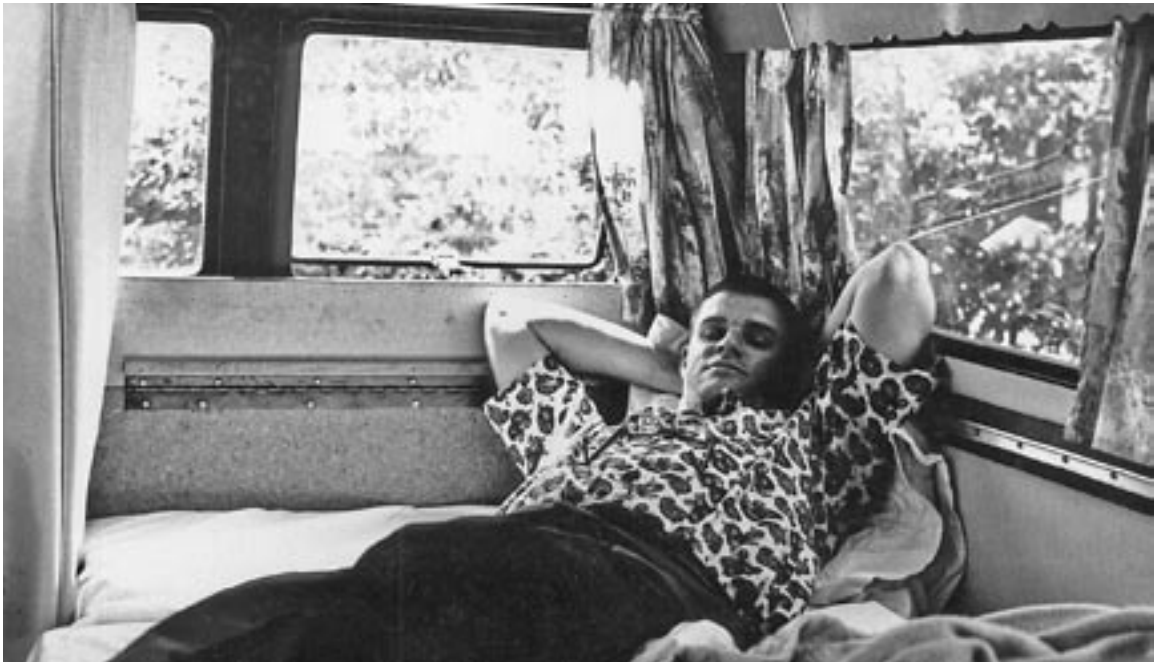


DARE *Newsletter*

Vol. 10, Nos. 2/3 Dictionary of American Regional English Spring/Summer 2007



DARE Fieldworker Ray O'Cain in a Word Wagon in 1966

Home-State Advantage

Ray O'Cain

This installment of our ongoing series of Fieldworker reminiscences describes the two summers Ray O'Cain spent on the road for DARE in his home state of South Carolina; the story will continue in a future issue of the Newsletter. Sadly, Ray died last year before completing this article. His wife, Maureen Nery, finished the piece in accordance with his wishes.

I've enjoyed the recollections of other fieldworkers in the *Newsletter*, remembering how we relished our time working for *DARE* and finding that the enthusiasm that propelled us through the sixties was still alive. Indeed, it's fascinating to attach faces and stories to names long familiar. We had many

Continued on page 2

Also in This Issue:

From the Chief Editor's Desk5
Cassidy Honored by Colleague5
In Memoriam—Mary Ann Pels5
Volunteer Profile—Lee York6
Funding Update6
DARE Editor Again Honors Students.7
Coming in Volume V7

Home-State Advantage *Continued from page 1*
experiences in common: life in the Word Wagon, finding campsites and keeping ourselves fed, new gustatory experiences, locating and keeping rapport with informants. And the civil rights movement seems to have touched us all in various ways.

One Fieldworker's Background

I spent the summers of 1966 and 1967 as a DARE Fieldworker in South Carolina, which was in a transition stage. Many traditions were in decline, but their replacements were not yet in place. Nothing refreshes memories of my DARE days like seeing a mule in a field or taking a drive through lands under cultivation. I grew up in the seat of a sturdy agricultural county, and notices of such events as the first cotton to bloom were still in evidence, though on the wane.

