

CAL

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Final Report to the National Endowment for the Humanities

A SURVEY AND COLLECTION OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

DIALECT RECORDINGS

Donna Christian, Project Director

**Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd Street NW
Washington, D. C. 20037**

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Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd Street NW
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SUMMARY

Within the humanities research community, a resource exists which has not been fully utilized. This resource is the extensive set of recordings of speech which have been made by investigators who use spoken language as data. Access to these recordings is typically limited to the collector and a few close associates. Considerable duplication of data collection effort results and opportunities for comparative studies are missed.

A Survey and Collection of American English Dialect Recordings set out to address this problem in two ways. First, a comprehensive survey of tape-recorded speech samples of American English that currently exist was conducted. The goal of the survey was to document the characteristics of existing recordings by describing the social attributes of the speakers represented, the topics discussed, the technical properties of the tapes, and the potential for access by others. A reference guide entitled American English Dialect Recordings: A Guide to Collections was prepared which describes over 200 collections, including speakers from 43 states and the District of Columbia, Canada, and communities in other locations.

In conjunction with the survey, the topic of audiotape preservation was investigated. As a service to holders of private collections, the prevailing recommendations on caring for audiotapes were synthesized and presented as a brief set of guidelines for tape maintenance.

Second, a representative collection of speech samples was compiled from tapes submitted by survey participants. The goal of this activity was to create a centralized source of American dialect samples and to provide for the preservation of this valuable resource that might otherwise be lost. A total of 118 hours of speech samples, in ten to thirty minute segments, were identified for inclusion, representing most of the states covered in the survey, as well as Canada and Puerto Rico. The recordings have been offered to the Library of Congress and Library staff have indicated a strong interest in adding the collection to the recorded sound holdings. Thus, it is anticipated that the tapes will be carefully preserved and public access will be facilitated.

This project has improved the access of scholars to the vast resource represented by dialect recordings held in private collections and has facilitated the sharing of information about existing collections. By drawing attention to their existence, it has also served to increase awareness of the desirability of preserving language recordings as part of our cultural heritage.

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BACKGROUND

Within the humanities research community, a resource exists which has not been fully utilized. This resource is the extensive set of recordings of speech which have been made by investigators doing research for which spoken language serves as a data base. The resource typically cannot be tapped by anyone other than the holder of the tapes. Considerable duplication of data collection effort results and opportunities for comparative studies are missed.

Since the tape recorder became a viable tool of field research in the 1950's, many investigators have conducted studies based on data from spoken language which they record. These studies include not only dialect research, but also oral history, folklore and other fields where oral accounts provide information. Once the immediate study is complete, the tapes are usually put away in storage, often in less than ideal conditions for tape preservation. Since no mechanism exists to facilitate access to such collections, or even to make others aware of their existence, a potentially rich source of information and cultural heritage is wasted.

A Survey and Collection of American English Dialect Recordings set out to improve this situation in two ways. First, a comprehensive survey of tape-recorded speech samples of American English was undertaken. The goal of the survey was to document the characteristics of collections of recordings and make that information available to the wider community of language researchers and other scholars in the humanities. A

reference guide was prepared (see Attachment C) and is being distributed to disseminate the information gathered in the survey. In addition, a brief set of guidelines for the preservation of audiotapes was prepared as a service to holders of private collections and it has been sent to participants in the survey.

Second, a representative collection of speech samples was compiled and offered to the Library of Congress. The goal of this activity was to create a centralized source of American dialect samples and to ensure preservation of this national resource. The Library of Congress has indicated a strong interest in acquiring the collection; thus it is expected that the tapes will be carefully preserved and public access will be facilitated.

An Advisory Panel was established to provide guidance to project staff. Members included: Dora Johnson, Project Director, Survey of Uncommonly Taught Languages, Center for Applied Linguistics; Roger Shuy, Director of the Sociolinguistics Program, Georgetown University; G. Richard Tucker, President, Center for Applied Linguistics, and Walt Wolfram, Director of the Research Division, Center for Applied Linguistics. The Panel reviewed the progress of the project at regular intervals and members were consulted about the full range of project activities.

The sections that follow provide further detail on project activities and accomplishments.

THE SURVEY

The first phase of the project involved a comprehensive survey of tape-recorded language samples that currently exist. This information was gathered from a number of sources, including direct mail polling, searches of relevant literature including dissertations, published requests for cooperation in appropriate newsletters, and inquiries made through the informal network of scholars in which CAL participates.

Information Collection

Preparation of a questionnaire to elicit the needed information was the first step. In the development of the questionnaire, an attempt was made to make the questions as easy to answer as possible; whenever appropriate, multiple alternatives were listed so that simple checkmarks could serve as responses as opposed to discursive, time-consuming answers. Ample space was also provided for elaboration or comments on items, however, for those who felt they wanted to add to the information given. A cover sheet was composed that would give an overview of the project apart from the specific instructions concerning the completion of the questionnaire. The Advisory Panel reviewed an early draft and suggested revisions. These suggestions were incorporated and a final version of the questionnaire was prepared and duplicated. A copy appears as Attachment A.

Each questionnaire was sent out with a personalized letter. Business reply envelopes were printed so that respondents could return the questionnaires with the least effort required, an

action intended to encourage the maximum rate of response to the survey.

In all, over 1,000 questionnaires were sent out; about 90% went to individual scholars, and the remaining 10% were sent to institutions, including archives, libraries, and associations. The mailing list was compiled from a wide variety of sources. A search of relevant literature, including a computer search of the ERIC database, provided names of authors who were then contacted. Membership lists of the American Dialect Society, the Southeast Conference on Linguistics, the Association of Recorded Sound Collections and other organizations were checked. A list of state directors of folk cultural programs was obtained, and questionnaires were mailed to all of them.

