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## Review

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*Dictionary of American Regional English*. Vol. 4, P-Sk. Edited by Joan Houston Hall. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002. xx + 1014. \$89.95.

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Projects that span too many generations run the risk of becoming obsolete. The founders depart the scene, and new ideas seem more exciting than old ones. In the case of the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)*, however, the seamless succession from the editorship of the late Frederic G. Cassidy to Joan Houston Hall has taken place. Cassidy's visionary ideas date back to the 1950s (see Cassidy and Duckert 1953), and in many ways, the work that moves ever so slowly toward completion expresses those old ideas in practice. What needs to be noticed, however, is just how much is new here! This is not a dictionary of the 1950s but a work for the new millennium.

*Regional* (as users know) does not mean just geography in *DARE*. In the first volume, published in 1985, Cassidy had this to say about inclusions:

(1) Any word or phrase whose form or meaning is not used generally throughout the United States but only in part (or parts) of it, or by a particular social group, is to be included. (2) Any word or phrase whose form or meaning is distinctively a folk usage (regardless of region) is to be included. (xvi)

Hence, the *Cousin Jacks* have their usage recorded, wherever they may live, and so do the *paisanos* and the *roundheads* and all the other "social groups" whose words and meanings are so lovingly entered.

In its original formulation, *DARE* was not to be a "dictionary on historical principles" in imitation of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Rather, it was to be based on the results of the answers to the questionair—Cassidy was something of a spelling reformer. Yet it soon became clear that the expressions taken from the mouths of "informants" had a history, and the dictionary must publish it. Having started down that road, it was hard to stop, and so all the entries selected for inclusion have dated citations going back as far as the eye can see.

Consequently, *DARE* greatly improves upon the *Dictionary of American English* (*DAE*) (Craigie and Hulbert, 1938-1944), though it differs in scope. (*DAE* takes in expressions especially distinctive of the United States before 1900.) Thus, not all *DAE* words are included in *DARE* since not all of them are “regional,” but when words do occur in both, it is easy to see how much new material has been found and put on display. Here, for instance, are some words from both dictionaries with the dates of the earliest citations:

	<i>DAE</i>	<i>DARE</i>
<i>pahoehoe</i>	—	1859
<i>pain perdu</i>	—	1896
<i>paint</i> (of a horse)	1893	1845
<i>palace</i>	1808	—
<i>palmetto</i>	1742	1606

In the arcane world of antedatings, these are huge leaps backwards. (*Palace* ‘palace of the governors’ is in this sense the “official residence and seat of government in Santa Fe, NM,” a usage still current and certainly regional. *DARE* seems averse to proper nouns in a way that *DAE* was not.)

The important “new” idea in this volume of *DARE* is the use of electronic resources to enable the lexicographers to define and illuminate. In her brief preface, Hall mentions some of the main historical databases and the citation practices used to pin them down, for instance, “1999 *Cattle Today* Mar (Internet).” She also celebrates Barry Popik for his “prodigious research,” an activity well known to the subscribers to ADS-List. Obviously, the next volume of the work will have even more to offer of this kind since READEX and the American Antiquarian Society are mounting a site in which all early American imprints will be available (and searchable).

The author of the dust-jacket copy points to one of the popular features of *DARE*: it is “a treasure trove of linguistic gems.” One can easily feel nostalgia (or curiosity) about the games and toys of childhood found here: *play-pretty*, *poison seat*, *pussy wants a corner*, *Quaker meeting*, *Queen Dido is dead*, *ransom tansom*, *red light*, *scissors*, *signify*. These are all meticulously treated. Other linguistic gems will appeal to those with a taste for strange words with strange cross-references: “*schussel* Cf. *dippich*”; “*scribbit* Cf. *schnibble*.” Especially admirable are the entries for plants and animals, words made especially complex by the disjunction between folk taxonomy and scientific nomenclature (see *pin oak* for a good example of the problem and the solution).

Readers of this journal are likely to have more specialized questions, and *DARE* provides an abundance of answers. One use of it (and especially the present vol-

ume) is to allow us to test the wisdom of the elders. How good is the scholarship on which we base much of our teaching?

