English in North America

10.0 The Beginnings of English in North America. English has been in use in North America since the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when fishing vessels arrived at the Grand Banks off the coast of Nova Scotia to fish the cod that could be found there in great abundance and where traders did business with the Indians (cf. Mann 2005: 47ff). Traders soon began going the Chesapeake Bay area to trade for furs from the Native Americans and as well. The crews of these ships were themselves often international (but European), which meant that in those cases where English was spoken on board, the language was far from the StE of England. What was spoken would very likely have been a mixture, possibly a leveling of varieties of regional English from England and Scotland (Wales and Ireland still had relatively few English speakers). Added to this would be English spoken as a foreign language among the non-native English-speaking crew members. This was then salted with nautical jargon. As prominent as nautical jargon may have been, there were probably as many varieties as there were ships, each representing a different mix of English.

10.0.1 Native American – English contact. All this notwithstanding, the early contacts of European sailors and traders with the Native Americans did leave behind two important traces. The first of these was disease, one of the most significant and tragic parts of what one author (Crosby 2003) calls the "Columbian Exchange." The second was the English language, which some of the Native Americans learned well enough to serve as interpreters in negotiations with the European colonists. It is not impossible that these early nautical varieties of English had a linguistic impact on the mainland of North America, though it would hardly have been a permanent one. The English of the seafarers was probably used in the early days in North America, but the continued influence of nautical jargon can only be seen somewhat indirectly, according to Dillard (e.g. 1980: 407), in the use of American Indian Pidgin English (AIPE)[1] and in the Pidgin English and later Creole English spoken by African slaves (for more on the latter see below). English was clearly around before colonization, but it was through the large number of settlers that the language became truly native to North America. And the language of these settlers shows evidence of contact with the Indians.

10.0.2 The Pilgrims and the Indians. The consequences of these two legacies can be seen quite concretely in the situation which the Pilgrim Separatists encountered when they arrived in Plymouth (Massachusetts) in 1620. Several years before their arrival an English expedition had landed there, taken a number of Indians as slaves, and left the smallpox behind to kill off over 90% of the Indian population, leaving the land empty for the arrival of the Pilgrims. In the words of William Bradford we learn:

> … the good hand of God favored our beginnings. … In sweeping away great multitudes of the natives by the smallpox, a little before we went thither, that he might make room for us there" (Bradford 1638, 1792; cf. Mann 2005: 55ff.)

An anonymous pamphlet, *New England's First Fruits*. London, 1643, proclaimed:

> "Thus far hath the good hand of God favored our beginnings; see whether He hath not engaged us to wait upon His goodness for the future by such further remarkable passages of His providence to our plantation in such things as these:
> 1. In sweeping away great multitudes of the natives by the smallpox a little before we went thither, that He might make room for us there. [There follow … further points] (qtd. in Vaughan 1972: 65)

John Winthrop, the most prominent leader of the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay wrote to Sir Nathaniel Rich in England regarding the next great epidemic in New England in 1634: "For the natives, they are neere all dead of small Poxe, so as the Lord hathe cleared our title to this place, those who remain… ." (May 22, 1634, *WP*, III, 167; see: Bremer: 203). Wherever Europeans went in the Americas,

[1] No English of this kind is documented earlier than 1641, when we can read the following attestation of AIPE: "They say, Englishman much foole, - Lazie squaes!" [Englishmen are very foolish – lazy squaws] (Lechford 1833, qtd. in Leechman and Hall 1980 [1955]: 418). However, William Wood provided what is possibly an earlier example, when receiving a broadside from a ship, cried out, "What much hoggery," "so big walk," and "so big speak," and "by and by kill," which caused them to turn back, not daring to approach till they were sent for" (p. 87) ["What a great crime," "moving so much," "speaking so loudly" and "by and by it will kill"].

the consequences of the spread of European diseases to which the native population had developed no immunity were similar: pestilence and death.

