Principal developments during these two centuries include a reorganization of the vowel system and a modification of consonants to bring them virtually in line with their incidence today. Between 1400 and 1600, eighteen of the twenty stressed vowels underwent quantitative or qualitative change in the phonological process called the “Great Vowel Shift.” During the same period, the resonant consonants, especially /r, ɹ, w/, also developed sets of alternates that became crucial markers in the identification of American English dialects.

Seven of these form a basic index for American regional and social variation through early Modern English reflexes of Middle English pronunciations:

- (1) “long o” before /f, m, p, t/, realized as /u/ or /ʊ/, and least frequently /ʌ/, in *broom, cooper, hoof, hoop, roof, room, root, and soot* (broom words);
- (2) “short o” realized as /ɑ/ or /ɔ/ before stops in *hop, cob, oat, head, rock, and bog* (forms with “short o” before /g/ and also some other consonants, as in *on, cloth, and closet*, are a special set of *hog* words);
- (3) /ə/ before /r/, realized as /ɑ/ or /ɔ/, as in *barn, car, and parté* (*barn* words), and after /w/, when before an alveolar obstruent, as in *wash, water, and watch* (*wash* words);
- (4) the diphthongs /ai/ and /au/, realized as [ai ~ a ~ əə] and [au ~ əʊ ~ əo ~ əe], especially before voiceless obstruents, as in *right and route*;
- (5) postvocalic /r/, realized tautosyllabically as [ə] or [ɚ], as in *beer, bear, burr, and bear*;
- (6) postvocalic /l/, realized tautosyllabically as [ə] or [ɹ] after back vowels, as in *pull and fall*, and heterosyllabically after front vowels as [f] or [l], as in *silly and belly*; and
- (7) initial /hw/, realized as /hw/ or /w/, as in *wheat, wheel, and white* (*wh* words).

In addition to those sets of regionally contrastive features, several social markers distinguish American dialects, irrespective of their geographic provinces, including:

- (1) alternation of up-dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ as /t, f/ and /d, v/, respectively;
- (2) modification of postvocalic consonant clusters /-sps, -sts, -sks/, as in *wasp, post*, and *desks*, through simplification to become /wɒsp, pɒst, desk/, /wɒs, pɒs, des/, or /wɒstɪz, pɒstɪz, destɪz/;
- (3) the homophony of /r/ and /ɛ/ before nasal consonants, as in *gym* and *gem* or *pin* and *pen*;
- (4) the substitution of /ai/ for /oi/ in *oil, boil, hoist*, and similar words; and
- (5) aberrant verb inflections, as, for example, preterits *blowed (blew), brang (brought), catched (caught), clim (climbed), div (dived, dove), drownded (drowned), growed (grew), knowed (knew), riz (rose), and seen (saw)*; and past participles *broke, busted (broken), et (eaten), froze (frozen), gave (given), rode (ridden), stole, stole (stolen), swam, swimmid (swam), and writ, wrote (written)*.

The following regional summaries identify principal dialect features of American pronunciation. These include a phonemic system, most easily recognized through its relationships to British Received Pronunciation (RP), a dominant regional pattern of pronunciation, most conveniently identified with the Inland Northern dialect, and a number of recessive features, most clearly associated with social dialects, especially those of Afro-Americans and Latinos. Taken together, those consonants, vowels, and intonational contours form a distinctive national pattern.

American regional dialects share a common phonemic system, identical in most respects with that of standard British English. American English (AE) phonological segments are twenty-four consonants and fourteen vowels. Two subsets of consonants include (1) the obstruents: stops /p, b, t, d, k, ɡ/ (as in *pill, bill, hill, kill, tell, and gill*), fricatives /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/ (as in *fill, view, ether, either, sill, zoo, shoe, pleasure, and bill*), and affricates /tʃ, ʃ/ (as in *chill and pledge*) and (2) the resonants: nasals /m, n, ŋ/ (as in *mill, sin, and ring*), laterals /l, r/ (as in *lien and rill*), and semivowels /w, y/ (as in *will and you*). Three subsets of vowels include (1) free vowels: front vowels /i, e/ (as in *peel and pain*), back vowels /u, o, ɔ/ (as in *pool, pole, and pall*), and diphthongs /ai, au, oi/ (as in *file, foul, and foil*), (2) checked vowels /ɪ, ɛ, æ, ʊ, ɑ, ʌ/ (as in *pit, pet, pat, pot, and put*), and (3) two weakly stressed vowels /ɪ̣, ə/ (as in *Cody* and *oada*).

Striking differences between the two national patterns appear in the realization of postvocalic /r/ and low checked vowels, as well as in the distinctiveness of intonational contours. In tautosyllabic contexts, both RP and

coastal varieties of AE, as well as some interior Southern varieties, vocalize postvocalic /r/ in both strongly and weakly stressed syllables, as, for example, *dear, dare, poor, pour, hurt, and water*, respectively. Both sets of dialects also have an unrounded low-back vowel before historical /r/ in *par* /ɑ/, with AE Southern dialects often including a nonphonemic centralizing glide [ə]. In RP and the American dialects of eastern New England, two phonemes, /ɒ/ and /ɔ/, occur respectively in *stop* and *straw*. In the British dialect, the rounded low-back vowel /ɒ/ occurs only before a consonant, as in *stop*, contrasting with /ɔ/ in *straw*, whereas the American dialects have /ɒ/ in both environments. Thus, in both dialects, *par* contrasts with *par*, as /ɑ/ versus /ɒ/ or /ɔ/, on the basis of lip rounding.

Even more distinctive are the intonational features that distinguish RP and AE. These include stress (contrastive loudness of syllables) and pitch (tune or melody). The sequence of stressed syllables contrasts in many words, as, for example, the placement of primary stress in *inquiry, garage, and advertisement* and the presence or absence of secondary stress in *library, dictionary*, and *territory*. Daniel Jones (361-5) also identifies "three noteworthy points of difference" of pitch that distinguish American intonation in certain contours that involve flat, falling, and modulating tone in the articulation of utterances.

For the past century, Inland Northern pronunciation has provided a functional baseline for most discussions of American pronunciation. This proceeds from several historical facts. Kurath (1939, 124) took the "central values" of the Inland Northern vowel system as "a standard of reference" for the transcription of speech in New England. Subsequent American atlas projects followed Kurath's lead, as explicitly stated, for example, in the LAGS survey (Pederson 1977a, 33-4). The widely read pronouncing dictionary of Kenyon and Knott also transmitted Inland Northern features as its base form. For example, Chomsky and Halle (ix): "The dialect of English that we study is essentially that described by Kenyon and Knott . . . In fact their transcriptions are very close to our own speech, apart from certain dialectal idiosyncrasies of no general interest, which we omit." And earlier, three of the most influential American structural linguists, Leonard Bloomfield, Bernard Bloch, and Morris Swadesh, used their native Chicago pronunciation as the basis for their descriptions of American English.

But a descriptive convenience, a "standard of reference," should not be confused with a fictional standard American pronunciation. The inaccurate and misleading phrase "General American" is sometimes used for this regional form. Cultivated Inland Northern has no more authority as a national standard of correctness than have the parallel social dialects in

New York City, Philadelphia, Charleston, Miami, Atlanta, New Orleans, or St. Louis. All of these focal areas establish regional patterns, and, when needed, as, for example, by electronic broadcasters, cultivated speech in those cities remains the best baseline for the identification of standard, locally acceptable pronunciation. Indeed, Southerners, for example, may find Inland Northern pronunciation overly precise, self-conscious, and unnatural, whether articulated in Chicago or Nashville.

As surely as the speech habits of Germanic immigrants in the past century helped to shape the Inland Northern pattern, current ethnic dialects, especially Afro-American and Latino, complicate the structure of regional dialects across the country. On the one hand, Afro-American immigrants to Northern cities during the second half of the twentieth century brought with them Southern regional dialects that became social dialects in those urban settings. Northern isolation kept these habits in place through at least two generations. Latino immigrants modify Northern and Southern urban speech in another way. Anglo-Hispanic urban bilingualism seems to reflect current trends in pronunciation with little evidence of traditional standards of pronunciation. Current English pronunciation habits in South Florida and South Texas show the influence of the speech of younger Americans across the country, from the realization of postvocalic /r/ in virtually all situations to the emergent collapse of the low-back vowels /ɑ, ɔ/ as /a/, as in *cat* and *caught*.

Regional and social dialects form the major varieties of American English today. These include four basic geographic patterns and three basic ethnic patterns. The regional dialect areas are Northern, Southern, Midland, and Western. The primary social divisions are Anglo (European extraction), Afro-American (African extraction), and Hispanic (Central American extraction). Within each of these regional and social sets, synchronic analysis can lead to consideration of every social factor at any historical juncture. A comparison of any two or more of these historical moments yields the evidence for diachronic analysis. Simply put, any summary of major varieties of American English can become quite complicated with little effort.

Dominated by the Anglo ethnic pattern, the Northern dialect area covers the Northeastern and Upper Midwestern states, extending as far south as the middle reaches of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and exhausting its certain domain at the Mississippi River. Another essentially Anglo domain, the Midland dialect area originates in Pennsylvania and forms a large transition area between the Northern and Southern divisions east of the Mississippi River. Although controlled by the Anglo pattern, as are all

American regions, the Southern dialect area extends below the Midland region to the Gulf of Mexico and across the Mississippi into Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, combining influences of all three ethnic groups, and demonstrates the most powerful expression of Afro-American culture among rural dialects. Conversely, the Western dialect area covers the rest of the "lower Forty-Eight" states and includes a distinctive Latino force, from South Texas through southern California and through the Rocky Mountain states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. An absence of evidence makes it necessary to exclude Hawaii and Alaska from these divisions.