An excellent test case is offered by the analysis of *shivaree*, by Raven I. McDavid Jr. and Alva L. Davis ([1949] 1979). They asserted that dialect geography is, for some, akin to “cultural anthropology,” and they set out to examine the terms for “a noisy burlesque serenade, used chiefly as a means of teasing newly married couples” (181). Having discussed the etymology of the term, they proceed to display the distribution of *shivaree* and its synonyms in the United States eastward of Minnesota and Missouri. All of these are now mapped in *DARE*, and McDavid and Davis can be viewed in light of the massive interviewing that underlies the dictionary. In the McDavid-Davis map, *shivaree* is the term of the Mississippi–Missouri–Ohio Valley; *serenade*, the south along the Gulf and the Atlantic, reaching upward to the head of Chesapeake Bay; *belling* in Appalachia and all of Ohio; *horning* in New York state; *bull-band* in the Pennsylvania German enclave; and *callathump* in Connecticut east of the Connecticut River. What does *DARE* offer?

*Shivaree* is reported almost exactly in the territory designated for it by McDavid-Davis; *serenade* comes a little farther into Pennsylvania, and there are indications of its use in New England, but the main pattern they found is certainly confirmed. So, too, *belling* appears in West Virginia and Ohio, though again with a little scatter into western Pennsylvania and Michigan. *Horning* is uncannily identical in the two reports, *bull-band* shows up in western Maryland and southeastern Pennsylvania, and *callathump* is found in western Connecticut with some slight dispersion.

The McDavid-Davis report was grounded in the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* (map 409), but of course they covered the entire eastern United States. Now *DARE* covers the whole country—*shivaree* is the principal term in the west—and it confirms with astonishing precision what had earlier been alleged.

We can look even further backward to the origins of dialectology in America, that is, to George Hempl’s results from the 1890s showing the distribution of the pronunciations of *creek* and *greasy*. Once again, *DARE* provides confirmation of early allegations (see Bailey 1992).

From these two comparisons emerges a confidence in the work of earlier scholars and a foundation for belief in the enduring “regionality” of English in the United States. Despite the fears (or celebrations) that dialects are fading away, it is apparent that there is an unexpected stability in them.

Readers of this review will find much else of interest.

While *DARE* may seem to be mainly a repository of words, there is an enormous amount of information about pronunciation, both historical and present day. Persons interested in American phonology will wish to consult *DARE* for many words (and phonetic environments). Among the interesting entries in this volume are those for *panther*, *parcel*, *partridge*, *psalm*, *quote*, *sassinger* ‘sausage’, *Saturday*,

*sauce*. Such entries are often cross-referenced to the introductory essay on pronunciation in volume 1, and they attest to the foresight and scholarship of that effort.

Grammatical information is also embedded in many entries, for instance, in the entry on *say* 'like' as an introducer of speech or thought: " 'How that water gone get up to me?' He say with a lectric pump." Or *set by* 'to take one's place (at the table)—often as an invitation to dine.' Or *side by each* 'side by side.' Or the many grammatical variants for the past and past participle of *reach*, *raise*, and *run*.

In admiring the volumes of *DARE* as they have appeared, I have often been surprised that I am as regional as anybody else. It is hard to imagine how people get along without saying *resin* for the 'sticky stuff that comes out of pine trees' or omit eating *paczkis* on Shrove Tuesday. In other words, it is sometimes difficult to identify the "regional" among the familiar and near at hand. Fortunately, *DARE* staffers are alert to these possibilities, and the expressions *picnic* '64 oz. bottle of beer' and *planned overs* 'intentional leftovers' are apparently seldom used beyond the city limits of Madison (where the dictionary is produced).

Other intentional leftovers include expressions marked with the double dagger, "used to indicate a word or sense of questionable genuineness." These are included when the editors suspect that these might be more widespread than their evidence shows: *polishing down* 'dressing down,' *round row* 'a circle,' *shadow ice* 'thin ice.'

Among the best things in volume 4 is the news that anticipates the end of the alphabet. Hall celebrates the "many supporters" who have "increased the momentum that will take us to the letter Z" (ix), particularly the head of the University of Wisconsin Foundation, who has "been extremely supportive of the effort to fund *DARE* to its conclusion" (x). We may all hope that this "momentum" propels them to the happy ending.

The ending won't really be the ending, or ought not to be. Of course, *DARE* needs to be made available in electronic form, but it can also be a centerpiece in a network of electronic texts displaying "regional" characteristics. No one now doubts that the future of libraries is electronic, but the raw materials only become useful as they can be interpreted. *DARE* is a great work of interpretation, consistently high in quality and thorough in its treatment.

At the party to celebrate the beginning of publication in 1985, the late Harold B. Allen wept with joy as he held the book in his hand. He was thrilled to see it begun, and we will be thrilled to see it finished, if only to enable us to get on to the next thing.

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