As for language, Bradford (speaking of his group in the third person) tells of the Pilgrims' contact with Native Americans on March 16, 1621:

> But about the 16. of March a certain Indian came bouldly amongst them, and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand, but marveled at it. At length they understood by discourse with him, that he was not of these parts, but belonged to the eastrene parts, wher some English-ships came to fhish, with whom he was aquainted, and could name sundrie of them by their names, amongst whom he had got his language. (Bradford 1620-1651: Book XIII)

The Indian mentioned was Samaset, and he provided the Pilgrims who had survived the first New England winter with information and names and, most importantly, introduced another Indian, Squanto (Tisquantum), to them. The latter spoke fluent English, having spent several years in England as a slave from 1605, but returning to America with Captain John Smith in 1612. He was recaptured and taken to England once again. His final return home in 1619 was only to find that his people (the Patuxet of the area where the Pilgrims had settled) had died in the smallpox epidemic. Squanto proved to be very helpful to the English, giving them advice on farming and fishing, so much so that he has become a mythological figure in American history, understood as a sign of friendship between Native Americans and Europeans.[2] For the purposes of this book we can understand Squanto as a symbol of the words which have entered (American) English as a result of contact with Indians[3].

10.0.3 The Influence of Native American languages on English. Actually, a great many Native American borrowings come from the eastern Indians, many of them from the Algonquian language family, to which the tribes of New England all belonged[4] as did many of the tribes farther south and west. By the very nature of the contact situation – Europeans in a strange environment with unfamiliar plants, animals, and native people – words for these things would have to come from one or the other of the two most important sources: (a) word formation using elements native to English or (b) borrowing from the one or the other indigenous language. The first path gives us such compounds as *black walnut* (in contrast to what is now called the *English walnut*), *blackbird*, or *tableland*) and extensions of European English terms to cover the newly encountered, i.e. new meanings of English words such as *yew*, *robin*, or *bluff*. The second path leads us to Anglicized borrowed ultimately from Indian languages. Marckwardt lists approximately 50 such items (1980: 30).

Among the borrowings we find the following early additions from the more easterly Algonquian language family:

- animal names: *chipmunk* (< Ojibwa *ačitamo·nˀ), moose* (< Algonquian *moos*), *muskrat* (< Algonquian-Massachuset *musquash*), *opossum* (< Algonquian), *raccoon* (< Algonquian *raugroughcun* / *arocoun*), *skunk* (< Abenaki *segañkˀ*), *terrapin* (< Algonquian-Delaware *tóˑlpeˑw*), *woodchuck* (< the Algonquian *ockqutchaun*);
- plant names: *hickory* (< Algonquian *pawcohiccora*), *persimmon* (< Algonquian *pessemmin*), *pecan* (< Algonquian-Ojibwa *pakaˑn*), *squash* (< Narraganset *askútasquash*);
- foods *hominy* (< Algonquian *-homen*), *pemmican* (< Cree *pimihkaˑn*), *pone* (< Algonquian *appone*), *succotash* (< Narraganet *msickquatash*);
- words for aspects of native culture and society: *manitou* (< Ojibwa *manitoˑ*), *powwow* (< Narraganset / Massachuset *powwaw* / *pauwau*), *sachem* (< Narraganset *sâchim*), *papoose* (< Narraganset *papoòs*), *squaw* (<

[2] In Virginia a further mythological Indian figure came on stage. This was Pocahontas (whose name may mean "little hellion"). She intervened when the leader of the colony, Captain John Smith, who had been captured by the Powhatans, was to be brained to death by throwing herself over his head. As his savior she counts as a figure of innocence and subjection to white-European power.

[3] The circumstances in Virginia were again somewhat parallel. The colony at Jamestown was in poor condition by September 1607 "but now was all our provision spent, … , all helps abandoned, each hour expecting the fury of the savages, when God, the patron of all good endeavors, in that desperate extremity so changed the hearts of the savages, that they brought such plenty of their fruits and provision as no man wanted [i.e. was in want]." (Smith 1612: chap. 2)

[4] The Algonquian family includes Abenaki Cree, Delaware, Massachuset, Narraganset and Ojibwa along with more than 20 further languages (cf. Driver 1969: 43).

Massachuset *squa* / *ussqua*), *moccasin* (< Algonquian *mockasin*), *tomahawk* (< Algonquian *tomahack*), *wigwam* (< Abebaki *wikɔwɑm*).

Table 10.1: Borrowings from eastern American Indian languages.

Overall, the significance of both sets of words for English as a whole is minimal though both do bear witness to the importance of contact in both cases.

