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ABSTRACT

This booklet points out some of the characteristics of the varieties of English spoken in Riverside and in the rest of California. The first chapter provides a general discussion of language variation and change on the levels of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The second chapter discusses California English and pronunciation and vocabulary characteristics of different areas. Chapter three considers the findings of the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast survey made in the 1950's and a more recent survey made in Riverside using an interview technique similar to but shorter than the Linguistic Atlas survey. Trends evident from the comparison of the two surveys indicate a move toward homogeneity, "spelling pronunciations," and greater Midlands and Southern influence. The final chapter deals with non-regional variations that can be attributed to age, sex, occupation, social class, or ethnic group. A bibliography is included. (VM)

RIVERSIDE ENGLISH

The Spoken Language of a Southern California Community

by

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preface

This booklet is intended to be of help in the schools of Riverside, California, by providing teachers and students with information unavailable elsewhere. It discusses some of the characteristics of the varieties of English spoken in Riverside and in the rest of California. Sometimes the going is heavy, especially in parts of Chapter 2 because it is not possible to refer the reader to another source for background data—there is none. Nevertheless, it is the book's aim to present the complicated facts about California English in as clear and uncluttered a fashion as possible.

Despite the abundance of information in these pages, it should be clear that our knowledge of California English is still rudimentary. In the East, a new generation of linguists has been reviewing and challenging the results of the Linguistic Atlas for the past decade; in California, the Linguistic Atlas is still not available to challenge.

Since anything published for use in the schools tends to become prescriptive, perhaps a warning is in order. The material in this book is not intended for memorization. Some of it may be wrong, and it will certainly be out of date soon. In the case of Riverside English, the students themselves are important sources of information. Let them conduct new surveys starting with themselves to see if the statements in the booklet still hold. The books by Labov and Shuy listed in the Bibliography will provide additional suggestions on how and what to ask.

Many persons have contributed directly or indirectly to the making of this booklet. We are grateful to the dozens of field workers and the hundreds of persons they interviewed in the studies reported here. Two persons were particularly helpful in this regard: Professor David Reed of Northwestern University, who gave us full access to field records of the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast and patiently answered our questions; and Professor Carroll Reed, of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, who gave us advice at several stages and provided information about the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Northwest.

Specific comments from the following people have helped me avoid some of the errors and infelicities of an earlier draft version:

Eva Reed Armbruster, Elizabeth Bright, Stanley Cook, W. Thomas Greenwell, James Hunter, Edith Trager Johnson, Mary Ritchie Key, Edna Lantz, Stanley E. Legum, Ronald Macaulay, George J. Metcalf, Robert H. Metcalf, Teri Metcalf, Sharon Okun, Lynnette Prisby, Carroll E. Reed, David W. Reed, Harry Singer, and Susan C. Nichols Seidman.

I remain responsible, however, for the shortcomings of this first attempt to describe Riverside English. It is particularly deficient in regard to variation which is not regional but a matter of social class, ethnic group, age, the particular speech situation, or the like (see Chapter 4). Corrections and suggestions for improvement will be welcome, and will be taken account of in any subsequent edition.

Tom Armbruster, aided by Shirley McFall, analyzed the Linguistic Atlas for Chapter 2. Edgar Howell helped with the analysis of Riverside English in Chapter 3. Sandre Prasad provided information on Mexican-American English for Chapter 4. Others who helped with preparation of the booklet were Barbara McLean, Brent Sweeny, and Anita Green.

The University of California awarded an "Urban Research" grant for the publication of this booklet, which is based in part on research conducted during 1969-70 under a Ford Foundation grant to the University of California for "Urban Crisis" research. I hope readers will find that it has been a worthwhile investment.

a.m

July 18, 1971

Contents

chapter 1: language variation

The telephone rings. You answer it and find a stranger on the line, asking for someone you have never heard of – a wrong number. The stranger apologizes and hangs up. The whole conversation may have taken just fifteen seconds, but in that time you have learned a great deal about the caller without seeing him or asking personal questions. You are pretty sure whether it is a man or woman, child or adult. You think you know what ethnic group the person belongs to, and what kind of an occupation he might have. And you know if he is a foreigner, or if he comes from another part of the country.

Of course, these are only guesses. But the surprising thing – surprising to professional linguists, who know how uninformed about language the average person can be – is that, providing you are a native speaker, you will guess correctly a good deal of the time, even with no special training.

Most of us, however, will not be able to explain how we made the guesses, or why they were correct. We all know that one speaker is different from another, but how are they different? Is it the quality of the voice, the vocabulary, the grammar, the pronunciation, the rise and fall of the pitch? How do we know what people to associate with what differences? These matters deserve investigation. That is what this book is about.

Vague impressions will not do. An Australian, or a visitor from rural Texas, will sound strange to a native Californian – but "strange" doesn't tell us much. We might describe the Texan's speech, as Arthur Hailey does in his novel *Airport*, by calling it a "nasal Texas drawl."[1] But that is really not precise enough. Twice in his novel *Hotel*, the same author mentions a character with a "nasal California drawl."[2] Does that mean Texans and Californians sound alike? Mr. Hailey may think so, but we know better.

Precise, accurate explanations of differences in language are not always hard to find. Yet we rarely seek and find the proper explanations, for two reasons. First, we don't need them. We can tell if someone is male or female, child or adult, Californian or stranger from his speech alone without any special training. We learn to perceive these differences just as the child learns to speak without a grammar book, and we can make use of this subconscious knowledge just as we can drive a car without knowing the principles of the internal combustion engine. The second reason is related to the first. Since we do not need to know how we know about language, we are free to invent whatever reasons strike us as most appropriate. Thus we can say that many Riversiders leave out the first *h* in *which* (pronouncing it the same as *witch*) because the air is so dry and we want to conserve moisture in our mouths, and people will believe this explanation despite abundant evidence to the contrary. (The pronunciation is much the same along the coast where the humidity is high.) Such an example may seem far-fetched,[3] but people in all seriousness have argued, for instance, that the shape of the lips and nose accounts for the distinctive characteristics of Negro speech.[4] Brief observation of the variety of lips and noses using any particular type of speech should convince anyone that physiognomy has little to do with dialect, but few people bother to make this observation. Again, that is what this book is about.

Human language is a specifically human characteristic: any normal human can learn it, but no animal can. Not all humans can learn to ride a bicycle, drive a car, or repair a television set; every human, barring physical disability, can walk, grasp with his hand, and speak. The fact that even with the most painstaking tutoring a chimpanzee cannot learn a human language[5] indicates that the ability to learn a language is hereditary only in humans. However, heredity does not determine what particular language a person will speak. Every

1. Part 3, Ch. 14 (p. 480 in the Bantam Book edition, New York 1969).
2. "Wednesday," Ch. 3, and "Thursday," Ch. 7, (pp. 162 and 271 in the Bantam Book edition, New York 1966).
3. And yet we can read: "Southerners speak much more slowly and drawl out the words to greater length. Some people believe that the difference in climate is responsible for this; that the warm southern climate causes people to speak in a slower, unhurried fashion . . . ." (Eloise Lambert, *Our Language*: New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1955). Those who subscribe to this "thermometer theory" would presumably argue that everyone in the country talks faster in winter and slower in summer.
4. William A. Stewart quotes one example of this "amateurism at its worst" on p. 13 of his article, "Urban Negro Speech: Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting English Teaching," in *Social Dialects and Language Learning*, ed. Roger W. Shuy (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964).
5. Chimpanzees cannot speak as humans do, but recent experiments at the University of Nevada and the University of California, Santa Barbara indicate they are able to learn a certain amount of sign language. See R. Allen Gardner and Beatrice T. Gardner, "Teaching Sign Language to a Chimpanzee," *Science*, Vol. 165 (15 August 1969), 664-72; David Premack, "The Education of S*A*R*A*H," *Psychology Today*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1970), 54-8.

human is born with the ability to learn any language and any variety of any language. The proof of this is not hard to find. Consider the many kinds of people from many different language backgrounds who migrated to the United States from Europe and Asia. Whatever foreign accent the parents had, except in special cases, you find no trace of it in their American-born children, although the children certainly bear a physical resemblance to the parents.

In the child, the human brain and vocal organs are flexible enough to let him speak any human language like a native. As he grows older, the flexibility disappears. When a family moves from one country to another, the parents will have great difficulty speaking the new language with anything but a heavy foreign accent. A child ten years old, on the other hand, will learn the new language quickly with only a slight trace of a foreign accent, and a six-year-old will sound just like a native in a few months. The years between ages five and twelve or thirteen seem to be the crucial ones for developing an individual's particular language habits.[6] The people he associates with during those years usually determine the kind of speech he has throughout the rest of his life.

One of the most striking characteristics of human language is its variety. Despite the dedicated efforts of reformers, there are still three or four thousand languages in the world, and no signs that any one of them will become a world language that will replace all others, though French scholars can give good reasons why French would serve the purpose admirably, and impartial English-speaking experts have proved "conclusively" that English is the ideal world language.[7] What we see, instead, is the ever-present tendency of language to change, dividing even the specially designed international language Esperanto into different dialects, or bringing new vocabulary and pronunciations to a "dead" language like Hebrew when it is brought back to life. The English of a thousand years ago makes no sense to a present-day speaker without special training, and we are all aware of how strange Englishmen or Australians sound in California.

Linguistic diversity is often a nuisance, but it has its uses. Because people sound different we can make guesses about sex, age, ethnic group, occupation, and regional origin from a short telephone call. Because language is so flexible, we can talk about new situations and things – rock festivals, lunar modules, smog. Even more important, because of flexibility the younger native population will generally grow up talking the same and therefore understanding each other no matter where the parents have migrated from.

Vocabulary turns out to be the part of a language that changes most quickly and that shows the greatest variation from speaker to speaker. Some of the most interesting questions about present-day Riverside English involve vocabulary. Will *seesaw* supplant *teeter-totter*? Is (paper) *bag* or *sack* becoming more popular – or have we decided to use *bag* for one kind of container and *sack* for another? Will we ever agree on how to pronounce *Rubidoux*?

Other aspects of language change more slowly, but when they do change, they make more difference. When you have learned that Riversiders most often say quarter *to* (eleven), instead of quarter *till* or *of*, you still have no idea whether they will prefer *couch* over *sofa*, *davenport*, or *divan*. The words each individual knows, and the meanings he gives to them, are often a very individual matter. (Ask someone to explain the difference between *pail* and *bucket*. Then ask someone else.) The way an individual puts words together, and the way he pronounces them, are much more consistent. If, as many Riversiders do, he pronounces *pen* like *pin*, he is very likely to pronounce *ten* like *tin*, and *men* like the first syllable of *minute*, and so on.

A single regularity in pronunciation of this sort applies to all the words in a speaker's language. That is, a given type of sound in a given environment will be pronounced in a predictable way. The "environment" is the neighboring sounds. Our Riverside speaker, even though he pronounced *pen* like *pin*, is unlikely to make *bed* the same as *bid*. The difference is not a matter of chance, or of different vocabulary items. It comes about because there is a difference in the following consonant. Before *n*, our speaker will merge short *e* with short *i*; before other consonants, he ususally will not. (For speakers of some other dialects, the merger occurs regardless of environment.) We can generalize, then, that patterns of sound change are regular and consistent.

There may be some complications, of course, as there usually are in a complex matter like language. Most importantly, a person may have more than one pronunciation for a word, especially if one of the pronunciations is not "standard." Many speakers who normally pronounce *pen* as *pin* and *ten* as *tin* will use the "correct" pronunciation (with the vowel of *bed*) when they are speaking carefully, and they will often even fail to recognize that they have any other pronunciation.

The following three chapters will look at Riverside English in a perspective that moves from the general and the past – California English as a whole – to the particular and present – Riverside today – and then to variations within the Riverside norm. Amid the details we will look for general patterns and venture a few predictions. We will look for regularities in grammar and pronunciation changes, but we will not expect to find the same sort of patterns in the vocabulary. And we will spend some time discussing *who* asked *whom what* kinds of questions to get our information, since the questions, the way they are asked, and the types of people chosen for investigation will have important effects on the conclusions we reach about California English.

6. See William Labov, "Stages in the Acquisition of Standard English," in the Allen-Underwood anthology (see Bibliography), pp. 483-490.
7. See, for example, "The International Language and English," Ch. 20 in *The Many Hues of English* by Mario Pei (New York: Knopf, 1967).

chapter 2: California English

> A mixed population, like that in the mines, representing every State in the Union, and every county of Great Britain, could not have a dialect; and nowhere is the English language better understood, or spoken with more force, elegance, and purity, by the poorer classes of people, than in this State.[1]

> If you want to hear the general American of the future, Hollywood and TV-studio based, go to California and listen to the speech of the California-born younger generation .... Do you recall how in the Presidential campaign of 1960 Kennedy's *ahsk* and *Africar* stood out like sore thumbs, while Nixon never drew a lifted eyebrow? Nixon spoke the general American of the future, an American shorn of all local peculiarities.[2]

All the varieties of English spoken in America and throughout the world have their origins in the British Isles. The first record of the English language in California in fact came directly from England. On a plate of brass, later discovered on a hillside in Marin County and now in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, the English adventurer Francis Drake left the following inscription (with spelling modernized):

> "BE IT KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS
> JUNE.17.1579
> BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND IN THE NAME OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND AND HER SUCCESSORS FOREVER I TAKE POSSESSION OF THIS KINGDOM WHOSE KING AND PEOPLE FREELY RESIGN THEIR RIGHT AND TITLE IN THE WHOLE LAND UNTO HER MAJESTY'S KEEPING NOW NAMED BY ME AND TO BE KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN AS NOVA ALBION.
> G FRANCIS DRAKE"

But when the English language arrived in California for good several centuries later, it came mainly from a different source, the previously settled Atlantic coast.

English-speaking settlers began arriving in the original Eastern colonies in considerable numbers in the 1600's, long before the days of rapid mass communication and transportation. Local varieties of English then began to develop on their own, somewhat independent of the changes in Britain and elsewhere in North America simply because speakers were relatively isolated.

While residents of the port towns of the East followed the developments of fashionable London English, those in the inland areas tended to keep more old-fashioned forms of speech. In this way the most striking differences between present-day British English (of the sort spoken by Londoners) and American English (spoken, for example, by Ohioans or Californians) arose. From the evidence of rhymes, spellings, and present-day usage, it appears that in the 1700's London speakers gradually stopped pronouncing *r* after vowels, as in *part* or *cart*. Residents of Boston and New York and the plantation owners in the southern Atlantic states seem to have followed the London fashion. Others inland, including the linguistic ancestors of present-day Californians, were too far away to be influenced by this change. The "dropped *r*" still remains restricted to Boston, New York City, and the South.

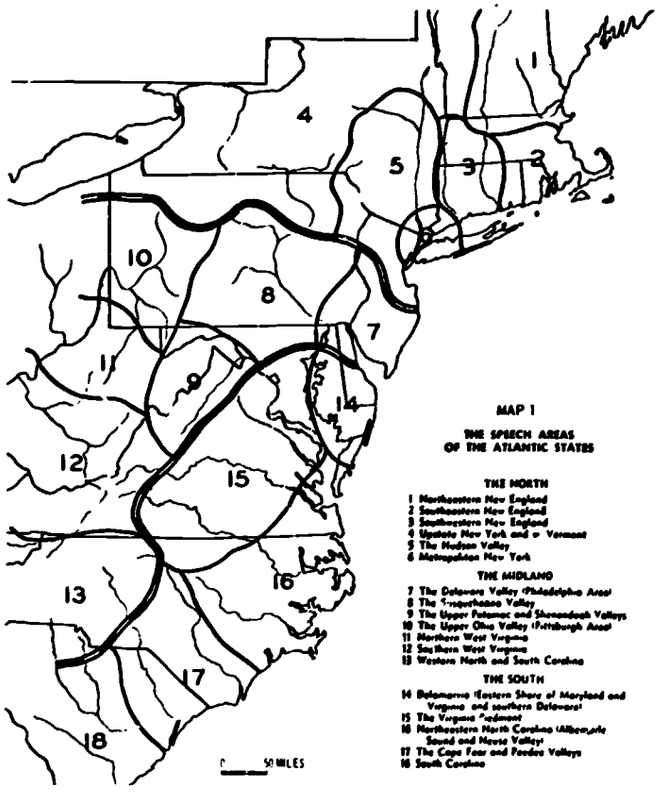
Difference from present-day Standard British English distinguishes what has been termed a "general American" speech area, including California, from those areas along the Atlantic coast which kept better correspondence with British trends. Outside of "general American" there would be a Southern dialect area; a New York dialect area; and a New England dialect area, centered in Boston. The latter not only lacks the *r* after vowels, but like standard British English uses the "broad *a*" which gives to the vowel of *half, bath, glass* and other stressed syllables ending in *f, s, n,* and *th* the sound of the *a* in *car*. (The British vowel, however, is slightly different; it is made with the tongue farther back [ɑ] than for the New England vowel [a]. See Figure 1 for explanation of phonetic symbols.)

To learn more about the exact nature of geographical variation in English vocabulary and pronunciation on this continent, several decades ago a number of linguists embarked on a nationwide project, still uncompleted, called the Linguistic Atlas of North America. They began, understandably, with the area of oldest settlement (and greatest concentration of present-day linguists), the Atlantic coast. During the 1930's specially trained researchers completed several hundred field interviews in New England, using methods which they described in the *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England,* [3] and reaching

1. John S. Hittell, *The Resources of California, Comprising the Society, Climate, Salubrity, Scenery, Commerce and Industry of the State*, 6th ed. (San Francisco: A. Roman, 1874), p. 35.

2. Mario Pei, *The Many Hues of English* (New York: Knopf, 1967), p 192.

3. by Hans Kurath (Providence: Brown U. Press, 1939).



MAP 1

THE SPEECH AREAS OF THE ATLANTIC STATES

THE NORTH

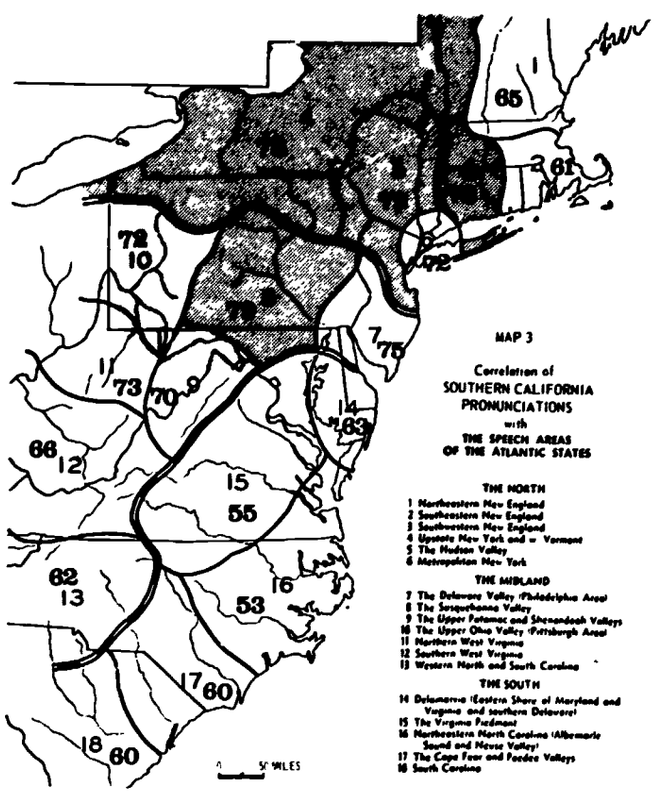
1 Northeastern New England
2 Southeastern New England
3 Southwestern New England
4 Upstate New York and w Vermont
5 The Hudson Valley
6 Metropolitan New York

THE MIDLAND

7 The Delaware Valley (Philadelphia Area)
8 The Susquehanna Valley
9 The Upper Potomac and Shenandoah Valleys
10 The Upper Ohio Valley (Pittsburgh Area)
11 Northern West Virginia
12 Southern West Virginia
13 Western North and South Carolina

THE SOUTH

14 Delmarva (Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia and southern Delaware)
15 The Virginia Piedmont
16 Northeastern North Carolina (Albemarle Sound and Neuse Valley)
17 The Cape Fear and Peedee Valleys
18 South Carolina



MAP 3

Correlation of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PRONUNCIATIONS with THE SPEECH AREAS OF THE ATLANTIC STATES

THE NORTH

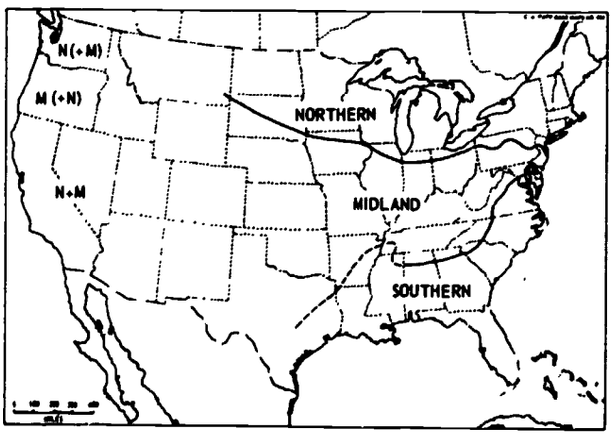
1 Northeastern New England
2 Southeastern New England
3 Southwestern New England
4 Upstate New York and w Vermont
5 The Hudson Valley
6 Metropolitan New York

THE MIDLAND

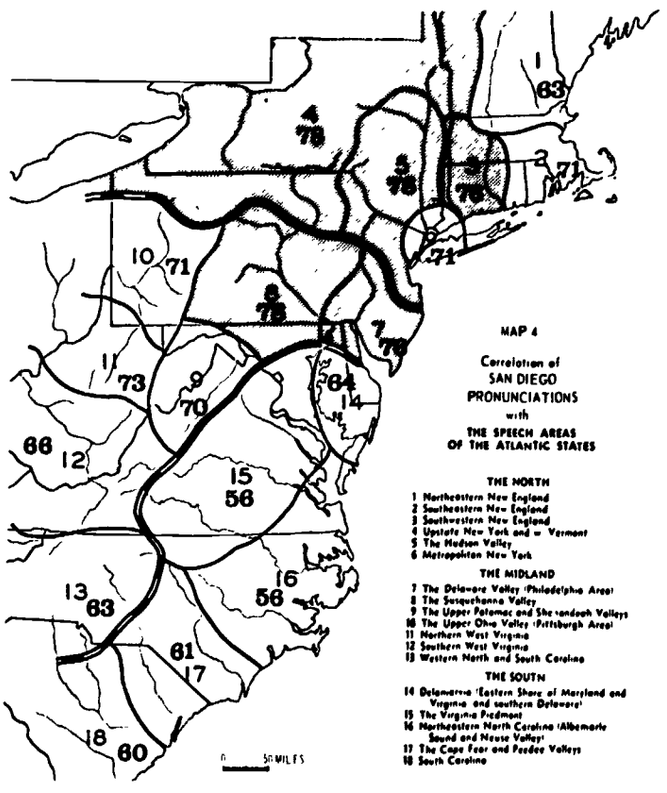
7 The Delaware Valley (Philadelphia Area)
8 The Susquehanna Valley
9 The Upper Potomac and Shenandoah Valleys
10 The Upper Ohio Valley (Pittsburgh Area)
11 Northern West Virginia
12 Southern West Virginia
13 Western North and South Carolina

THE SOUTH

14 Delmarva (Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia and southern Delaware)
15 The Virginia Piedmont
16 Northeastern North Carolina (Albemarle Sound and Neuse Valley)
17 The Cape Fear and Peedee Valleys
18 South Carolina



MAP 2: PRINCIPAL DIALECT AREAS in the United States. Moving westward from the Atlantic states the boundaries become less sharp and more in dispute among linguists.