In addition, publicity about the project led to a number of requests to participate. Since the level of participation depended so heavily on the breadth of the audience reached with information about the project's goals, considerable effort was focused on publicizing the speech recordings survey. A general announcement, appropriate for posting on a bulletin board or including as an item in a newsletter, was drawn up (see Attachment B). A copy of the announcement, along with a letter, was sent to Linguistics and English Departments at 90 universities in the United States and Canada, and to 9 research centers. In addition, the announcement, with the note "Please Post," was included in selected questionnaire mailings. The same announcement was sent as well to 104 associations, membership organizations, and newsletters, whose membership and/or subscribers were

thought to include some with speech recording collections. A letter asking their help in publicizing the project was included. Many of these groups included the announcement in their publications, including, for example, the American Dialect Society, the Oral History Association, the American Folklore Society, the Linguistic Society of America, the Conserve Neighborhoods newsletter, and Southern Exposure magazine.

Finally, a rich source of names was found in the suggestions of other people to contact made by those who returned questionnaires (see Attachment A, page 4). As a result of all of these activities, the mailing list continued to grow throughout the course of the survey.

The working definition of "American English" used for the survey included all varieties of English spoken in North America (the United States and Canada, for the most part), including English-based creoles (Gullah, in particular). There was, in addition, clear interest in documenting both varieties of English elsewhere as well as varieties of other languages spoken in North America. However, within the limits of the project resources, it was not possible to expand the originally stated scope in either of those directions.

A total of 292 responses to the survey were received. They can be broken down as follows:

Questionnaires completed:	172
No recordings available:	101
Decline to participate:	5
Other:	14

The responses reported on 211 collections of speech recordings. As they were received, the information about the collections was organized for presentation in a reference work.

Preparation of the Reference Guide

In order to disseminate the information gathered through the survey, a reference guide to collections of recordings was developed. The information provided in the questionnaire responses by survey participants was transformed into guide entries utilizing a standardized format, with one collection of recordings per entry. Before the guide was printed, participants were sent a copy of the entry or entries reflecting the collection(s) they reported on, at which time they could correct inaccuracies or provide updated information.

A "collection" was understood as any number of audiotapes of any number of speakers. In some cases, the population of speakers was homogeneous (all from the same community); in others, the speakers were extremely diverse (a collection of samples from all over the country). The size ranged from several tapes to several thousand. The collections were essentially defined by the contributors, and these characterizations formed the basis for the guide entries.

Each entry was designed to show the primary state listing and dates the recordings were made on the top line, followed by name and address of the contact person for the collection and its dimensions (number of tapes and number of subjects). The remaining section then listed details about the recordings--what kind of subjects were included, what special topics, if any, were

discussed, and what format was used. Finally, the accessibility of the tapes was specified, along with any further relevant notes about the collection (such as the availability of a catalog or other descriptive treatment).

Abbreviations were generally avoided, so that the individual entry would not appear too dense. However, within the "subjects" category, several abbreviation conventions were observed. They included designations for male (M) and female (F), and groupings within socioeconomic status (SES): lower class (LC); working class (WC); lower middle class (LMC); middle class (MC); and upper class (UC). The format used for the guide is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Guide Entry Format

STATE (primary for classification)	Dates Recordings Made
------------------------------------	-----------------------

CONTRIBUTOR (last name, first name)
Address
Phone Number, if available

DIMENSIONS of sample: number of tapes, number of subjects, number transcribed

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Subjects: age, male/female, demographic (rural/urban) and ethnic group characteristics; socioeconomic status, specific locations.

Recordings: length, type of data (other comments--quality, etc.)

Topics: description of content of speech; other notable characteristics.

Restrictions: any restrictions to access (whether or not phone/mail, just mail, or no inquiries invited).

Notes: other comments, including citations for materials related to collection.

Entries in the guide from the United States were grouped by state. Each collection was classified according to the primary state represented by the speakers in the sample. This categorization can be used to locate the entry (within states, entries were listed alphabetically according to the contributor's name). When more than one state appeared in a collection, the entry was cross-referenced at the end of the other states involved (giving both the state under which the entry appeared and the collection holder's name so that the entry could be easily located). Collections from areas outside the United States (including Canada) were grouped together in one section since they were not as numerous as those from the United States.

In cases where a collection spanned a large number of states, or in a few instances where world-wide coverage (including, but not limited to, North America) was indicated, these entries were grouped together under the headings "United States--General" and "World-wide", respectively.

Although other arrangements of the entries might have been possible, it was decided that listing by state was the most neutral and accessible way of classifying the collections. Other bases for categorization, such as region, or social group, are not equally applicable to all collections. In addition, there are alternative formulations for subgroups within these categories that would require arbitrary decisions for particular entries. For example, the delineation of region may be more or less detailed (north/south vs. New England, north midland, and so on). Thus, the decision was made to group entries by state.

In addition to the individual entries and cross-referencing notes which constitute the main body of the guide, an index was also prepared to provide information related to other methods of categorization. Contributors' names and institutions (such as archives and libraries) were also listed there. As a result, the guide may be approached for the identification of collections by region, social group, particular collector, or institution.

The resulting document describes over 200 collections, representing speakers in 43 of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia. Canada (including British Columbia, Labrador, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Ontario), the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and Central America are also included. A copy of the reference work, American English Dialect Recordings: A Guide to Collections, is appended as Attachment C.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TAPE PRESERVATION

Project staff researched and prepared a set of guidelines for the preservation of audiotapes. This activity was included as a service to those researchers who continue to maintain a large majority of recordings in private collections. Such an individual might not be aware of the need to take certain precautions to maintain tape recordings and would be unlikely to consult the published reference works on the subject. However, if presented with a set of recommendations, a collector would become more aware of the need to think about preservation and would make greater efforts in that direction.