10.0.4 American Indian Pidgin English (AIPE). Many of words just listed (*moccasin, squaw, papoose, tomahawk*) which came from Algonquian languages were, according to one linguist, Dillard, transmitted to both Europeans and to non-Algonquian-speaking Indians by way of a lingua franca, specifically American Indian Pidgin English (1973: 149). AIPE itself is the earliest variety of Pidgin English to appear in British North America (see 10.0.2), always, Dillard maintains, about ten years after the first African slaves appeared in the area in question. This hardly seems to be justified for some of the New England examples quoted above, where contact was more likely to have been nautical. According to one source AIPE, whatever its ultimate source or sources, must have been widespread in use and continued to be used for some three hundred years:

> An East Coast variety of Pidgin English was transmitted by White traders and runaway slaves to Indians elsewhere on the continent, so that the form of the pidgin was quite uniform throughout the period of its use, roughly 1600-1900. (Taylor 1981: 180)

Documentation of AIPE is sporadic and uneven, yet its (one-time) existence seems clear enough as attested in both non-fictional reports (see Leechman and Hall 1981) and in fictional presentations (Miller 1981). It shares a number of features with either African PE or Chinese PE or with both. For present American Indian English, see below 10.5.1.

Phonology:

- /ð/ → /d/ *dat, dey, den*, etc.; /θ/ → /t/ *tump* < *thump;* /f/ → /p/*Pilipp* < *Philip*; /ɹ/ → /l/*locks* < *rock*
- Loss of final vowels (*ver* < *very*); /l/ (*Engismon* < *Englishman*); unstressed initial syllables (*'fendant* < *defendant*)

Morphology:

- no plural {s} in nouns (*two Hed* < *two heads*)
- *me* as subject (*me be so strong*)
- widespread loss of verb endings (*me be*); past marker *been* (*Me been sick*); occasional use of transitive suffix *'em, um, 'im, him* (*you datch um Jeremiah Offscow*)

Syntax:

- absence of articles (*we fling in water, big fish come*); zero copula (*much foole*) and subject (*suppose cross* "if he is cross")
- possession via juxtaposition (*white man mouth*)
- *as* for *than* (*stronger as I was before*)
- reduplication of verb for continued action (*travel-travel*)
- manner and time adverbs before (subject and) verb (*quick you catch um…strong you hold um, safe you ging um; he then cheat him*)
- negation with *no* instead of *not* (*he no run away*)

Lexis:

- *broder* "sibling of the same sex"
- *heap, much* "very"
- *medicine* "magic, something incomprehensible"
- *savvy* "know"
- *suppose* "if"
- *all one* "like, as, the same as"

(Leechman and Hall 1981: 121-123)

Table 10.2: Features of AIPE.

10.1 Colonial English. The English language which the settlers carried along with them was, of course, that of England. It is very likely that the colonists brought various regional forms though it is generally accepted that the largest number of those who arrived came from southern England. Baugh concludes on very imperfect evidence (1281 settlers in New England and 637 in Virginia for whom records exist for the time before 1700) that New England was predominantly settled from southeastern and southern counties of England (about 2/3) as was Virginia (over 50%). The Middle Colonies (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware) probably had a much larger proportion from northern England as well as Scots-Irish from Ulster (Baugh 1963: 108-109).

Despite the different regional origins of the English-speaking settlers in North America, there was relatively little difference in the varieties the colonists from Great Britain and Ireland spoke. Dialect geographers within the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada have collected numerous regional differences within American English (AmE), but these consist largely of incidental differences in vocabulary as well as a number of systematic differences in pronunciation. None of these, however, present a barrier to mutual understanding. This basic similarity within AmE can be credited to two factors: (1) the relatively high degree of education and respect for learning (esp. in New England) and (2) the leveling or koinéization of varieties as they mixed in the new environment.

10.1.1 Learning and education in New England. The first and foremost purpose of education was to prepare people for their further life by ensuring that they had the necessary knowledge and proper attitudes. This was achieved chiefly in the family, whether for the trades and homemaking or as a matter of moral values. The family, authoritarian and paternalistic and with was no real practice of "childhood," was the most important unit of Puritan[5] society, yet the Puritans of the first generation were anxious lest affection bind them too firmly to their children. Therefore they often apprenticed them outside their own households. At the same time it was often the practice to treat non-family member servants as one of the family, even providing them with land at the end of their servitude. The usual method was imitation; a young person assisted and watched until he or she could be entrusted with certain tasks.