Both my parents were in the first generation to leave the farm, and I was a frequent visitor to other relatives who were still farming. Thus I was familiar with a number of farming practices, and was accustomed to meeting people in enterprises adjacent to agriculture: hardware stores, fertilizer dealers, gin houses, tobacco warehouses. A statewide system of postsecondary technical and vocational education was evolving for those wishing to participate in the non-farm economy. One of the suits joined in the Brown vs. Board of Education decision was in South Carolina, so there was plenty of public consciousness and trepidation in the face of imminent social changes.

I think I had several advantages in carrying out the fieldwork in my home state. Had the need arisen, I would have had no problem marshaling vouchers for myself. I was more or less familiar with the best ways to get from one place to another, and could plan interviews in such a way as to take advantage of the best camping spots or offers of hospitality. My college history minor included work on South Carolina history and a research job reading 150-year-old newspapers, so I was able to justify the choices of communities on such matters as settlement history, intrastate rivalries and contrasts, local economies, exposure to greater or lesser new influences, and the like. My American colonial history was taught by a South Carolinian who regularly highlighted matters of local significance like Revolutionary battles and made connections to persons and locations in Charleston that were accessible with just a few minutes' walk. I also began a place-name project in my home county, which led to my first published paper.

Of particular importance, I think, was my introduction to the short stories of William Price Fox, whose tales of South Carolina "characters" were so distinctive. These "characters" were hardly the stuff of high culture, and I realized explicitly that all the interesting things to know were not in books and archives, that the informal body of mores and customs in which I dwelt was actually a worthy object of study.

I had eagerly pressed Fred Cassidy to allow me to work in my home state, despite his preference to send fieldworkers northward in summer, and despite his belief that outsiders might be more sensitive to the sorts of differences that were DARE's objective. By the time I showed up in Madison, I had worked up a plan for the network of communities, with an assist from my Colonial History professor. Fred naturally checked out our proposal himself, but gave me the go-ahead. So, unlike most fieldworkers, I saw rather few exotic places. I was usually within a hundred miles of home. The only long-distance trips I made were back and forth to Madison to be outfitted in the Word Wagon.

I started out as a chemistry major at Clemson University. When I found myself flabbergasted by physical chemistry and thermodynamics, I reconsidered my career path. I transferred to the College of Charleston and headed off into the humanities, and though I was stimulated by something called Advanced Grammar, my direction was much influenced by South Carolina history and a near-minor in the social sciences. Living in Charleston, arguably America's most culturally self-conscious and socially stratified community, makes it pretty hard to remain unaware of the distinctiveness of local cultures and history. I learned while an undergraduate at the College of Charleston that there was actually a field of study called linguistics and determined that it would be my direction through graduate school. In June of 1965 I was headed for the Linguistic Institute at the University of Michigan, with plans to continue for a master's degree at Indiana University.

Just before I set out for my graduate studies, I had an experience that cinched my plans for linguistics and dialectology. Lee Pederson, who would later triumph with the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* at Emory University in Atlanta, was being deployed south by Raven McDavid to do some mop-up fieldwork for the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States project. McDavid and I had been corresponding since about late 1963, spurred by my discovery of his

chapter on regional dialects in W. Nelson Francis's *Structure of American English*.

I was enlisted to help locate informants and serve as a guide for Lee. My father and I came up with the names of people in several communities who could provide introductions to the informants we wanted to reach. The great thrill for me was to sit in on interviews conducted by an experienced fieldworker. All of us in South Carolina were pretty exotic to Lee, I think, and I was even able to offer comments that helped elicit a few responses.

At Michigan, in addition to learning phonetics, I was fortunate to enroll in Old English, taught by Harold Orton, editor of the *Survey of English Dialects*. We spent several after-class hours together; Professor Orton was enthralled by taped samples of South Carolina folk speech, and I was enthralled by everything he had to say. I recall his being especially delighted by the double plural *childrens*, pronounced *churns*.

From Professor Orton I learned of *DARE*, and in October, when I was at Indiana University, I wrote to headquarters saying that I had seen the notice seeking fieldworkers. I asked for an application, submitted it, and waited for the invitation to join *DARE*.