The guidelines developed by the project summarize and highlight the widely agreed on principles for maintaining

audiotapes in good condition (for example, the need to rewind a tape periodically to prevent damage when the tape is not listened to regularly). A draft of the guidelines was reviewed by experts from the Library of Congress Division of Recorded Sound for technical accuracy and by the project Advisory Panel who gave special attention to the document's usefulness to scholars. Once a final version was prepared, the recommendations were sent out to contributors to the survey. They are made available to others on request, and several individuals have asked for multiple copies for further distribution. A copy of "Maintaining Audiotape Recordings: A Brief Guide" is found in Attachment D.

THE COLLECTION OF RECORDINGS

The second phase of the project had the goal of assembling a representative sampling of recordings of American English speakers, along with supporting documentation, in a format that would be suitable for presentation to the Library of Congress as a permanent part of that institution's holdings.

Development of a Sample of Recordings

In the survey questionnaire used in the first phase of the project, one of the questions requested respondents to indicate whether or not they would be willing to have a subset of their tapes included in a centralized collection. Those who responded affirmatively (nearly all) were sent a letter asking them to submit representative tapes from their collection(s) for possible inclusion in the central collection. The goal and characteristics of this collection were described, and participants were

invited to send several tapes that they considered the best suited to fit the needs of the project. The following criteria to guide the project's selection of speech samples were mentioned in the letter:

- (1) technical quality of recording (clarity of subject's/s' voice;
- (2) contribution to overall balance according to age, sex, region and ethnic and social class;
- (3) no restrictions on non-commercial use (appropriate permissions available);
- (4) availability of typescript of contents.

In addition, information about the policy of the Library of Congress regarding use of their archived recordings was included, so that respondents could determine whether they needed to request additional restrictions on availability of their recordings.

Along with the tapes, participants were asked to provide certain kinds of documentation, where possible. On a form that was provided, they were asked to describe the contents of the tapes in a general way and to give certain identifying characteristics for the speakers represented, such as age, sex, ethnic group, and so on. The form also contained a section where the contributor could nominate a particular segment of the tape for inclusion, since the format of the collection called for ten to thirty minute selections of individual tapes. They were requested as well to send any typescripts or transcripts which had been prepared for the tapes.

In response to the initial mailing, a number of collectors sent tapes; others indicated that they intended to submit

recordings at a later date. A total of 32 survey participants declined to submit tapes for inclusion, for a variety of reasons. Follow-up letters were sent to those who did not respond at all and reminders were mailed to individuals who offered to send tapes at a later time. In addition, the grant period was extended by six months so that collectors had more time to prepare their contributions.

During the period allotted for tape submissions, 56 individuals sent recordings for consideration. In one case, the contribution was a videotape, so it could not be included. In another, the tape was sent for the information of the project staff only, with the request that it not be included in the overall collection. On the other hand, some submissions included representative samples of more than one collection. As a result, the total number of collections represented is 58. The number of tapes submitted for each collection ranged from one to thirty-two. In all but a few cases, contributors did not specify particular segments within the tapes. They did, however, include typescripts when available (for 22 of the collections). Documentation was not always complete; follow-up correspondence attempted to elicit further information, but in some cases, the descriptions remained incomplete.

Preparation of the Tapes

As tapes were received, project staff reviewed them and selected portions that could be included in the overall collection. The actual length and nature of each selection varied considerably, depending on the characteristics of the recordings

represented. For the most part, however, a segment of ten to thirty minutes could be identified that typified the longer recording. For a given collection, this resulted in a total of one to four hours of representative selections. The parameters of each selection were carefully documented and grouped in one-hour units so that the master tapes for the collection were clearly outlined (the master tapes were two hours long, one hour per side). When available, typescripts were marked to show the beginning and end of a selection. The contributed tapes and instructions for assembling the samples were then turned over to an audio engineer for production.

A technical consultant was contracted to provide the tape preparation services. It turned out to be possible to utilize the services of an audio-video production engineer from the Library of Congress on a free-lance basis. This was very advantageous, since it brought the project not only excellent technical expertise, but also an indepth familiarity with the practices and preferences of the Library for their archived recordings collections. The project director also consulted directly with the head of the Curatorial Section of the Motion Picture, Broadcast and Recorded Sound Division concerning the preparation of the recordings. On the recommendation of these technical consultants, the master tapes for the collection were produced on Scotch (3M) type 208 audio recording tape, 1.5 mil, polyester base, back-treated, on 10-1/2 inch metal reels with preservation hubs. All material was recorded at a speed of 7.5 inches per second, dual track mono. These specifications match

the preferred format of the Library for recorded sound collections. Equalization was used when necessary to improve sound quality. The engineer also produced a 60 minute cassette copy of each master tape side that will remain at the Center for Applied Linguistics. The cassettes were recorded simultaneously with the reels so they are first generation copies from the original tapes, recorded in real time.

At the beginning of each side of the master tapes, an announcement was recorded: "CAL Survey of American Dialects, Master Tape Number ____, side ____." The number reflects the order in which the tapes were received and processed, since it was not possible to wait until all tapes had been submitted before beginning the master tape production. Announcements also appear before each segment identifying the original tape from which it came (by a "working" number assigned when the tape was received). Approximately 60 seconds of silence was left between segments on a side. No noise reduction (i.e., Dolby) was used on cassettes or reels.

Once the master tape was completed, the original recordings were returned to the contributors. Using the survey and supplementary information provided by each collector, the documentation needed to accompany each tape was prepared. Although resources were limited, a number of typescripts were prepared for tapes which were submitted without them. In these cases, the typescripts were done only on the selections actually included in the collection. As a result, approximately half the samples now have accompanying typescripts. A packet of information about each

master tape was then assembled, containing a description of the speakers recorded and the relevant typescript portions, if available.