For the Puritans education was the major element of culture and society beyond religion itself. Indeed, the main motivation for establishing schools was to provide the people with access to reading and writing and hence to the Word of God. The Puritan population was, in any case, extraordinarily well educated. Practically all the ministers of the Puritan (later: Congregational) church in the colonial period were college-educated. One out of 200 in the first years was a graduation of Cambridge, which is one in every forty households.

What about formal education? It served chiefly to transmit moral values and to ensure access to the Bible. Common schools themselves were instituted in 1642 (in Boston already in 1635) and legally mandated in 1647 as seen in the following law text:

> It being one chiefe piect [project] of y^{t} ould deluder, Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of y^{e} Scriptures, as in form^{r} times by keeping y^{m} in an unknowne tongue … It is therefore ord^{r}ed, y^{t} ev^{r}y township in this iurisdiction, aft^{r} y^{e} Lord hath increased y^{m} to y^{e} number of 50 household^{rs}, shall then forthwith appoint one wthin their towne to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write & reade … & it is furth^{r} ordered, y^{t} where any towne shall increase to y^{e} numb^{r} of 100 families or household^{rs}, they shall set up a gram̃er schoole, y^{e} m^{r} thereof being able to instruct youth so farr as they may be fited for y^{e} university … . (qtd. in Lucas 1984: 117f)

University level education (or what passed for that) provided training for ministers.[6] So important was this that within ten years of settlement in the Massachusetts Bay Harvard College was founded (1636).

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[5] The Puritans, who established their colony at Massachusetts Bay in 1628/30, were theologically similar to the Pilgrims, but were not separatists as the latter were.

[6] Harvard granted its first degrees in 1642. In the 1770s it had about 180 students - at a time when all the colleges in the colonies had about 750 students. Tuition in the 17th century cost approx. 4 hogs a year. Note that England had only two universities until the establishment of the university in London in 1827 (but there were academies and private schools, a select group of what the English call public schools. Religion was the motive behind most of the colonial foundings not only in New England, but also in the Middle Colonies and the South. They were: William and Mary [in Virginia] (1693) Anglican; Yale [in Connecticut] (1701) Congregational; College of New Jersey (later Princeton) (1746) Presbyterian; Academy of Philadelphia (later University of Pennsylvania) (1740, 1751/55) non-denominational; King's College (= Columbia) [in New York] (1754) Anglican (later Presbyterian); College of Rhode

Literacy rate in Massachusetts
89-95% of (propertied) men
42% of women (62% by century end).
60% of households contained books in Middlesex; in Essex: 39% (and lending was widespread)

The effects of learning and education on the language were twofold. First of all, where the level of education was high, as it was in Massachusetts, 0.5% of the settlers were university graduates, there was clearly a greater orientation toward the written language. This meant that the *relative* uniformity of English in early America was more a matter of grammar and vocabulary and less of pronunciation, and this is still today the essence of what is meant by the StE, which shows a great deal of uniformity in its written form but a great deal of variation in its pronunciation. However, this also meant that the orientation toward learning was more likely to be observed in New England than in the American South (see below 10.4.3). The second consequence of the early emphasis on education was the establishment of attitudes of correctness among the educated (or semi-educated), a perspective which continues very strongly in the 21st century, where people apologize for what they consider to be "bad grammar" (and despite the fact that they, of course, use it).

Figure 10.1: The New England Primer: five million copies in 150 years (1683-1830). It ensured literacy and inculcated Christian virtues.

Outside of New England literacy was less widespread (or indeed, very low). Consequently, books and newspapers were also rare (see 10.2.3.1).