An analysis of these rural regional dialects depends on convention and convenience because much work remains to be done in the study of American English. Conventional divisions of Northern, Midland, and Southern dialect areas reflect contributions of American atlas projects (Kurath 1939-43; H. Allen 1973-6; Pederson 1986-92). Identification of a Western division involves four facts: (1) compared to the Eastern states, American speech north of Arkansas and west of the Dakotas has been relatively unstudied, (2) the territory is without a primary settlement area, (3) all preliminary research suggests a blend of regional dialects from the Eastern, Midwestern, and Southern United States, and (4) climate and physical geography provide a basis for the division of the American Midwest and West that reflects historical, social, and linguistic developments.

Including urban regional patterns, American social dialects require similar descriptive flexibility. Common sense recommends the possibility of as many social dialects as there are combinations of social factors within each rural regional and ethnic configuration. These include the absolute factors of ethnic identity, sex, and age, the relative factors of formal education and social class, and the secondary factors that comprise the parental and ancestral records of age, education, and social class. Each of these configurations can then be studied in regional (rural or urban) contexts to identify as many social dialects as description requires and patience allows. For those reasons, this summary concentrates first on the rural regional framework and then considers the implications of social features in major centers with attention to ethnic and other social factors.

This approach follows the fact that the base stratum of the national language is English and its culture is Anglo. Prior to World War II, the powerful influences of Afro-American and Latino forces went unappreciated because they were virtually ignored in systematic research of American English. Since then, largely through the efforts of sociolinguistic investigation, students have begun to appreciate the impact of non-Anglo ethnic groups upon American language and culture. At this time, however, the

findings remain at best fragmentary and inconclusive. For those reasons, it is impossible today to provide an accurate history of American dialects, but current research also makes it impossible to ignore the implications of Afro-American and Latino-American contributions to the national language, especially in its urban centers.

7.5 Four major American dialects

The Northern and Southern dialects of American English emerged from primary settlements in the eastern United States, and the Midland and Western from secondary settlements to the south and west. The Northern dialects had their source in Massachusetts; the Southern dialects, in Virginia and the Carolinas. Originating in Pennsylvania, the Midland dialects are an extension from the Northern area. Today, these three are the strongest regional divisions in American speech, although now Midland seems everywhere to be a blend of Northern and Southern features, having lost most of its distinctiveness. In the same way, north and west of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, the Western dialect area combines features from the other three areas. The Northern and Southern dialects originated in the seventeenth century, with the Massachusetts, Carolina, and Virginia colonies reflecting the Puritan/Royalist division in England. The Midland dialect area grew with the development of the Old Frontier in the eighteenth century. The Western dialect area is a social product of the nineteenth century, following the Louisiana Purchase.

The first successful English communities in the New World, at Jamestown (1607) and Plymouth (1620), exemplify the cultural distinctiveness from which these contrasting groups came. The Virginia colonists steadily preserved Old World traditions with a dependence upon the cultural resources of the mother country. The Massachusetts colonists brought a revolutionary spirit and a determination to reform the source culture according to the beliefs that led them out of England. These social facts stand at the base of the primary regional division of American speech, Southern and Northern.

In the words of the Southern historians Simkins and Roland (13):

The English colonists who established themselves in Virginia in 1607, in Maryland in 1634, in Albemarle [now North Carolina] region by 1653, in South Carolina in 1670, and in Georgia in 1733, possessed one common purpose. They wanted to live as Englishmen. In this ambition they succeeded in great measure. They established the Anglican church by law and at the same time tolerated other forms of Christianity

congenial to English customs. The Southern county and parish governments reproduced English concepts of local administration, and the Southern provincial governments of charter, governor, and representative assembly were reproductions on a smaller scale, of the English system. Education and architecture followed English patterns. English books were read, English clothes worn, English tools and furniture used, and English holidays celebrated. For generations correspondence was maintained with English relatives.

By contrast, the colonists in the North were determined to remain separate and free to go their own way. They established a cultural pattern that indeed came to be recognized as "The New England Way." As Boorstin (1958, 15-16) wrote of this distinctive Colonial experience:

To the Puritans and to many who came here after them, the American destiny was inseparable from the mission of community-building. For hardly a moment in the history of this civilization would men turn from the perfection of their institutions to the improvement of their doctrine. Like many later generations of Americans, the Puritans were more interested in institutions that functioned than in generalities that glittered.

The phrase "The New England Way" was an earlier version (not entirely different in spirit though vastly different in content) of the modern notion of an American Way of Life.

Consistent with those cultural facts, when American English today is discussed as a unified form, as "General American," for example, the designation identifies the Inland Northern dialect. And that is the reflex of a New England dialect. The speech reflects early westward migration, first out of Newtown (now Cambridge), Massachusetts, into Connecticut with Thomas Hooker's congregations, extending its pattern across the Upper Midwest from the Connecticut Valley and Upstate New York to Chicago and beyond.

The Midland dialect area outlines the domain of Pennsylvania influence upon the English language in the Northern and Southern states. It originated early in the eighteenth century and demonstrates the largest demographic movement in American history. During the fifty years (1725-75) preceding the Revolutionary War, that progression extended through the Shenandoah Valley to the south and the Ohio River Valley to the west. These German, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh settlers were experienced travelers, who outlined the territory of the Old West and established a large and diversified region. As illustrated by Pederson (1978, 304), the historical boundary of the Old West in 1800 corresponded perfectly with the western limits of the American dialects of the Eastern states, as described by

Kurath (1949). As the Northern area was distinguished by its predominantly English sources, the Midland area included large numbers of German settlers in its early development. It also revealed a comparatively stronger Scottish and Irish influence and a weaker English one than did the regions to the north and south.

Beyond the Mississippi River, the Western dialect area developed in the nineteenth century, with the territory delimited before the onset of the Civil War in 1861. Here, in two tiers of states in the eastern sector — Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota, as well as the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas — the immediate source of the Western area emerged. With the exception of Missouri, all American English in these states remained essentially mixtures of Northern and Midland speech throughout the era. Missouri combined Northern, Midland, and Southern features, thereby establishing a pattern that dominated American English through the Rocky Mountain states. In the rural dialects of the Pacific states, California, Oregon, and Washington, native speech preserves Northern and Midland features. In urban centers throughout the West, as well as in the Northern and Midland areas, Afro- and Latino-American ethnic dialects markedly alter regional patterns and distinguish the language of the cities. And with the great migrations of Southern poor whites and blacks into the urban centers during the present era, all Western cities, like those of the other three major regions, share substantial and pervasive elements of rural Southern dialect features.

7.6 Northern dialects

Among the oldest and most influential of American patterns, the Northern dialects extend from Maine to Northern Pennsylvania in the east and reach beyond the Mississippi across northern Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. These dialects have their primary source in New England. As Kurath (1939, 8) summarized:

New England has two major dialect areas, an Eastern and a Western. The Eastern Area corresponds roughly to the section of New England occupied in gradual expansion from the Atlantic Seaboard; the Western, to the area settled from the Lower Connecticut Valley and from Long Island Sound west of the Connecticut River. The "seam" between these two settlement areas runs straight north from the mouth of the Connecticut River . . . through both Massachusetts and Connecticut to the southern boundary of Franklin County . . . , where it swerves west and follows the southern boundary of Franklin County to the

Berkshires. . . Here it turns north again and runs along the crest of the Green Mountains to the northern boundary of Vermont.

Furthermore, as a dialect area of the northeastern United States, it must also include the broadly different and complex isolate of metropolitan New York City. Although originally most closely bound to Hudson Valley in New York State and its Dutch heritage, the metropolitan area might sensibly be regarded a major regional dialect area in itself, according to its social history of the past two centuries.

Today, this Northern area includes six principal subdivisions: in the east, (1) northeastern New England (Maine, New Hampshire, and eastern Vermont), (2) southeastern New England (the Boston focal area), and (3) metropolitan New York (the New York City focal area); and in the west, (4) southwestern New England (western Massachusetts, Connecticut, and north central Pennsylvania), (5) the Hudson Valley (south central New York and northeastern Pennsylvania), and (6) the Inland North (western Vermont, Upstate New York, and derivatives spread across the Midwest beneath the Great Lakes and beyond the Mississippi into Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas).

The six subdivisions share a number of regional words. These include Northern lexical hallmarks: *anglerworm* 'earthworm,' *boss*, *basie*, or *co-boss* (a cow call), *brook* 'small stream,' *clapboards* 'finished siding,' *arning needle* 'dragonfly,' *awes trough* 'gutter,' *fills* or *thills* 'buggy shafts,' *johnnycake* 'corn bread,' *pail* 'bucket,' *pit* 'cherry-stone,' *stone wall* 'fence of rough stones without mortar,' *swill* 'table scraps for hogs,' *whiffetree* or *whippletree* 'single-tree, wooden bar hooked to the traces of a harness.' Historically, however, many words now of general currency also originated in the northeastern quadrant of this territory, for example, *chipmunk*, *coal hod*, *freddy*, *gutter* 'eaves trough,' *kerosene*, *picket fence*, *salt pork*, *skewnk*, *string beans*, *teeterboard* or *-tetter*, *white bread*. Although no longer diagnostically useful in distinguishing regional speech, such words illustrate the influence of this geographic pattern on the national language.

Although the least productive set of discriminative features, Northern morphology also contributes to the dialect structure. Among verb forms, Arwood (40) identified these as "Chiefly Northern": *wun't* (for *want't*), *be* (for *am*), *haan't ought* (for *shouldn't*), and the atypical past forms *see* (preerit), *dove*, and *et*. Like the Northern phrases — *all to once* 'all at once, suddenly' and *sick to the stomach* 'nauseated' — these forms have emerged from folk usage and diminished in currency through the passage of time and the spread of general education. Nevertheless, each helps to characterize the historical

base of the regional pattern and to offer evidence for the establishment of Old World associations in the historical composition of Northern American English dialects.