For the final collection, 118 hours of recorded speech samples were identified for inclusion. Most of the states covered in the survey are also represented in the representative speech samples, along with Canada and Puerto Rico. The selections in the final collection are described in Attachment E. This list specifies the master tape number and side (A or B, one hour each), the collector, a summary description of the content of the tape, and the state(s) represented by the speakers.

Distribution of the Collection of Recordings

A letter has been sent to the head of the Gifts and Exchanges Division of the Library of Congress, offering the collection of recordings as a gift (Attachment F). Although no official acceptance has been received as yet, conversations with representatives of all of the Library divisions involved have indicated that there is strong interest in this acquisition. Project staff have remained in contact with the Archive of Folk Culture and the Motion Picture, Broadcast and Recorded Sound Division throughout the project and their support is anticipated. If accepted, the recordings on large reels, along with the accompanying documentation, will be submitted to the Library. They will be accessed through the Archive of Folk Culture, then deposited into the recorded sound holdings.

The original cassette version of the collection will remain at the Center for Applied Linguistics. Scholars have on-site

access to all the data maintained at CAL, and this collection will be added to the larger holdings.

In addition, each contributor to the collection will receive a cassette copy of the tapes which contain segments of recordings he/she submitted, along with a copy of the documentation prepared to accompany the tapes.

RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

There are several products which resulted from this project. First, a guide to collections of recordings of American English was prepared. Complimentary copies of the guide are being given to all participants in the survey. Additional copies will be made available at a reasonable cost to other interested individuals. A number of people who became aware of the project have already requested copies of the guide. They will be notified of its availability as will others who cooperated with project staff in the survey even though they had no recordings to report on themselves. In addition, an announcement about the guide will be sent to a variety of organizations which will distribute the information to their members or constituencies through their publications. The guide will also be submitted for inclusion in the ERIC Clearinghouse database so that it will be widely accessible in microfiche as well as print copy. It is anticipated that the guide will be widely distributed among humanities scholars, who will then have access to information about recordings held in over 200 collections.

Another outcome of the project is the set of guidelines for the preservation of audio recordings. This synthesis of

technical recommendations was sent to all survey participants, and it will continue to be available on request. Announcements about the guide to collections of recordings will mention the tape preservation guidelines as well.

Finally, samples drawn from more than 50 collections were compiled into a representative set of 118 hours of recordings of American English. As mentioned previously, these recordings have been offered to the Library of Congress and it is expected that the collection will be permanently housed there. A complete set (on cassette) with documentation will also be kept at the Center for Applied Linguistics. Other copies may be offered as well at a reasonable cost to interested institutions (such as university libraries) in order to broaden access for scholars around the country. This outcome will give the public a source of authentic speech by people from many regions and social groups and will preserve a part of this important component of our cultural heritage.

The uses of the information compiled in the project are many and diverse. Researchers interested in particular dialects will have a source to consult on what has been done for the region or group of concern. They will also have access to samples of speech if the dialect is represented in the tape collection. Others whose concern lies in an overall view of a number of English varieties will be similarly served by the project. Research on a particular language feature that occurs across dialects as well as comparisons of other areas of language behavior among different groups of speakers will be greatly

facilitated. In addition, searches of recordings for oral history components, details of local folk culture and other aspects of their content will be made possible by the existence of the centralized collection. Writers, actors and members of other fields who deal with the representation of spoken language also will benefit from the outcomes of the project.

DISSEMINATION

In addition to the distribution of products outlined in the previous section, several other activities will be undertaken to disseminate information about the project. If the collection of recordings is accepted by the Library of Congress, a press release will be prepared to announce the gift. This release will be mailed to the Library's regular list, and additional names will be added by project staff. In addition, a formal presentation of the recordings will be requested, and Library staff have indicated that an article would most likely be written for the Library's newsletter. The Archive of Folk Culture would also publicize the collection through its normal channels.

A short description of the project and its results will be developed and sent to several key publications, including the newsletters of the American Dialect Society, the Oral History Association and the American Folklore Society. In addition, the project director will offer presentations at conferences and meetings to disseminate information about the project.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are several directions of inquiry that follow naturally from the work undertaken for this project. As mentioned earlier, a number of respondents to the survey had recordings of non-English languages spoken in the United States and expressed a concern that this component of our heritage should be documented as well. A survey to locate and describe such recordings is one step that should follow this project. Other efforts might include similar surveys of recordings of English, both native and non-native, from other countries (Australia and India, for example). As English takes its place as an international language, the value of this documentation becomes increasingly evident, as recordings illustrate the forms of English spoken around the world.

Further follow-up work would take advantage of this information and recordings provided by this project to consider patterns of language structures across dialects of American English, particularly in pronunciation and grammar (since lexical surveys have been more widespread). Comprehensive treatments of particular features would be facilitated by access to a wide variety of recordings, giving the primary data needed for such investigations.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Survey Questionnaire
- B. Survey Announcement
- C. American English Dialect Recordings: A Guide to Collections
- D. "Maintaining Audiotape Recordings: A Brief Guide"
- E. Contents of American English Dialect Recordings Collection
- F. Letter to the Library of Congress

ATTACHMENT A:

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

CAL/NEH Dialect Recordings Survey

The Center for Applied Linguistics, under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, is conducting a survey of tape-recorded samples of American English. The information gathered in this survey will be compiled into a reference guide listing collections of tape recordings and their relevant characteristics. The survey is the first phase of a project designed to preserve and facilitate access to the national resource represented by speech recordings held in private collections. Later, a representative collection of speech sample recordings will be compiled from the tapes held by respondents to the survey. The Library of Congress has expressed strong interest in acquiring such a collection.