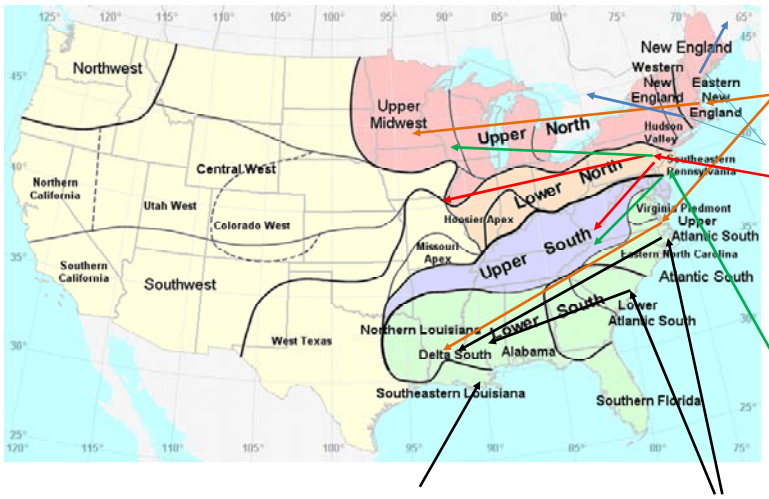
Puritan literature. There was nothing that might be called literary life; there was no theater or plays, a printing press, yes, but no novels or romances. The chief public occasions were church services and at their center was the chief Puritan literary form, the sermon. Published work consisted of histories, journals, sermons, letters, biographies, and poetry. The following are books people brought along from England: Descriptions of the New World (for Plymouth, including John Smith); practical books: herbals and medical books; the Bible and religious books; political and historical books (e.g. Machiavelli); and some poetry (Hart 1963). Pilgrim William Brewster's personal library at his death in 1643: 323 English books, 64 Latin ones, plus various unidentified ones. In 1630 the *Arabella*, bringing Winthrop, the great Puritan leader to Massachusetts, carried more than 20,000 gallons of beer and wine; but also more books than anyone besides Brewster had in Plymouth.

The Bay Psalm Book. The first American "bestseller" was *The Bay Psalm Book* (Thomas Weld, John Eliot (the missionary to the Indians), Richard Mather, and Francis Quarles, 1640): The first edition consisted of 1700 copies (for 3500 families in the northern colonies); it also sold in England and went through 51 editions in 125 years.

> *Neither let any think that for the meetre sake wee have taken liberty or poeticall licence to depart from the true and proper sence of Davids words in the hebrew verses: noe; ... If therefore the verses are not alwayes so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that Gods Altar needs not our polishings: Ex. 20. for wee have respected rather a plain translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetnes of any paraphrase and soe have attended Conscience rather then Eloquence, fidelity rather then poetry, in translating the hebrew words into english language, and Davids poetry into english meetre...*
> (Mather 1640: "Preface")

Southerners (and the English and the Scottish as well) read more or less the same pious books: 25-33% of books in the Southern colonies were religious. But there were fewer books and less literature because of greater social differences in the South (perhaps only 20,000 volumes in all of Virginia in 1700). Yet practical publications such as almanacs, obviously important for a people who farmed and sailed, predated the *Bay Psalm Book*.

Island (later Brown) (1764) Baptist; Queen's College (later Rutgers) [in](1766/71) Dutch Reformed; Dartmouth [in Massachusetts] (1769) Congregational.



Map 10.1: Major Sources and Goals of Immigration

10.1.2 Koinéization.[7] Dillard has entitled the second chapter of his *All-American English* (1975) "The American Koiné." This catches the important notion of dialect leveling, which is perhaps the single most important change in the English language in America (and in other settler colonies as well). While it is surely significant that the majority of English settlers in the 17th century came from Southern England (see above, 10.1), it is not possible to make a plausible case for the continued existence of any local or even regional dialect anywhere in North America (except perhaps Newfoundland; see below 10.2.5.1). Indeed, it is entirely plausible that the beginnings of the koiné pre-dated the move to America. Mobility in England, including urbanization, was already a factor that brought speakers of countless local varieties into contact with each other. In addition, it is not clear how koinéization as a process actually functions:

> Some sociolinguists believe that variants found in the majority of contributing dialects are those most likely to be retained. Others argue either that the variants used by the largest number of individual speakers become koiné or that demographical, social, cultural, occupational, and political factors – the social traits and status of various speakers and groups – outweigh linguistic factors in determining which elements compose a koiné. (Longmore 2007: 527)

However that may be (and there is a considerable amount of speculation involved here), numerous observers of the linguistic scene in Colonial America remarked on its uniformity (see for example the relevant quotations in Dillard 1975: 55-58). The words of John Witherspoon (1723-1794), a Scotsman who immigrated to America in 1769, are well known and worth repeating once more:

> The vulgar in America speak much better than the vulgar in Great Britain, for a very obvious reason, *viz.*, that being much more unsettled and moving frequently from place to place, they are not so liable to local peculiarities either in accent or phraseology. (qtd. in Mencken 1948: 19)

William Eddis, visiting from England wrote in a letter of June 8, 1770:

> Is it not … reasonable to suppose, that the English language must be greatly corrupted by such a strange intermixture of various nations [he mentions Great Britain and Ireland and "almost every other European government"]? The reverse is, however, true. The language of the immediate descendants of such a promiscuous

[7] The process in which a *koiné* emerges. The term derives from the Greek word *koiné*, meaning "common" and referring originally to the variety of Greek which became the lingua franca of the Hellenistic period (cf. Thomson qtd. in Siegel 1999: 5).