Upon learning of my acceptance, I set off for Madison after a year at Indiana. Fred got me up to speed on the way he expected the work to be done. I was eager to hit the road, but there was some delay in getting the Word Wagon ready, so I had time to learn a bit about how the data I sent back would be handled. I also learned what was expected when I undertook to read and mark some of the regional printed matter. I most recall reading several of the Revolutionary Romances of South Carolinian William Gilmore Simms. Simms's library was destroyed by Sherman's troops en route from Savannah to Columbia.

Traveling the State

South Carolina has three distinct regions: the Lowcountry, including the tidewater and coastal plain and extending to the fall line; the Upstate, the territory above the fall line and extending to the mountains; and the Pee Dee, the hinterland for the northern beaches, culturally similar to the adjoining parts of North Carolina. This makes for a great deal of dialect diversity in a relatively small area.

On the road in South Carolina, my most adventuresome times often came in the context of civil rights and voter registration, and it was sometimes hard to convince folks that traveling for

the University of Wisconsin was not to be taken as threatening. Fortunately, I had a considerable network of contacts who could vouch for me and direct me toward informants (and it helped that I didn't talk like somebody "from off").

Once when I was traveling well past dark to make my overnight convenient to the next community, I stopped at a little country store. Inside I noticed prominent displays of Ku Klux Klan posters and handbills. Only the storekeeper was present, but I wasted no time getting on my way. I even took evasive action, making turns and running with lights out, secure that I knew my way well enough to improvise if necessary.

I had a good notion of how to get around in a community or find an offer of hospitality. South Carolina then was mostly what William Least Heat-Moon called "blue highways" in his book of that name. I never consulted a map, and even when I ventured into communities for the first time, I had plenty of sense about their geographical relation to one another.

Dining on the Road

My diet was varied and satisfactory. I happily subsisted on the seasonal treats of summer, like figs, watermelon, blackberries, peaches, and peanuts. There was also an abundance of fresh home-grown vegetables. I was a pretty experienced cook for a twenty-three-year-old male. Also, I was often able to eat at my mother's table, especially on days when informants were unavailable or when a modest detour was practical.

I took from home what I could store (and possibly reheat). The Word Wagon's icebox, however, wasn't of much use in the heat of summer. Most practical was to buy a twenty-five-pound block of ice, but I had to be careful to wedge the icebox door shut so it wouldn't fly open if I made a sharp turn or quick stop. The ice took up a lot of room, too, and I had to be attentive to the need to drain what melted.

I should enter here the story of my most exotic meal as a fieldworker—it actually took place before my South Carolina travels. I was invited to the Cassidys' for lunch and was told in advance that the feature would be artichokes. Back then the markets had nowhere near the huge variety now available. We took our pleasure in homegrown vegetables: tomatoes, corn, onions, okra, various beans and peas, squash, eggplant.

Till then my experience with artichokes had been as a relish or pickle, made from Jerusalem

artichokes. The globe artichokes that appeared at lunch were altogether unknown, but after a demonstration, I dug in and they remain on my list of likes. It might be more than a coincidence that I regularly sought the terms *artichoke pickle* and *artichoke relish* while afield!

Life Inside (and Outside) the Word Wagon

I rarely slept inside the Word Wagon. The engine was pretty slow to cool down in the summer heat. At times I found places to camp. Fortunately, our state parks had recently reopened after quietly closing to avoid racial integration. I usually had the parks pretty much to myself, especially on weekdays, so I heard many choruses of the chuck-will's-willows (perhaps better known as chuck-will's-widows).

My favorite camping spot was a roadside park set aside and maintained by a big paper company on its timberlands. It was situated on the Black River, and a bluff of about five feet offered a view of a wide bend in the river that was evidently a swimming spot. If not, it was when I left, and it was remarkable to sense the effect of the tide in the river currents at a spot perhaps twenty-five miles (as the crow flies) from the ocean. As was my custom, I slept outside the Word Wagon, comforted by a pile of pine straw I gathered up for a splendid mattress. But I was careful to use a ground cloth over the pine straw to avoid redbugs (chiggers).

Only rain could keep me inside the Word Wagon overnight. I suppose I should have been

more wary of snakes—South Carolina has several venomous types, notably copperheads, moccasins, and several members of the rattlesnake clan. And once or twice I might have been prudent to be on the alert for alligators in the extensive swamplands I passed through.