The attached questionnaire is being used to collect the information needed for the survey phase of the project. We are asking that a separate form be filled out for each identifiable collection. By "collection," we mean one or more tapes that share certain characteristics--particular traits of the sample (region, social class, etc.) or the content (oral history narratives, language use questionnaire responses, etc.), for example. Thus, a collection could be three tapes of residents of a small New England town, or an extensive compilation of recordings of interviews with railroad workers around the country.

All contributors to the survey will receive a complimentary copy of the reference guide that is produced. In addition, we will be compiling a brief set of guidelines for the preservation of audiotaped speech recordings which will also be sent to those who help in the project.

This questionnaire may be reproduced for wider distribution. For more information or to obtain more copies of the questionnaire, contact:

Dialect Recordings Survey
Center for Applied Linguistics
3520 Prospect Street NW
Washington, D. C. 20007
(202) 298-9292

Thank you for your cooperation.

CAL/NEH DIALECT RECORDINGS SURVEY

Describe your collection of dialect recordings by responding to the items listed below. Use a separate questionnaire form for each collection. The blank space on the right of each page is available for any elaboration, qualifying comments, or additional information you would like to provide for any of the items.

Respondent Information

Name: Institutional
Affiliation:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

Collection

Elaborations/Comments

1. Brief General Description of Collection:

2. Characteristics of Sample:

Total number of tapes:

Total number of subjects recorded:

Total number of hours recorded:

When tapes were made:

Where tapes were made:

Length of each sample (if varying, check average length and indicate range):

_____ less than 20 minutes

_____ 20-40 minutes

_____ 40-60 minutes

_____ over 60 minutes

_____ range:

Context of tapes:

_____ free speech, no interviewer involved

_____ free speech, with interviewer

_____ directed interview (controlled content
--e.g., local history questions)

_____ data elicitation (controlled format--
e.g., fill-in-the-blank questions)

_____ reading (passages/word lists)

_____ other (please explain)

Location of collection:

Transcripts
available:

Yes
 regular orthography
 special orthography
 phonetic
 No

Clearance/permissions obtained from
subjects:

Yes
 No
If yes, attach a sample.

Access to Collection

Are your recordings accessible for use by other
scholars?

Yes
 No
If yes, how:

Has such access ever been requested?

Yes
 No

Are any of your recordings currently available
to the public (i.e., through copies for sale or
tapes available for listening in a public location)

Yes
 No
If yes, how?

Would you be willing to have one or more of your
tapes copied for inclusion in a centralized
collection prepared by this project?

Yes
 No

Are there any special conditions for copying?
(e.g., permissions that must be obtained):

Yes
 No
If yes, explain:

Would you be willing to receive phone or mail
inquiries about your collection?

Yes
 No

Research Reports

If reports have been written concerning this collection, list the basic (or most comprehensive) reference and its availability:

If you would like to mention other reports, use space below.

Comments

Can you suggest any other scholars with collections of recordings that we should contact? Please give addresses where we could write to them:

Any further information, comments:

Please mail completed form to:

CAL/NEH Dialect Recordings Survey
Center for Applied Linguistics
3520 Prospect Street NW
Washington, D. C. 20007

ATTACHMENT B:

SURVEY ANNOUNCEMENT

CAL/NEH Dialect Recordings Survey

Within the language research community, a resource exists which cannot be utilized to its full potential. This resource is the extensive set of recordings of speech which have been made by investigators doing research for which spoken language serves as a data base. The resource cannot be tapped to any significant degree by anyone other than the holder of the tapes. Considerable duplication of data collection effort results, and opportunities for comparative studies are missed.

The Center for Applied Linguistics, under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, has undertaken a project to improve this situation in two ways. First, a comprehensive survey of tape-recorded speech samples of American English that currently exist will be conducted. The information gathered in this survey will be compiled into a reference guide listing collections of tape recordings and their relevant characteristics. In addition, a brief set of guidelines for the preservation of audiotapes will be prepared as a service to holders of private collections, to help ensure that these recordings will be maintained in good condition. Second, a representative collection of speech sample recordings will be established. This collection will not only create a centralized source of American dialect samples; it will also provide for the preservation of the valuable resource that might otherwise be lost. The Library of Congress has indicated a strong interest in acquiring such a collection. Thus, the tapes will be carefully preserved and public access will be facilitated.

The first phase, the survey, is underway now. It is being conducted by mail, using a questionnaire developed for this purpose. All contributors to the survey will receive a complimentary copy of the reference guide that will be produced. If you have a collection of speech recordings, please write to the address below and a questionnaire will be sent to you.

This project is designed to increase the access of scholars to the vast resource represented by dialect recordings held in private collections. By drawing attention to their existence, it will also serve to increase awareness of the desirability of preserving language recordings as part of our cultural heritage. The success of the project, though, depends on the cooperation of the members of the research community who hold such tapes. We hope that you will be able to assist us by responding to the questionnaire and encouraging others to do so as well. The results should benefit all of us.