> ancestry is perfectly uniform, and unadulterated; nor has it borrowed any provincial, or national accent, from its British or foreign parentage. (qtd. in Boorstin 1958: 275)

To recognize the koinéization of English in America does mean to deny local and regional differences in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, to say nothing of class, gender, and ethnic differences, all of which will be elaborated on in various sections throughout the remainder of this chapter. Koinéization did not level everything in its path, and it did not occur overnight. More likely it stretched over at least three generations: in the first speakers accommodated to each other; in the following generations nativized the compromise forms. In looking at how AmE differs from Insular English we will begin by looking at the influence of further languages the speakers of English had contact with.

10.1.3. Colonial American English in contact with other European languages. In 1700[8] the population of the North American colonies was more than 200,000 (Indians not counted). The settlers, mostly from England, Scotland, and Ireland, were concentrated chiefly in Massachusetts and Virginia (both with about 50,000). At the end of the colonial period in the United States the number had grown to about 2.5 million, of whom 20% were Africans (mostly slaves). The population was surprisingly urban: Philadelphia with 40,000 and Boston with 25,000 were the second and third largest cities in the English-speaking world (but clearly far, far behind London). Charleston, South Carolina had 12,000, but Williamsburg, Virginia's largest "city," had a permanent year-round population of only 1500.

Yet despite the large numbers of people from Britain and Ireland and their descendants, other European settlers were also an important presence in colonial America. Approximately 17% of the people living in New York and New Jersey were of Dutch origin; in Delaware (briefly there was the Swedish colony of New Sweden at Fort Christiana, 1638-1655) 9% were Swedish. Pennsylvania was heavily settled by Germans (approximately one-third) (Bailey 2004: 11), and throughout Canada and the Mississippi Valley the French presence was dominant, just as the Spanish were in Florida. The linguistic effect of the presence of the languages of these people is, however, remarkably small.

Dutch contributed chiefly to the vocabulary and to a small extent to public culture. Among the words which entered AmE from Dutch we find the somewhat less well-known *cruller* (a kind of doughnut) and the ubiquitous *cookie*. Other words for food include *cole slaw*, *pot cheese* (loan translation < *pot kees*) and *waffle*. The once very American word *boss* also comes from Dutch, as do *yacht*, *stoop* (the porch-like steps in front of urban houses), *snoop*, *spook*, *dope*, *dumb*, and maybe even *Yankee* [9](< *Jan Kees* "John Cheese" because of the Yankees' (i.e. New Englanders') pale complexion. *Freebooter* is a loan translation of Dutch *vrijbuiter*. In the same field of shipping ME already had borrowed widely from Dutch (see chap. 5). Now, however, we can add *scow* and over-land transportation such as *span* (of horses) pulling a *sleigh* or the *caboose*[9] on a train. More strictly cultural items include Saint Nicolas, better known as Santa Claus (both from the Dutch) and street names in New York, such as Wall St. (so named because of the Walloons who lived there) or Hell's Gate ("Bright Gate"). The various placenames ending in {-hook}(< *hoek*) such as Sandy Hook also come from Dutch. Further items either regional or no longer current were also borrowed into AmE (e.g. *patroon, hay barrack, boodle*; *erve* "small inheritance," *kolf baan* "a mallet used in a particular game," *rolliche* "meat roulade," *olicook* "fat cake") (cf. Marckwardt 1980: 51ff).

German, French, and Spanish are the most important European languages which English speakers came into contact with in the colonial period, yet influence they had was relatively negligible. This would change in the 19th and 20th centuries as we will see below (10.3.4).