Like all other major regional divisions of American English dialects, Northern speech includes few general phonological features that distinguish it from the other three patterns. Indeed, the major phonemic features of the area are common to all current dialects of the English language.

Moreover, like all other American dialects, the most striking regional features of Northern speech include the reflexes of historical /hw/, /hy/, postvocalic /r/, and the low vowels /æ, ɑ, ɔ/. Because all three of the consonant features particularize subregions of the area, none stands as a distinctive Northern marker.

General Northern features, therefore, appear in the pronunciation of a few consonants and vowels. The fricatives /s/ in *gray* and /ð/ in *with* offer the surest old-fashioned and regionally distinctive pronunciations. Among the vowels, these features mark the region: the contrasts of /o/ and /ɔ/ in *mourning* and *morning*, *hoarse* and *horse*, *fourteen* and *forty*, and historically similar pairs; /u/ instead of /ʊ/ in *roots* (less frequently in *room* and *broom*), and /u/ for /ʌ/ in *gums*.

Coastal Northern (eastern New England and New York City) has a number of striking characteristics. From Maine to Rhode Island, words such as *apple dowdy* 'deep-dish pie,' *bunny clabber* or *clapper* 'curdled milk,' *butternut* 'plane tree, sycamore,' *comforter* 'quilt,' *fritters* 'fried cakes,' *hog's head cheese* 'headcheese,' *piggys*, and *spindle 'tassel*' mark the rural vocabulary.

Virtually no subregionally distinctive morphological features recur across the territory in all varieties of coastal Northern speech. A few folk forms, however, help to reinforce the subregional pattern. These include the preterits *waked* 'woke,' *er'ate*, *rix* 'rose,' *div* 'dived, dove,' and *driv* 'drove,' as well as the preposition *against* or *agin* 'next to.' Although none of these has currency today, unless in the speech of the oldest and most isolated rural folk speakers, the forms identify sources of interior Northern speech, as well as the historical distribution of features generally associated with Southern or Western speech.

Coastal pronunciation provides the most distinctive forms of the subregion: a centering glide for tautosyllabic postvocalic /r/, as in *beard* [brəd], *bear* [bɛə], *bare* [bɛə], *bird* [bɜ:d], *boor* [buə], *boar* [buə], *barn* [bɑ:n], a nonhistorical linking /r/ between vowels, as in *law[r]* and *order*, and the loss of the onset fricative /h/ in *wheat* words. Locally distinctive vowel pronunciations include: (1) a low-front vowel [a] before historical /r/ in *barn* words and less consistently before voiceless fricatives, as in *pasture*, *glass*, and *afternoon*; (2) a

rounded low-back vowel [ɒ] in *trap*, *ov*, and other reflexes of the historical Middle English short *o*; (3) a shortened and centralized variant of /o/ called the "New England short o," as in *stone*, *boat*, and similar words; (4) a distinctive, noncentralized monophthong or diphthong in *Tuesday*, *new*, and *due*; (5) residual incidence of old diphthongs [ɛɪ] and [ɛʊ] especially before voiceless consonants, for example, in *bite* and *bout*, respectively; (6) a rounded low-back onset [ɒ] in pronunciations of the diphthong /oi/, as in *oyster* and *oil*, especially in eastern New England; (7) the same rounded low-back onset for the diphthong /aɪ/ in all contexts, especially in current New York City and New Jersey speech.

Inland Northern, extending from the lower Connecticut Valley, first into the New England frontier and then across the vast expanse of the Middle West, contrasts with all the aforementioned coastal forms. Whether as a result of isolation from British sources or the internal social chemistry of the frontier setting, this pattern is more typical of American usage than any other regional configuration. The typical pronunciations are most striking: (1) postvocalic /r/ is preserved in all contexts; (2) /ɑ/ is the expected vowel in *trap*, *ov*, and almost all other members of this historical set, with the exception of *dog* and with divided usage in *bog* and *log*; (3) the "New England short o" steadily diminishes in incidence westward with scattered occurrences in northeast Pennsylvania; (4) the diphthongs of *Tuesday*, *new*, and *due* are ingliding in the speech of descendants of immigrants from the British Isles; among Germanic immigrants, however, the coastal relic /u/ gains reinforcement, especially in the urban centers of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis.

Northern lexical and morphological forms are extended over the entire territory. Words such as *burlyap bag*, *chipmunk*, *clapboards*, *faucet*, *fried cake* 'doughnut,' *hey cock*, *lobbered milk* 'clabbered milk,' *spider* 'frying pan' (originally with three legs), *stoneboat*, and *veeter-totter* mark the regional vocabulary. In addition to the preposition *to in side to the stomach* (which is general use in Northern), the folk verb forms *clim*, *sawit*, and *boughten* outline the southern limit of the Northern territory across the Middle West.

Historically, the dialects of New York State include three principal divisions: Upstate, Hudson Valley, and metropolitan New York City speech. Although an Inland Northern subdivision (with the Connecticut River Valley and western Massachusetts, comprising eastern Inland Northern), the Upstate area shares Hudson Valley, predominantly Dutch, relics and reflects the powerful influence of New York City. From the Hudson Valley come *pot cheese* 'cottage cheese,' *olicook* 'doughnut,' *barracks* 'haystack,' *sappaw* 'mush,' and *veimurion* 'shivaree.' Regionally distinctive morphology

includes the familiar Eastern usage (wait or stand) *on line* 'in line' and (live) *in a street* 'on a street'. The Hudson Valley and New York City areas share coastal Northern pronunciations of postvocalic /r/, whereas the Upstate pattern conforms with interior Northern usage. The three agree in the homophony of stressed vowels in *mourning/morning* and *hoarse/horse*, the loss of /h/ before /w/ in *vibale, whip*, and similar words, the glottalized allophone of /t/ in *mountain* (less frequently in *bottle*). The Hudson Valley and New York City have /e/ in *Mary*.

7.7 Midland dialects

The most controversial of regional patterns, the Midland dialect area reflects the formation and influence of Pennsylvania speech. As McMillan (122) illustrates, the controversy proceeds from two definitions. The first had currency before American atlas projects were underway — "the dialects of the Middle Atlantic states." The second reported atlas findings — "the dialect lying between the Northern and Southern dialects." Eastern Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) and Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh) divisions of the Midland dialect extend their influence into the South respectively through the Shenandoah Valley and across the Midwest through the Ohio Valley. The historical reflex of these developments yields two primary constructs (east/west) and two secondary constructs (north/south). Some students reject these divisions on the basis of strictly synchronic evidence because they begin as transition areas between the North and South in the East and reform as part of a general geographic pattern with features of the North and South beyond the Mississippi River. But Kurath (1949, 2-3) explains the historical Philadelphia base in the east/south axis this way:

During the last decades before the Revolution large numbers of Pennsylvanians and many immigrants from abroad who landed on Delaware Bay had occupied the fertile farm lands along the Shenandoah and pushed their way across the Blue Ridge into the piedmont of the Carolinas before coastal settlements of Virginia and the Carolinas had expanded into these areas. The Scotch-Irish and the Palatine Germans from Pennsylvania and from overseas constituted the major elements in the population of these southern uplands, but Virginians, Carolinians, and Englishmen mingled with them.

The southwestward thrust from Pennsylvania through western Maryland into the Valley of Virginia and the Carolina piedmont (1725-1775) was met by a series of thrusts up the rivers from the coastal settlements of the South. Southern settlers mixed with the

Pennsylvanians along the periphery of the Southern settlement area, especially south of the James River, but the seam of these two major settlement areas is clearly reflected in a well-defined speech boundary which runs along the Blue Ridge in Virginia and then swerves out into the piedmont at Lynchburg.

After the Revolution the descendants of these southern uplanders crossed the Appalachians in large numbers by way of the Holston River and the Cumberland Gap. They occupied fertile lands of central Kentucky and Tennessee, and established themselves in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois during the first decades of the nineteenth century. They also infiltrated into the narrow valleys of the Kanawha and its tributaries in West Virginia.

Kurath (1949, 3) outlines the historical Pittsburgh north/west base this way:

Farther north the settlements in the Pittsburgh Wheeling area of the upper Ohio expanded rapidly up the Monongahela into West Virginia, up the Allegheny to Lake Erie, and down the Ohio Valley. The settlers came from Pennsylvania east of the Alleghenies, from West Jersey, and from abroad, but there were also New Englanders among them. By 1810 the downward thrust from the upper Ohio had met the northward thrust from Kentucky in the region of Cincinnati and Louisville.

Taken together, such demographic facts explain the historical region:

This far-flung Midland area, settled largely by Pennsylvanians and by the descendants in the south uplands, constitutes a separate speech area which is distinct from the Northern area — the New England settlement area — and from the Southern area. Its northern boundary runs in a southwesterly direction along the Blue Ridge and through the Carolina piedmont. The South Midland, to be sure, exhibits a considerable infusion of Southern vocabulary and pronunciation.

Only a few general Midland lexical forms extend across the territory from Pennsylvania into the Upper Midwest. They include *blinds* 'roller shades,' *coal oil* 'kerosene,' *dip* 'sweet sauce for pudding,' *fish(ing) worm*, *green beans* 'string beans,' *hull* 'to shell (beans or peas),' *little piece* 'short distance,' (*paper*) *poke* '(paper) sack,' *side pork* or *side meat* 'salt pork,' *skillet* 'frying pan,' *snake feeder* '(dragonfly?) *soak* (a cow call), and *sputs* or *sputting* 'drainpipes (from a roof).'

More narrowly defined, the historical Midland vocabulary emerges in another set of words that are essentially confined to the state of Pennsylvania: *cruddled* (milk) 'curdled,' *fire bug* 'firefly,' *hand stack* 'hay shock,' *verden* 'barn loft,' *overhead* 'loft,' and *piece* 'to snack.'