The worst night I spent inside the Word Wagon was about forty miles up U.S. 17 from Charleston, when I pulled over well past dark into a roadside park maintained as part of the Francis Marion National Forest. It was my intent to keep a morning appointment with an informant living on the Santee River Delta, one of the last places where the ivory-billed woodpecker was sighted. It was rather rainy, and both the humidity and the temperature were high.

After a pretty long drive, the engine was well heated and damnably slow to cool. Nested between the seats, I listened to the maddening tick-tick-tick of the slowly cooling engine. Because of the rain, I could only partly open the windows and back, but that was plenty of room for mosquitoes—they seemed to be the size of sparrows. Tossing and turning, breathing insecticide, I dreamed of designing a battery-operated fan. ♦

Maureen Nery writes:

*I fell in love with Ray O'Cain's voice first, not knowing yet that language had been his guide through a significant part of his life. When I heard that fine, soft lilt, almost r-less in many words, well, it didn't take much more than that. The first question I ever asked Ray (and I asked him plenty) was the derivation of the Spanish word *papa* (potato). We met in a Mexican restaurant, and I have a distinct memory of the rest of the company receding as we began to talk.*

Ray was unable to finish this article because he died in October of 2006 after a six-year battle with liver disease and, eventually, cancer. He gave me the best words and the best years of my life. I hope I have done a service—and no disservice—to Ray in editing and presenting his memories. I know it has been a healing process for me.



◀ Ray O'Cain and his wife, Maureen Nery

“One of my interests is the history of commercial names in the U.S. *DARE* is a valuable resource in that regard. I know that *DARE* is constantly being consulted by intellectual property attorneys for that very reason. I always mention *DARE* when I teach the Language and Law course that I give at Duke.”

Ron Butters
Duke University

From the Chief Editor's Desk

Joan Houston Hall

In the last issue of the *DARE Newsletter*, I reported that we were eagerly awaiting word from the National Endowment for the Humanities about the grant for which we had applied. While the issue was still in press, we had the terrific news that we had indeed received the grant, which includes both outright money and matching money. You can imagine the relief we felt!

All five of the NEH panelists gave *DARE* a final rating of “E” (for “Excellent”), and we are pleased (and proud) to share some of their comments:

“*DARE* is an American treasure and deserves to be supported for the publication of the fifth, and final, volume.”

“*DARE* is clearly a resource of great value.”

“[It] is probably the best proposal I have ever read in any grants competition. It is utterly compelling. I use *DARE* in my own research and teaching, but I . . . had not realized the extent of its influence in so many fields of endeavor, academic and otherwise.”

We were also pleased to hear that *DARE* had been designated an NEH “We the People” project, a classification reserved for those activities “promoting knowledge and understanding of American history and culture.”

Our task now is clear: we need to raise the private gifts that will release the full amount of NEH matching funds. Your help will be most welcome! ♦

“I was waxing nostalgic about *DARE* to a co-worker recently; I’ve never had another job that was both so enjoyable, so important, and let me work with such an amenable group of talented people!”

Erin Meyer
DARE Project Assistant, 2003–2006
Reference Specialist
Boulder Public Library

Cassidy Honored by Colleague

The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation has awarded a prestigious named professorship to John D. (“Jack”) Niles, of the UW–Madison’s Department of English. A specialist in Old English literature, Niles has published extensively on Old English poetry, *Beowulf*, and the significance of new archaeological discoveries at Lejre, Denmark, where the main action of *Beowulf* has traditionally been set.

In tribute to Fred Cassidy’s work in Old English and in recognition of the continuing work on *DARE* “down the hall” from his own office, Jack has decided that he will be the “Frederic G. Cassidy Professor of Humanities.” The title generously recognizes Cassidy’s wide-ranging interests in language, literature, and dialect geography. ♦

“Thank you again for another enjoyable year of *DARE* newsletters!”

Connie Shehan
Fayetteville, Arkansas

In Memoriam

DARE is saddened to report the death, on July 17, 2007, of former Technical Typist Mary Ann Pels. After leaving the *Dictionary* staff in 1985, Mary Ann went on to work in a number of capacities in the publishing field, most recently as Associate Editor of *Ecological Restoration*, a journal published by the University of Wisconsin Press for the UW–Madison Arboretum. ♦

“The *Dictionary of American Regional English* is a terrific resource for the courses that I teach in English syntax and morphology. . . . The *DARE* editors have made wonderful contributions to my classes, giving guest lectures and even designing tasks that allowed students to contribute to *DARE* (by checking electronic historical data bases for early attestations of regionalisms). Students also love the interview I recently did with Joan Hall on the subject of common beliefs about dialects, as part of my podcast series [at <http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~awanner/podcasts/podcasts.htm>].”