10.1.4 The language of the African slaves. By the end of the colonial period the percentage of people of African descent in what became the United States had reached approximately one-fifth of the population. With probably only minor, individual exceptions these people spoke the one or the other variety of English, depending very much of the nature of their relations with Euro-Americans. Slavery itself existed in all of the colonies, but there was a small, slowly growing community of free African Americans. Among the slaves there were house servants, skilled craftsmen, and field laborers. This had consequences for the type language spoken. Where contact was less intensive, it is very likely that a form of creole, if not, indeed, in some cases, pidgin English was common. Where contact was closer, de-creolized forms were in use, often very close the usage of the free white population.

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[8] By comparison England toward the end of the 17th century had a population of 5 million, of whom 500,000 lived in London.

[9] Disputed origin; other explanations abound.

African American Pidgin English and Plantation Creole. There is little direct evidence of Pidgin English in the North American colonies. In the very early period from 1620-1700 there are sporadic bits taken from the speech of slaves such as that of Tituba, a slave brought to Massachusetts from Barbados, who testified at the Salem witch trials (1692). Dillard, who recounts the available evidence, lists the following recorded by one of the presiding judges at the trials, Justice Hathorne (an ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne): *I no hurt them at all; He tell me he God; They told me serve him* (Dillard 1973: 79). According to Dillard the features of African (American) Pidgin English would be:

feature	example	feature	example
enclitic vowels	*grandy*	invariant verb	*nobody have smallpox any more*
absence of the article	*cutty skin* "cut the skin"	phonological interference	/ʃ/ for /tʃ/ as in *shilde* for *childe*
future marker/adverb	*by 'nd by* (*bimeby*)	non-differentiation of gender	*he, 'im, and him* regardless of gender

(ibid.: 79f).

There are more records from the late 18th century which would include many of the points just listed such as enclitic vowels and unmarked 3rd person singular present verbs plus some use of the past tense marker *did*, replacement of /l/ by /r/ as in *terra* "tell" (reminiscent of the phonology of many West African languages), cluster simplification such as *tone* for *stone* or *peech* for *speech*, durative *be* (vs. zero-*be* for short-term states; see below 10.3.2), and non-redundant tense marking. According to Dillard a form reminiscent of Gullah probably existed throughout the colonies and early republic (ibid.: 87-93).

The data is not very abundant, and this leads to important differences in positioning as to the origins and development of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). While Dillard, quoted here several times, emphasizes the creole origins of AAVE, others (Poplack et al. 2002: 100-109; also a traditional position of many dialectologists) have put more emphasis on the continuity between the non-standard forms of BrE and AAVE. According to them the verb ending {-s}, whether missing in the 3rd person singular or present in verbs other than the 3rd person singular, was subject to widespread variation, esp. in Northern BrE (the "Northern Subject Rule"), later spreading to more general working class usage. In a similar vein many of the unmarked past tense forms, e.g. *come* for StE *came*, are credited to "retentions of once robust features since eradicated from the accepted standard" (ibid.: 109). The evidence speaks for a combination of sources. Clearly many of the pronunciation features of early AAVE (enclitic vowels, /l/ → /r/ shift) have no source in BrE nor do article absence, some types of time-tense marking (*bimeby*), or undifferentiated gender in the 3rd person singular personal pronouns. AAVE will be discussed in more detail in 10.3.2.

10.2 Development of North American English after American independence. Overall, the same effect of education and the schools, development of the reading public, effects of urbanization that we have seen in connection with Great Britain were also present in North America. The degree and tempo of the various developments may have differed, but the effect on the standard language was similar. Indeed, StE in Great Britain and Ireland and in North America (as indeed elsewhere in the world) for largely identical. Those points which differ will be elaborated on in the following sections.

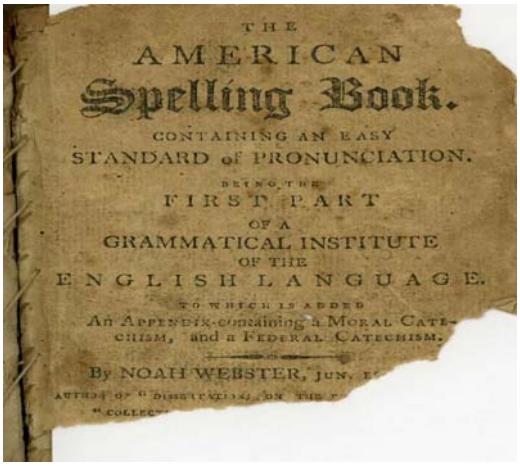
THE
AMERICAN
Spelling Book.
CONTAINING AN EASY
STANDARD of PRONUNCIATION.
BEING THE
FIRST PART
OF A
GRAMMATICAL INSTITUTE
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.
TO WHICH IS ADDED
An Appendix containing a Moral Cate-
chism, and a Federal Catechism.
By NOAH WEBSTER, jun.