MAP 4

Correlation of SAN DIEGO PRONUNCIATIONS with THE SPEECH AREAS OF THE ATLANTIC STATES

THE NORTH

1 Northeastern New England
2 Southeastern New England
3 Southwestern New England
4 Upstate New York and w Vermont
5 The Hudson Valley
6 Metropolitan New York

THE MIDLAND

7 The Delaware Valley (Philadelphia Area)
8 The Susquehanna Valley
9 The Upper Potomac and Shenandoah Valleys
10 The Upper Ohio Valley (Pittsburgh Area)
11 Northern West Virginia
12 Southern West Virginia
13 Western North and South Carolina

THE SOUTH

14 Delmarva (Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia and southern Delaware)
15 The Virginia Piedmont
16 Northeastern North Carolina (Albemarle Sound and Neuse Valley)
17 The Cape Fear and Peedee Valleys
18 South Carolina

conclusions which they published, with elaborate maps, in the three-volume *Linguistic Atlas of New England.* [4] Field work in other areas took much longer to get underway, but by 1961 coverage of the East Coast was nearly complete, and detailed studies of the vocabulary, pronunciation, and verb forms used in all the Atlantic states had been published. [5] As field work in California began in the 1950's, the Eastern researchers had already reached surprising new conclusions about the varieties of English in the eastern United States.

They decided that instead of just two basic types of dialects, "general American" and "the others," it would be more accurate to say that geographically there are three American dialects: North, Midlands, and Southern. (See Map 1.) Northern dialects divided from Midlands along a line that goes through northern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, in some cases straight on through Denver. Above that line, to take a particularly useful example, the last consonant in *greasy* will have an *s* sound. Below that line, *greasy* sounds as if it were spelled *greazy*. The true *r*-dropping dialects, according to the Linguistic Atlas study, are found mainly along the Atlantic Coast, separated by the Appalachian Mountains from the Midlands area. The basic pattern as far west as the Rocky Mountains thus shows a Northern dialect for the upper third of the nation, a Southern dialect for a coastal wedge in the southeast, and a Midlands dialect spreading out as it goes west to encompass everything in between. (See Map 2.)

Mountains and desert separate California geographically from the eastern part of the country. They also prevent a simple westward extension of the dialect boundary lines located in the East. If these lines were to extend all the way to California, people in our state would sound like Texans. That is, their speech would show the features of the Southern and South Midlands dialects, where *pin* and *pen* can sound alike and *fire* is not much different from *far*. But the mountains and desert, and the paths of migration used to cross or circumvent them, resulted in a different settlement pattern for California.

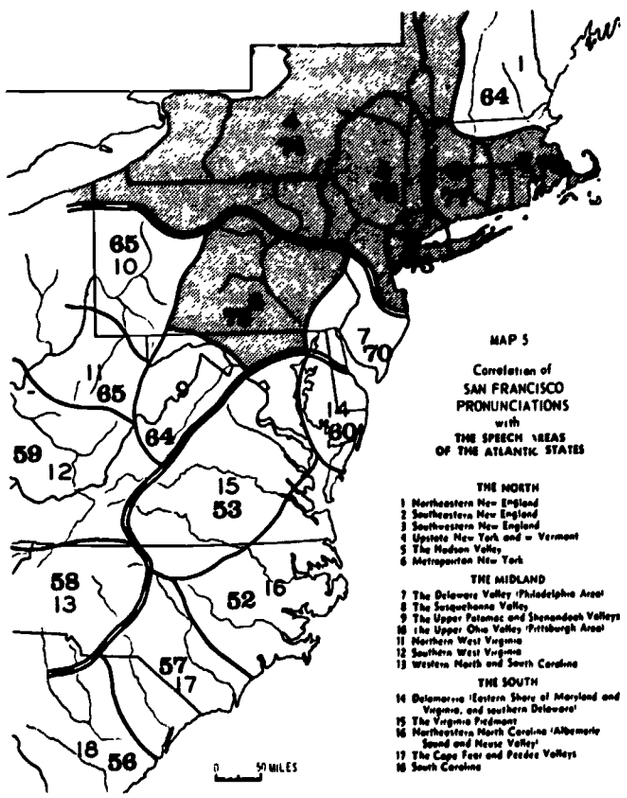
The greatest number of English-speaking emigrants to California came, and still come, from the inland parts of the United States north of the Mason-Dixon line. It is not surprising, then, to find that California speech is closer to that of Syracuse, N.Y. than to that of Boston or Richmond. Linguistic Atlas evidence indicates that the Eastern speech area most like California is that known as the Inland North. The Eastern area least like California is the South. Maps 3, 4, and 5 compare California pronunciation with that of the East, based on the Linguistic Atlas survey made in the Atlantic states in the 1930's and 1940's and in California in the 1950's, as analyzed in Table 1. (The higher the number, the greater the correlation. Figures are not yet available for California as a whole.)

Though they show correlation with the Inland North and the North Midlands, the figures also suggest that California English is somewhat different from that of any Eastern area. As we will see, this does not mean that California English has developed exotic features. California settlers came from a variety of Eastern areas, and even after they reached the Golden State, they and their descendants kept moving about. The result, for California English, is a blending of the features of a number of different Eastern dialects, a blend that is not quite like that of any other place.

PRONUNCIATION

What then does California English sound like? Although it is a blend, it has specific characteristics. Native Californians grow up talking California English, not the out-of-state dialects of their immigrant parents. Among the characteristics of California pronunciation as noted in the 1950's in the Linguistic Atlas survey are the ones given below. For each item there are comparisons with the Atlantic coast areas shown in Map 1.

Linguistic Atlas records use special phonetic symbols to permit precise and clear comparisons. Figure 1 illustrates relative positions of tongue height and frontedness for these symbols, which always appear in brackets in the text below. Here there is not space for a discussion of the symbols; for



4. ed. Hans Kurath (Providence: Brown U. Press, 1939-43).

5. Hans Kurath, *A Word Geography of the Eastern United States* (University of Michigan Press, 1949). E Bagby Atwood, *A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States* (University of Michigan Press, 1953). Hans Kurath and Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States* (University of Michigan Press, 1961).

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2			84	77	74	77	64	68	61	66	60	60	61	61	62	63	60	67	61	79	69	73	71	65	69	69	73	70	66	2
3				85	81	77	70	74	69	66	67	62	63	60	60	58	64	62	78	78	74	78	76	70	75	76	77	75	73	3
4					83	73	74	76	73	68	72	68	66	66	60	60	66	64	78	77	74	77	78	72	75	77	74	75	73	4
5						82	83	85	73	77	80	70	67	70	60	60	67	65	79	77	75	78	78	76	79	78	76	77	73	5
6							72	75	62	68	64	57	59	58	59	56	62	65	72	71	68	72	71	69	73	73	73	71	65	6
7								85	71	80	81	70	65	76	76	61	64	64	75	73	73	74	76	79	77	76	70	73	71	7
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13														75	76	81	86	70	62	60	56	58	63	55	60	60	58	63	59	13
14															68	74	73	65	63	62	59	61	64	63	61	60	60	61	61	14
15																81	79	70	55	55	49	52	56	48	52	52	53	58	55	15
16																	84	70	53	53	48	50	56	50	51	51	52	57	55	16
17																		78	60	59	55	57	61	54	57	58	57	63	59	17
18																			60	60	58	58	60	57	56	57	56	60	58	18
SC	(Southern California)																			93	88	90	86	84	88	89	82	83	83	SC
LA	(Los Angeles)																				86	92	84	81	85	85	81	81	84	LA
GP	(Glendale-Pasadena)																					87	82	83	84	83	79	78	82	GP
NC	(North Coast of Southern California)																						85	82	85	84	82	80	81	NC
SD	(San Diego)																							80	82	82	78	78	80	SD
IE	("Inland Empire": Riverside, San Bernardino, etc.)																								84	83	75	74	74	IE
RD	(Riverside County desert and rural)																									94	78	78	78	RD
D	(Southern California Desert)																										79	81	77	D
SF	(San Francisco)																											78	74	SF
CN	(California Negro)																												86	CN
LN	(Los Angeles Negro)																													LN

TABLE 1: Similarity scores among Atlantic coast areas (see Map 1) and California regions (see Map 7) for pronunciations of 108 items. To find the correlation for any two areas, find the place where the column for one area and the row for the other intersect. The higher the number, the greater the correlation. Derived from Linguistic Atlas Records.

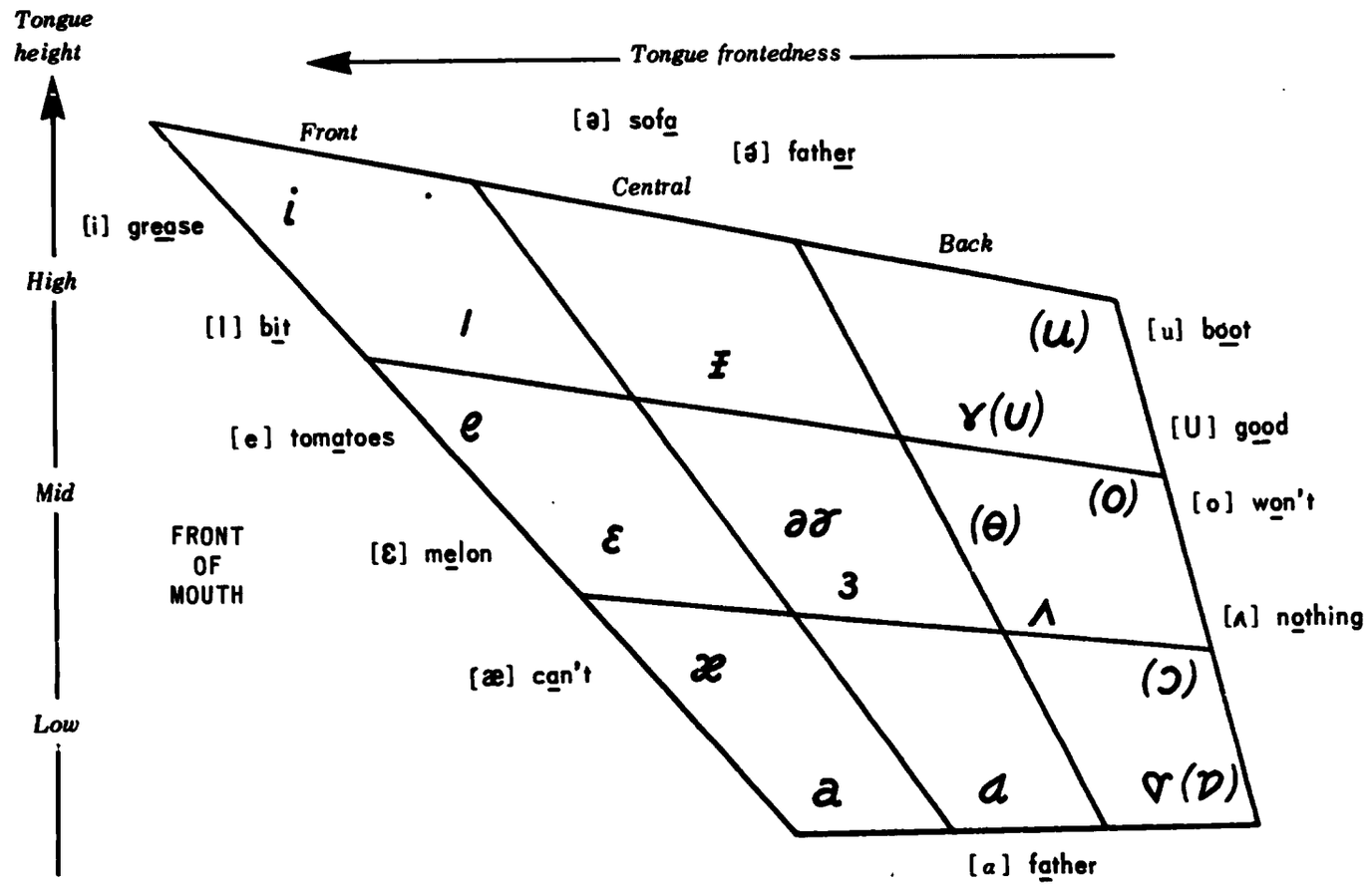


FIGURE 1: Relative positions of tongue height and frontedness for vowels indicated by phonetic symbols. Examples of words using these sounds are given only for vowels which native Southern Californians consistently use. Parentheses around a symbol indicate that the lips are rounded when the sound is produced.

more information see Kurath and McDavid's *Pr* ... *English in the Atlantic States* (Ann Arbor: U ... Michigan Press. 1961), the source of the information on the Atlantic States given here.

At least 90 per cent and sometimes all of the southern Californians interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas used:

The "long *e*" vowel [i] in *grease* (verb), and the "long *e*" [i] or "short *i*" [ɪ] in *beard, ear,* and *here. Grease* had the same vowel throughout the Atlantic states; the other three words varied, though they agreed with the California pattern in Eastern Areas 1-8, 10, and 11. In other Eastern areas, especially 18. the vowel of *beard, ear,* and *here* was often the "long *a*" of tomatoes [e] or a "yuh" [jə] (to make *beard* sound like *byud* or *byird*).

A simple "short *e*" vowel [ɛ] in *fence* and the second syllable of *muskmelon,* and the "short *e*" or "long *a*" [e] in *deaf.* In some of the East the "short *e*" of *fence* is followed by an "uh" sound [ɛᵊ] (especially Areas 1, 9, 10, 12-18). In Areas 9 and 13-16, a substantial number of speakers used the "short *i*" [ɪ] in the second syllable of *muskmelon,* pronouncing it *mushmillon* or *mushmullion. Deaf* had a "long *e*" vowel [i] for at least some of the speakers interviewed in all of the Eastern areas; only Areas 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 18 resembled California in generally having "short *e*" [ɛ].

A "short *e*" [ɛ] in the first syllable of *parents.* In Eastern areas 3-5, 7-11 this "short *e*" prevailed; otherwise the vowel was the "flat *a*" [æ] of *hat.*

The "flat *a*" [æ] in *can't.* This vowel predominated in the East, too, but the fronted "broad *a*" [a] (made with the tongue farther forward--see Figure 1) was strongly represented in Areas 1 and 2, and the "long *a*" of tomatoes [e] was a frequent response in Areas 12-14, 16, and 17.

A "flat *a*" (as in *hat*) in *half, aunt, calf,* and *raspberry.* This was the pronunciation in most of the East, but in areas 1 and 2 the fronted "broad *a*" [a] was used for the first three words. For *raspberry* the "flat *a*" was predominant in all Eastern areas, but Areas 2 and 3 had a number of responses with the fronted "broad *a*" [a], and Areas 1 and 4 had a considerable number of responses with a low back vowel [ɒ,ɔ].

The "long *a*" [e] of *mate* in the second syllable of *tomatoes.* Eastern Areas 1-4 recorded some speakers with the "flat *a*" [æ] or the fronted "broad *a*" [a] for that syllable, but in those areas, as in all of the East, the "long *a*" also predominated.

A "broad *a*" [ɑ] in *barn.* This vowel also predominated in Eastern areas 1, 3-6, 8-12, and 17. A slightly "flatter" or more fronted vowel [a] was recorded often in areas 1-3, and a "broader" or more open vowel [ɑ] with the tongue farther back predominated in Areas 7, 13, and 18. In Area 14 the vowel was farther back and rounded, like that of some pronunciations of *born* [ɒ].

A diphthong (a two-vowel combination) beginning with the "broad *a*" [aU, ɑU] in *out* and the first syllable of *mountain.* This was the predominant pronunciation in Eastern Areas 1-8, 10, and 11. Other pronunciations began with the "flat *a*" [æʊ], and in *out* the diphthong often began with an "uh" sound [əʊ,ʌʊ] in Areas 9, 14-16, and 18.

The "long *i*" [ɑɪ] in *nine, twice.* and *wire.* Before the second *n* in *nine,* Eastern Areas 1, 2, and 4 sometimes began the diphthong with an "uh" sound [əɪ]. Areas 9, 12-18 usually lengthened the first element and reduced the second, to make the diphthong [ɑᵉ,ɑᵊ], something like the vowel in the second syllable of *upon.* Before the *s* sound, in *twice,* most Eastern areas used the Southern California pronunciation, but Areas 1, 4, and 15 generally began with the "uh" sound [əɪ,ʌɪ]. Before *r,* in *wire,* Areas 11-14 had only the "broad *a*" of *father* [ɑ] instead of the diphthong "ah-ee" [ɑɪ].

An "uh" sound [ʌ] in *nothing.* Most Eastern areas also had this vowel, but Areas 1-8 had the "broad *a*" of *father* [ɑ] or a further backed vowel [ɒ] as well.

A "long *o*" [o] in *home* and *won't.* This was the vowel in most of the East, but Northern Areas 1, 2, and 4 had more fronted vowels [ɐ] or [ʌ] (so that the words sounded more like "hum" and "wunt") for a substantial minority of those interviewed, and the Virginia Piedmont, Area 15, had a ... ort *oo*" [U] for nearly half of the *won't* responses.

A "long *o*" [o] in the final syllable of *widow.* Eastern Areas 12, 13, 16, and 17 had a substantial minority of pronunciations for *widow* which ended in *r* [ɚ] as if the word were spelled *widder.*

An "*oy*" [ɔɪ] in *joint.* Most of the East used this pronunciation, but one-third of those in Metropolitan New York, Area 6, had an "uh--ee" [ɜɪ] sound, and a substantial minority of speakers in areas 11-18 used a "long *i*" [ai] sound.

The "broad *a*" [ɑ] in *father* and *calm.* This vowel was the norm in the East, but it had variants not found in California: for *father,* a more fronted [a] (with the tongue farther forward) in areas 1-3, and a more backed [ɑ] (with the tongue farther back) in Areas 8, 13, 15, 16, and 18. *Calm* appeared predominantly with the "flat *a*" [æ] in Eastern Areas 7-17.

A "short *u*" [ʌ] in *sun, gums,* and *shut.* Eastern dialects generally also use [ʌ] in these words, but in each case there are exceptions. One-third of those interviewed in Areas 13 and 18 pronounced *sun* with an unrounded "short *oo*" [ɤ] vowel (pronounced with the lips spread). Between one-third and one-half of those interviewed in Areas 1, 2, 9, 12-17 pronounced *shut* as if it were spelled *shet* [ɛ]. A number of speakers in 1-5 pronounced *gums* with a "long *u*" [u] or a "short *oo*" [U].

An *r* in *thirty* and the second syllable of *father* [ɚ]. This *r* after vowels is one of the most prominent features distinguishing Eastern dialects. Those interviewed in Areas 3-5 and 7-14 generally used *r* in these words, while those in Areas 1, 2, 6, and 15-18 generally omitted the *r.*

No extra or intrusive *r* in *law and order* or *swallow it.* Most Eastern speakers pronounced *law and order* as Californians did, but a substantial minority in Areas 1, 2, and 6 put in an *r,* as if the phrase were *lore and order.* That "intrusive *r*" occurs only in such cases as this, when a word beginning with a vowel

immediately follows one that ends with a vowel sound. Eastern speakers in Areas 2-8, 10, 11, and 18 generally did not have an *r* in *swallow it*, but those in Areas 1, 9, and 12-17 used the "swaller it" pronunciation.