Besides the German loan translations that dominate these lists, such as *fire bug*, *green beans*, and *snake feeder*, other words also occur in communities with substantial German subcultures, from Milwaukee in the north to East Texas in the south: *fat cakes*, *rain worm*, *sawbuck* or *woodbuck*, *smearcase* 'cottage cheese,' and *thick milk*. Other Germanisms, such as *clock* 'hen,' *paper toot* 'paper sack,' *ponhans* 'Philadelphia scapple,' *snits* 'dried fruit,' and *vootzie* (a cow call) are largely confined to Pennsylvania and its immediate neighbors. Conversely, the old Pennsylvania German loans *sawbernat* and *spook* 'ghost' have gained general currency in virtually all dialects of American English.

Perhaps the most familiar feature in Midland morphology may be the preposition *till*, in the phrase "quarter till the hour." Other regional phrases include *all the farther* 'as far as,' *got awake* 'woke up,' and *want off* 'want to get off.' Although now widespread in American folk speech, the following verb forms are also best associated with the Midland dialect area: *boil* 'boiled,' *clim* 'climbed,' *dogbit* 'bitten by a dog' (originating in the Wheeling, WV, area before spreading south and west), and *seen* 'saw.' Within the primary source area, the most distinctive morphological and grammatical features originate in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect with constructions that occur, like the vocabulary, in the German-American subcultural enclaves across the country: (the oranges are) *all* 'all gone,' *make out* (the lights) 'put out,' and (school) *leaves out* 'lets out.'

Midland speech demonstrates its clearest regional distinctiveness in the pronunciation of certain consonants and vowels. Most pervasive is the realization of a fully retroflex postvocalic /r/, setting the area apart from coastal speech to the east and interior (historical plantation) speech to the south. The Northern-Midland boundary, from Pennsylvania to North Dakota, however, emerges most convincingly in the regional reflexes of Middle English /wa-/ in *wash* and *wasp* and "short o" in the *hog* words. The old-fashioned eastern contrast of front vowels in *Mary* /e/, *marry* /æ/, *merry* /ɛ/ becomes a binary division of /æ/ in *marry* and /ɛ/ in *Mary* and *merry* in the Midland territory, often collapsed to general homophony with /ɛ/, especially in the speech of younger natives. Perhaps the most distinctive marker of Midland pronunciation is the widespread occurrence of intrusive /r/ in *wash* and *Washington*, most common in folk speech. Other systematic features include /ə/ in *haunted* and *careless*, /ɪ/ in *stomach*, and /θ/ in *with*.

The North Midland division extends the pattern south out of Philadelphia and west out of Pittsburgh. Marked at the south by the occurrence of /s/ instead of /z/ in *great*, as well as other features that divide

Northern and Southern speech, the boundary between North Midland and Northern extends the southern influence of Philadelphia speech into the great valley of Virginia in the east and follows the course of Ohio River settlements from Pittsburgh to St. Louis in the west. Here also, pronunciation offers the most reliable basis of regional distinctiveness, especially the pronunciation of low-back vowels before /r/: /ɑ/ to the north and /ɒ/ to the south in *harr* words. A western reflex of the Pittsburgh pattern, this feature extends to the south and west where it merges and helps define the South Midland pattern of Southern Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. Those areas include the homophony of *boars* /horse and *morning* /*morning*, the occurrence of /ɪ/ for /i/ in *crick*, and the monophthongal and diphthongal allophones of /u/ ([ʊ] or [ʉ]) in *due*, *new*, *Tuesday*, and similar words, instead of the centralized glides [ju] and [tʃ], which prevail to the east and south.

In addition to the German features of eastern Pennsylvania, the distinctive *baby coach* 'baby carriage' endures only in the Philadelphia area, whereas *pavement* 'sidewalk' spreads south to Baltimore and beyond. Spreading southward out of Chesapeake Bay, *snake doctor* 'dragonfly' holds an easterly course in the north, but in the south it becomes a powerful up-country Southern marker as a dominant form in the Georgia piedmont and the Cumberland Basin of middle Tennessee. From there the form extends as far south and west as interior Texas. Out of Western Pennsylvania come *baby buggy*, which replaces Pittsburgh's *baby coach* in the southwesterly realization of the form, and *gymysack* 'burlap sack.'

The South Midland subregion extends the northeastern Philadelphia pattern deep into the southern United States, where it merges with up-country dialects in the east and delta speech to the west. Among the most powerful South Midland lexical markers are these: *dog irons* 'andirons,' *fireboard* 'mantel,' *French harp* 'harmonica,' *red worm* 'earthworm,' and *top sack* 'burlap sack.' Especially in east Tennessee, the area preserves many general Midland lexical forms, such as *fish(fing) worm*, (*paper*) *poke*, and *snake feeder*, none of which has much currency beyond the southern boundary of the state. Morphological features include preterit and past participial *drinlet* and *shrinket*, archaic *set* for *sat* (preterit), and unmarked *swim* (preterit).

The most striking phonological feature is the [ə] or [a'] allophones of /ai/ before voiceless obstruents, as in *like*, *nice*, and *white*. The fully retroflex postvocalic /r/ distinguishes the South Midland region from the South more dramatically than any other features of American English. Much, if not all, of this territory otherwise might be most effectively identified as the northern and western extensions of the interior South.

7.8 Southern dialects

Historically, Southern dialects of American English begin south of the Potomac River in the east and extend across the domain of the old Confederacy, including Texas as well as the more recently settled Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and the border states of Kentucky, Arkansas, and Missouri, especially south of St. Louis. This region includes three primary speech patterns, coastal, interior, and delta. The coastal pattern extends from Richmond, Virginia, to Brownsville, Texas, including the seaboard of the South Atlantic and Gulf states. Behind this region, the interior division includes two major South Midland divisions: the full domain of the highlands and piney woods and southern plains, where the African slavery of the plantation society gave the region its most distinctive cultural forms. The delta landforms divide the area from south to north, with the lower Mississippi and Atchafalaya basins uniting in the coastal pattern and the Yazoo, Red, and St. Francis basins joining the interior.

These dialects reflect the demographic history of the region. Two of the greatest population movements in American history shaped the cultural composition of the South. First, the migration out of Pennsylvania settled the Carolina piedmont and then the upper and lower reaches of the interior and extended historical Midland forms across the territory. Second, the mass transportation of blacks from their birthplaces in Virginia and South Carolina into the New Orleans slave markets reorganized the speech patterns of the central South.

As these processes continued, the plantation systems moved steadily southward and westward, first with tobacco planters in Virginia, then with indigo developers in South Carolina, and finally with developers of cotton, rice, and cane across the plains and up the five river basins of the Mississippi delta. (As used here, the term "Mississippi delta" includes the area from Memphis to the Gulf of Mexico. It is divided into an upper delta, which includes the basins of the Arkansas, Tensas, and Yazoo rivers, and a lower delta, dominated by New Orleans, but also influenced by Baton Rouge and Natchez.)

The history and distribution of dialect features (Pederson 1996a, 13-23) recommend a tripartite division of Southern and South Midland dialects into coastal, interior, and delta regions. The coastal dialects cover the full extent of the shoreline and the piney woods subdivisions behind it. The interior dialects cover (1) the piedmont from Virginia to Alabama, (2) the eastern, central, and western plains that verge on the woods to the south, and (3) the highlands that extend from the Blue Ridge of east Tennessee to

the Ozarks of lower Missouri and Arkansas, interrupted by the Mississippi Valley and the delta system. The delta dialects spread northward from New Orleans, the most powerful cultural center in the South, beginning as an essentially coastal pattern and concluding in upper Arkansas much more closely identified with interior dialects.

A number of lexical features mark the area, from the coast northward and across the entire South Midland territory. These include *baby carriage*, *buckee* 'pail', *butter beans* 'lima beans', *chifforobe* 'wardrobe', *chilins* 'hog intestines as cooked food', *chop* (cotton) 'hoe', *clabber* 'curdled milk', *common* (a pejorative), *corn dodgers* 'corn bread preparation', (*corn*) *shukes*, *dirt dasher* 'mud wasp', *feist* 'small, noisy dog', *gobbers* 'peanuts', *greens* 'boiled leaf vegetables, especially collards', *grits* 'ground hominy', *hoot owl*, *Irish potatoes*, *jacking* 'an inexperienced or fraudulent tradesman or professional', *light bread* 'white bread', *lighthead* 'pine kindling', *pallet* 'bed on the floor', *peckerwood* 'woodpecker', *polecat* 'skunk', *roasting ears* 'corn on the cob', *streech owl*, *seed* 'cherrystone', *sesam*, *singletree* 'wagon evenner', *skillet*, *skin* 'bacon rind', *stlop bucket*, *tole* 'carry', *warminit* 'small predator', *whetrock* 'sharpening stone', *white lightning* 'unlicensed whiskey, moonshine', and *yams* 'sweet potatoes.'

Morphological and grammatical features found across the entire area include verb forms, function words, and distinctive pronominal usage. Although rarest in cultivated speech, the deleted copula and auxiliary verb occur all over the South, as in *he big* and *he done it*, respectively. The negative construction *ain't* also seems indigenous to the entire area, although the fierce prejudice against this form seems at last to be taking hold even here. Other grammatical features are the preposition *at* in the phrase "sick at the stomach," the directive *yonder* 'there' as in "over yonder" or "yonder comes Nora," double modal auxiliaries *might can* or *might could* as in "I might could do it," the intensifier *right* as in "right nice," and the perfective *done* as in "I done told you that already."

Among the most familiar and widespread characteristics, the preterit and past participial form *drag* 'dragged' also spreads across the entire territory with few constraints of social distribution. Indeed, the form has a remarkably high incidence among the youngest native generation of the region. The most familiar elements of Southern word formation may, however, be the distinctive second person plural forms, *you all* or *y'all* and the less frequent possessive *y'all's*.