Thanks for your help. For more information, or to obtain copies of the questionnaire, please contact:

Donna Christian, Project Director
CAL/NEH Dialect Recordings Survey
Center for Applied Linguistics
3520 Prospect Street N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20007
(202) 298-9292

ATTACHMENT C:

AMERICAN ENGLISH DIALECT RECORDINGS:

A GUIDE TO COLLECTIONS

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"Maintaining Audiotape Recordings:

A Brief Guide"

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AMERICAN ENGLISH DIALECT RECORDINGS COLLECTION

Compiled by Donna Christian
Center for Applied Linguistics

Tape #	<u>Collector</u>	<u>Contents of Tape</u>	<u>State</u>
1A	Arnold Jacobsen Arnold's Archives East Grand Rapids, MI	Excerpts from: Fiorella LaGuardia, Fred Allen and friends radio show, Groucho Marx radio show, Amelia Earhart speech, Jack Dempsey interview, H. L. Mencken interview	Varied
1B	Jack Phelan Alcoa, TN	Reading samples illustrating accents from South Carolina low country, New York City, Mississippi/Alabama, Eastern Shore, Maryland/Tennessee	AL, MD, MI, NY, SC, TN
2A	Donna Roper Pendleton District Historical and Recreational Commission Pendleton, SC	Local history, folklore of mountain life, told by 65 year old male, ranger of Stumphouse Tunnel Park	SC
2B	Joseph Hall Los Angeles, CA	Residents of Great Smoky Mountains area of North Carolina and Tennessee, 4 subjects, 60+ years of age	TN NC
	Patricia Nichols San Jose State University San Jose, CA	Short segments of interviews with residents of coastal South Carolina: 90 year old white male; 88 year old black female, speaking Gullah; black and white students ranging in age from 9 to 16 years old, male and female	SC
3A	Eleanor Mitchell Sam Houston State University Huntsville, TX	Personal history and reading by 49, 70 year old white females from Texas	TX
3B	William Clements Mid-South Center for Oral History Arkansas State University State University, AR	Oral history on sharecropping by 65+ year old black female from Joiner, AR; oral history on storekeeping and farming by 65+ year old white male from Marked Tree, Arkansas	AR
4A	Natalie Maynor Mississippi State University Mississippi State, MS	Conversation with 86 year old black female, 88 year old black male from Oktibbeha County, Mississippi	MS

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4B	Lawrence Foley James Madison University Harrisonburg, VA	Linguistic Atlas-type interview with 65 year old black female, 70 year old white female, from Tuscaloosa County, Alabama	AL
5A 5B	Ralph Desmarais Little Rock, AR	Oral history by residents of rural Arkansas: 95 year old male prairie homesteader, 86 year old Czech male, 84 and 74 year old black females	AR
6A 6B	Walt Wolfram Donna Christian Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, D.C.	Conversation with Native Americans from two Pueblos in New Mexico, ranging in age from 11 to 62 years old, male and female	NM
7A 7B	Walt Wolfram Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, D.C.	Conversations with 6 Puerto Rican and 2 Black male teenagers in New York City (age 14 to 18 years old)	NY
8A 8B	Walt Wolfram Donna Christian Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, D.C.	Conversations with rural white natives of Appalachian region, ranging in age from 13 to 76 years old, male and female	WV
9A 9B 10A 10B	Mesa County Oral History c/o Oral History Coordinator Grand Junction, CO	Oral history interviews with residents of Mesa County, CO, including Dutch, German, and Basque immigrants, ranging in age from 54 to 89 years old, male and female (most over 80)	CO
11A 11B	Renee Garrellick Concord Historical Commission Concord, MA	Oral history interviews with residents of Concord, MA, ranging in age from 64 to 92 years old, male and female	MA
12A	Maida Bergeron Louisiana Folklife Program Baton Rouge, LA	Conversations with two male speakers, aged 55 and 56, a French black creole and an Isleno, descendant of Canary Islanders who settled in St. Bernard Parish, LA	LA
12B	Elaine Thatcher South Dakota Folk Arts Program Sioux Falls, SD	Oral history interviews with two male speakers: storyteller of Norwegian ancestry from Sisseton, SD and 68 year old Native American (Mandan) from Pierre, SD	SD

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13A 13B	Stewart Kingsbury Northern Michigan University Marquette, MI	Reading sentences and passages ("Rip the Rat") and some conversation with residents of the Upper Peninsula, Michigan, ranging in age from 19 to 59 years old, male and female	MI
14A	Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Hyde Park, NY	Speeches made by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt	NY
14B	R. J. Handscombe Glendon College Toronto, Ontario, Canada	Group discussion of school topics, adult with 5 to 9 year old children from North York, Ontario	Canada
15A 15B	Mary Ritchie Key University of California Irvine, CA	Conversations about tobacco farming with rural white farmers from Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Maryland, ranging in age from 57 to 80 years old, male and female	CT MD PA
16A 16B	Mary Ritchie Key University of California Irvine, CA	Conversations about tobacco farming with rural white and black farmers from North Carolina, Georgia and Missouri; also includes a tobacco auction in North Carolina	NC GA MO
17A 17B	Mary Ritchie Key University of California Irvine, CA	Conversations about tobacco farming with rural white farmers from Tennessee and Kentucky, male and female	TN KY
18A 18B 19A 19B	Roger Shuy Georgetown University Washington, D.C.	Conversations with black and white speakers from Detroit, Michigan, ranging in age from 12 to 49 years old, male and female	MI
20A 20B 21A 21B 22A 22B	Linda Blanton University of New Orleans New Orleans, LA	Oral history interview/conversation with Appalachian white residents of Breathitt County, Kentucky, ranging in age from 16 to 18 (tape #20), 31 to 51 (tape #21) and 70 to 76 (tape #22) years old, male and female	KY
23A 23B 24A	Brenda McCallum Archive of American Minority Cultures The University of Alabama University, AL	Personal history interviews for "Working Lives" radio program, with black female school teachers (age 65-67), male steelworker (age 45), male ironworker (age 75, retired), female domestic worker (age 65), male coal miner (retired), white male steelworker (age 65, retired) from Alabama	AL