An *l* in *walnut*. The *l* was present in most of the Eastern responses, too, but other pronunciations (with *r* for *l*, or with no consonant at all--"wa'nut") predominated in Areas 15 and 16, and were used by a substantial minority of those interviewed in Areas 2, 3, 13, 14, 17, and 18.

No *t* at the end of *once* or *twice*. This was also the case in most of the East, but half the speakers in Areas 9-14 said "wunst" and "twuyst," and half the speakers in Areas 16 and 17 also added *t* to *once*.

A "you" [ju] in *ewe*. This was the Eastern pronunciation in Areas 1-4 and 6, but in Areas 9, 12, 14-17 the "yowe" [jo] pronunciation predominated, and Areas 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 18 were divided between "you" and "yowe." "Cultured" speakers in all areas of the East generally used "you."

An "uh" [ə] final vowel in *sofa*. This was the vowel in most Eastern areas, but half of those interviewed in Areas 11, 12, 14, and 17 had an "ih" [ɪ, ɨ] instead.

No *y-* at the start of *yeast*. Northerners, from Eastern Areas 1-6, used an initial *y-*, while those in Areas 7-18 generally did not.

No *y* after the *g-* in *garden*. Easterners also generally had no *y* there, but a substantial minority of those in Areas 13 and 15-18 of the South said "gyarden."

A *t* before the *l* in *turtle*. Most Easterners also had this *t*, but the majority of those in Areas 14 and 16 used a *k* (to make it "turkle"), and a substantial minority of those in Areas 12, 13, 15, and 17 also used *k*.

A simple "short *i*" [ɪ, ɛ] in *whip*. Eastern Areas 1-6 also had the simple vowel, while those in Areas 9-17 and half of those in Areas 7 and 18 had an offglide after the *i* [ɪ^{ə}] to make the pronunciation somewhat like "whih-up."

From such examples it is clear that the blend of California English is a bland one. Where the Linguistic Atlas records show a uniform pronunciation in Southern California, it is always a pronunciation that is widespread in the East. Californians also generally used pronunciations that were characteristic of "cultured" rather than "folk" speech in the East.

The Linguistic Atlas also recorded many items of less than complete agreement in Southern California pronunciation. In two cases, for example, Southern California showed internal variation where the East did not. First, only a small scattering of Easterners in Areas 8 and 10 pronounced *v* in the plural of *hoof (hooves);* all the rest had an *f (hoofs).* Nearly one-third of the Southern Californians interviewed, however, used the *v* pronunciation. Second, most of those interviewed in the East pronounced *drought* with a *th* sound at the end ("drouth"); this was the slightly predominant pronunciation in Southern California as well, but a quite sizeable minority used a final *t* instead ("drout"). These examples both show Californians inclining more than Easterners to pronounce words as they are spelled. The *t* for *drought* was heard mainly in "cultivated" Eastern speech.

Certain examples suggest the existence of several distinct dialect areas within Southern California. Or rather, the previous existence of distinct areas. The Linguistic Atlas surveyed a limited selection of older natives in the 1950's. Heavy migration to and within California blurs regional distinctions rapidly.[6] But to judge for the moment from the Linguistic Atlas record, we can delineate these dialect areas:

Los Angeles

A few pronunciation traits distinguished Los Angeles from the communities further inland or elsewhere along the coast. Three-fifths of those interviewed in Los Angeles used the "long *e*" [i] in the second syllable of *diphtheria* ("diphthee**i**a"), while other Southern Californians generally used the "short *I*" [I] ("diphthi**r**ia"). The Los Angeles preference was like that of Eastern Areas 15-18.

Half of those interviewed in Los Angeles used a "long *e*" before the "long *u*" in *tube* [iu], giving a pronunciation like "tea-ube." Other Southern California residents had a simple "long *u*" vowel. The "ee-uw" [iu] sequence occurred in some pronunciations recorded for Areas 1-5 but not elsewhere in the East. Los Angeles residents also used this "ee-uw" [iu] in *chew* and *suit* more frequently than their neighbors, though the "chee-uw" and "see-uit" pronunciations were in the minority everywhere in Southern California, even in Los Angeles. In the East, these pronunciations were also in the minority: between ten and twenty per cent of the responses in Areas 1-5.

More than other Southern Californians, Los Angeles informants were inclined to put a *y* before the "long *u*" in *new, due,* and *Tuesday* (to make them sound like *nyew, dyue, Tyuesday*). The greatest contrast was in *new*, where 25 of 37 in Los Angeles used the *y* compared with just 11 of 66 for the rest of Southern California. In the East, Areas 15-18 used the *y*, as did substantial numbers in all but Areas 5-8, 10, and 11.

In *without*, Los Angeles residents were more likely to use the unvoiced *th* (as in *thin*) than most of their neighbors. In Los Angeles 24 of 36 used unvoiced *th*, while in the rest of Southern California 39 of 62 used voiced *th* (as in *then*). (The numbers of respondents vary from item to item because informants sometimes gave no response.) Eastern Areas 1-7 used voiced *th* in *without;* both voiced and voiceless varieties were prevalent in other Eastern areas.

Whether they used *t* or *th* at the end, Los Angeles residents were more likely (11 of 29) than other Southern Californians (8 of 56) to use the "open *o*" [ɔ] in *drought* (to give it the vowel of *bought*). Hardly any Easterners used this vowel in *drought*. Kurath and McDavid (p.167) consider it "a spelling pronunciation."

6. There is also the possibility that some of the differences recorded within Southern California reflect differences among the people who conducted the interviews. Interviewers tended to work in separate areas. See Chapter 3.

Two-thirds (23 of 35) of those interviewed in Los Angeles had no *h* at the start of *humor*, while 36 of 63 elsewhere had the *h*. Here Los Angeles agreed with most Easterners. Only in Areas 1-6 did a substantial minority use *h*.

Glendale-Pasadena

Though it was in many ways like Los Angeles, not to mention the rest of Southern California, the Glendale-Pasadena area showed some distinctive characteristics of its own in the Linguistic Atlas survey. For example, in the first syllable of *married*, 9 of the 11 persons interviewed in Glendale-Pasadena used the "short *e*" [ɛ] of *bed*, while 61 of 93 other Southern Californians used the "flat *a*" [æ] of *hat*. The "flat *a*" was dominant in all Eastern areas except Area 11, though the "short *e*" is the norm in the midwest.

Where most other Southern Californians used the back "open *o*" [ɔ] in *faucet* (71 of 89), *haunted* (73 of 82), *sausage* (71 of 92), *water* (53 of 90), *daughter* (73 of 93), *orange* (69 of 93), *dog* (70 of 93), *salt* (49 of 57), and *law* (75 of 88), those interviewed in Glendale-Pasadena made frequent use of the "broad *a*" [ɑ] of *father* in all these words. Those in Glendale and Pasadena who used the "broad *a*" numbered as follows: *faucet* 6, *haunted* 5, *sausage* 8, *water* 8, *daughter* 7, *orange* 5, *dog* 8, *salt* 7, *law* 6. Such widespread use of the "broad *a*" in these words had no parallel in the East. Certain Eastern areas (different ones in each case) used a "broad *a*" in *daughter, fog, water, sausage*, and *haunted*, but there are few Eastern records of the "broad *a*" appearing in *law, salt, faucet*, and *dog*. *Orange* is a different case, where the "broad *a*" was a much more widespread Eastern pronunciation, predominating in Areas 2-5, 10, 11. In the East, *faucet* had a "flat *a*" [æ] for a minority of speakers in Areas 1-6, and *haunted* had this [æ] for a majority of speakers in Areas 1, 9, and 12-17. This particular use of the "flat *a*" did not show up at all in California.

About one-fifth of those interviewed in Southern California (21 of 104) pronounced *greasy* with a *z* (the predominant pronunciation in Eastern Areas 5-18), but all eleven in Glendale and Pasadena used the *s* sound.

Nine out of ten who responded in Glendale-Pasadena used *h* at the start of *humor*, in contrast with Los Angeles (see above) and the rest of Southern California.

San Diego

The Linguistic Atlas interviewed eight people in San Diego. Southern Californians generally (77 of 103) pronounced *egg* as if it were spelled "aig" [e,ɛɪ], but 6 of the 8 San Diegans used the simple "short *e*" [ɛ] instead. The "short *e*" in *egg* was the norm in Areas 2-8, 10, and 11 of the East.

Five of the 8 San Diegans pronounced *catch* as if it were "ketch" [ɛ], compared with only 28 of 95 elsewhere in Southern California; the others used the "flat *a*" [æ] of *can't*. The "ketch" form was the norm in Eastern Areas 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11-18.

Half of those interviewed in San Diego pronounced the second syllable of *wheelbarrow* with the "broad *a*" [a,ɑ] instead of the "flat *a*" [æ] of *can't*, or the "short *e*" [ɛ] of *melon*. Only 11 of 95 other Southern Californians used the "broad *a*." Eastern Areas 4, 9-14, 16, and 17 were like San Diego in this respect.

In *sumac*, the San Diego informants used only the *sh*-sound at the beginning, while 51 of 59 other Southern Californians used *s*-. The word began with *sh*- in all Eastern regions, though some "cultured" speakers used *s*-; Southern Californians outside of San Diego preferred the spelling pronunciation to the traditional one for this word.

All 8 San Diegans pronounced *soot* with a "long *oo*" [u], while 64 of 93 other Southern Californians used the "short *oo*" [ʊ] and 12 used the "short *u*" [ʌ] of *nothing*. The "long *oo*" was recorded only for a small minority of speakers in Eastern Areas 2-4; in Areas 11-18 the "short *u*" was the rule, while in Areas 1-10 the "short *oo*" was predominant.

San Diego informants preferred the "broad *a*" [ɑ] to the "open *o*" [ɔ] in *water* (6 to 2) and *fog* (5 to 3). (See the Glendale-Pasadena section above.) The "broad *a*" was the norm for *fog* in Eastern Areas 3-7 and 16-18, while the "open *o*" prevailed in Areas 1, 2, 8-14.

In *without*, 7 of the 8 San Diegans used the voiced *th* of *then* rather than the voiceless *th* of *thin* (see Los Angeles section above).

Three of the 8 San Diegans pronounced *Mrs.* as "miziz" instead of "misiz"—a much higher proportion than for the rest of Southern California (10 of 99). The "miziz" was recorded for about half of the speakers in Eastern Areas 8 and 15-17.

Finally, San Diego was the only Southern California area where all Linguistic Atlas informants were recorded as pronouncing the *r* after *b* in *library*. In all other areas at least a few speakers said "liberry" or "liburry"—15 of 95 altogether. The "liberry" version is common throughout the East, but "it is rare in cultivated speech" (Kurath & McDavid, p. 173).

Riverside County Rural

The Linguistic Atlas interviewed ten people in Riverside County outside of the Riverside-Corona area: Elsinore (2), Banning (2), Hemet, Anza, Indio, Thermal, Blythe, and Ripley (1 each). These Riverside County Rural and desert area informants sometimes shared characteristics with six others interviewed in desert areas outside Riverside County—Mohave (2), Barstow (2), El Centro, and Holtville.

In *hearth*, 7 of 10 in rural Riverside County and 4 of 6 in other desert areas used the vowel of earth [ɚ], while 64 of 79 other Southern Californians used the "broad *a*" [ɑ] of *father*. *Hearth* rhymed with *earth* (sometimes omitting *r* in both cases) in Eastern Areas 1, 2, and 10, and was found in nearly half of the responses in Areas 3-5, 7, 8, 11, and 18.

The vowel of *earth* [ɝ] also appeared in the first syllable of *bushel* for two of the rural Riverside County persons interviewed and for two in the other desert areas. Otherwise only 3 of 77 Southern Californians said "birshel," and this variant was practically nonexistent in the East.

Four of the rural Riverside County interviewees used the nothing vowel [ʌ] in *soot*, compared with only 8 others out of 87 in the rest of Southern California. In the East this vowel was the norm for *soot* in Areas 4, 7-9, and 11-18. (See San Diego comments above.)

Two of those interviewed in rural Riverside County, compared with only two others of 93 elsewhere in Southern California, used the sofa vowel [ə] in the last syllable of *widow*, to make it sound like "widda." The South and South-Midlands areas of the East also inclined towards this pronunciation.

Rural Riverside (9 of 10) and the other desert areas (all 6) used the "open *o*" [ɔ] in *four*, while only 4 of 89 other Southern Californians did. The "closed *o*" or "long *o*" [o] was the norm in the rest of Southern California. In the East, Areas 5-8 and 10 agreed with the rural Riversiders.

Four of the 10 residents of rural Riverside County used *r* in *wash*, to make it "warsh." In Glendale-Pasadena, 4 of 11 used *r*. Elsewhere in Southern California, the *r* was heard with only 6 of 82 interviewed. In the East, a substantial number of speakers in Areas 8-13 said "warsh."

Half of the rural Riversiders pronounced *greasy* with *z*, compared with only 16 of 88 elsewhere in Southern California. The *z* pronunciation predominates in Eastern Areas 5-18.

Riverside and the "Inland Empire"

An "Inland Empire" area includes nine Linguistic Atlas informants–from Redlands, San Bernardino (2), Colton, Ontario, Pomona, Corona, and Riverside (2).

In *twice*, two Inland Empire interviewees used an "uh-ee" [əɪ] instead of the usual "ah-ee" [ɑɪ] diphthong; it was recorded nowhere else in Southern California, but was fairly common in Eastern Areas 1, 4, 10 and 14-16.

Most other Southern Californians (91 of 95) pronounced *wire* with the "long *i*" [ɑi], but three of those interviewed in the Inland Empire used the simple "broad *a*" [a] instead. The "long *i*" was characteristic of Eastern Areas 1-6, 9, and 15, while the "broad *a*" was used by one-third to one-half of those interviewed in Eastern Areas 7, 8, 10-13, 16-18.

Five of the 9 Inland Empire respondents used the "long *oo*" [u] in *soot;* except in San Diego (see above), the "short *oo*" [U] was much more prevalent elsewhere in Southern California.

In *roof* all 9 Inland Empire interviewees, all but one of the Rural Riverside County interviewees, and all of those interviewed in other desert areas used the "short *oo*" [U]. The rest of Southern California also preferred the "short *oo*" but only by 43 to 36 over the "long *oo*" [u]. In the East, Areas 3, 4, 11, and 12 showed a strong preference for the "short *oo*" in *roof*, and Areas 8, 13, 15, 17, and 18 strongly favored the "long *oo*," while usage was mixed elsewhere.

Likewise, in *hoop* 7 of 9 in the Inland Empire and 8 of 10 in Rural Riverside County used the "short *oo*" [ʊ], compared with just 22 who used "short *oo*" and 62 who used "long *u*" [u] elsewhere in Southern California. In the East, the "short *oo*" [U] was the rule everywhere except in Areas 2, 3, 8, and 10.

In *humor*, 5 of the 9 from the Inland Empire had the "short *oo*" [U], compared with only two of 89 others in Southern California. The "short *oo*" was a rare pronunciation anywhere in the East. (See Los Angeles above for comments on the initial consonant.)

Even in *wound* (the noun meaning 'injury'), 8 of the 9 interviewed in the Inland Empire used the "short *oo*" [U], compared with only 5 other Southern Californians who used the "short *oo*" and 88 who used the "long *oo*" [u]. Four of the others who used the "short *oo*" [U] in *wound* were from rural Riverside County. In the East the "short *oo*" was practically nonexistent for this word.

Three of the Inland Empire interviewees used an "uh-ee" [ɜɪ] instead of the usual *oi* diphthong [ɔɪ] in *joint*. Only one other Southern Californian out of 93 used the "uh-ee." It was equally rare in the East, recorded only among one-third of the speakers in Metropolitan New York (Area 6).

In the Inland Empire, all but one of those interviewed had an "uh" [ʌ,ə] in the second syllable of *because*. In the rest of Southern California, 35 had an "uh" vowel and 60 the "open *o*" [ɔ] or the "broad *a*" of *father* [ɑ]. An "uh" vowel occurred among a substantial number of Eastern speakers in Areas 2-7 and 18.

All but one of the respondents in the Inland Empire used the voiced *th* of *then* in *without*, following the pattern of San Diego but not that of Los Angeles (see above).

In *neither* and *either*, 8 of the 9 interviewed in the Inland Empire used the "short *i*" of *bit* [ɪ] rather than the "long *e*" of *knee* [i]. Seven of the 10 in rural Riverside County also used the "short *i*." The "long *e*" was the predominant pronunciation throughout the East, but a minority of speakers in Areas 7, 8, 10, and 14 used the "short *i*" instead.

Six of the seven who responded in the Inland Empire used the voiceless *th* of *thin* at the end of *drought* rather than *t*. Five of eight in rural Riverside County and five of seven in other desert areas also used the *th* sound rather than *t*. In the rest of Southern California, 29 used *th* and 34 used *t*. Nearly all Easterners interviewed had *th*. (See Los Angeles above for comment on the vowel.)

These were some of the regional distinctions that emerged from a survey in the 1950's of the older native population of California. The survey deliberately sought the kinds of speakers who would preserve the greatest amount of older local variation. To the younger Southern Californian of today, many of the local characteristics mentioned above will seem strange. Southern California English seems to have undergone

some changes in the past twenty years, as the next chapter will suggest. The blend seems to have become more bland, and the old local distinctions seem to be fading.

VOCABULARY

If the pronunciation of California English has tended away from the quaint and peculiar and towards the widely-heard versions of other regions, what has the vocabulary done? It too seems anything but exotic. In the early 1950's, reporting on the results of a preliminary survey, David Reed found a simple rule of thumb for California vocabulary: the greater the use of a word throughout the East, the more likely it was to be the choice of Californians.[7]

California English does have a number of distinctive vocabulary traits, and it has had them ever since English speakers arrived in this state in appreciable numbers. John Hittell, whose comment in 1874 on the lack of dialect peculiarities in California appears at the start of this chapter, continued in the same paragraph: "Slang, as distinct from dialect, is common in California. Mark Twain had excellent opportunities to become familiar with it, and he has made a singular and amusing collection of it in an account of 'Buck Fanshaw's Funeral.' "

Let us briefly note some examples of this slang. The Mark Twain story deals with his career as a reporter in Virginia City, Nevada, but there is every reason to believe that similar sorts of language were found in the Northern California cities with which Virginia City had close contact. "Scotty" Briggs, "a stalwart rough," consults in the following terms with "the minister, a fragile, gentle, spiritual new fledgling from an Eastern theological seminary":

> "You see, one of the boys has gone up the flume–"
> "Gone where?"
> "Up the flume–throwed up the sponge, you understand."
> "Thrown up the sponge?
> "Yes–kicked the bucket–"

and later,

> "He was the best man that ever–pard, you would have doted on that man. He could lam any galoot of his inches in America. It was him that put down the riot last election before it got a start; and everybody said he was the only man that could have done it. He waltzed in with a spanner in one hand and a trumpet in the other, and sent fourteen men home on a shutter in less than three minutes."[8]

Writing for the San Francisco newspaper *Alta California* on June 17 and 18, 1859 as part of a series on "Variations of the English Language," Hittell provided a list of fifty-five "Californianisms." (See Figure 2.) "Most of the Californianisms are either derived from the Spanish or refer to mining," Hittell notes. "A few of the words here put down were used in the language before the American occupation of this country, but were first brought into extensive use by Californians" (*Californians* apparently means only the English-speaking population).

Most numerous in his list are the Spanish terms. Some refer to the Spanish Californians' ranching system: *aparejo, adobe, caballada, corral, fuste, jaquima, manada, mecate, mochilas, rancho, ranchero, reata, rodeo, vaquero, zanja, zanjero.* This way of life now exists only in history books and Western movies, and consequently few of the terms are still in general use in California English. *Adobe, corral, ranch,* and *rancher* nevertheless remain vigorous. In California, *ranch* keeps something of the wide range of meanings Hittell described in 1859; anything that in other parts of the country would be a *farm*, even for growing vegetables and grain, can be called a *ranch* here.[9] Two other terms have survived in modified form: *reata* (now *lariat*) and *vaquero (buckaroo). Rodeo,* of course, remains well known, but now (especially in Northern California) the accent commonly falls on the first rather than the second syllable, and the meaning has undergone considerable change.

Zanjero remains in use in Riverside. The "Gage Canal Co." heading in the white pages of the telephone book lists five men who work as "zanjeros."

The Spanish terms that relate to geographical features have survived well until the present day, perhaps more in place names than as general designations. Hittell's list includes *arroyo, canada, canon, plaza, playa, pozo, pueblo, rancheria,* and *sierra.* Only *pozo* and *rancheria* are really obsolete today; the rest have maintained their existence and even much of their original meanings.

Four Spanish California legal terms, *espediente, informe, habilitation,* and *rubric,* have disappeared with the last traces of the Spanish land-holding system. *Coyote* remains well known even where the animal itself does not, while *mahala* is now as rarely heard as *squaw.*

Hittell lists nearly two dozen specialized mining terms, many of them nowadays unfamiliar: *arastra, bar, claim, color,*

7. "Eastern Dialect Words in California," *Publications of the American Dialect Society,* No. 21 (April, 1954), pp. 10-11. Also in the Allen-Underwood anthology (see Bibliography), p. 111.

8. *Roughing It, Vol. II;* Underwood Edition, The Writings of Mark Twain, Vol. VIII (Hartford, Conn: American Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 64, 68.