The general regional pattern includes several pronunciations of consonants and vowels, as well as prosodic features, that set Southern speech apart from the rest of the country. Besides extending /z/ in *gray* across the entire geography of the South, consonant pronunciations include a

"clear i" between front vowels, as in *Billy*, *Nelly*, and *silly*. In regional folk speech, an /l/ replaces /n/ in *chimney*, /j/ replaces /z/ in *rouge* and more widely in *Baton Rouge*, /t/ is pronounced in *often*, and /l/ is vocalized after a back vowel and before a consonant as in *bulb*, *cold*, *colt*, and *pulp*. Vowel features include the contrast of /o/ and /ɔ/ in *hoarse/horse* and *mourning/morning*, /ɔ/ in *wash*, the frequent alternation – especially among younger speakers – of /ɪ/ for /ε/ before /n/, creating such homophonous pairs as *den/din*, *meant/mini*, *pen/pin*, and *ten/tin*. Before voiced consonants, /ai/ and /oi/ are pronounced [a: ~ aʰ] as in *ride* and [ɔʰ] as in *oil*. Checked vowels /ɪ, ε, æ, u, ɑ, ʌ/ tend to be raised and retracted, often with weakly realized offglides, as in *pit*, *pet*, *pat*, *put*, *pot*, and *putt*. Before a voiced velar /g/, the low-back vowel of *hog* words is often realized as an upgliding diphthong [ɔʰ]. Other distinctive phonemic features are /u/ in *coop*, /ɪ/ in *Negro*, /ɑ/ in *stamp* (*stomp*), and the loss of the second syllable in *Louisiana* (/ˈlu:zi,æniə/), less frequently in *Mississippi* (/ˈmɪzɪ,spi/). General Southern intonation includes primary stress on the first syllable of *July*, *September*, *October*, *November*, and *December* and weak stress on the final syllable of all seven days of the week, where the vowel is realized as /i/ [i], rather than /e/, as in most varieties of American English.

From Tidewater Virginia to the southernmost Texas coast and across the piney woods beyond that coastal strip, certain generalized features further characterize Southern speech, including lexical, grammatical, and phonological features. The general coastal lexicon includes *blood pudding*, *cat squirrel*, *gopher* 'land-burrowing tortoise', *hog* 'head cheese', *hoppin' john* 'grasshopper', *live oak*, *mosquito hawk* 'dragonfly', and *mouth harp* 'harmonica'. Words peculiar to the coastal strip include *collard greens*, *rain frog*, and *shell road*. In the piney woods, the subregional vocabulary includes *croaker sack* 'burlap sack', *maniel board*, *peanuts*, *piney-woods rooster* 'range hog', *press peach* 'cling peach', *shiner* 'minnow', *skeeter hawk* (alongside *mosquito hawk*), *smut* 'soot', and *splinters* 'resinous kindling'.

General coastal pronunciation includes /ε/ for /ɪ/ in *since*, /ɪ/ in the second syllable of *January*, loss of medial /t/ in *twenty* and of /ɪ/ in *forward*, the alternation of /n/ for /ŋ/ in *Washington*, and weakly retroflex /ɪ/ in unstressed syllables, as in *November*. Along the coast, pronunciation includes the loss of /h/ before /w/ in *wheel* words and the vocalization of postvocalic /ɪ/ in all tautosyllabic environments. The old-fashioned pronunciations of /ai/ and /au/ with centralized onsets endure in old-fashioned Tidewater and extend along the Carolina coast with very little occurrence in Georgia low country today. All of these features contrast with piney woods usage, where the realization of /hw/ conforms with that

in the rest of the interior South and the realization of a fully retroflex postvocalic /ɪ/ conforms with South Midland usage, as do the allophones of /ai/ and /au/ before voiceless obstruents.

General coastal word formations include past participial *drove* and *drank*, as well as the preposition *on* in the phrase "sick on the stomach." Elsewhere, the dominant forms of American English grammar mark the speech of the coastal strip, now dominated by urban patterns. Conversely, as a predominantly rural relic area, the piney woods preserves many old-fashioned folk forms now lost in the rest of the Lower South. Some of these are preterits *come* and *busted*, as well as past participial *blowed*, *swimmed*, and *took*.

As outlined by Pederson (1996a), the most interesting historical concordances in this division, however, unite the highlands and the piney woods as South Midland derivatives. Shared forms include *boogerman* 'devil', *dairy* 'storage cellar', *fitters* 'pancakes', *granny* (*woman*) 'midwife', *hoosier* 'rustic', *liver and lights*, *middling(s)* 'bacon sides', *mushmelon*, *ridy-horse* 'seesaw', *rock fence*, *serenade* 'shivaree', *somerset*, *swingletree* 'whiffle tree', and *widow woman*. Common word formations include the preterits *draved*, *drownded*, and *riz*, past participial *rode*, and the preposition *till* in phrases like "quarter till the hour." Besides realizations of historical /ɪ/ and the /hw/ sequence, folk speech of the highlands and piney woods share these pronunciations: /o/ for /u/ in *ewe*, /č/ for /s/ in *rins*, /š/ for /sk/ in *tusk*, /e/ for /æ/ in *chance*, excrescent final /ɪ/ in *below*, *yellow*, and similar words, /y/ for /hy/ in *humor*, raised onsets of /au/ [æu] as in *cow* and *plow*, as well as the monophthongs and short glides of /ai/ before voiceless obstruents, as in *ripe*, *might*, *like*, *kenife*, and *rise*. All of these correspondences suggest that piney woods was historically a South Midland dialect. It probably originated above the South Carolina piedmont in the vicinity of the old Waxhaw settlement, birthplace of Andrew Jackson. Through the powerful influences of the plains to the north and the coastal strip to the south, however, it deserves classification today as Southern dialect.

The speech of the New Orleans focal area forms one of the most influential zones in the geographic structure of American English. As a primary settlement area and perhaps the most powerful focal area of American English – extending its influence as far north as Nashville, via the Ohio and Cumberland, and across the Gulf coast from Houston, Texas, to Pensacola, Florida – it unites the coastal and interior subdivisions. As a historic cultural center, New Orleans extended influence to Mobile Bay in the east and to the South Texas coast in the west. In the interior, its domain extends up the Lower Mississippi, Atchafalaya, and Yazoo basins as far

north as the Louisiana-Arkansas border. General delta features include *bayou* (for both 'backwaters' and 'creek'), *buckshot* (land), *buffalo fish*, *Catabonla car* 'a breed of intrepid stock dog', *coal oil* 'kerosene', *coo grass* 'field weed', *cash* 'mush', *frogstool*, *gallery* 'porch', *grass sack* 'burlap sack', *gumbo* (land), *mid-dlebuster* 'lister plow', and *salt meat* 'fat bacon.' Local word forms include preterit *fitted*, past participial *did* 'done' and *hung* 'hanged', executed, and the proposition *in* for the phrase "sick in the stomach."

Pronunciation extends the coastal treatment of postvocalic /r/ as [ʒ] as in *bird*, *beard*, and similar words, and the /hw/ sequence far north into the Red River and St. Francis basins. Other distinctive phonological features are /ɑ/ in *stabbed* (for /æ/) and in *sausage* (for /ɔ/) and a low-back rounded vowel [ɒ] in *garden*.

Dominated by the powerful New Orleans focal area, speech of the lower delta combines features current in the basins of both the Mississippi and Atchafalaya basins. The subregional vocabulary includes *banquette* 'side-walk', *beigner* 'fried cake', *boudin* 'sausage' (particularized as *red boudin* 'blood sausage' and *white boudin* 'pork sausage'), *cash-cash* 'mush', *gar* (fish), (*gasper*) *goo* (fish), *guts* 'chittins', *jump the broomstick* 'marry', *lagnappe* 'something extra', *orphan child*, *pave road*, *picket(s)* 'picket fence', *scrape cotton* 'chop or hoe cotton', and *shallots*.

Although only preterit *swole* (of *swell*) occurs as a distinctive grammatical feature, a substantial number of pronunciations mark the territory. /e/ in *again*, /ɛ/ in *chair* (the general vowel for this word in American English, but not general in the South), /ɔ/ in *morning*, /ai/ in *hoist*, postvocalic /r/ usually vocalized tautosyllabically, as in *chair*, *church*, *corn*, *garden*, and *queer*, sometimes lost in *careless* or often weakly retroflex, for example, in *thirteen*. Most characteristic pronunciations include the loss of /h/ in *wheat* words, the vocalized upglide [ɛ̃] in *church*, *girl*, and *third*, and the familiar disyllabic pronunciation of *New Orleans* as /'nyɔlnz/.

From metropolitan New Orleans, north to Natchez, Mississippi, and west to the boundary of the Atchafalaya delta, a smaller set of features marks the core of the region. These include Cajun 'rustic', *irons* 'andirons', *kyoodle* 'dog of mixed breed', *locker* 'clothes closet', *lord god* 'logcock (a woodpecker of striking appearance)', (*potato*) *pump* 'cellar' (predominantly in the rural perimeter), and *sheepshead*. In addition to past participial *ate*, the area is marked by /t/ for /θ/ as in *three*, vocalized /ɪ/ in *wool*, /ʃw/ and /sw/ in *strimp* (exclusively in folk speech), rounded low-back vowels [ɒ̃ or ɒ] in the stressed syllables of *Charleston* and *Chicago* (which correspond closely to the native pronunciations of those two distant places), but the unrounded, retracted low-central [ɑ̃] or an unrounded low-back vowel in *tease!* and *rough*.