Anja Wanner
University of Wisconsin–Madison



Volunteer Profile

In this continuing series, Beth Gardner interviews Lee York, who has been a DARE volunteer since August of 2005.

Q: How did you first become acquainted with the *DARE* project?

A: I knew about the project because several years ago my parents knew former *DARE* Bibliographer Goldye Mohr at Oakwood Village Retirement Community. They told me about the project. I later met Cathy Attig in the Waunakee Community Band, where we both play clarinet. I asked her where she worked; when she mentioned *DARE*, I told her I would like to volunteer there, and so . . . here I am.

Q: What kinds of tasks do you perform for *DARE*?

A: Most of the time I am at *DARE* I file or proof-read quote slips. These tasks fit with my former profession as a librarian.

Q: What do you enjoy most about volunteering at *DARE*?

A: I really enjoy being a small part of this endeavor, and I enjoy meeting the people working on it.

Q: Other than volunteering for the *Dictionary*, what are your interests?

A: I play the clarinet in three different bands. I winter in Arizona, love to explore the mountains and the desert, and have written a children's book about the animals of the desert.

My husband, Stan, and I have a very close family, and when we are in Wisconsin we spend a lot of

time with our two daughters, our son and his fiancée, our adult grandchildren, and our seven great-grandchildren. I also volunteer at the Alzheimer's Association, keeping up their caregiver and professional library. Stan and I enjoy attending many of the cultural events in Madison, and we go on Elderhostel trips several times a year. ♦

Funding Update

Jon E. Sorenson
Director of Development

You can adopt a child, you can adopt a pet, and you can even adopt a star. Did you know you can adopt a letter in the *Dictionary of American Regional English*? Well, you can. With a gift of \$100,000 or more, you can help us complete Volume V of the *Dictionary* and adopt a letter to honor a loved one or yourself (or just because you like the letter). In addition to the satisfaction of knowing that your generous donation will assist in bringing this important scholarly work to completion, your name and letter will be acknowledged in Volume V and commemorated in a beautiful plaque in the shape of a book.

There are many ways to give, including cash, appreciated securities, and real estate. Donations of appreciated securities are a wonderful way to avoid capital gains taxes and receive the full tax deduction. Another advantageous way to give is through an IRA, and 2007 is the last year you can transfer your IRA rollover distributions tax-free, with a maximum donation of \$100,000. (You must be 70½ or older to take advantage of this limited program.)

Twelve letters have been adopted, with fourteen to go. Please give me a call at (608) 262-7211 or e-mail me at <jon.sorenson@uwfoundation.wisc.edu> to find out more about how you can help us complete this project and find good homes for all the letters of the alphabet. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation by check or credit card, please use the coupon that appears on page 8 of this *Newsletter*. Remember that gifts to *DARE* will be matched by the National Endowment for the Humanities and will be put to good and immediate use.

Many thanks to all who support *DARE*. Every gift of every size is valued. ♦



DARE Editor Again Honors Students

In her second year as President of the American Dialect Society, *DARE* Chief Editor Joan Hall once again had the opportunity to select three students as Presidential Honorary Members. The students, who will receive free membership in the ADS through 2010, were introduced during the luncheon at the Society's 2007 Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California. They are James Martin Beuerlein, Jr., an undergraduate at the University of Tennessee; Danny E. Flynn, Jr., a graduate student at Michigan State University; and Jaclyn Ocumpaugh, also a graduate student at Michigan State University.