9. George R. Stewart comments on *ranch:* "Over almost all the English-speaking world it has maintained much the meaning given in the text ['a large tract of land owned by one party'], with the restriction of being applied to land given over to stock raising. This same meaning applies in northern California. In central and southern California, however, the word is applied to any kind of agricultural establishment, such as an 'orange ranch' of five acres. A man who plants some onions in a vacant lot may refer to his ranch. There are chicken ranches and even bee ranches. The line of demarcation in usage, so far as I have been able to determine, is about the latitude of Sacramento. At the University of California [Berkeley] one can always be sure of a good argument by asking a class what this word means." "Two Spanish Word Lists from California in 1857," American Speech, 16 (Dec. 1941), p. 261.

Daily Alta California.

SAN FRANCISCO, FRIDAY, JUNE 17.

Variations of the English Language.

BY JOHN S. HITTELL.

CALIFORNIANISMS.

The provincialisms of California belong under the general head of Americanisms, but on account of their having some peculiarities not common to other Americanisms, and because this essay is first published complete in California, they are kept separate. Most of the Californianisms are either derived from the Spanish or refer to mining. A few of the words here put down were used in the language before the American occupation of this country, but were first brought into extensive use by Californians.

Bummer.—An idle, worthless fellow, who does no work, and has no visible means of support. The word "loafer," like "lounger," does not designate the general conduct or permanent character of a man, but only a temporary idleness. A respectable, industrious man may become a "loafer" by making idle, impertinent visits in business places during business hours; but the word "bummer" implies a low, lazy character. It is probably derived from the vulgar German words *Bummeln* and *Bummeler*, which are about equivalent to "loafer" and "loaf." Its origin has been attributed to *Boehmen*, the German name of Bohemia, a nation celebrated for the number of its sharpers and adventurers. The Gipsies are called *Bohemiens* in France because of their roving lives and worthless character. "Bummer" is generally supposed here to be a Californianism.

Bumming, acting the bummer, used in such phrases as "he is bumming around."

To dry up, a slang phrase meaning to stop, fail, disappear, become silent. It is very expressive to Californians accustomed to see the whole face of the country dry up in the dry season.

Shenanigan, a low word for a cheating trick.

Aparejo (a par ay' ho), a Mexican pack saddle.

Adobe (a do' be), a large sun-dried, unburned brick, sometimes two feet long; a foot wide, and four inches thick.

Arroyo, (ar ro' yo), a brook, or small river, or the dry bed of either.

Caballada (ca bal ya' da), a herd of broken horses.

Cañada (can ya' da), a small cañon, a deep ravine, a narrow valley with steep sides.

Cañon (can' yon), originally a tube, and hence applied to mean a deep gorge with high steep walls. Comparatively few cañons and cañadas are to be found in that portion of the United States east of the Mississippi, but they are abundant in California. The Spaniards place the accent on the last syllable of cañon (can yone'), but in ordinary American usage the accent is on the first syllable. It is frequently spelt "canyon" and "kanyon."

Corral (cor ral'), a pen into which a herd of cattle or horses is driven, when one is to be caught. Every ranch has a corral, and the cattle and horses are often so wild that it would be a very difficult matter to catch one without the use of the corral.

Coyote (coy o'te), a Californian wolf, closely resembling, if not specifically identical, with the prairie wolf of the Mississippi Valley.

Expediente, the original papers relating to some government business, filed in a public office.

Fuste (foos 'te), a strong saddle-tree, made of wood and covered with raw cow hide, used for lassoing.

Informe, a note of the Governor on a petition for land under the Mexican law, ordering an inquiry to be made whether the land petitioned for was Government land, and liable to be granted away.

Jaquima (hack 'ee ma), a head stall used in breaking wild horses.

Mahala (may hay 'la), a vulgar name for squaw, a corruption from the Spanish *mujer*, a woman.

Manada (ma na 'da), a herd of breeding mares under the lead of a stallion.

Mecate (may ca'te), a rope of hair, used for tying horses.

Mochillas (mo cheel'ias), large leathern flaps for covering a fuste.

Plaza, a public square in a town.

Playa, a beach.

Pozo, a spring or well.

Pueblo, a town.

Rancho (ran 'tsho), before the Americans took California, meant a tract of land used almost entirely for pasturage, rarely less than four square miles in extent, sometimes as much as ninety-nine square miles, and in most cases not less than thirty square miles. Since the conquest *rancho*, and its American derivation "ranch," are often applied to small farms, and sometimes, in the way of slang, to single houses, tents, and liquor shops. "Ranch" is sometimes used as a verb; thus a man who opens a farm according to common parlance "has gone to ranching."

Ranchero (ran tshe 'ro), is a man who owns and lives upon a rancho. It is usually understood to mean a Spanish Californian.

Rancheria, is an Indian hut or a village.

Reata (ray ah 'ta), is a raw-hide rope; used for lassoing.

Rodeo (ro day' o), is a collection of wild or half-wild cattle or horses.

Sierra (see er' ra), originally a saw, a chain of mountains.

Vaquero (va kay' ro—vulgarly pronounced buc aa' ry), a herdsman.

Zanja (san' ha), a ditch for irrigating agricultural land.

Zanjero (Zan hay' ro), a person whose duty it is to keep irrigating ditches in order. Among the officers of the city of Los Angeles is a Zanjero.

Arrastra (a ras' tra), a primitive mill for crushing quartz.

Bar, a low bank of sand or gravel, at the side of a river, deposited by the stream.

Claim, the tract of land claimed for mining purposes by a man or party. There are various kinds of claims, such as bank, bar, hill, tunnel, flat, &c.

Color, a visible quantity of gold found in prospecting. If the prospector finds one or more particles of gold in his search, he says he has found the color.

Diggings, a general name for placer gold mines. *Wet diggings* are in the banks and bars of unfailing creeks or rivers, *dry diggings* are in flats or the beds of gullies which are dry the greater portion of the year.

Gulch, a gully.

Pay Dirt, auriferous dirt rich enough to pay the miner.

Placer, from the Spanish, a place where gold is found in dirt near the surface of the ground.

To Prospect, to hunt for gold diggings.

Prospect, the result of a prospecting tour.

Sluice, a wooden trough about 14 inches wide and 16 deep, and not less than 30 feet long used for washing pay dirt.

Ground Sluice, a trough cut in the ground for washing pay dirt.

Tail Sluice, a large sluice put in below a number of other sluices, and depending on them for its supply of dirt and water.

Sluice box, a box put at the lower end of a sluice to catch the gold.

SPARE THE ROBINS.—The robins and blackbirds should never be killed. They are not only a source of pleasure by their beautify, liveliness and frie[illegible]ess, but th[illegible] much good b[illegible]

June 18, 1859

Variations of the English Language.

BY JOHN S. HITTELL.

Sluice Fork, a fork similar to a manure fork, but with blunt prongs, as wide at the point as at the heel. The fork is used for throwing stones out of the sluices.

Sluice Head, the quantity of water used in a sluice; a constant stream of water running through an aperture, usually two inches high, and from 5 to 15 inches long, under a pressure of 7 inches.

Slum, slimy mud.

To Strip, to throw off worthless dirt from the top of pay dirt.

Tailings, the waste of a sluice, tom, rocker, or quartz mill.

Tom, a wooden trough, from 10 to 15 feet long, for washing pay dirt.

Tom Stream, the amount of water used in a tom.

Rocker, a machine resembling a domestic cradle, for washing pay dirt. It is often called a "mining cradle."

Wing Dam, a dam in a creek or river, not running entirely across it.

Habilitation, from the Spanish *habilitacion*, a certificate or stamp on paper which authorised it to be used for certain purposes. To *habilitate* paper, to place the mark of habilitation on it.

Rubric, a flourish, which Mexicans and native Californians append to their signatures, and which, in fact, they consider as an important part of their signatures, and the most difficult to imitate or counterfeit. They often use their "rubrics" alone as signatures. To *rubricate* is to sign with a rubric

diggings, gulch, pay dirt, placer, prospect, sluice, ground sluice, tail sluice, sluice box, sluice fork, sluice head, slum, strip, tailings, tom, tom stream, rocker, wing dam. Only three of these terms–*arastra, color,* and *placer*–come from the Spanish. It is clear from this list that Spanish Californians were not dominant in the search for gold.

Shenanigan, bumming, and *bummer* remain current in California (and American) English nowadays, though not with exactly the same meanings Hittell gives. Recently *bummer* has become the designation for an unpleasant experience rather than a type of person. *Dry up* remains in use much as Hittell described it.

Not all these terms had their origin in California, though many of them did, according to the citations of the *Dictionary of Americanisms.*[10] The Spanish vocabulary entered the English language in other Southwestern states even earlier and for the same reasons as in California. But the first recorded uses of *zanjero, color, slum, tailings, tail sluice, shenanigan, bumming,* and *dry up* apparently were in California.

Four years later, in 1863, Hittell reprinted his list, with a few changes, in his book *The Resources of California* (San Francisco: A. Roman & Co.). He left out *shenanigan* and *mahala* (perhaps because one was "a low word" the other "vulgar"), *informe,* and *sluice box.* New words included two Spanish terms: *alforja,* "a bag, usually made of raw cowhide, used for holding the articles to be carried by a pack horse," and *embarcadero,* "a landing place." *Rodeo* in his 1859 list referred to collections of both cattle and horses; now *rodeo* is limited to cattle and a new term *recogida* refers to horses. *To corral* has the added meaning, "to drive a person into a position from which he cannot escape." Mining brings in three new terms, *to hydraulic* or *to pipe,* "to wash dirt by throwing a stream of water upon it," and *to knock down,* "to steal rich pieces of auriferous quartz from the lode." We also find two other terms:

> *To freeze out,* a miner's phrase used to express the policy whereby stockholders or partners in mines are driven to sell out. For instance, if some rich men, owning part of a mine, discover that it is very valuable, they may conceal that fact, and at the same time levy heavy assessments for works which can bring no speedy return; and thus the poorer shareholders will be burdened and discouraged, and induced to sell out at a low price.

> *Square meal,* a good meal at a table, as distinguished from such meals as men make when they are short of provisions, a condition not uncommon among men who make adventurous trips into the mountains.

California has perhaps 150,000 place names, many of them recalling our Spanish heritage. If we were to include place names under the heading of "Californianisms," the list would fill a thick volume. (See Gudde, *California Place Names,* in the Bibliography at the end.)

Among older native Californians in the 1950's the massive Linguistic Atlas survey was not able to turn up much more in the way of distinctive California vocabulary than Hittell had been able to find on his own. In several hundred items specially chosen for the Linguistic Atlas project because they would be likely to show regional variation, the pattern of California usage was clear: California generally adopted the terms that were most widespread in the East. From Elizabeth Bright's analysis of Linguistic Atlas records, we can list most of the vocabulary items of "general or minor general distribution" in California according to their relation with the East. The number after each item indicates the percentage of Californians and Nevadans who used the term in the Linguistic Atlas interviews. (Most of those interviewed–270 of 300–were from California.) Alternative possibilities, with California-Nevada percentages if applicable, are listed below each item.[11] All the alternatives under each heading are different names for the same thing.

For example, the "cottage cheese" entry below indicates that 94 per cent of the Linguistic Atlas informants for California and Nevada said "cottage cheese" and 15 per cent said "smear case." Other synonyms found in the East but not to any extent in California and Nevada were "curds," "Dutch cheese," "pot cheese," and "clabber cheese."

A. California-Nevada terms, with percentage of use, found also in North, Midlands, and South Atlantic States.

skunk 98
  pole cat 27, civet cat 13
faucet (on water pipe at kitchen sink) 96
  spicket, spigot
freestone (peach) 96
  open-stone, soft, clear-seed
picket fence 95
  paling fence, paled-fence
cottage cheese 94
  smear case 15, curds, Dutch cheese, pot cheese, clabber cheese
string beans 94
  green beans 21
midwife 90
  granny woman

10. ed. Mitford M. Mathews (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1951). A selection of the entries from this large historical dictionary appears in Mathews' paperback, *Americanisms,* Phoenix Books 229 (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1966). The even larger earlier work on which Mathews' dictionary is partly based is the *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles,* ed. Sir William Craigie (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1938-1944).

11. Elizabeth Sweet Bright, "A Word Geography of California and Nevada" (Ph.D. Dissertation, U. of California, Berkeley, 1967), pp. 183-199, 225. See Bibliography.

frying pan 89
skillet 56 [see D below], spider
mantel 88
mantelpiece 15
(he was) hauling (wood in his wagon) 88
carrying, carting, drawing
(to) shell (peas) 87
hull
living room 87
parlor 38, front room 23, sitting room 11
(window) shades (on rollers) 84
blinds 40, curtains 24
porch (at front door) 84
front porch 28, veranda 9
saw horse (for holding boards for sawing) 82
horse 19, saw buck
(it goes) clear (across) 81
clean, jam, slam, plum
(I) want to get off (at the next corner) 81
want off 15
ram 80
buck 29
(when are) you (coming again?) 79
you-all 11
get up (call to horses to urge them on) 75
clucking 21, giddy-up 14
pancakes 75
hot cakes 65 [see F below], flapjacks 23, griddle cakes 10
andirons 74
dog irons, fire dogs, fire irons, handirons
doughnut (made with baking powder) 74
cake doughnut 34
(come here) chick (=call to chickens when feeding them) 74
chickie, biddie, widdie, kip, coop, bee, coo-chee, cootie
haystack 74
stack 29, rick, barrack
paper bag 72
bag 34, (paper) sack 30
moo (during feeding time) 71
loo, hum
bucket (wooden vessel) 70
wood(en) bucket 27, wooden pail 6
whetstone 68
scythe stone 3
lima beans (large, flat, yellow) 67
butter beans 31 [see G below]
gutters (on roof) 59
eaves troughs 12, eaves 11
creek (small fresh water stream) 59
stream 71, crick 39, river 29, brook 23, slough 4
bastard 58
illegitimate (child) 42, catch-colt 3
(hay)loft (upper part of barn) 56
(hay)mow 12
(he isn't) at home 56
home 53, to home
bucket (large open tin vessel for water, milk) 54
pail 54 [see E below]
(may I) take you home? 53
help you home 24, see you home 16, give you a lift 15, give you a ride 14, carry you home

(clothes) closet (built in) 49
wardrobe (closet) 13
(maple) grove 44
(maple) orchard 19, sugar bush, sugar orchard, sap bush, sap orchard
(he is sick) *at* his stomach 41
to 51 [see E below]
shavs (of a buggy) 37
shafts 40, fills, thills
privy 33
outhouse 63 [see E below], Chic Sale 25, toilet 21, backhouse 20
so boss(ie) (call to cows to get them to stand still during milking) 31
saw, hoist, hie, sto

B. North and South but not Midlands (2 items)
kerosene 74
coal oil 75 [see D below]
quarter *to* eleven 66
ten-forty-five 32, quarter *of* 30, quater *till*

C. North and Midlands but not South (10 items)
wishbone 98
pully-bone, lucky-bone
husks (on ear of corn) 89
shucks
(he) played hookey 86
cut class, cut school, ditched, played truant, was truant
chipmunk 84
gopher 12, ground squirrel
shivaree (noisy, burlesque serenade after wedding) 76
reception 4, serenade, horning, belling
baby buggy 73
baby carriage 32, baby coach
teetertotter 61
seesaw 38
gunny sack 56
burlap sack 27, burlap bag 17, barley bag/sack 13, croker sack, tow sack
corn crib (building for storing corn) 44
(corn) bin 15, crib 9, corn house
clingstone (peach) 43
cling peach/clings 78 [see F below], press peach, plum peach

D. Midlands and South but not North (9 items)

coal oil 75
  kerosene 74 [see B above]
snack (eaten between regular meals) 72
  piece 14, bite 13
singletree (crossbar on wagon to which horses are hamessed) 57
  whiffletree
skillet 56
  frying pan 89 [see A above], spider
coal bucket 46
  (coal) scuttle 34, (coal) hod 10
spigot (on barrel) 42
  spicket 34 [see below], faucet 17, tap 15
(hay)shock (in field) 38
  (hay) stack 18, haycock 15
rock fence 34
  stone wall 29, stone fence 22, rock wall 14
spicket (on barrel) 34 [see *spigot* above]

E. North only (12 items)

white bread 88
  bread 26, light bread 7, loaf bread
quilt 81
  comfort(er) 59 [see below]
salt pork 68
  pork 20, side meat, middlins, flitch
(pig) pen (shelter and enclosure for hogs and pigs) 64
  (pig) sty 35, hog pen 12
angleworm 63
  worm 57, earthworm 29, fishworm 19, garden worm
outhouse 63
  privy 33 [see A above]
raised doughnut (made with yeast) 60
  doughnut 34
comforter 59 (only 45% in Calif.) [see *quilt* above]
pail (tin) 54
  bucket 54 [see A above]
firefly 52
  glowworm 22, lightning bug 20
(he is sick) *to* his stomach 51
  at 41 [see A above]
(pig) sty 35 [see *pig pen* above]

F. Midlands only (5 items)

cling peach/clings 78
  clingstone (peach) 43 [see C above]
hot cakes 65
  pancakes 75 [see A above]
bawl (of cow when calf is taken away) 48
  bellow, beller, low
(window) blinds 40
  (window) shades 84 [see A above]
sawbuck (for holding firewood for sawing) 33 [compare with *saw horse* A]
  saw horse 34

G. South only (1 item)

butter beans (large, flat, yellow) 31
  lima beans 67 [see A above]

From such examples it appears that the pattern for vocabulary is much like that for pronunciation. Californians adopted terms which were already fairly general in the East, for the most part, and if they took terms from just one of the three major Eastern dialect areas, they would most often follow the North. But it is not possible to be very precise in generalizing about California vocabulary, because any survey can investigate only a small fraction of the words anyone uses. (On the other hand, even a short conversation can reveal a person's basic pronunciation habits.)

Searching through the Linguistic Atlas records for words *not* found in the East, Elizabeth Bright concluded that only the following could be considered "regional or local in usage."[12] As before, the numbers indicate the percentages of California-Nevada interviewees who used the terms, and beneath each item appear alternatives.

A. "Western" words, found in California-Nevada and at least one of the following states: Colorado, Texas, Washington.

pinto 81
  paint 11, Appaloosa 3
burro 74
  donkey 34, jackass 32
corral 73
  barnyard 24, lot, stable lot, barn lot, farm lot
horn (or *horned*) toad 72
  horny toad 20
bronco 58
  wild (horse) 25, mustang 14
lariat 54
  lasso 69, reata 19, lass/lasso rope 15 [see B below]
pinto beans 33
  pink beans 17, cranberry beans 8 [see B below], frijoles 7, (speckled) bayos 6 [see B below], brown beans 6
mesa 22
  plateau 38, flat (lands) 26, plain 23, prairie 15, desert 4
arroyo (depression with usually dry watercourse) 21
horny toad 20 [see *horn toad* above]
dogie (motherless calf) 19
  orphan 19, maverick 15, leppy 9 [see B below]
reata 19 [see *lariat* above]
buckaroo 16
  cowboy 81, cowhand 9, cow puncher 9, vaquero 7, herdsman 2

12. Bright, pp. 185-6.

maverick 15 [see *dogie* above]
paint 11 [see *pinto* above]
frijoles 7 [see *pinto beans* above]
vaquero 7 [see *buckaroo* above]
shiners (for bait) 7
minnows 76
ear sewer 6
dragon fly 59, (devil's) darning needle 15, mosquito hawk 7, snake doctor 5, snake feeder 3
pourdown 3
cloudburst 55, downpour 36, heavy rain 13, (rain) storm 10
blacksnake (for driving horses) 3
whip (general term; no percentage given)

B. Words apparently limited to California-Nevada

lasso (or *lass*) rope 15
lasso 69, lariat 54 [see A above]. reata 19 [see A above]
rustic (on side of house) 13
siding 34, clapboards 19, shiplap 14, batten 4
barley sack/bag 13
gunny sack 56, burlap sack 27, burlap bag 17
leppy (motherless calf) 9
orphan 19, dogie 19, [see A above], maverick 15 [see A above]
cranberry beans 8
pinto beans 33 [see A above], pink beans 17, frijoles 7 [see A above], (speckled) bayos 6, brown beans 6
(speckled) bayos 6 [see *cranberry beans* above]
a thunder and lightning 3
thunderstorm 65, electric(al) storm 20, thunder and lightning (storm) 18
sanky ("spelled *zanja*") 2
irrigation ditch 60, canal 34, ditch 32
(he) sloughed school 1 (Nev.)
played hookey 86, cut class/school 18, ditched 14, played/was truant 9

From such evidence the number of strictly regional words used in California seems very small. Many of the words on the two lists above were used by only a few even of the older, native population of California, as the small percentages make clear. Since the 1950's the number of Californians who use such terms has probably diminished further.

A number of the words on these lists were recorded only in particular parts of California. *Shiners, pourdown, rustic, cranberry beans,* and *a thunder and lightning* were recorded only in Northern California. *Sanky,* on the other hand, was heard only in Los Angeles.