The Atchafalaya delta centered at Lafayette, Louisiana, the heart of the Louisiana Cajun French territory, covers the domain of the Archafalaya River. The vocabulary includes *blackjack* (land) 'poor land', *champiignon* 'mushroom', *charivari* (French pronunciation in four syllables with uvular r), *choupique* (a local type of fish), *comars* 'rustic', *coulee* 'creek bed', *croquignole* 'doughnut', *flood rain* 'heavy rain', and *sacalait* (a local type of fish). Also distinctive are the animal calls *pee* or *lee* (in various sequences to chickens) and *cho* or *choo* (in various sequences to hogs). In addition to preterit *et* 'ate', this southwesternmost basin in the Mississippi Valley also includes /u/ in the second syllable of *mushroom*, /ɛ/ in the first syllable of *gyrup*, /ɑ/ in *coffee*, flapped /r/ in *thrashed*, devoiced /g/ in *eggs*, and final consonant loss (of /t/ and /d/ respectively) in *chest* and *wound*.

Beyond the Atchafalaya delta, other lower delta features extend across the Sabine River into Texas in the south and into the plains and basins of the Red and Ouachita rivers to the north and west. Here, the easternmost set of Western features emerges. They include *bellow* 'cry of a cow', *blackland* 'prairie' or 'soil', *cottonwood*, *hackberry*, *lunch* 'snack', *mustard greens*, *passed* 'died', *prairie* 'meadow', and the familiar Northern markers *burlap sack* and (*corn*) *baskets*.

Without distinctive morphological features, this tentative zone shares these features of pronunciation: a weakly stressed second syllable in *always*, /m/ for /n/ in the second syllable of *captain* 'cap'n', low-back vowels in *barn* and *wash*, devoiced /d/ in *band*, a lowered /ɔ/ in *oranges*, an unrounded low-back vowel [ɑ̃] in *God*, centering glides [ɑ̃] and [ɪ̃] respectively in *water* and *field*, and a weakly retroflex postvocalic /r/, as in *corn*.

Dominated by the piedmont and the plains, interior Southern preserves most of the hallmarks generally associated with American Southern dialects. These are lexical features: *bateau* 'rowboat', *buttercakes* 'pancakes', *branch* 'creek', *counterpane* 'bedspread', *crocus sack* 'burlap sack', *firedogs* 'andirons', *flambeau* 'makeshift lamp', *galloos* 'suspenders', *goose* 'trachea', *ground* 'peas', *peanus*, *barp* 'harmonica', *bunker down* 'crouch', *lamp oil* 'kerosene', *pully bone* 'wishbone', *salad tomatoes* 'cherry tomatoes', *spring onions* 'green onions', *terrapin* 'tortoise', *tommytoes* 'cherry tomatoes', *tree frog* 'small frog', *tumbleet* or *tumbletsault* 'somersault', and *veranda* 'porch'.

Only the preposition *of* in phrases like "quarter of the hour" seems to be a locally identifying grammatical unit. From the Virginia piedmont across the Mississippi River into the upper Texas plains, interior pronunciation shares these features: (1) vocalized postvocalic /r/ and /l/, (2) strong nasality of stressed vowels, replacing nasal segmental phonemes, as in *rim*, *rim*, and *bring* (most common in Afro-American folk speech), (3) substitution of

/s/ for /ʃ/ before /r/ in words like *shrimp* and *shrub*, (4) tense /e/ in *Mary* and *Sarah*, (5) an unrounded low-back vowel [ɔ:] in *earn* and *wash*, and (6) strongly centralized vowels, [ɨ], [ɥ], [ɞ], often becoming [ʉ], in *new*, *tube*, and similar words.

Within the interior region of the South, a substantial number of forms are shared among the Nashville-Cumberland basin of middle Tennessee, the Georgia piedmont to the south and east, and the Yazoo delta to the south and west. In Mississippi, distribution follows the course of the Natchez Trace from Tennessee and Alabama to the river town. The vocabulary includes *candle fly* 'moth', *clabber milk*, *sauce* 'sweet toppings', *snake doctor* 'dragonfly', *sorghum* 'molasses', *swabbelly* 'salt pork', and *spoiled* 'rancid' (of butter).

With a dialect grammar similar to the rest of the interior, this subdivision has these striking pronunciation features: complete loss of /r/ in *car* and of /y/ in *Matthew* [mæθu], the lax high-back vowel /ʊ/ in *bulke*, a fully realized diphthong /ɪu/ in *student*, and a rounded low-back vowel in *wasp*. The incidence of such features may reflect historical facts of interior movement and may help to explain the complex patterns of dialect distribution in the Southern states.

7.9 Western dialects

Beyond the Mississippi River, Western dialects consist of three large divisions: (1) the Mississippi Valley and western Midwest plains, (2) the Western plains and Rocky Mountains, and (3) the Pacific Coast. As social products of the nineteenth century, all major varieties in this large speech area developed from Eastern sources. Western extensions of Northern, Midland, and Southern patterns reach to the Rocky Mountain states, where Spanish influence and cross currents of settlement reshaped the dialects as distinctive regional composites. The linguistic atlases of the North Central States, the Upper Midwest, and the Gulf States offer empirical data to outline the territories to the east, north, and south, respectively. The crucial central area, however, in Missouri and Kansas remains uninvestigated by a general dialect survey. Thus, the dialect composition of the central Mississippi Valley must be extrapolated from data available in atlas sources.

Although exploration of the West began before the Louisiana Purchase (1803), settlement followed the establishment first of overland trails and later of railroads that united the full expanse of the region with the staging areas to the east, especially at St. Louis and Kansas City. The Mississippi Valley, however, is the primary source of Western dialects;

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there regional speech extended and reformed the three primary eastern patterns.

Immediately west of the Mississippi River, the eastern pattern of Northern, Midland, and Southern is modified. The northern third of Iowa preserves a basic Northern pattern. The Southern pattern extends northward to the Louisiana-Arkansas border. But between these reasonably well-differentiated areas, western reflexes of Midland dialects merge in a large graded area that combines Northern and Southern features with the west Pennsylvania pattern. Northern speech then extends westward across eastern South Dakota and southwestern North Dakota, where it enters the Rocky Mountain region in the Black Hills. Besides the delta subdivision that reaches up the Mississippi, Red, and St. Francis river basins to the Missouri booteel, interior Southern speech extends westward across the Louisiana and East Texas piney woods to merge with plains Western beyond Dallas and Fort Worth.

At the center of this zone, St. Louis became the primary source of Western dialects that developed following express routes, wagon trails, and later railways, east to west. Much of the West, however, was settled through the establishment of pioneer speech communities directly from eastern sources in a process Robert Hall (1964, 256) described this way:

With ever increasing mobility, innovations are likely to travel very fast and far, and to be diffused first to secondary and then to tertiary centers of radiation, often by-passing many geographically intermediate but more isolated places, in a manner reminiscent of military "island hopping" and capture of advanced outposts by parachute troops before the "mopping up" operations carried out by the main body of the army.

For example, the pervasive Inland Northern features in Rocky Mountain enclaves in Utah and Colorado, as well as on the Pacific Coast in California and Washington, demonstrate this pattern most dramatically. But similar extensions of Mississippi Valley speech out of Missouri and Texas demonstrate more deliberate extensions that followed roadways without much development of intervening territories. The Mississippi Valley region includes two subregions that divide north and south in Iowa. The northern sector, centered at Minneapolis and Saint Paul, is a western extension of the Inland Northern dialects, and the southern sector, centered at St. Louis, combines Northern with Midland features. Although both subdivisions include dialects that extend well into the plains, where distinctive Western forms first emerge, the easternmost varieties are of paramount importance

because they form basic centers of communication for the transmission of Eastern forms into the West.

From eastern Minnesota to north central Iowa, a small but distinctive set of features outlines the Northern core of features in the upper Mississippi Valley. These include lexical forms *belly flap* 'a dive in which the front of the body lands flat,' *boulevard* 'grass strip at the side of a road,' (*devil's*) *darning needle* 'dragonfly,' *Dutch cheese* 'cottage cheese,' *gopher*, *spider* 'frying pan,' *stone boat* 'a flat sledge for dragging heavy objects,' *swill pail*, and *whiffletree* 'a pivoted swinging bar to which harness traces are attached and by which a vehicle is pulled.'

Pronunciation includes the preservation of /h/ before the semivowels /w/ as in *whip* and /y/ as in *humor*. It also has /ɪ/ in *creak*, /ɑ/ before /r/ as in *barn* words and in most reflexes of Middle English "short o," including the *hog* words, and, less regularly, /ʊ/ in *broom* words.

As the cradle of Western dialects, the speech of the west central Midwest spread from Iowa to Arkansas along the river in the east and to the Ozarks and Oklahoma hills in the west before ranging across most of Nebraska and Kansas. Centered in Missouri, the major staging areas — with St. Louis in the east and Independence and Kansas City in the west — transmitted an essentially western Midland pattern over the lower extensions of the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains.

This Midland pattern reflects the union of two subregional sets that originated in Pennsylvania. The primary source of dialects in this area seems to proceed from Western Pennsylvania, following the course of the Ohio River in the Mississippi Valley. Nineteenth-century demographics, however, show a secondary source that proceeded into the same territory along an extended and circuitous route. The great migration out of eastern Pennsylvania first extended south through the Shenandoah Valley terminating in the Carolinas and east Tennessee. The discovery of the Cumberland Gap in 1750 offered a route first into east central Kentucky and, later, a southern access to the Midwest.

Settlement of the middle Mississippi Valley from those two sources reunited the historical Pennsylvania patterns in the middle nineteenth century with all the cultural acquisitions gathered through almost a hundred years of diverse social experience. The resultant vocabulary includes items from Western Pennsylvania and its Ohio Valley extensions, such as *baby buggy*, *green beans* 'string beans,' and *gunysack* 'burlap sack,' and terms from eastern Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky, such as *coal oil* 'kerosene,' (*corn*) *shucks* 'corn husks,' *French harp* 'harmonica,' *singletree*, *skillet*, *stop bucket*, and *snake feeder* or *snake doctor* 'dragonfly.'