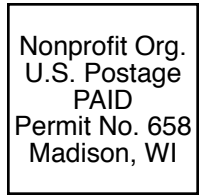
Traditionally, the outgoing President of the ADS presents the lecture at the annual luncheon. Ms. Hall was pleased to have the opportunity to bring her colleagues up to date on the value of *DARE* (which is the official dictionary of the American Dialect Society) to contemporary users. She outlined ways in which *DARE* has proved useful to people such as forensic linguists (in identifying suspects based on words in ransom notes and threat letters), physicians (whose patients may use regional terms for ailments and diseases), psychiatrists and language therapists (who use word-finding tests with answer keys that fail to recognize regional variation in American English), as well as to linguists, lawyers, librarians, teachers, writers, oral historians, journalists, actors, and dialect coaches. She was very happy to say that *DARE* is becoming widely recognized as an extremely valuable research tool as well as a book that provides browsing pleasure for those who simply love language. ♦



Joan Hall (center) with two of this year's Presidential Honorary Members, Jaclyn Ocumpaugh (left) and Danny E. Flynn, Jr. (right), both from Michigan State University. Missing from the group is the third member, James Martin Beuerlein, Jr., from the University of Tennessee.

Coming in Volume V

<i>south-southerly</i>	The old-squaw (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>). (Atlantic, esp S Atl)
<i>speckled dick</i>	A dock (here: <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>). (sAppalachians)
<i>tump (over)</i>	To fall over abruptly, capsiz. (Chiefly Sth, S Midl)
<i>tunk</i>	To strike, tap. (Chiefly NEng)
<i>tureen dinner</i>	A potluck dinner. (Chiefly swNY, nOH, wPA)
<i>turned</i>	Having a (specified) personality or nature. (Chiefly S Midl, esp KY)
<i>twister</i>	A cruller. (Chiefly NEast, N Cent)
<i>under ditch</i>	Of land: within reach of an irrigation ditch; under irrigation. (Chiefly West)
<i>underhold</i>	Fig: an advantage; the upper hand. (Esp S Midl)
<i>underpending</i>	Underpinning. (Chiefly Sth, S Midl)
<i>illegal</i>	Of a child: illegitimate. (Esp Gulf States)
<i>unless</i>	Unless. (Chiefly Sth, S Midl)
<i>untelling</i>	Beyond conjecture or expression. (Chiefly sAppalachians)
<i>upping block</i>	A mounting block. (Chiefly Midl)
<i>use</i>	Esp of wild animals: to go or stay habitually (in or about a place). (Chiefly Sth, S Midl)
<i>vendue</i>	An auction. (Chiefly NEast, esp NEng; old-fash)
<i>vessel</i>	A chamber pot. (Chiefly NEast, Gt Lakes)
<i>viewing</i>	A visitation (at a funeral home). (Chiefly PA, NJ, MD, DE)
<i>wag</i>	To lug, tote. (Sth, S Midl)
<i>waiter</i>	An attendant at a wedding. (Chiefly Sth, S Midl; old-fash)
<i>wamus</i>	A type of men's jacket. (Inland Nth, N Midl; old-fash)



Postal Return Address:
Dictionary of American Regional English
University of Wisconsin–Madison
6125 Helen C. White Hall
600 N. Park St., Madison WI 53706

(608) 263-3810
<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/dare/dare.html>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Please use this gift to support the *Dictionary of American Regional English* Fund.
 My/Our contribution of \$_____ is enclosed.
(Please make checks payable to:
"DARE/UW Foundation.")
 Please charge my/our gift of \$_____ to my:
 MasterCard Visa AmEx
Card no. _____ - _____ - _____ - _____
Expiration date: _____
Cardholder name (please print): _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____
Please return this form to *Dictionary of American Regional English* Fund, c/o Jon E. Sorenson, University of Wisconsin Foundation, U.S. Bank Lockbox, P.O. Box 78807, Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807.

DARE Staff Members

EDITORIAL STAFF

- Roland L. Berns, Science Editor
- Audrey R. Duckert, Adjunct Editor
- George H. Goebel, Review Editor
- Joan H. Hall, Chief Editor
- Sheila Y. Kolstad, Senior Science Editor
- Luanne von Schneidemesser, Senior Editor, Production
- Leonard Zwilling, General Editor

PRODUCTION STAFF

- Catherine R. Attig, Production Asst., Technical Typist
- Elizabeth Blake, Proofreader
- Elizabeth R. Gardner, Senior Proofreader, Newsletter Editor

FINANCIAL SPECIALIST

Ginny Bormann

BIBLIOGRAPHER

Janet Monk

PROJECT ASSISTANT

David Nunnery

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Jon E. Sorenson