Within California, regional variation in vocabulary seems less regular than the minor regional variations in pronunciation suggested by the Linguistic Atlas data. But there are a few exceptions. Not only do Northern Californians call San Francisco "the city"; they also make fairly extensive use of *chesterfield* for the item that they and others also call a *couch* or *sofa.* (See Map 6.) The range of influence of *chesterfield* apparently runs close to that of the furniture dealers in *the city.*

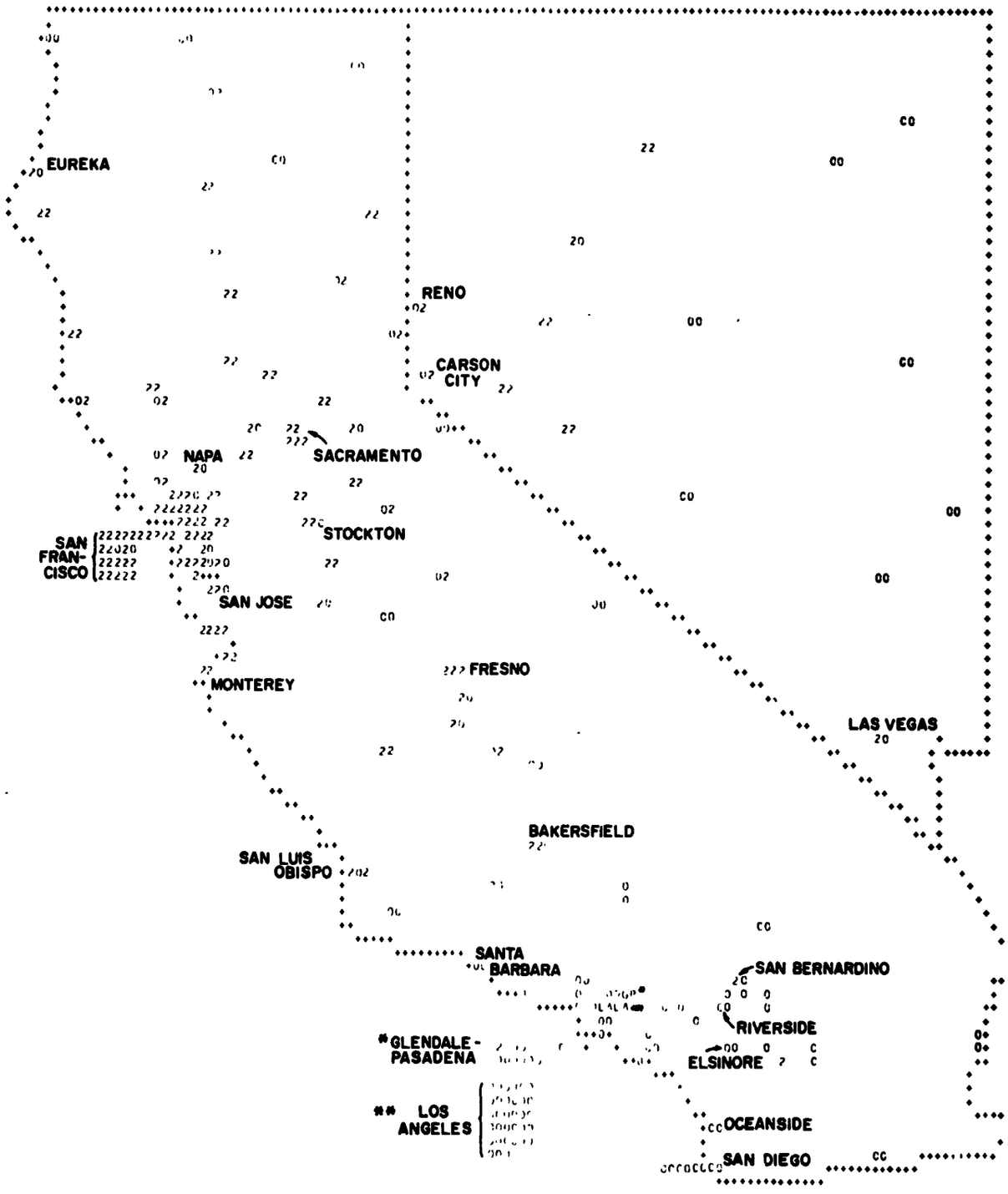
Only one widespread vocabulary item was limited to Southern California: the designation *Santa Ana* (or *Santana, Santyana*) for the warm wind that blows in the winter. In other parts of California and the United States, such a wind is a *norther* or *chinook,* if it has a special name at all. But in the area on the coastal side of the coast range mountains in Southern California, all but a handful of the speakers interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas knew the term *Santa Ana.* (See Map 7.) It presumably originated among those who lived downwind of the Santa Ana River canyon, though it has spread over a much wider area.

If we are to trust the Linguistic Atlas records, in the 1950's the boundary between those who called the wind *Santa Ana* and those who did not ran right between Riverside and Colton. The four informants from western San Bernardino County—two from San Bernardino, one from Colton, one from Redlands—made no mention of the term *Santa Ana,* while both of the Riverside speakers used it. Nowadays the term is well known in San Bernardino too.

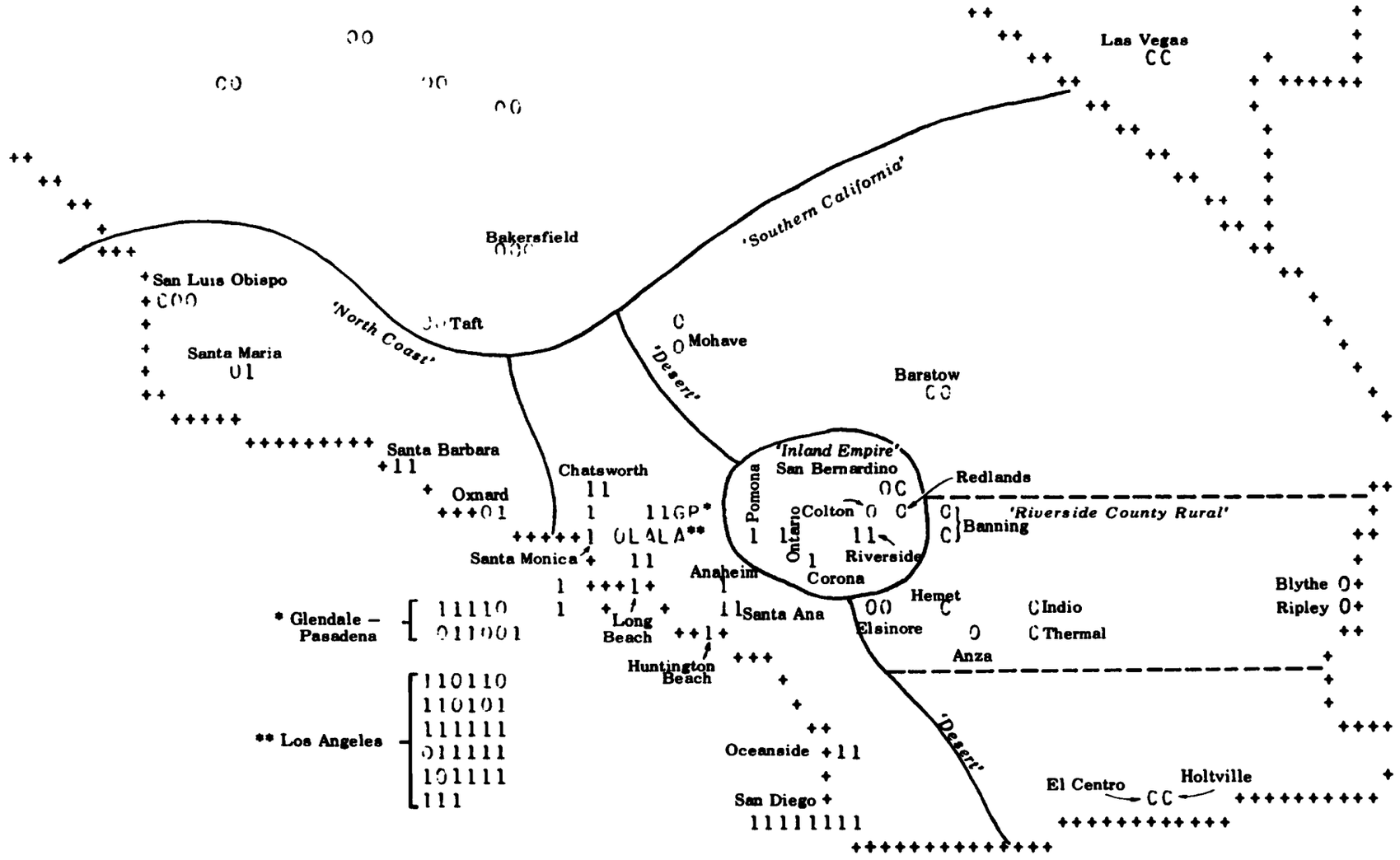
In the Linguistic Atlas survey, the two persons interviewed in the city of Santa Ana used the other pronunciations for the name of the wind. Both said *Santana* and *Santyana,* but not *Santa Ana.* This is consistent with the city's long-time efforts to dissociate itself from the name of a sometimes disagreeable weather phenomenon. Elsewhere, however, *Santa Ana* was by far the most prominent name for the wind.

Less spectacular variation within California may be found in the use of *teetertotter* (Southern California and rural North) versus *seesaw* (San Francisco Bay area); and (paper) *sack* (Riverside and some of Riverside County) versus *bag* (almost universal in the North). See Maps 8 and 9 for details.

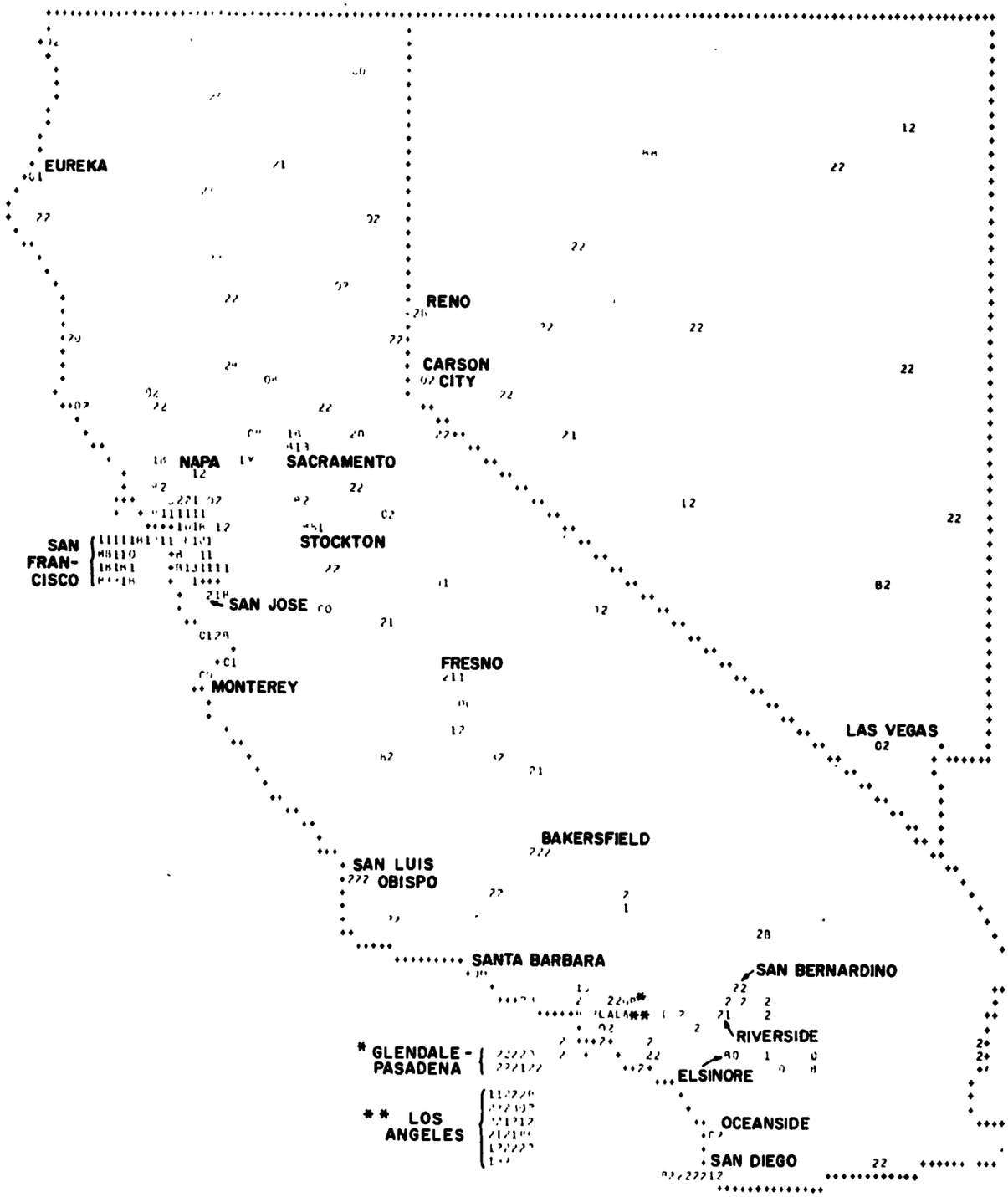
In comparison with other regions surveyed for the Linguistic Atlas of the United States, California seems to have few local and regional peculiarities. The California English spoken by the 300 Californians and Nevadans interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas was a new blend, not exactly like anything in the East, yet composed of pronunciation and vocabulary features which for the most part were widespread in the Atlantic States, especially if those features were to be found in the Inland North or North Midlands, and especially if the features were used by "cultured" speakers. For this reason, although California English is indeed distinctive, it does not strike the ear of most Americans as particularly distinctive—there is nothing exotic about it.



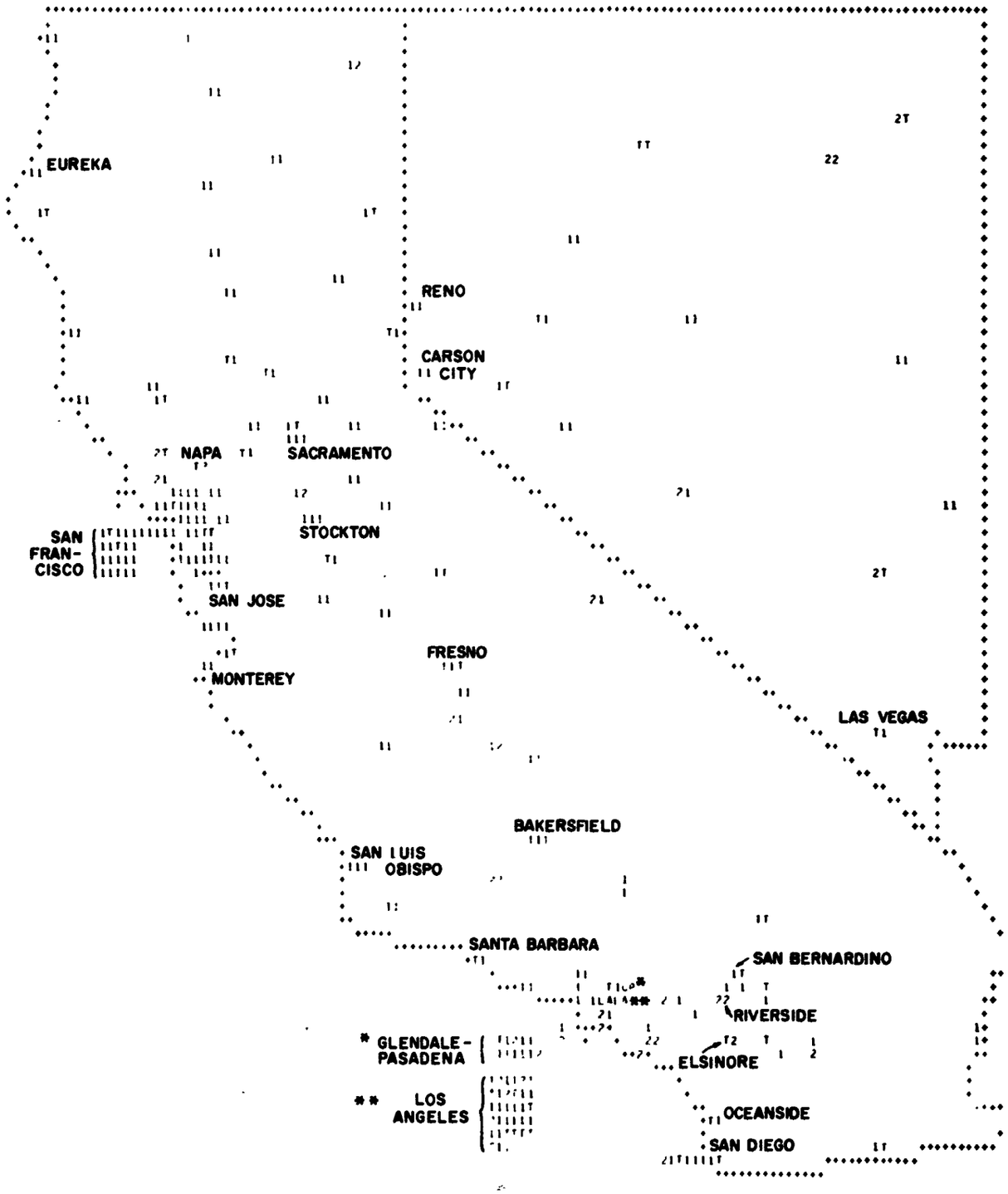
MAP 6: "CHESTERFIELD." The number 2 locates Linguistic Atlas informants who volunteered the term "chesterfield" for the item generally known as couch, sofa, etc. Informants who did not give this term are indicated as 0.



MAP 7: "SANTA ANA." The number 1 locates Linguistic Atlas informants who gave "Santa Ana," "Santana," or "Santyana" as the name for a warm wind in winter; 0 locates informants who did not give one of these names. There were a few scattered "Santa Ana" responses in Northern California, but all were in reference to Southern California winds. The map also indicates boundaries of dialect areas mentioned in the text and in Table 1.



MAP 8: "SEESAW-TEETERTOTTER." The number 1 locates Linguistic Atlas informants who gave "seesaw"; 2 locates informants who gave "teetertotter"; B locates those who gave both terms, and 0 locates those who gave neither.



MAP 9: "BAG-SACK." The number 1 locates Linguistic Atlas informants who said "(paper) bag"; 2 locates informants who said "(paper) sack"; T locates informants who gave both responses.

chapter 3: the Linguistic Atlas and a new survey of Riverside

On the morning of Tuesday, June 24, 1952, a polite young graduate student from the University of California, armed with a spiral notebook purchased at the University Bookstore, went to a house on Josephine Street in Berkeley to begin gathering samples of native California speech from an 83-year-old woman who "was born and brought up right here in San Francisco." For four days the interviewer asked her questions, making a detailed phonetic transcription of each response. The resulting 80-page book of notes was the first of 300 such records compiled for the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast.

In Riverside, the two Linguistic Atlas interviews took place in June, 1956. The Riverside interviewer, then a young phonetician on the faculty of California State College, Los Angeles, had selected two women informants from among those who had volunteered in response to a newspaper article. One woman, a 59-year-old housewife, had been born in Riverside and lived downtown most of her life. She had graduated from high school. The other was also a housewife, twenty years younger, born in Riverside, with two years of college education at Riverside City College. She showed an awareness of language which gave a distinct flavor to her interview. The interviewer observed that she "expressed pride in her heritage, in California, and dislike for speech forms and behavior of migrants and non-natives" and was "eager to show the 'right way' to pronounce certain items associated with California life."

The two chosen to represent Riverside in the survey did not quite fit the ideal range of variation which the survey directors sought. For cities like Riverside, classified as "non-urbanized" in the 1950 census, David Reed and his assistant David DeCamp adopted the following policy:

> In apportioning interviews to the communities, the *Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast* follows the plan of two interviews for each non-urbanized community, laid down by the eastern atlases. Although it is often impossible to achieve just the social distribution that one would like in each community, an effort is made to secure, on the average, one man and one woman, one person over 60 and one between 45 and 60, and one informant without high school education and the other with no more than high school education in each community group of two.[1]

In the ten "urbanized" areas, which included San Bernardino, they broadened the range of the interviews slightly, seeking one-fifth of their interviews from "college graduates and . . younger informants in the 30 to 45 range."

There were other restrictions. Those interviewed had to be natives, or near-natives, and had to have spent most of their lives in the community they represented. They also could not have grown up in families where foreign languages were spoken. Reed summarized:

> Nativity, residence, and unfamiliarity with foreign languages may be thought of as the restrictive requirements which rule certain people out as informants. Where other social factors such as occupation, economic status, religion, group affiliations, etc. are concerned, we seek as good a distribution as possible without restrictions.[2]

Thus the Linguistic Atlas survey was deliberately less than fully representative of California's population in the 1950's. The emphasis on finding long-time residents, the methods of seeking informants (sometimes radio and newspaper appeals, but generally personal inquiry), and the nature of the request (an Anglo interviewer from the University asking for ten unpaid hours of a person's time) led to little representation from Negroes (only 13 of 300). The added restriction against acquaintance with a foreign language—since it might possibly influence a speaker's English—virtually eliminated the many English-speaking Californians of Spanish ancestry. The field workers apparently assumed that all Mexican-Americans—as well as Chinese- and Japanese-Americans—would have been bilingual.[3]

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1 David Reed, "Problems of Linguistic Geography on the Pacific Coast" (paper presented as Linguistic Forum lecture, Linguistic Institute, Univ. of Michigan, August 1954), pp. 9-10.

2 "Problems of Linguistic Geography on the Pacific Coast," p. 11.