Pronunciation in this area shows a predominantly Western Pennsylvania influence with rounded low-back vowels in *hog* words, as well as in the development of historical /ɑ/ in *ma* and *pa* and before /r/ as in *barn* words. Reflecting Southern sources are the incidence of /z/ in *gray*, /č/ in *rinse*, /v/ in *cop*, and /æ/ in *leg*.

An essentially Southern dialect base extends across the delta regions, the Louisiana and East Texas plains and includes the relic highland enclave of the Missouri and Arkansas Ozarks. Its distinctive contributions to Western dialects, however, emerge as the local patterns reach westward. The incidence of features such as *baby buggy*, *coal oil*, *green beans*, and *skillet*, as well as the low-back vowels mentioned above, unite the middle and lower Mississippi Valley subdivisions from the Missouri foothold to New Orleans. The incipient Western vocabulary emerges from north of the New Orleans focal area. This includes a few Atchafalaya delta terms, such as *coulee* 'creek bed,' *prairie*, and *step* 'inside stairs.' In the Red River basin in northwestern Louisiana and the adjacent plains of Arkansas and East Texas, a distinctively mixed Southern and Western vocabulary appears, including *branch* 'creek,' *corral*, *French harp* 'harmonica,' *lariat*, *lasso*, *pecker-wood*, *pulley bone*, *souse*, and *subtrack*.

Pronunciation includes strongly retroflex realizations of postvocalic /r/ and the reemergence of /h/ before /w/, both missing in territories dominated by New Orleans and the lower Mississippi delta. As the dialect of the Louisiana piney woods crosses the Sabine River to become that of the East Texas pine flats, a distinctly Western vocabulary takes shape. There the western lower Mississippi Valley pronunciation combines with Western words such as *blinley* '(of milk) turning sour,' (*blue*) *norther* 'fierce northern wind,' *bronc* '(of) unbroken horse,' *dogie* 'orphan calf,' and *draw* 'dry creek.'

Beginning west of the ninety-eighth meridian and extending beyond the mountains and deserts, this large Western speech area finds unity in the physical and social facts that underlay its destiny. West of the ninety-eighth meridian, the plains become a semiarid to arid zone. The productive farming that marked the Midwest was impossible there until the advent of specialized methods such as "dry farming" and modern tools such as the Oliver plow and the spring-tooth harrow, first produced after the Civil War. When these became available, the area was rapidly settled and became a clearly defined cultural region, restricted by the absence of the twenty-two inches of annual rain necessary for productive traditional farming.

Because mobile cartlemen could move across a vast territory in search of good grasslands, making use of even the badlands in the winter months, the domain of the cowboy ultimately extended from Texas to Montana and

into western Canada. Culturally, the trails from Texas into Colorado and Wyoming carried the language and artifacts through the area. Even today, such linguistic forms distinguish the West, however dominant Eastern institutions over the general development of these societies may be.

From the west central Dakotas through Texas, this area is characterized by a small set of words: *vigan* 'range blanket,' *trail*, and the previously mentioned Western terms of the Southwestern plains, such as *blinky*, *brone(o)*, *jerky* 'dried beef or venison,' *lariat*, *lasso*, *rancho*, and *rancho band*. All of these occur across the rural Rocky Mountain regions in old-fashioned folk speech, reinforced by *bum* 'orphan cattle or sheep,' *cavy* 'string of horses,' *cinch* 'saddle girth' (as opposed to Southern *bellyband*), and *rope lasso*. Other rural words of general currency across the West are these familiar topographic designations: *alkali* (*bad flats*, *land*, *soil*), *badlands*, *canyon*, *draw*, *gorge*, *gulch*, *ravine*, and *wash*. The region, extending from the Dakotas to the Rio Grande, combines Northern and Midland vocabulary. Striking Midland features include *baby buggy*, *coal oil*, *green beans*, *gunny sack*, (*mouth*) *burp* 'harmonic,' *nicker* 'gentle sound of a horse,' *pack* 'carry,' and *want off* 'want to get off.'

From Montana and Idaho through Wyoming, Utah, and upper Colorado, Western dialects preserve an essentially Northern pattern. This reflects the comparatively late settlement of the area, primary routes of travel from the east, and the large number of Americans of European birth or parentage. The Mormons, who formed the largest early settlement, had followed a course from Northern Ohio to Missouri, back to Nauvoo, Illinois, and then westward to Utah along the Mormon Trail with Brigham Young, a native of Whitingham, Vermont. Although those settlers initially staked out the entire Southwest as the State of Deseret, their domain finally narrowed to the state of Utah and the border regions of Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nevada.

Prior to 1845, the border between the United States and Mexico divided southwest and north central Colorado at the Arkansas River. Thus, the first settlers entered the northeast quadrant of the state. With the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1858, newcomers arrived from the east along northern and southern routes. These facts seem reflected today in the strong Northern element in the upper and central part of the state against an essentially Midland pattern elsewhere, especially in the most newly settled areas.

In Montana and Idaho, the predominant Northern pattern reflects the remarkable numbers of immigrants and first-generation Americans in both states. The population of Montana in 1930, for example, was 45 percent of these newcomers, with the overwhelming majority from Germany and Scandinavia. Because these states repeated the pattern established earlier in

Minnesota and the Dakotas and included many settlers from those states, Northern speech was extended westward across the northern Rockies.

The distinctive mountain flora and fauna of the northern Rockies were named with such terms as *quakes*, *quakers*, or *quaking aspen* 'indigenous poplars.' Other lexical features of the region include *basin* 'extended valley between mountains,' *butte* 'flat-topped hill,' *hole* (a Western-sized counter-part of the Eastern *mountain hollow*), *park* 'high plains meadow,' *piggin string* 'tie used in calf-roping,' and (*saddle*) *fender*.

Across the Western plains and mountains, as far south as central Colorado and the entire state of Utah, vocabulary and pronunciation reflect a Northern influence. Examples are (*peach*) *pit*, *teeter-totter*, and *whetstone*, as well as the pronunciation features /s/ in *gray*, /hw/ in *whip* words, fully retroflex postvocalic /r/, which prevails across the mountains and Pacific Coast, and homophony of *Mary*, *merry*, and *mery*. The occurrence of /a/ in *log* words also marks old-fashioned rural speech across this territory. The coalescence of /a/ and /o/ in all contexts among young speakers points toward the loss of the /o/ phoneme in the northern Rockies, as far west as Idaho. Other striking features include /s/ in *Boise*, /æ/ in *Colorado* and *Nevada*, and a weakly stressed final syllable in *Oregon*.

Inseparable from the development and expansion of Texas after the Mexican War, the southern Rockies preserve a Spanish influence that steadily competed with transplanted Anglo-American forms from the east. Nowhere was this competition greater than in New Mexico and Arizona. When, in 1905, Congress proposed the creation of a single state across this southwestern territory, residents of both subdivisions objected. In New Mexico, citizens feared the loss of their Hispanic traditions; in Arizona, they worried that their American-English culture would be lost under Spanish influence. As a result, separate states were simultaneously established in 1912.

From central Colorado to interior Texas, as well as across the states of New Mexico, and Arizona, regional speech reflects the mingling of four cultural influences from the north, east, and south. These are (1) the extension of the general Midland pattern that marks the northern subdivision, (2) a western Midland pattern that distinguishes these lower enclaves, (3) a Southern residue that diminishes east to west, and (4) a powerful Spanish influence, which provides the southern part of the Western plains and Rocky Mountains with its most distinctive dialect features.

The general Midland vocabulary includes a number of forms that occur with decreasing incidence in the Rockies. These include (*corn*) *shucks*, *roasting ears*, *slip bucket*, and *sooze*. From the western Midland come *baby buggy*, *coal*

vii, and *crumdad* 'crawfish,' as well as the strongly rounded low-back vowels, both before /t/ as in *barn* words and in *hog* words.

Strongest in west Texas and southeastern New Mexico, Southern and South Midland features include *Christmas gift* (as a greeting), both *crúker sack* and *tom sack* 'burlap sack,' *dog irons* 'andirons,' *gully washer* 'heavy rain,' *paper sack*, *pully bone* 'wishbone,' *vesaw*, *snake doctor* 'dragonfly,' *toad-frog*, and *you all* (second person plural). Probably more important are the Southern lengthened free vowels and ingliding checked vowels that characterize the Southwestern drawl.

From Spanish sources come *arroyo* 'dry creek,' *calaboose* 'jail,' *frijoles* 'pinto beans,' *hoosegow*, *mesa* 'flat-topped hill,' *remuda* 'string of horses,' and *sudadero* 'saddle fender.'

In addition, an exclusive Southwestern vocabulary further defines the subregion with forms such as *backamore* 'rope halter,' *horned toad*, *shinny* 'oak-covered land,' *swry* (euphemistically) 'bull,' and *trap* 'livestock enclosure.'

Anglo-Americans settled the coastal west early—in the Willamette Valley of Oregon (south of modern Portland and the Columbia River) and in California at Sacramento and San Francisco. Each area was originally settled from the Midwest by the northern Oregon Trail originating at Independence, Missouri, and by the southern Old Spanish, Santa Fe, and California trails. The striking New England influence, especially in San Francisco, may reflect early connections with the merchant mariners, as well as with early settlers from New England who arrived by sea, entering the Pacific across Nicaragua and Panama or around Cape Horn. Although early settlement was accelerated by the Oregon Boom in 1847 and the California Gold Rush two years later, the most powerful influences on the speech of the Pacific Coast followed the Civil War. And these have been primarily Northern forces that shaped the development of cultural centers at Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, and Seattle.