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24B	Bettie Sommer University of Central Florida Orlando, FL	Conversation with: 77 year old black male, 114 year old black male (former slave), 8 and 9 year old black females, residents of Florida	FL
25A 25B 26A	Iron Range Research Center Chisholm, MN	Personal history interviews with Croatians, Serbians and Slovenians, ranging in age from 66 to 88 years of age, male and female, residents of rural Iron Range region of Minnesota	MN
26B	Stearns County Historical Society St. Cloud, MN	Oral history interview with Fred Marshall, age 73, Sixth District Congressman from Minnesota, 1948-1962	MN
27A	Steve Siporin Idaho Commission on the Arts Boise, ID	Oral history interviews with 82 year old white male (hunting stories), 73 year old Finnish-American female (Finnish traditions), 78 year old white male (logging)	ID
27B	Darwin Hayes Brigham Young University Provo, UT	Personal history interviews with rural white speakers, ranging in age from 72 to 87, male and female	ID
28A 28B	Geoffrey Gephart Indiana Arts Commission Indianapolis, IN	Folklore interviews with speakers from rural Indiana, ranging in age from 66 to 81 years of age, male and female	IN
29A 29B	Derek Reimer Provincial Archives Victoria, British Columbia, Canada	Oral history interviews with native British Columbians from rural areas, ranging in age from 60 to 70 years of age, male and female	Canada
30A 30B	Rebecca Bills Pittsburgh, PA	Conversations with natives of Smith Island, Maryland, ranging in age from 18 to 45 years of age, male and female (including several watermen)	MD
31A	Jennie Scott University of Florida Gainesville, FL	Conversation with 40 year old black male from Ann Arbor, MI; Dialect Reading Test administered to two 7 years old black males from Detroit, Michigan	MI
31A 31B	William Kirwin Memorial University of Newfoundland St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada	Conversation with 67 year old male, then 77 year old male, from Rhode Island; Conversation and reading by University of Nebraska students (1953-54); Ripon College freshmen class discussion; Poetry discussion by group of University of Nebraska English Department instructors (1954)	RI WI IL NE TN

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32A 32B	Miriam Meyers Minneapolis, MN	Oral book reports given by black and white students in New Haven, Connecticut, ranging in age from 14 to 18 years old, male and female	CT
33A	Maurice Crane Michigan State University Voice Library East Lansing, MI	Public speech by Isaac Asimov (New York City), Alben Barkley (rural Kentucky), Hugo Black (Harlan, Alabama), John L. Lewis (Iowa)	NY KY AL IA
33B	Connell Gallagher The University of Vermont Burlington, VT	Personal and Vermont history discussion with Lee Emerson, former governor (76 years old) and Fortis Abbott, former state senator (84 years old)	VT
34A 34B	Walt Wolfram University of the District of Columbia Washington, D. C.	Conversations with black and white residents of rural Mississippi, ranging in age from 11 to 92 years old, male and female	MS
35A 35B	Donna Christian Walt Wolfram Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, D. C.	Conversations with Vietnamese immigrants in northern Virginia area, ranging in age from 12 to 50 years old, male and female, with U.S. residency from one to seven years	VA
36A 36B 37A 37B	Donna Christian Walt Wolfram Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, D. C.	Conversations with residents of rural Ozarks area of northwest Arkansas, ranging in age from 12 to 91 years old, male and female	AR
38A 38B 39A 39B	Joseph Mele University of South Alabama Mobile, AL	Short monologues (3-12 minutes) by adult speakers from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia (34 samples total)	AL,AR FL,GA KY,LA MS,NC SC,TN VA
40A 40B	Morgan Jones New Paltz, NY	Descriptions of pictures from <u>A Pictorial Linguistic Interview Manual</u> (by Stanley Sapon) by Puerto Ricans speaking English, adults, male and female	PR
41A 41B	Kathleen Manscill Great Smoky Mountains National Park Museum Gatlinburg, TN	Oral history and reminiscences by residents and former residents of Great Smoky Mountains National Park area, ranging in age from 65 to 91 years old, male and female; includes two samples of female speaker ten years apart, at age 65 and 75	TN NC

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42A 42B	Guy Bailey Texas A & M University College Station, TX	Linguistic Atlas interviews with two working class speakers from Washington County, Texas, 72 year old white male and 82 year old black male; conversation among a group of black male adolescents from Bryan, Texas, 11 to 13 years old	TX
43A 43B 44A 44B	Bethany Dumas University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN	Conversations (personal history, reminiscences) with rural white natives of Newton County, Arkansas, ranging in age from 41 to 82 years old, male and female	AR
45A	Michael Linn University of Minnesota Duluth, MN	Personal history with Finnish-English bilingual residents of Minnesota, ranging in age from 41 to 85 years old, male and female	MN
45B	Michael Linn University of Minnesota Duluth, MN	Personal history with residents of the Iron Range area of Minnesota (Chisholm), 66 year old Slovenian male, 55 year old Russian female, 87 year old Swedish male	MN
46A 46B 47A 47B	Wessie Connell Roddenbery Memorial Library Cairo, GA	Oral history interviews with black and white natives of Cairo, Georgia, and nearby communities, ranging in age from 53 to 100 years old, male and female	GA
48A 48B	M. Lois Huffines Bucknell University Lewisburg, PA	Conversations with Pennsylvania Germans about current ways of life and reminiscences, ranging in age from 23 to 73 years old, male and female	PA
49A 49B	Lurline Coltharp University of Texas El Paso, TX	Interviews using sections of the DARE questionnaire with natives of Ysleta, Texas, bilingual Spanish-English speakers, ranging in age from 65 to 77 years old, male and female	TX
50A 50B	Darwin Hayes Brigham Young University Provo, UT	Personal history and reminiscences with natives of Bern, Georgetown and Montpelier, Idaho, descendants of Swiss and German immigrants, ranging in age from 45 to 94 years old, male and female	ID
51A	Ronald Butters Duke University Durham, NC	Conversation and reading with residents of Wilmington and Asheville, North Carolina; black and white speakers, males 14 to 24 years of age, females 37 to 80 years of age	NC