3 One Linguistic Atlas informant was literally of Spanish ancestry: a man, a native of Monterey, whose grandfather grew up in Madrid, settled in Monterey in 1820, and became the first teacher of Spanish and French in Monterey. The informant spoke only Spanish until he was six years old. He was chosen, the interviewer noted, because in Monterey "almost everyone spoke Spanish a generation ago."

Tom Armbruster has calculated that the typical informant for the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast would have been a Caucasian, a rural Californian, born 1897 and educated through the eleventh or twelfth grade, a not-too-active member of a major Protestant denomination, and interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas in 1955. The balance between males (151) and females (149) was nearly even. The survey included people born between 1861 and 1924, aged 28 to 91 at the time of the interview (140 were over 60). There were 11 Jews, 35 Catholics, 109 Protestants, 87 who belonged to no religion, and a good number whose religious preference was not clear. Of the total, 107 had no more than grade school education, 156 had been to high school but not college, and 37 had attended college, including ten who had done some graduate work.

Eleven different persons conducted the interviews. Each had his own way of eliciting the responses and his own habits of phonetic transcription, though training sessions were held to make both as uniform as possible. Figures 3 and 4 show the fifth page of the notebook for both of the Riverside informants. Unfortunately, we have no tape recording or other record of exactly what the interviewer said to get these responses. However, we can illustrate the interviewing technique with the tape-recorded text of the same part of an interview made for a similar survey, the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Northwest. The interview was recorded in Bremerton, Washington (across Puget Sound from Seattle) in September 1956, the same year as the Riverside interviews.[4]

REED: . . Now, if you had a rain storm with all kinds of electrical effects, what would you call that?

INFORMANT (a woman): That's probably what I was meaning when I thought that a thundershower or cloudburst would be-

REED: Uh-huh. If you were on a ferry and the ferry had to go very slow because you couldn't see anything, there was moisture in the air, what would you call that?

INFORMANT: Fog

REED: And if you turn to somebody and say, "My, isn't it-*what* today?"

INFORMANT: You mean, on a foggy day?

REED: Yeah-

INFORMANT: Just be, "Isn't it foggy?"

REED: If you have a long period without any rain-I don't suppose this would ever happen in Bremerton, it's almost impossible what would you think it would be called? A long period without rain.

INFORMANT: A drought

REED: If you say the wind *blows*, what's the past tense? The wind

INFORMANT: Blew.

REED: And if the wind has been blowing very hard and suddenly you say it's not-you can't feel much wind any more, what's the wind doing?

INFORMANT: Calmed.

REED: Or you could say it's letting up, dying down, or anything like that?

INFORMANT: Yes.

REED: What would you say?

INFORMANT: Gee, probably "letting up."

REED: What kind of a wind comes in the wintertime here, generally from the south-it's been very cold and suddenly the wind is sticky and warm, just as it is today-might rain, too: it's been snowing: suddenly it's-the snow melts away fast, it's a wind-

INFORMANT: A south wind? Is that what you have-Do you mean directional? Is that what you meant?

REED: Yes, what do you call-Do you have a special name for that kind of wind?

INFORMANT: No, I don't have.

REED: Ever heard of a chinook?

INFORMANT: Not to use it.

REED: Uh-huh. It's all right. Suppose on the ground in the wintertime, you wake up in the morning and look out, and the ground is all white, it's clear, the weather's clear and the ground is all white, this isn't snow-

INFORMANT: It's covered with frost . . . .

The transcript makes clear one final limitation of the Linguistic Atlas type of interview: It does not have much room for normal conversation. Despite all its limitations, however, the Linguistic Atlas survey method has provided us with valuable and extensive information about the variety of American English pronunciation and vocabulary-and the only reliable background for present-day studies.

The Village Idiom

Do present-day Riversiders speak like those interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas fifteen years ago? One way to get at an answer to this question is to conduct a survey in the Linguistic Atlas manner and compare it with the Atlas results. While keeping the Linguistic Atlas method of direct questioning, it is possible to use a shorter interview format and a simpler means of recording answers in order to sample the language of a larger number of Riversiders. Such a survey can then include people the Linguistic Atlas deliberately left out- young people, Mexican-Americans, non-natives. (The natives must be carefully distinguished from the immigrants, because the latter bring with them the speech habits of other regions. Nevertheless, the speech of the non-natives shows the

[4] Recording made by Carroll Reed, director of the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Northwest

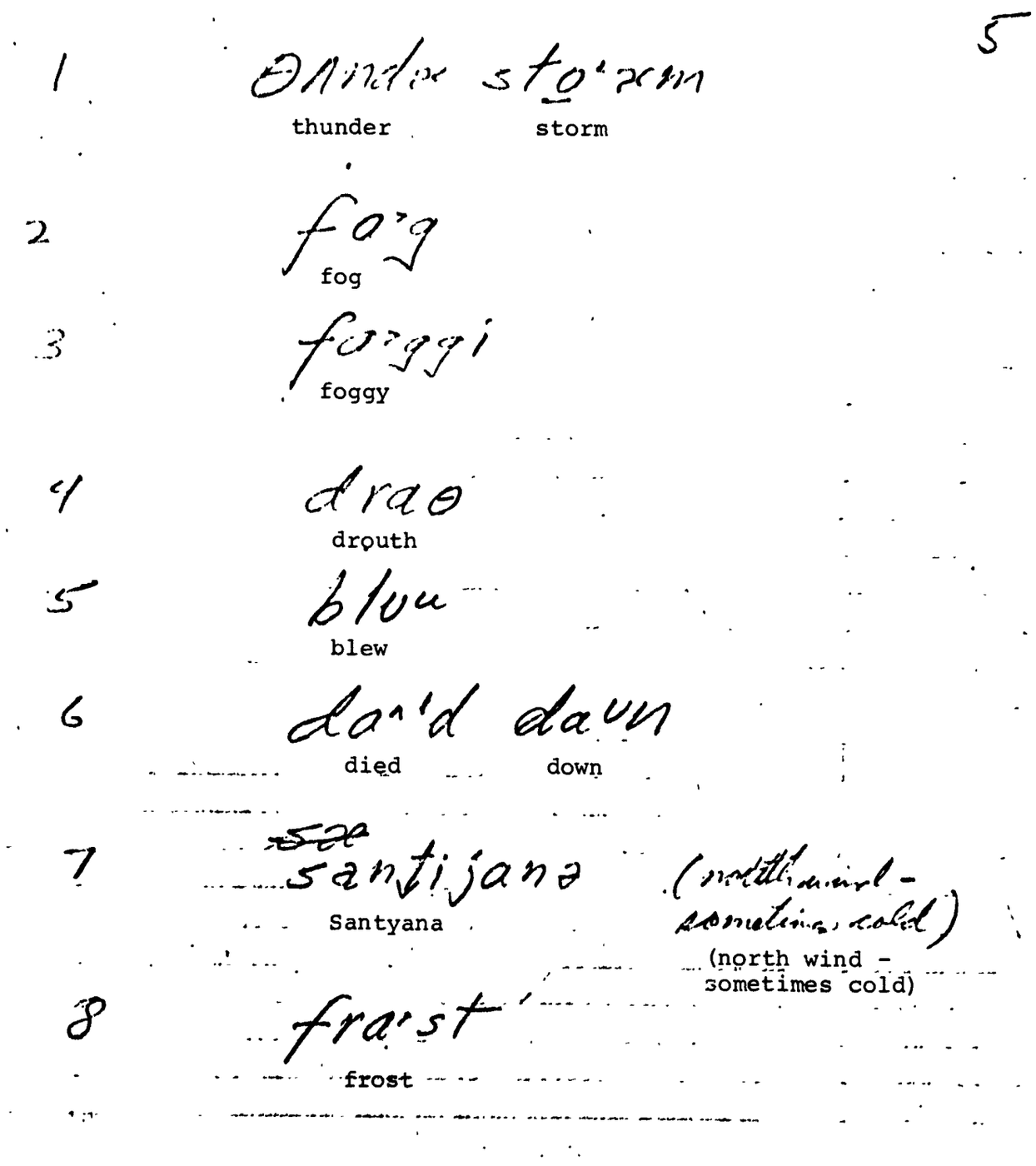


FIGURE 3: Page from Linguistic Atlas field record of interview with the older Riverside informant (B).

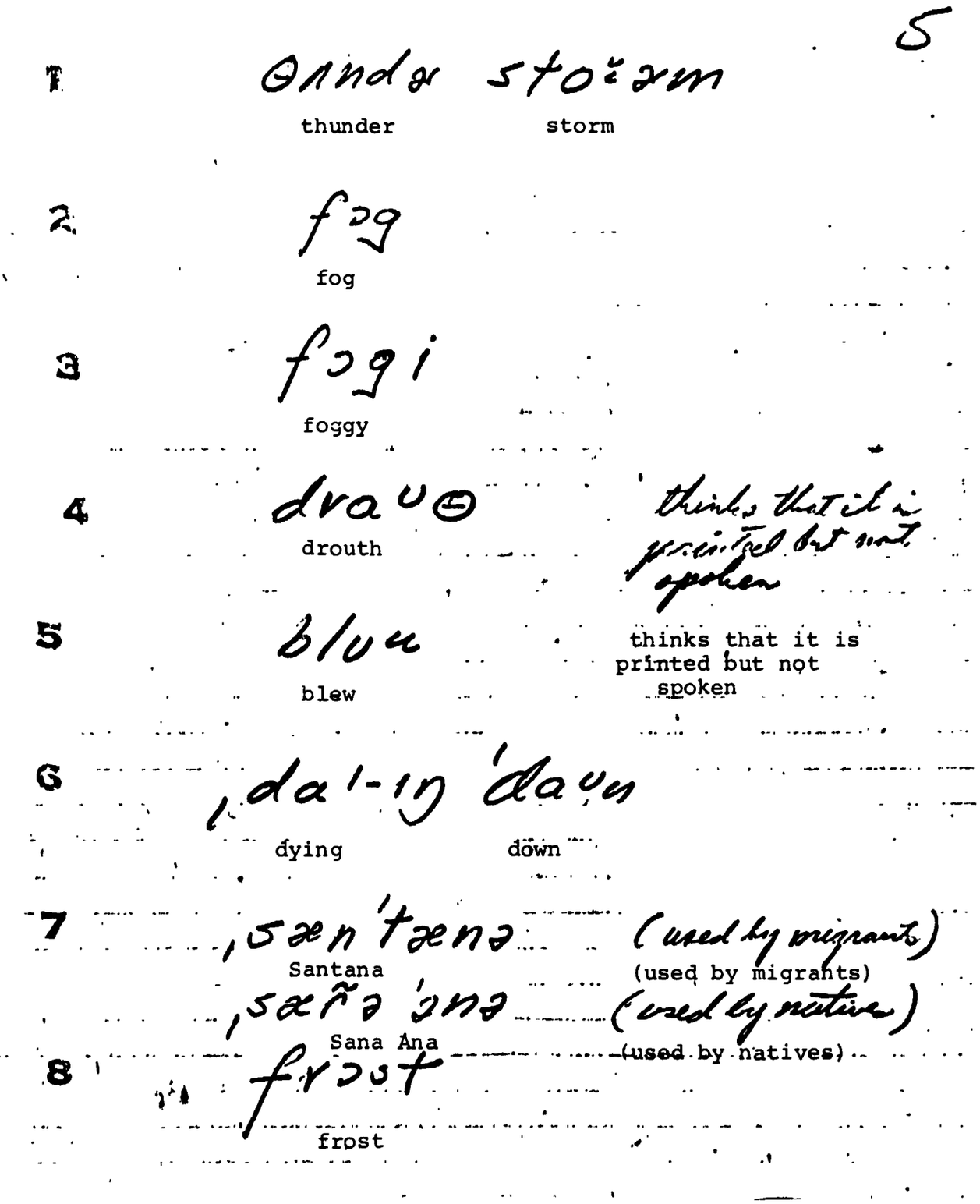


FIGURE 4: Page from Linguistic Atlas field record of interview with the younger Riverside informant (G).

influences which may affect the next generation of native speech.)

In the spring of 1969, some 200 residents of Riverside gave information in this manner about their speech. Those interviewed were chosen through a random sampling procedure. An interviewer would be assigned to go to a particular house in a particular area of Riverside. He was to interview the first person over 15 years old that he encountered there. As one might expect, this procedure did not always work. Sometimes the persons so located could not or would not answer the interviewer's questions. A few interviewers were unable to survey the areas assigned to them. Finally, since most of the interviews took place in the afternoon, the interviewers found more women than men, more shut-ins than workers. These shortcomings, and the inexperience of the field workers (who were students in a college class), should warn against extrapolating too freely from the results. But the results are suggestive.

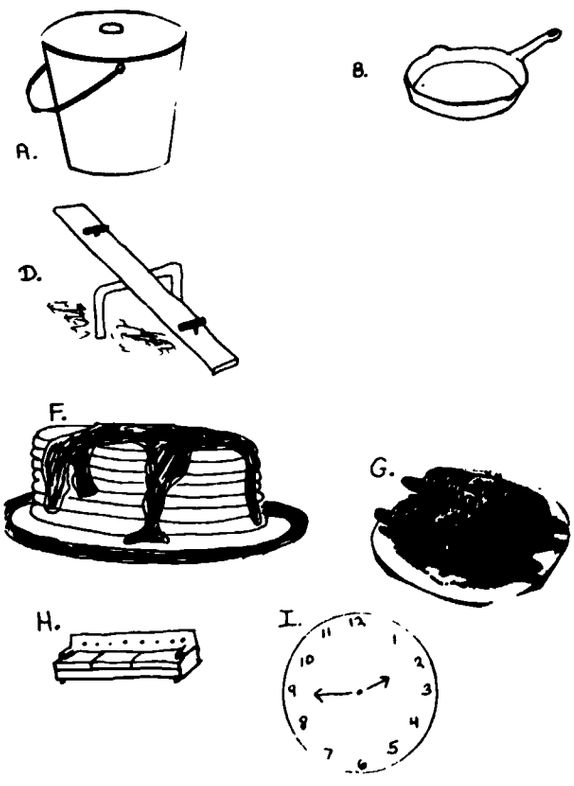
Of the 208 persons interviewed, only 40, less than one in five, were natives in the linguistic sense, having spent their dialect-formative years (ages 5-15) in Riverside. (This low proportion of natives is probably an accurate reflection of population trends. Riverside has grown from 46,764 in 1950 to 84,332 in 1960 and 140,089 in 1970.) Seventeen of those interviewed had grown up in Los Angeles; nine were from elsewhere in California, but 139 were from out of state. Only four (two per cent) were blacks, compared with the black proportion of 5.1 per cent in the 1970 census; blacks were underrepresented probably because all of the interviewers were white. There were more Mexican-Americans in the survey, a total of 11, although still not quite as many as one would expect for their proportion in the population.

Women outnumbered men two to one. Thirty-nine (20 per cent) of those interviewed were between 15 and 20 years old; 55 (25 per cent) were between 20 and 30; 37 (15 per cent) were between 30 and 40; 25 (10 per cent) were between 40 and 50; 24 (10 per cent) were between 50 and 60; and 25 (10 per cent) were over 60. The informants also tended to be higher on the educational scale than those of the Linguistic Atlas survey. Only 17 of the informants had gone no further than elementary school. Ninety-six graduated from high school, and 95 had gone to or graduated from college. Thus the information from this preliminary survey tells us something about the vocabulary and pronunciation of the middle-class Anglo population in Riverside. It also indicates some of the norms followed by speakers from all groups and classes. The English spoken by blacks and Mexican-Americans deserves further attention, and we will treat these groups in a separate chapter.

The list below includes some of the nearly 100 questions in the survey. The first number after each response is the total number of persons who gave it; the number of native Riversiders appears in parentheses. Linguistic Atlas percentages for comparable items appear with the designation LAPC on the next line. This line also shows the responses of the two Riverside informants: B indicates the older woman and G the younger.

For example, the notation under question 2 indicates that 156 of all persons interviewed said the center of a cherry was a *pit*, 29 said it was a *seed*, and 15 said it was a *stone*. Of those who spent their dialect-formative years in Riverside, 34 said it was a *pit*, 5 said it was a *seed*. In the Linguistic Atlas survey, 83 per cent of Californians and Nevadans said *pit*, 20 per cent said *seed*, and 17 per cent said *stone*. Linguistic Atlas informants B and G from Riverside said *pit*, and informant G also said *seed*.

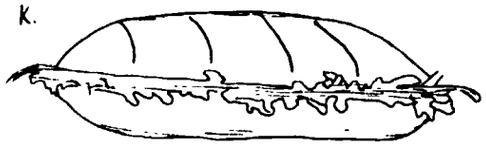
1. What do you call item A? (See illustration.)
   pail 101 (15), bucket 101 (23)
   LAPC: "wooden vessel" bucket 70% B, G, wooden bucket 27%, wooden pail 6%
   LAPC: "large open tin vessel for water, milk" bucket 63%, pail 54% B, G
   The Riverside survey and the LAPC are not strictly comparable here. See 22 below.



2. What do you call the center of a cherry?
   pit 156 (34), seed 29 (5), stone 15 (0)
   LAPC: pit 83% B, G, seed 20%, G, stone 17%
3. What do you call a dry creek bed?
   wash 71 (12), arroyo 22 (4)
   LAPC: wash 21%, arroyo 21% B, G, gully 33% B, G

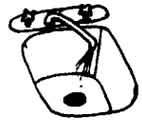
4. What do you call item B?
   frying pan 115 (24), skillet 64 (11), fry pan 12 (1)
   LAPC: frying pan 89% B, G, skillet 56% G
   Both B and G said a frying pan was of "light sheet metal." G said a skillet was of "heavy cast iron." Other LAPC informants did not volunteer these distinctions.
5. What do you call this? (The interviewer held out a brown heavy paper container, large enough for groceries.)
   bag 153 (31), sack 43 (5)
   LAPC: paper bag 72%, bag 34%, (paper) sack 30% B, G
6. What is the device found outside of the house in the yard or garden which you turn on to obtain water?
   faucet 172 (36), spicket 13, tap 6, spigot 5, hydrant 5
   See 25 below for LAPC results.
7. What is the insect that glows at night?
   firefly 128 (26), lightning bug 43 (6), glowworm 13 (1), fire bug 10 (3), June bug 3 (2)
   LAPC: firefly 52% B, G, glowworm 22%, lightning bug 20% B
   This is not a California insect, and there is some confusion in the naming. The song "Glowworm" was popular in the 1950's and may have affected the LAPC results.
8. What do you call item D?
   teeter-totter 113 (25), seesaw 88 (14)
   LAPC: teetertotter 61% B, G, seesaw 38%, teeter 16%, teeterboard 10%
9. What is the window covering that moves on rollers?
   shades 105 (23), blinds 54 (9), window shades 25 (2), window blinds 4, curtains 4 (1), roller shades 3 (1)
   LAPC: shades 50% B, window shades 34% G, blinds 35%, window blinds 5%, curtains 24%
10. What do you call item E?
    dragonfly 155 (31), mosquito hawk 4 (1), darning needle 4, devil's darning needle 1 (1), snake feeder 1
    LAPC: dragonfly 59% B, G, (devil's) darning needle 15% G, mosquito hawk 7%, ear sewer 6% (N. Cal.), snake doctor 5% (N. Cal.), snake feeder 3%
11. What is the automobile device for making the car go faster?
    accelerator 141 (24), gas pedal 43 (11), throttle 8 (1), gas 4 (2), pedal 3
12. What do you call item F?
    pancakes 174 (37), hotcakes 29 (3), flapjacks 1
    LAPC: pancakes 75% B, G, hotcakes 65% G, flapjacks 23% griddle cakes 10%
13. What do you call item G?
    corn on the cob 183 (34), roasting ears 7, sweet corn 2
    LAPC: corn on the cob 75% G, sweet corn 17% B, roasting ears 14%, green corn 11%, ears of corn 10%, fresh corn 5%
14. What is the name of the place where packaged groceries can be purchased?
    grocery store 101 (21), supermarket 31 (5), store 24 (5), market 18 (3), grocery 6, grocery market 6, general store 5 (2), delicatessen 2
15. What do you call item H?
    couch 94 (23), sofa 59 (8), davenport 26 (2), divan 6 (1), settee 2, chesterfield 1
    LAPC: sofa 64% G, davenport 48% B, G, chesterfield 45% (N. Cal.), couch 43% G, settee 23%, lounge 20%, divan 15% B, day bed 6%, loveseat 6%
    Couch is clearly a more modern term. Of the 165 Linguistic Atlas informants born 1898 or earlier, only 35% used *couch*, while of the 135 born 1899 or later, 57% mentioned it. The participants in the Riverside survey, who were generally younger, favored *couch* even more.
16. What time does this clock (item I) say?
    quarter TO two 125 (22), quarter OF two 53 (11), quarter TILL two 24 (4)
    LAPC: quarter TO eleven 66% B, quarter OF eleven 30% G, quarter TILL eleven 4%
17. What do you call high flat land?
    plateau 125 (25), mesa 55 (10)
    LAPC: plateau 38%, mesa 22% B, G, benchland G
18. To become ill with a cold is to:
    catch a cold 103 (19), come down with a cold 37 (6), catch cold 19 (6), get a cold 18 (4), take a cold 5, take cold 3
    LAPC: caught cold 55% B, caught a cold 38% B, G, took (a) cold 13%
19. If you are nauseated, you are sick:
    TO your stomach 143 (27), AT 41 (4), IN 7 (2), OF 1 (1)
    LAPC: sick TO his stomach 51% B, AT 41% G, IN G

K.