Unlike communities in the plains and mountain states of the interior West, the subarea comprising Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada has no direct union with the gradual westward expansion from the East. And, as no clear extension of a Northern-Midland, a Northern-Southern, or a Midland-Southern boundary emerged beyond the ninety-eighth meridian, the patterns of regional dialects in the Far West are understandably convoluted. All dialects of the Far West reflect settlement by "parachuting," with focal areas in Seattle and San Francisco antedating and surpassing in influence most of the important cultural centers of the Rocky Mountain states, for example, Boise, Casper, Denver, and Phoenix. Only Salt Lake City emerged as an important site in that region, but like other

centers there, it had little influence on the development of regional speech to the north, south, and west.

For that reason, a predominantly Inland Northern pattern dominates in the states of the Pacific Coast and Nevada, but an internal subdivision seems to separate Washington, Oregon, and northern California from southern California and Nevada. This pattern reflects the major routes of settlement, by trails, railroads, and finally the highway system that united the Far West with the Middle West.

The essential regional composition of the four states reflects a mix of Northern and Midland features. But, as Elizabeth Jackson has suggested for Colorado speech patterns, virtually all Western dialect mixtures reflect processes that were well underway or completed before they were extended beyond the Middle West.

Lexical, grammatical, and phonological features form a general pattern across the Pacific states and Nevada, reflecting the preeminence of Northern dialect influence on the speech of the region with less influence from Midland sources, fewer from plains and Rocky Mountain Western, and least from the South. These Far West features include a considerable number that today approach general currency in American English. From the Northern dialects come *andirons*, *anglerworm*, *chipmunk*, *clingingstone peach*, *cloudburst*, *froggy*, *freestone peach*, *harmonica*, *headcheese*, *mantel*, *pail*, *pig pen*, *pit* 'cherry-stone,' *ram*, *salt pork*, *stallion*, *string beans*, *to* in "quarter to the hour" and "sick to one's stomach," *whinny*, *white bread*, and *wishbone*. From Midland and Southern (usually south Midland) sources come *baby buggy*, (*barn*) *lot*, *coal oil*, *coal bucket*, *green beans*, *gunnysack*, *gutters*, *mush*, *roasting ears* 'corn on the cob,' *second crop*, *vesaw*, *shivaree*, *singletree*, *skillet*, *snake doctor* 'dragonfly,' *till* in "quarter till the hour," and (*window*) *blinds*. Specialized usage of Western words include a preference for *lasso* (with primary stress on the first syllable in the Far West and on the last syllable in the Rockies) over *lariat* and *rodeo* (with primary stress on the second syllable more often than in the Rockies, where it is invariably on the first syllable).

Washington and Oregon attracted large numbers of Eastern farmers, fishermen, and miners, drawn by the promise of abundant rainfall, access to the ocean and powerful rivers, and a long history of success in the extractive industries. As the terminus of the Oregon Trail, the Willamette Valley absorbed the first settlers who extended Northern and Midland forms across the territory now dominated by the two states. Later development of heavy industries, especially at Portland and Seattle, reinforced a dominant Inland Northern pattern. Indeed, apart from a few Cook County shibboleths, the speech of metropolitan Chicago is as nearly indistinguishable

from Seattle speech as it is from that of San Francisco. And, after having little currency across the interior West, Northern terms reemerge: (*devil's darning needle*, *Dutch cheese* 'cottage cheese,' *johnnycake* 'corn bread,' and *stoop* 'back porch.' Although these occur to the south in Nevada and California, they have higher incidence in the Pacific Northwest. Local speech is further marked by the occurrence of Midland *dog irons* 'andirons' and distinctly sub-regional *eyawse* 'wild horse' and *chitook* 'warm, moist southwestern wind' (in contrast with the warm, dry wind of the Upper Rockies).

Like the dialects in the southern Rockies to the east, speech in the Pacific Southwest acquires much more from Midland and Southern, as well as Hispanic, sources than does the northern coastal area. Although the combination of early and recent immigrants preserves a predominantly Northern pattern, especially in the cities of Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego, contributions from those other three sources distinguish California and Nevada. Midland and Southern features include *bucket* 'wooden vessel,' *coal bucket* 'metal vessel,' *horned, horn, or horry toad*, *jag* 'partial load,' *lightning bug*, *mud dauber*, *mushmelon* 'cantaloupe,' *rock* 'stone,' *rock fence*, *side meat*, *singletree*, *skillet*, *sowbelly*, *spicket*, and *wardrobe* 'built-in closet.' From Spanish sources come *adobe*, *arroyo*, *burro*, *cholo* 'Mexican,' *corral* (common throughout the West except in Washington), *frijoles*, *mesa*, *peon*, *riata*, and *vaguero*, as well as terms such as *enchilada*, *patio*, *plaza*, *taco*, and *tortilla*, all of which have gained general currency in virtually all dialects of American English.

These Western dialects suggest the immediate future of the national language more reliably than any other regional pattern. As products of American social history since the Civil War, local speech of the West incorporates features from eastern sources and reforms them across the plains, mountains, and coastal subdivisions of the Western states. In this area, modern cultural influences of American life manifest themselves linguistically. These changes reflect the impact of mobility, urbanization, and social reform on the contemporary family, education, economy, and technology. All of these experiences have contributed to the development of the Western, trans-Mississippi, dialects of American English at the end of the twentieth century.

In an era dominated by the automobile, industrialization, and social integration, the American West came into its own as the national center of population reached the Mississippi Valley. The confluence of Northern, Midland, and Southern speech forms reshaped the language here in a territory that established unique relationships with European and American sources. Western society found its basis in native usage, and its dialects offer

the most reliable model for American English at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

7.10 Summary: major American dialects

1. Northern
 - a. northeastern New England
 - b. southeastern New England
 - c. metropolitan New York City
 - d. southwestern New England
 - e. Hudson Valley
 - f. Inland North (western Vermont, Upstate New York, and derivatives spread across the Midwest beneath the Great Lakes and beyond the Mississippi into Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas)
2. Southern
 - a. coastal
 - (1) Atlantic
 - (2) Gulf
 - b. interior
 - (1) piedmont
 - (2) Gulf plains: eastern, central, western
 - c. delta
 - (1) upper: Arkansas River basin, Yazoo River basin, Red River basin
 - (2) lower: Archafalaya River basin, lower Mississippi River basin
3. Midland
 - a. eastern (Philadelphia)
 - b. western (Pittsburgh)
 - c. North (western reflexes of Pittsburgh)
 - (1) eastern: Cincinnati, Indianapolis
 - (2) western: St. Louis, Kansas City
 - d. South (southern reflexes of Philadelphia)
 - (1) highlands: eastern: Virginia, Kentucky, east Tennessee, Georgia Blue Ridge; central: middle Tennessee, upper Alabama Cumberland; western: Missouri and Arkansas Ozarks
 - (2) piney woods: Georgia and Alabama wire grass; Florida and Alabama sand hills and pine flats; Mississippi and Louisiana piney woods; East Texas pine flats
4. Western
 - a. Mississippi Valley and western Midwest plains
 - b. Western plains and Rocky Mountains (beyond the 98th meridian,

forty miles west of the Red River in North Dakota and fifty miles west of Fort Worth in Texas, where annual rainfall usually fails to exceed the twenty-two inches required for traditional Midwestern farming)
 c. Pacific Coast (Pacific Northwest, San Francisco, southern California)

FURTHER READING

The best current resources of American dialects include William Kretzschmar's Linguistic Atlas projects site <<http://us.english.uga.edu/>> and William Labov's TELSUR project (Atlas of North American English) <<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phonoatlas>>. Useful recent readings include Cynthia Bernstein, Tom Nunnally, and Robin Sabino (1997), *Language Variety in the South Revisited*; Ellen Johnson (1996), *Lexical Change and Variation in the Southeastern United States, 1930-1990*; William A. Kretzschmar, Jr. (1998), "Ebonics"; William A. Kretzschmar, Jr. and Edgar Schneider (1996), *Introduction to Quantitative Analysis in Linguistic Survey Data*; Rosina Lippi-Green (1997), *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*; Salikoko Mufwene, John Rickford, Guy Bailey, and John Baugh (1998), *African-American English: Structure, History, and Use*; and Edgar W. Schneider (1996), *Focus on the USA*. The most comprehensive source for lexical information about American dialects is Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall (1985-), *Dictionary of American Regional English*.

8 AFRICAN-AMERICAN ENGLISH

Salikoko S. Mufwene

8.1 What is African-American English?

The term African-American English (AAE) is used here for "the whole range of language [varieties] used by black people in the United States: a very large range indeed, extending from the Creole grammar of Gullah spoken in the Sea Islands [and coastal marshlands] of South Carolina [and Georgia] to the most formal and accomplished literary style" (Labov 1972a, xiii). This chapter is focused, however, on vernacular varieties characterized as basilectal or mesolectal. A basilect is a variety most different from educated, middle-class English, called an acrolect, and a mesolect is intermediate between the basilect and the acrolect.

The term AAE is used here as a general, umbrella term that must be distinguished from more specific ones such as Gullah – also known as Sea Island Creole – and African-American vernacular English (AAVE). Gullah is any of a range of creole varieties, and AAVE is any of the continental nonstandard varieties of African-American speech. Following several African-American scholars (J. Baugh 1983; M. Morgan 1989; Smitherman 1977; Spears 1988; Tolliver-Weddington) but in contrast with William Labov (1972a, cf. however 1982) and others, the term "vernacular" is used here for varieties of AAE allegedly used by 80 to 90 percent of continental African-Americans as a primary means of communication for their day-to-day intragroup communication (Smitherman 1977, 2; Spears 1988, 109; Wofford 367). That percentage is only an estimate suggesting that most African-Americans speak those varieties of AAE.

Labov, on the other hand, identifies AAVE as "that relatively uniform grammar found in its most consistent form in the speech of the [adolescent] black youth from 8 to 19 years old who participate in the street culture of the inner cities" (1972a, xiii), which prompts the question of whether the rest of African-Americans speak white middle-class English or white nonstandard