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52A 52B	J. K. Chambers University of Toronto Toronto, Ontario, Canada	Conversation with residents of Toronto, four females (12, 22, 22 and 52 years old)	Canada
53A 53B	Appalachian Oral History Project Lees College Library Jackson, KY	Oral history interviews (railroads, coal mining, funerals, general ways of life) with residents of rural Kentucky, male and female, over 60 years of age	KY
54A 54B 55A 55B	Nanjo Dube University of Arkansas Little Rock, AR	Conversation and memory games with black and white second graders, high school students, and adults ranging in age from 26 to 50 years old, male and female, from Jefferson County, Florida	FL
56A 56B	Keith Cunningham Northern Arizona University Flagstaff, AZ	Conversation with Native Americans from New Mexico and Arizona, Navaho, Tewa/Hopi, and Zuni, ranging in age from 32 to 75 years old, male and female	NM AZ
57A	Annie Mae Turner Turner Studios Union Springs, AL	Personal history conversation with residents of Bullock County, Alabama: 91 year old white female, 86 year old black male, 84 year old black female	AL
57B	Michael Montgomery University of South Carolina Columbia, SC	Conversation with residents of White Pine, Tennessee, two 17 year old males, two females, age 39 and over 60	TN
58A 58B 59A 59B	Ralph Fasold Georgetown University Washington, D. C.	Conversation with black residents of Washington, D. C., ranging in age from 10 to 61 years old, male and female	DC

ATTACHMENT F:

LETTER TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Center for
Applied
Linguistics

May 16, 1986

Mr. Peter Bridge
Chief, Exchange and Gift Division
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C. 20540

Dear Mr. Bridge:

With the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Center for Applied Linguistics, I have compiled a collection of American English dialect samples. The collection includes representative excerpts from the recordings of over 50 collectors and illustrates the speech patterns of a wide range of geographical and social groups within the American population. I would like to offer the tapes as a gift to the Library of Congress. I believe that they are a valuable resource and would enrich the Library's holdings.

The collection of tapes is the result of the second phase of a project which began in 1983 entitled "A Survey and Collection of American English Dialect Recordings." A brief description of that project is enclosed. Throughout the project, I have maintained contact with Gerald Gibson, curator for the Motion Picture, Broadcast and Recorded Sound Division, which would be the ultimate custodial body for the tape collection, and Gerald Parsons of the American Folklife Center. They have both been extremely helpful in the advice they have provided, and they have expressed enthusiasm about this acquisition.

The tapes themselves were produced with the Library's preferred format in mind, by a professional audio engineer. There are 118 hours of recordings in the collection; they are available on Scotch 208 audio recording tape, 1.5 mil polyester with back treatment, on ten-inch metal reels (2500 feet). Each tape has a playing time of two hours at a speed of 7.5 ips, (recorded in the dual track mono format). Documentation that accompanies the tapes includes name and address of the contributor, date of the recordings, characteristics of the speakers represented (social and geographic), and, in many cases, a typescript of the speech. These print materials will be provided to the Library together with the tapes.

There are no severe restrictions on the availability of the tapes. When potential contributors were contacted, I sent them a copy of the Library's policy on access to its recorded

Peter Bridge
May 16, 1986

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sound collections. With the documentation for each recording, contributors had an opportunity to indicate any restrictions exceeding normal Library policy.

If this gift is accepted by the Library, I would like to have a formal presentation of the collection, perhaps sometime this summer or fall. I would also hope to have public notice taken of the gift, since its value as a resource depends on people knowing of its availability. In addition, I believe that NEH and CAL deserve recognition for their support of the project. If the Library prepares a news release about the collection, I could supply a list of names to add to the mailing list for such an announcement.

Thank you for your consideration of this gift to the Library. I hope that you will find it to be a valuable addition to the recorded sound holdings. I will call you later next week to see if there is any further information I can provide. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Donna Christian

Donna Christian
Project Director, Survey and
Collection of American English
Dialect Recordings

Enclosure

cc: G. Richard Tucker, President, CAL

CAL/NEH DIALECT RECORDINGS

SURVEY AND COLLECTION

Within the language research community, a resource exists which cannot be utilized to its full potential. This resource is the extensive set of recordings of speech which have been made by investigators doing research for which spoken language serves as a data base. The resource cannot be tapped to any significant degree by anyone other than the holder of the tapes. Considerable duplication of data collection effort results, and opportunities for comparative studies are missed.

The Center for Applied Linguistics, under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, has undertaken a project to improve this situation in two ways. First, a comprehensive survey of tape-recorded speech samples of American English that currently exist will be conducted. The information gathered in this survey will be compiled into a reference guide listing collections of tape recordings and their relevant characteristics. In addition, a brief set of guidelines for the preservation of audiotapes will be prepared as a service to holders of private collections, to help ensure that these recordings will be maintained in good condition. Second, a representative collection of speech sample recordings will be established. This collection will not only create a centralized source of American dialect samples; it will also provide for the preservation of the valuable resource that might otherwise be lost. The tapes will be carefully preserved and public access will be possible. The collection will be offered to the Library of Congress. As part of the Library's holdings, the collection would be even more generally available.

The benefits from this project are expected to go beyond increasing the access of scholars to dialect recordings. Drawing attention to the existence of this resource will stimulate new studies and will increase awareness of the desirability of preserving the national resource of language recordings as part of our cultural heritage.

Project Director: Donna Christian
Center for Applied Linguistics
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