L.

N.



20. What is the name for item K?
    grinder 126 (32), submarine 25 (2), poor boy 18 (5), hero 4, hoagy 2

Riverside is rare in showing such a heavy preference for *grinder*. A recent survey of 100 American cities showed only Hartford, Conn. and San Francisco using *grinder* exclusively. Des Moines, Iowa; Providence, R. I.; Cleveland; Chester, Pa., and Philadelphia used *grinder* along with other terms.[5]

The Riverside Press, January 1, 1970, reports: "Ralph D'Elia brought the "grinder" to Riverside 15 years ago after many years of selling the sandwiches in Norwich under the same name. The origin of the term, Mr. D'Elia says, goes back 30 years to when he first opened his sandwich shop in Connecticut.

"A friend of his was in the shop 'wanting a sandwich in the worst way.'

" 'We hadn't finished baking the bread,' Mr. D'Elia recalls, 'but he said he was so hungry he'd take it on anything—even stale bread.

" 'So I gave him a sandwich on some stale bread I had. Naturally, he had to chew quite a bit to swallow, so he commented "you have to grind this bread to eat it." '

"The sandwiches, although made with fresh bread, thereafter came to be known as 'grinders.' The sandwich shop is still operating in Norwich, run by Mr. D'Elia's cousin."

21. What do you call a fenced area for animals?
    corral 155 (29), pasture 17 (3), range 1
    LAPC: corral 73% B, G, barnyard 24%

22. What do you call item L? (See 1 above.)
    bucket 136 (32), pail 62 (6)
    For LAPC results see question 1. The difference between answers to questions 1 and 22 in the Riverside survey may reflect different reactions to items that look different, or it may simply reflect the interview situation. That is, the person interviewed may want to please the interviewer by giving a second name for an object in response to a second question about it. In any case, it is clear that both *pail* and *bucket* are in general California use, with *bucket* predominating, and that people generally mean different things by *pail* and *bucket*, though different people make different types of distinctions, classifying containers as buckets or pails according to what they are made of or what they are used for.

    This is a common phenomenon called "secondary semantic differentiation." People seem to find it wasteful to have perfect synonyms in their vocabularies. They will thus take two terms that mean approximately the same thing and divide the meaning so that one term refers only to certain kinds of items and the other to other kinds. It happens also with *couch, sofa, davenport,* etc., and with *bag* and *sack*.

23. What do you call the center of a peach?
    pit 116 (27), seed 54 (11), stone 29, kernel 3, heart 1 (1)
    LAPC: pit 60% B, G, stone 40%, seed 21% G

24. What do you call this? (The interviewer held out a paper container, about the same size as the object for question 5, but thinner, colored yellow, and decorated with the University of California Bookstore insignia.)
    bag 129 (25), sack 72 (13), poke 1, toot 1
    LAPC: see question 5

25. What do you call item N? (compare with question 6)
    faucet 177 (36), tap 10 (2) spicket 7, spigot 3
    LAPC: "on water pipe at kitchen sink" faucet 96% B, G

After these and other such questions, the interviewer handed a dittoed sheet to the informant. "Please pronounce these sentences as you would in normal conversation," the sheet directed. As the informant pronounced them, the interviewer recorded pronunciations of particular words. Although the dittoed sheet did not indicate the words the interviewer was listening for, the pronunciations were probably more careful than they would be in genuine "normal conversation." Some of the responses to this section appear below. For each pronunciation a phonetic symbol and a word containing the sound like that indicated by the symbol is given. Once again the first number represents all those interviewed while the second number (in parentheses) represents just the native Riversiders. B and G again indicate the responses of the two Linguistic Atlas informants from Riverside on comparable items.

1. My father is *buried* in Oklahoma. (Remember that the italics did not appear in the sheet read by the informant.)
   b*u*ried: [ɛ] v*e*ry 189 (37), [ʌ] h*u*rry 19 (3)
2. The Joneses bought a new *car* this year.
   c*a*r: [r] present 198 (38) B, G, [r] not present 10 (2)
3. Half the corn crop was destroyed by the *drought*.
   drou*gh*t: [t] 180 (34), [θ] b*a*th 21 (2) B, G
4. My mother makes *greasy* gravy.
   greas*y*: [s] 182 (39) B, G, [z] 25 (1)
5. They are building a *nuclear* reactor at Muscle Beach.
   nuc*l*ear: vowel between *c* and *l* 69 (20), vowel *after cl* 134 (19)
6. Are you from *Missouri?*
   Missou*ri*: [i] *sea* 192 (39) B, G, [ə] b*u*t 6 (1)
7. A *creek* ran right through their property.
   cr*ee*k: [i] *sea* 199 (38), [ɪ] *si*ck 9 (2) B, G
8. The *news* is *due* on *Tuesday*.
   news, due, Tuesday: y before first vowel 23 (6), no *y* 172 (32) B, G
9. Did you remember to lock the *garage* door?
   garage: [ǰ] *j*ump 106 (22), [ž] rou*ge* 100 (17)
10. She went to the store to *get* some paper.
    *g*et: [ɛ] l*e*t 116 (21) B, G, [ɪ] b*i*t 91 (19)

[5] Edwin Eames and Howard Robboy, "The Submarine Sandwich: Lexical Variations in a Cultural Context." *American Speech*, 42 (December, 1967), pp. 279-288.

11. Our *cleaning* bill was high this time.
    cleaning: [ŋ] thing 178 (33), [n] thin 29 (7)
12. That old *cow* has been there for years.
    cow: [a] hot 114 (23) **B**, G, [æ] hat 91 (17) plus [ʊ] in both cases
    This is a difficult item to record correctly. The numbers therefore may be inaccurate.
13. Her name is *Mary* Blake.
    Mary: [ɛ] get 141 (27) **B**, G, [e] hay 62 (13)
14. What a *horrid* looking dog!
    horrid. [o] horde 174 (36), [a] hard 24 (3), [ɔ] long 10 (1)
15. How long is the *root* of that weed?
    root: [u] through 137 (31), [U] book 70 (9) **B**, G
16. The baby is sleeping on his *stomach*.
    stomach: [ɪ] lick 136 (34) **B**, [ə] luck 70
17. Are you coming *with* us?
    with: [θ] bath 155 (32) **B**, G, [ð] bathe: 53 (8)
18. He placed the bookmarker *across* a page.
    across: [s] 159 (32), [st] 48 (8) **B**
19. I have *often* heard that song.
    often: without [t] 159 (29) G, with [t] 48 (11) **B**
20. John was born in *Illinois*.
    Illinois: without [z] 153 (24) **B**, G, with [z] 55 (16)
21. The sea was almost too *calm* that day.
    calm: with [l] 110 (16) G, without [l] 98 (24) **B**
22. At age 10, he got his first paper *route*.
    route: [aU] cow 140 (30) **B**, [u] blue 67 (10) G
    Secondary semantic differentiation often occurs with the two pronunciations of this word. Many people will use one pronunciation in "paper route," and another in "Route 66" or in "the route he took."
23. Please *wash* your hands before eating.
    wash: with [r] before *sh* 56 (9), without [r] 152 (31) **B**, G
24. For months, they sought the great white *whale*.
    whale: [w] (same as *wail*) 131 (31), [hw] 77 (9)
25. He pushed the *wheelbarrow* into the garden.
    wheelbarrow: ending with [l] as if spelled *wheelbarrel* 77 (13), ending with vowel 126 (25) **B**, G
    If we can trust the ears of the students who recorded the responses, the high proportion of informants using *l*, as if the word were spelled *wheelbarrel*, represents a remarkable change. The LAPC recorded *Wheelbarrow* for 96% of its informants, *wheelbarrel* for only 3%—and those in Northern California. The change might represent increasing unfamiliarity both with the separate word *barrow* and with the thing we call a *wheelbarrow*.
26. The *groceries* obviously would spoil in hot weather.
    groceries: [s] 110 (23), [š] bush 96 (17)
27. Every Easter, sunrise services are held on Mt. *Rubidoux*.
    Rubidoux: [o] throw 164 (30), [u] through 44 (10)
    This name seems to have had two accepted pronunciations from the time it was first brought to Riverside. In the original French, of course, the final vowel is like the [u] of *through*. But Riversiders as a rule do not speak French, and just as Americans now pronounce *Los Angeles* with English vowels and consonants, so three-fourths of Riversiders pronounce *Rubidoux* with a final syllable like *dough*. Sometimes the spelling influence goes further. On other occasions speakers have been heard to pronounce the final syllable as *ducks*.

Does this survey reveal any differences between Riverside English of 1969 and that of the Linguistic Atlas survey 15 years earlier? Because of differences in interviewing technique and the populations sampled, and because of the inexperience of the field workers in the Riverside survey, it is necessary to be cautious in answering this question. Yet some trends seem to exist. The spread of *wash* for *arroyo*, and of *plateau* for *mesa*, suggest a slight decline in the use of Spanish vocabulary, a decline which has probably continued for over a century, as we can tell by observing all the words in Hittell's list which have become obsolete along with the Spanish ranching way of life. Urbanization and heavy immigration from the East tend to obliterate all but the most widely known Spanish terminology.

A much clearer trend is for a word which was predominant in Linguistic Atlas usage to become even more predominant, and for remnants of peculiar local usage to diminish or disappear. Thus we have the generally favored (paper) *bag* gaining over the *sack* used by the two Riverside Linguistic Atlas informants, alternate names for the *dragonfly* vanishing; *pancakes* replacing *hotcakes;* the disappearance of other names for *corn on the cob; couch* displacing *sofa* and *davenport;* sick *to* the stomach becoming almost the only phrasing; peach *stone*, a minor variant, disappearing; *greasy* almost always with an *s; creek* almost always with the vowel of *sea*. Spelling pronunciations are gaining too: the *s* in Illinois and the *l* in *calm*, both originally "silent letters," are now frequently heard.

So far these are just further examples of the trends toward blandness (general usage) and spelling pronunciations which we noted in Chapter II's comparison of California with the East. But there are hints of one new trend, too—not solid evidence yet, but definite hints. In three items we seem to encounter increasing influence of Midlands and Southern pronunciations from the East. The spread of *git* for *get; cow* with the "flatter" or more fronted diphthong that begins with the vowel of *hat* instead of the vowel of *father;* and the "long *u*" [u] in *root* all suggest a new quality to Riverside speech not found in the records for the Linguistic Atlas informants. The vowels of *get* and *cow* are particularly important, since they suggest the possibility of similar pronunciations in many other words. The short *e* is even more likely to become short *i* when followed by *m* or *n* (pen, men, remember, . . .); the diphthong of *cow* may be heard again in *now, wow, how, house*. . . . If this proves to be a trend, it would accord with the substantial migration to this area from Midlands and

Southern speech areas in the past decades, and would suggest that Riverside English is moving slightly towards the speech of these immigrants.

A Short Survey of Southern California

Students in a beginning linguistics class at UCR tested a few of the items from the Riverside survey on a larger group in the fall of 1969. This shorter survey encompassed 332 persons, both natives and non-natives, from throughout Southern California. (Many interviews were conducted in the students' home towns during Thanksgiving vacation.) About one-third of those interviewed were from Riverside. Nearly one-quarter (73) were from Los Angeles, 8 per cent (25) lived in San Bernardino, 20 per cent (67) in other parts of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, 5 per cent (15) in San Diego or vicinity, 5 per cent (17) in Northern California, and 2 per cent (5) in other parts of California. One or two were visiting from out of state. More than half of those interviewed (178 or 54 per cent) were under 25, and there were more females (173 or 52 per cent) than males.

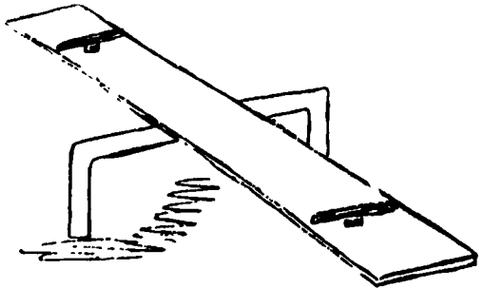
The instructions to the interviewers read in part:

> The purpose of the inquiry is to determine certain attitudes about language and information about vocabulary and pronunciation items. You should tell your informants that there are no "right" or "expected" answers. Ask all questions essentially as they are written. . . . . you may give additional hints, but do NOT use any of the possible responses yourself. If the informant does not come up with a response, skip the item and move on to the next.

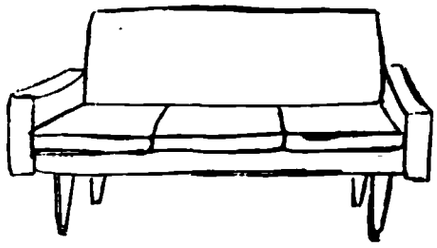
Here are some of the questions and a tabulation of the responses. The actual number of responses occurs first, followed by the percentage (in parentheses).

1. What is the name of the big mountain in downtown Riverside next to the river? (Record only whether last syllable is *DOUGH* [do] or *DO* [du].)
   Rubi*DOUGH* 228 (68%), Rubi*DO* 51 (15%), Rubi*DUKS* 1
2. What is the name for the strong wind that blows in spring and fall?
   Santa Ana 210 (63%), Santana 78 (23%), Santa Anas 13 (4%), Sana Ana 6 (2%), Santayana 5 (2%), Santanas 4 (1%), North wind 4 (1%), Norther 3 (1%)
3. What is the name for a sandwich in an elongated bun that is a meal in itself?
   grinder 144 (43%), submarine 87 (21%), poor boy 43 (13%), torpedo 16 (5%), hero 11 (3%), pastrami 5 (2%), hoagie 4 (1%)
4. When it is fifteen minutes before the hour, it is quarter–
   to 143 (43%), till 109 (33%), of 90 (27%), before 4 (1%), until 1
5. What is the name for the playground item in illustration A?
   teetertotter 183 (55%), seesaw 159 (48%)

A.



B.



6. What do you call the item in illustration B?
   couch 213 (64%), sofa 79 (24%), davenport 25 (8%), divan 15 (5%), love seat 2 (1%), settee 2 (1%)

For the most part, even with a mixed population that includes non-natives and a large number of young adults, the results of this survey confirm trends noted earlier. The *dough* pronunciation for the last syllable of Rubidoux, the use of *Santa Ana* or a variant pronunciation as the name of a wind, the preference for *couch* over *sofa* or *davenport* seem firmly established. *Seesaw* remains a strong alternative to *teetertotter*. The *grinder* is less dominant over other names for the meal-in-itself sandwich only because the survey took in a good many people who were not Riversiders. If there is any present-day characteristic that marks off Riverside residents from other Southern California speakers of English, it is probably this preference for the term *grinder*.

The one unexpected result of this short survey, however, was the prominence of quarter TILL. Of the 300 informants in the Linguistic Atlas survey, only 12 (including five in the Southern California deserts) said "quarter till eleven." The Riverside survey found 10 per cent of the natives and 12 per cent of the total sampled saying "quarter till (two)." But the Southern California sampling found "quarter till" for one-third of those interviewed.

Some of this difference might just reflect a difference in the way the question is phrased. The response might sometimes depend on whether the name of the hour follows: "When it is a quarter *to eleven*, it is a quarter *till*." (This is only a hypothesis; it remains to be tested.) But if the phrasing of the question does not fully account for it, we have in quarter *till* one more suggestion of increasing Midlands and Southern influence in the speech of Southern California. *Till* in this phrase is especially common in the Midlands region of the East, and it is absent from the North.

A Sampling of Young Riversiders

A somewhat different kind of survey investigated the speech of 45 native Riversiders, all of them high school juniors or seniors, 16 to 18 years old, in the spring of 1970. There were several Mexican-Americans and blacks, but most of those interviewed were Anglos. Rather than rely on field workers to make accurate transcriptions as they conducted the interviews, this survey used tape recorders. Each person interviewed gave his rendition of the following passage:

> Did you ever try to make a collect call? What a drag. While you're explaining the call to the operator, she is pushing buttons, but not listening. So then when she repeats what you said, it's incorrect, and the whole mess begins again.
> It's just too complicated to call collect.

In an effort to encourage "natural" speech, the passage was deliberately designed to have a conversational style, slang, and a protest against authority. These features seem to have helped. But any time a person reads aloud into a tape recorder for a stranger, his speech is likely to be careful. The analysis of these tapes can thus tell us about the norms of careful speech among young Riversiders; it does not indicate how they might talk among friends.

In this careful reading, not one of the 45 interviewed said *explainin'*, *punchin'*, or *listenin'*. That is, they never pronounced the last syllables of these words to sound like *sin*, but always like *sing* (in 2/3 of the responses) or *seen* (1/3). Even in this formal situation, a substantial minority avoided the formal standard ("explaining") in favor of a less formal pronunciation ("explaineen"), although they completely kept away from the informal ("explainin' "). In the East, in studies of earlier generations, the contrast has always been between *-ing* and *-in'*; for this generation of Riversiders, we find that the variation is instead between *-ing* and *-een* (though of course *-in'* is still known and used in informal situations too). There are some indications that a speaker's proportion of *-ing* to *-een* relates to such factors as social class, sex, ethnic group, and formality of the speech situation. One could test for such correlations by tallying several different speakers' uses of *-ings*, *-eens*, and *-in's* in both formal and informal situations.

Each student interviewed had four chances to pronounce the *h* in *wh-* words: *what* a drag (30 wh, 15 w), *while* (24 wh, 21 w), *when* (8 wh, 36 w), and *what* you said (36 wh, 9 w). This amounted to 60% of the possible maximum use of *h*, a high proportion considering that in all dialects the *h* is usually absent when *wh-* words are unstressed (like *when* in the passage). But though *h*-pronunciation seems a definite norm, it is not always followed. After reading the anecdote, the young Riversiders were also asked to read aloud a number of pairs of words, including *whip–wit* and *wear–where*. In each case more than half of those interviewed did not pronounce the possible *h*'s (*whip:* 26 w, 18 wh; *where:* 25 w, 20 wh).

Perhaps as a result of losing the traditional distinction between *wh-* and *w-* words, some Southern Californians have devised a new one. They have been heard to use *h* for emphasis on words that traditionally had only *w-*. This phenomenon sometimes appears in the expression "oh whow!" (for oh wow!), and one girl talked about dressing for Halloween as a *whitch*.

The Linguistic Atlas had found *h-* pronunciation very much the rule in the 1950's. The two Riverside informants had pronounced the *h* in every one of the *wh-* words in the survey: *what, wheat, white* bread, *wheelbarrow, whetstone, whinny, whiffletree, whip,* and *whoa* Almost all the informants in inland Southern California did likewise, and so did three out of four of the Linguistic Atlas informants from the Southern California coast. The different results of the survey of young Riversiders suggest that pronunciation of *h* in *wh-* words is no longer as universal as it once was, though it still remains the norm. Whether this indicates a trend that will eventually lead to the disappearance of *h* in *wh-* words (as is now the case in England, and in many places along the Atlantic Coast), or whether the *h* will reestablish itself more firmly, remains to be seen.

In parts of the South, in Texas, and in Black English (see next chapter), many speakers do not distinguish "short *e*" [ɛ] from "short *i*" [ɪ] when followed by a nasal consonant *(m, n, ng). Men, cents, fence, M, N, strength* sound like *min, cints, fince,* and so on. *Sense* becomes the same as *since,* and *pen* is like *pin*–so speakers sometimes will talk about an "ink pin" to distinguish it from a "safety pin." This merging of vowels before nasals is not characteristic of the two Riverside informants for the Linguistic Atlas: they invariably used the "short *e*" [ɛ] of *bet* in *again, fence, hem, hen, men,* pig *pen, strength, ten.* But the young Riversiders sometimes merged "short *e*" into "short *i*." In the anecdote, "short *i*" was very much a minority pronunciation of *then* ([ɪ] 3, [ɛ] 39) and *when* ([ɪ] 4, [ɛ] 40), but two-fifths of those interviewed used it in the second syllable of *again* ([ɪ] 18, [ɛ] 27). The "short *e*" remains the norm for careful speech, but the "short *i*" is obviously much more widespread in words like *again* than it used to be. As with the *w/wh* distinction, it is too early to tell whether the norm will change to [ɪ] or whether it will reassert itself more firmly as [ɛ].

The analysis also suggests that the low back "open *o*" [ɔ] vowel is rare among young Riversiders. Words like *law* and *salt* may be heard throughout the country, especially among older speakers, with a vowel quite distinct from that of *father*–made with the tongue further back and the lips more rounded. Such speakers will distinguish between *cot* [ɑ] and *caught* [ɔ], *hock* [ɑ] and *hawk* [ɔ]. David Reed and Carroll Reed report that unrounded [ɑ] in *wash* and *on* was characteristic of the urban centers in California,[6] and Stanley Cook found [ɔ] merging into [ɑ] as an urban trait in Utah.[7] William Labov has noted a similar trend throughout the country.[8] Young Riversiders seem to be following this trend. They were asked to read the groups of words *watch–wash* and *doll–Paul–ball*. If they distinguished between the [ɑ] of *father* and the "open *o*" [ɔ], the speakers would be likely to use different vowels within each group, though exactly which words might have the open *o* could vary from person to person. In fact, however, only 8 young Riversiders had different vowels in *watch* and *wash*, while 37 did not, and only 5 had different vowels in *doll–Paul–ball*, while 40 did not.

Other Observations

The person who studies language variation always faces a dilemma. To get systematic results in a reasonable amount of time, he needs a systematic method of sampling speech. This usually involves carefully structured interviews where informants answer questions or read aloud. But structuring of this sort makes people self-conscious about their speech and sometimes far from natural in their responses. Dialect researchers have therefore tried hard to observe "natural," unguarded speech–the unselfconscious conversation among friends, or even between strangers, as they go about their business. Using notebooks or tape recorders as unobtrusively as possible, the researcher can gather dialect information of great value–though analyzing the information and comparing it with the results of other studies is considerably harder this way.

Studies of this last sort point to another new trend in the English of young adult Riversiders. That is the fronting of the first part of the vowel sound in words like *down, house, out, cow, now,* and *wow*, so that the diphthongs begin with the "flat *a*" of *hat* [æU] instead of the "broad *a*" of *father* [ɑU]. This is in contrast to older Riverside usage, as the Linguistic Atlas attests: in such words both of the Riverside informants invariably have [ɑU] diphthongs that begin with the *a* of *father*. This too seems to be the result of Southern and South Midland influence. But in those areas of the East the first part of the diphthong is "slow" or prolonged, so that the difference from the Northern and North Midland sound is one of vowel length as well as vowel quality. The pronunciation heard among younger Californians is something of a compromise: the diphthong is Southern, but it is "fast" like that of the North. When a young Riversider says he is going *out* of the *house*, even if he uses the new pronunciation, he does not sound as odd to the older generation of native Riversiders as a Texan would.

The surveys in this chapter are obviously far from the final word on Riverside English. But they do suggest that a number of trends are operating in the speech of this area. First, Riverside English seems to be losing the local peculiarities it may once have had as Southern California English becomes more homogeneous (and urbanized). Second, one hears an increasing number of Midlands and Southern traits in Riverside English, presumably correlated with the substantial recent immigration from those areas. And third, these trends suggest that Riverside English continues the trend towards blandness and unobtrusiveness which we noted for California as a whole.

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[6] "Some Problems of English Speech Mixture in California and Nevada" (paper read at the 1968 meeting of the American Dialect Society), p. 7.

[7] "Language Change and the Emergence of an Urban Dialect in Utah" (unpublished dissertation, University of Utah, 1969), p. 129.

[8] *The Study of Nonstandard English* (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1970), p. 65.

chapter 4: non-regional variation

This chapter begins with a somewhat negative title in order to emphasize a positive point: Our language (and all language) varies more than simply by region. Regional differences are important, and the easiest to notice, but that does not excuse the linguist from observing the other important correlations: age, sex, occupation, social class, and ethnic group. The features which correlate with these categories are the same sort as those for regional variation, namely matters of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and idiom. Although there is as yet no resource for these categories comparable to the Linguistic Atlas, it is easy enough to notice their importance.

There are great changes in language from age group to age group, at least until people reach adulthood. Many of the changes have nothing to do with the development of the organs of speech, which is a separate matter. Age group differences are especially apparent in vocabulary and idiom, ranging from the baby talk of children who have just learned to speak ("night-night," "bye-bye," "kitty," and the euphemisms for body functions and the toilet) through teenage slang (always hopelessly out of date when a book tries to record it) to various adult norms

Differences between the sexes are equally obvious. In English they involve vocabulary and idiom (a man is unlikely to use "darling" as an adjective, a woman is unlikely to say "fill 'er up" at a gas station) and matters of grammar and pronunciation as well (especially in the "second highest status group" of a community, women are more likely to use formal, "correct," prestige forms).[1]

Occupational differences lead to distinct differences in vocabulary. Every field has its jargon. A policeman, a doctor, and a garage mechanic will use quite different terminology in describing the same auto accident.

Social class, as determined through sociological investigation, correlates with differences in language use. In New York City, William Labov found that those in the higher social classes pronounced *r* after vowels (as in ca*r* vs. ca*h*) more often than those in the lower classes.[2] These social variables differ from place to place. In Riverside nearly everyone always pronounces the *r* after vowels (as in ca*r*), so it does not serve here as a social marker. No one has as yet described social class variables for Southern California.

Among the most distinctive varieties of American English are the ethnic dialects. In Riverside, Mexican-American English and Black English are especially notable. These are the dialects associated respectively with the Mexican-American and Black communities, though it should be emphasized that all dialects are environmental, not hereditary. The language and dialect a person learns is that of his speech community, and most particularly of his peer group—the people his own age with whom he associates. When one speech community is isolated from another, divergences in language easily develop. Those who live in the Mexican-American community (whatever their racial background) have developed a dialect we can call Mexican-American English, and those who live in the black community (whatever their background) have developed what we call Black English. These dialects have ethnic rather than regional distribution. Black English, at least, seems to be remarkably uniform throughout the country, though in each area it differs from the Anglo norm.

As we investigate ethnic dialects, certain general characteristics become apparent. California English is not exactly like anything in the East, but it is unquestionably systematic it is possible to state in some detail the California norms of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Likewise, neither Mexican-American English nor Black English is exactly like any Anglo dialect, but each is just as systematic (and complex) as the Anglo norm. What the outsider perceives as apparently random "mistakes" are in fact rule-governed patterns. Take an example from Black English that at first appears unaccountable The usual plural for *desks* is "desses." This strange formulation turns out to be a perfectly normal plural. The difference is that Black English drops the second of a pair of consonants at the end of a word, so that *desk* becomes *dess.* The plural then is the normal *-es* added to any word (dress, mess) that ends with an *s.* (In fact, this plural is more regular than the one often heard in Anglo conversation, where the plural of *desk-* pronounced with a k—is "desss," a longer *s* sound but without the *k.*)

Not only are the ethnic dialects rule-governed and systematic; they also often use the same rules as the Anglo dialects, and just extend them further. Take the above Black

1. William Labov, *The Study of Nonstandard English* (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1970), p. 32.
2. *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966).

English practice of dropping the last sound of a group of consonants at the end of a word (*desk* becoming *dess, grasp* becoming *grass, test* becoming *tess,* etc.). In normal conversation, all dialects of English—including the Anglo ones—drop the final consonant from such groups, providing that another word starting with a consonant immediately follows. No normal speaker of English will pronounce the *k* in the phrase *desk top,* unless he makes an unnatural pause between the two words. Even in the formal situation of reading a text aloud into a tape recorder, only half of the young Riversiders mentioned in the last chapter pronounced *t* in the phrase *collect call,* though they all pronounced the *t* in the *collect* that occurred as the last word of the passage.

Ethnic dialects have low prestige. Speakers of Mexican-American English or Black English are perhaps even more vehement on this point than outsiders. The feeling is nearly universal that Mexican-American English is "no language at all," that ethnic dialects are "not good English." Ethnic dialects have such a low prestige because they identify speakers as members of low-prestige groups, not because the dialects are linguistically inferior. Those who speak only Black English will have language trouble in the schools where "good" Anglo English is the norm, but whites (or blacks) who are not fluent in Black English would have just as much difficulty getting along in the areas where Black English is spoken.

Curiously enough, there seems to be no such thing as a "primitive" language or dialect. All human languages seem equally capable of expressing human feelings and interests (borrowing vocabulary, when needed); the Bible, for example, can be translated into all languages and dialects. Differences in language ability show up between individuals, not between dialects. Shakespeare wrote in London English, but this does not mean every present-day speaker of London English can write as well as Shakespeare.

Speakers of the ethnic dialects are generally bidialectal to some extent. They understand Anglo dialects, even if they do not reproduce them perfectly, since they have had to learn to follow the Anglo language of schools, businesses, and government authorities. Like everyone else, they will shift to a more formal and "standard" type of speech in formal situations, especially when dealing with persons outside the ethnic group. It is well for outsiders to remember this when they attempt to learn about ethnic dialects; the Linguistic Atlas method of sending an Anglo stranger to ask direct questions about one's language can easily distort the picture. Labov expresses the principle succinctly.

> . . .whenever a speaker of a nonstandard dialect is in a subordinate position to a speaker of a standard dialect, the rules of his grammar will shift in an unpredictable manner towards the standard.[3]

Outsiders, on the other hand, usually are quite ignorant of the characteristics of the ethnic dialects. The Black English use of *it* instead of the empty *there*—as in "it's no one under the table" for "there's no one under the table"—remains unknown to members of other speech communities.

This chapter will conclude with a discussion of some of the traits of two ethnic dialects. The discussion will have to be considerably more tentative than that for California English in the earlier chapters. There is much less information to go on, and the investigators in Riverside have all been Anglos.

Black English

In the past decade dialectologists throughout the nation have paid increasing attention to what they now term Black English. Black English seems to be fairly uniform throughout the country, though it has regional and age variants—children and those who live in the Old South having forms most distant from the Anglo varieties. Ralph W. Fasold and Walt Wolfram give a detailed but nontechnical explanation of the pronunciation and grammatical features of Black English in their article, "Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect" (see Bibliography), and there is no need to duplicate their discussion here. But some of the more important characteristics deserve mention.

Black English has distinctive pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Some of the pronunciation characteristics are found in the standard speech of the East, especially that of the South. Black English drops the *r* after vowels ("car" becomes "cah") and the glide of the "long *i*" (side" [aɪ] becomes "sahd" [aə], "time" becomes "tahm"). Rather than using the article *a* only before consonants and *an* before vowels, Black English simplifies the rule, again like some Southern dialects, and uses *a* (pronounced "uh" [ə], of course) all the time. Such Southern and South Midlands characteristics are rare in the speech of Anglo natives of Southern California.

On the other hand, the raising of the "short *e*" [ɛ] before nasals, so that *pin* and *pen* sound alike, is a Black English and Southern characteristic which seems to be on the increase in the speech of young Riversiders (see preceding chapter).

Black English generally uses the *-in'* [ɪn] form for the suffix rather than the more widely heard *-ing* [ɪŋ] or *-een* [in] of local Anglo speech. For the voiced *th-* at the beginning of words Black English often substitutes a sound close to *d-* ("de" instead of "the"), and for voiceless *th-* a sound close to *t-* is often heard ("tink" for "think"). Under certain special conditions such as at the end of a word-voiceless *th* can become *f* ("toof" for "tooth").

As mentioned earlier, while Anglo English generally omits the second element of a consonant cluster at the end of a word when another consonant follows ("collec' call"), Black English can omit the second element under all circumstances ("collec' apples"). This makes the past tense forms of many verbs indistinguishable from the present. Except when the base form of a verb ends with *d* or *t* (rounded, haunted), the standard *-ed* past tense suffix is simply a *t* if the verb ends with a voiceless

3. *The Study of Nonstandard English,* p.11.

consonant (as in *stopped*) or a *d* if the verb ends with a vowel or voiced consonant (*snowed, rubbed*). Black English can omit such a *-t* or *-d* whenever it is the second element of a consonant cluster, as it often is. "stopped" becomes "stop," "rubbed" becomes "rub." (When a consonant follows, speakers of Anglo English will do likewise: "yesterday he stop' the truck.") Although what looks like a grammatical change takes place, it is simply a matter of pronunciation. When the cluster reduction rule does not apply, speakers of Black English will use the *-d* ("snowed").

A teacher who is not familiar with this peculiarity may have difficulties in teaching reading to a speaker of Black English. That is, if a third-grade speaker of Black English reads aloud, "yesterday he miss' all his opportunities," the *miss'* pronunciation does not mean that he has failed to notice the *-ed* in the written text. He simply does not pronounce it, just as he would not pronounce the *gh* in *night*.

The absence of *r* after vowels also leads to homonyms that are not found in other types of Riverside English. For example, the possessive form *their* loses its *r* and becomes *they* in Black English, that is, "It is they house" rather than "It is their house." A similar pattern holds for *you*. This does not mean that speakers of Black English have no notion of possession. For that matter, all speakers of English make no distinction between *her* in "give it to her," and *her* in "that's her hat," but the context and the position of the words make it quite clear which one is the possessive.

Grammatical distinguishing features of Black English include: substituting "ain't" for "didn't" ("He ain't do it"); multiple rather than single negation rules, calling for negative markers in every possible place in a negative sentence rather than in just one place ("Nobody ain't do nothing" instead of "Nobody did anything"); and simplification of the present tense of verbs so that the third person singular has no *-s* ("He see it"). For indirect questions Black English keeps the inverted word order of direct questions and does not use *if* or *whether* ("I want to know did he go somewhere" instead of "I want to know whether he went somewhere").

Like other dialects, Black English uses an abbreviation of "going to" to indicate future time ("I'm going to go home"). When the subject is *I*, all dialects may abbreviate to something like "g'n'," but Black English speakers may instead leave out the *g* and preserve the vowel ("I'mon go"). When the subject is *he*, Black English keeps the *g* but sometimes preserves the vowel ("He gon go") in contrast to the practice of other dialects.

Black English has developed a special use of *be* which permits distinctions not made in other dialects. Linguists have not yet been able to agree on the correct translation of this *be* into standard English. One linguist contrasts *he busy* "he is busy (momentarily)" with *he be busy* "he is (habitually) busy," and *he workin'* "he is working (right now)" with *he be workin'* "he is working (steadily)."[4] Fasold and Wolfram, however, explain differently (p. 67): "To say *I'm good* is to assert a permanent quality of oneself. To say *I be good* means that the speaker is good only intermittently."

Black English also has a distinctive vocabulary which is little known beyond the community. "Rapping," "shucking," "jiving," "running it down," "signifying," and "sounding," for example, designate some of the particular kinds of verbal dexterity valued in the ghetto. To the uninitiated the subtle difference between the speech which is "shucking" and that which is "jiving" needs considerable explanation.[5]

Mexican-American English

Linguists have only begun to notice the English spoken in Mexican-American communities. The information at hand is too meager to permit any but the most tentative conclusions. The statements here about Mexican-American English should be viewed as hypotheses to be tested by further research.

In a number of important respects Mexican-American English seems to be quite a different sort of dialect from Black English. For one thing, it appears to be considerably less uniform throughout the country (or the Southwest, where most Mexican-Americans live). A 1957 study of San Antonio, Texas, found no traces of a genuine Mexican-American English dialect there. Most San Antonio Mexican-Americans had a poor command of English; those who spoke English fluently were simply like foreigners who had learned English as a second language. Rather than picking up the Southern regionalisms of San Antonio Anglo speech, "they learned the unnatural, regionless, *formal* style of the classroom"[6] since they were isolated from social contacts with the Anglo community. The Anglo speakers frequently used Southern *light bread, corn shuck,* and *snake doctor* where the Mexican-Americans generally used *white bread, corn husk,* and *dragonfly*. In speaking English the San Antonio Mexican-Americans avoided Spanish terms common to Anglo speech of that area, such as *arroyo, burro,* and *frijoles*

An Anglo interviewer talking with Mexican-Americans native to Riverside and Southern California finds quite a different situation. First of all, though Spanish is still a strong influence, English is the first language of a very large proportion of Southern California's Mexican-Americans. Second, the Mexican-American English heard in our Mexican-American communities seems quite different from the formal and sometimes halting English that a foreigner would learn in the classroom. A Spanish-speaking foreigner might use Spanish phrasing in his English: "I can to speak"

4 William A. Stewart, "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects," Allen and Underwood anthology (see Bibliography) p. 452.

5. See Thomas Kochman, "Rapping in the Black Ghetto," *Trans-Action,* Feb. 1969 (reprinted in *Soul,* ed. Lee Rainwater. Trans-action Books 6, 1970, pp. 51-76).

6. Janet B. Sawyer, "Spanish-English Bilingualism in San Antonio, Texas," in *Texas Studies in Bilingualism,* ed. Glenn G. Gilbert (Berlin, 1970), p. 18.

instead of "I can speak"; "He has thirst" instead of "He is thirsty", "He is teacher" instead of "He is a teacher"; "I want that he eat" instead of "I want him to eat." Among speakers of California Mexican-American English we find no such patterns.

In vocabulary as well as in grammar, California Mexican-American English seems similar to local varieties of Anglo English, with comparable variation according to social class, occupation, and the like. This apparent lack of distinctiveness in grammar and vocabulary is in striking contrast with both Black English and the Texas variety of Mexican-American English mentioned earlier. Like those interviewed in San Antonio, Riverside Mexican-Americans seem to make sparing use of Spanish words in their English—but this is true of Riverside Anglos as well. When speaking English, both Anglos and Mexican-Americans in Riverside use English pronunciations for names such as Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Santa Ana.

What makes California Mexican-American English a distinctive dialect of its own is the pronunciation. Here the Spanish influence is evident, even though many speakers of Mexican-American English do not themselves know Spanish. The English of their speech community has been, and in many cases still is, influenced by the genuine Spanish accent of those who never learned English until adulthood, if at all.

The exact workings of the Spanish influence on pronunciation may sometimes be complicated. In Spanish, the *z* sound can occur at the end of a word only when another word beginning with a voiced sound (a vowel or the consonants *b d g m n w y r l* etc.) immediately follows. Otherwise Spanish will have an *s*. English, on the other hand, frequently ends a word with a *z* sound (still spelled *s*, to be sure) even when no voiced sound follows. Thus the "Spanish accent" of a native Spanish-speaker who is trying to learn English would be likely to put an *s* in place of the usual *z* at the end of words like dogs and houses when these words come at the end of sentences. Fluent speakers of Mexican-American English, on the other hand, can be heard to do the opposite, perhaps "overcorrecting" the mistakes of the Spanish accent. Not only will they pronounce dogs at the end of a sentence with the normal English *z*, but sometimes even words like *race* and (the) *house* which in Anglo English end with the *s* sound.

Vowels of Mexican-American English are sometimes quite distinctive in directions that one might expect from Spanish influence. For example, the "short *i*" in words like *six* and the "long *e*" in words like *seeks* can become less differentiated than in Anglo English, though they do not seem to merge.

Most interesting of all the characteristics of Mexican-American English and the most difficult to describe precisely is its intonation. In other English dialects, a speaker indicates new information or the emphasis of his sentence by changing the pitch of the voice (usually raising it) or increasing the loudness of the word to be emphasized. Within a phrase the greatest change in pitch usually coincides with the loudest syllable to mark the "sentence stress." In Mexican-American English the places of greatest loudness and pitch change often do not coincide, resulting in what sounds to outsiders like two separate peaks in the phrase.

At the end of a sentence in Anglo English, the pitch and the loudness usually fall off; they remain steady or rise only if there is more to be said, or if there is some uncertainty to the statement, or in certain kinds of questions. In Mexican-American English, the pitch and loudness do not fall off as rapidly at the end of a declarative sentence, sometimes giving the outsider the false impression that the speaker is not finished, uncertain, or asking a question.

Either of these factors, the presence of two peaks or the slower rate of decline at the end of a phrase, may account for the apparent emphasis on the second element of a phrase that is treated by other dialects as a compound noun. Mexican-American English may have "minority *group*" where other dialects will stress the first element of the compound "*minority* group."[7]

There are some indications that the range of styles of a speaker of California Mexican-American English is different from that for the local Anglo English speakers, with the Mexican-American norms always somewhat less formal than Anglo norms for the same situation. Thus to the Anglo speaker the Mexican-American speaker may sound too casual, and to the speaker of Mexican-American English the Anglo speaker may seem overly formal or haughty.

One other feature of the Mexican-American speech community deserves mention. Those speakers who are fluent in both English and Spanish will often make use of both languages in the same conversation. Outsiders may perceive this as a separate new language containing elements of both Spanish and English, but in fact it is not. It is instead a matter of rapid switching back and forth from one language to another, sometimes even within a sentence. Speakers of a single language do the same sort of thing, switching from more to less formal styles within that language depending on situation and subject.

The Spanish spoken by Mexican-Americans in California is another matter. For some speakers it borrows so heavily from English that it appears to be an English-Spanish mixture. But it remains Spanish in basic structure, just as English has kept its basically Germanic structure despite copious borrowing of vocabulary from French and Latin.

The details as well as many of the basic characteristics of Mexican-American English remain to be investigated. Past and present Spanish influence, and strong regional differences, add to the difficulty of providing a full explanation.

The study of the systematic differences between nonstandard and standard dialects, and especially of Black English, has prompted the suggestion that it is dialect differences which cause the "under-achievement" of so many

7. Sawyer, "Spanish-English Bilingualism," p. 36, gives similar examples for the strongly Spanish-influenced San Antonio Mexican-Americans: straw*berries*, apple *tree*, storage *room*, grand*father*.

minority children in the schools. Particularly in reading and writing dialect differences would seem likely to cause difficulty. As a remedy it has been proposed to teach the standard English to speakers of a nonstandard variety before they even start reading–or to provide special primers written in the nonstandard dialect. Such programs however, rest on dubious premises. They overlook the important distinction between spoken and written English. Written English is remarkably uniform the world over; spoken English is remarkably diverse. If speakers of such diverse regional dialects as London English, Boston English, Texas English and Australian English can learn to read the standard, there is no reason to expect special difficulties for the speaker of Black English or Mexican-American English. If there are difficulties, they may result from cultural differences, or from the teacher's misunderstanding of the student's dialect. A speaker of Black English who is criticized for reading *Yesterday he missed it* as "Yesterday he miss' it" will simply be baffled; he has read as correctly in terms of his dialect as the Englishman who leaves out the *r* in *horse* or the person who leaves out the *gh* in *through*.

bibliography

Footnotes in the preceding chapters refer to specific sources of information. Here are a few books especially useful for the reader who wishes to go beyond the scope of this booklet. Many are inexpensive. Together they make a very respectable introduction to the study of variation in American English.

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*William Labov, *The Study of Nonstandard English.* Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1970. Important discussion of methods of conducting surveys.

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