Fig. 10.2: Webster's Spelling Book

10.2.1 Standardization. The standard in America, like in Great Britain and Ireland, is independent of a single institution such as an academy, yet it would be mistaken to assume there was no authority in such matters. In fact, it is a conglomeration of self-appointed (or, indeed, self-anointed) experts – the authors and compilers of grammars, dictionaries, and manuals of usage which embody authority in language.

The single most imposing name within this tradition in the United States was Noah Webster (1758-1843), whose most influential books were *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1783-85), consisting of three parts, a speller (1783), a grammar (1784), and a reader (1785), and his *American*

Dictionary of the English Language (1828). Indeed, the dictionary has given his name legendary status, so much so that "Look it up in *Webster's*" is seen as the final authority, and the name Webster appears in the title of a variety of US dictionaries. Parallel to Webster's books other well-established and influential works included the McGuffey Readers, of which an estimated 120 million copies were sold between their first publication in 1836 and 1960 (they continue to be sold today). Next to spelling and vocabulary learning these readers emphasized religious and national values.

Vocabulary. An important part of the national project of AmE has been to emphasize its independence from BrE. This has also led to a feeling of division between the United States and Anglophone Canada (see below 10.2.5). The title of H.L. Mencken's monumental book on English in the United States, *The American Language* (1919-1963), offers testimony to this. Mencken's work emphasizes difference in vocabulary and meaning, esp. in contrast to BrE. Much of what he compiled is quaint and vaguely interesting, but often trivial and dated. What he stresses in discussing Americanisms is the type of items concerned, viz. words borrowed from other languages, words needed to accommodate American culture and institutions, British provincialisms, archaisms (from a British point of view), and extensions and shifts of meaning (cf. Mencken 1963: 103.109).

Clearly, there is ample material of the sort Mencken assembled, but the important perspective is that only the cultural-institutional items pose a really major problem. Cultural-institutional comprises all those names (*John Hancock, Paul Bunyan, Jim Crow, Sasquatch*), historical-geographic references (e.g. *Three Mile Island, Teapot Dome, the Qu'Appelle Treaty, the Beltway, Podunk*) , institutions (*Bill 101, NBA, FDA, the Mounties*), traditional songs, music, and dances *("Sweet Betsy from Pike," "Roll, Jordan, Roll," "The Virginia Reel"*), national customs (*trick-or-treat, Presidents Day, Levée*), and more – a sheer endless list. What is true in the United States and Canada is true of every country, and it is something we fully expect to encounter in an unfamiliar place. Although this is part of the vocabulary of national languages, it is really less the kind of thing you find in a dictionary and more what we use an encyclopedia for.

The remainder of Mencken's types are either minor or peripheral. The kind of item borrowed into AmE from Indian languages (10.0.3) and from Dutch (10.1.3) are often enough particular to this variety, but of little significance beyond local usage. Specifically AmE items may be known and used only in North American English, but often they a recognized and understand, though not actively used in other variety. And, of course, the same is true of the peculiarities of the other varieties, as well – an AmE speaker in conversation with a speaker of BrE may know what is meant by *draughts* but simply continue to use the AmE designation *checkers* . Why does this happen? One of the reasons is that the use of a given national item is that it is emblematic; it signifies; it labels the speakers as a member of (here) a national group.

Spelling. The one aspect of the standard language which Webster is especially closely associated with is the reform of spelling, which he ardently supported and undertook step by step in his spelling book (which rivals McGuffey's six volumes of readers with sales of over 60,000,000 by the 1960s).

> Slowly, he changed the spelling of words, such that they became "Americanized." He chose *s* over *c* in words like *defense,* he changed the *re* to *er* in words like *center,* he dropped one of the Ls in *traveler,* and at first he kept the *u* in words like *colour* or *favour* but dropped it in later editions. He also changed "tongue" to "tung." (Wikipedia-Noah Webster, q.v.)

As this quotation shows, much, but not all, of what he proposed was accepted and is now normal AmE usage. These spelling reforms are not haphazard and unsystematic. Instead, we find the principles of

- **simplification**: double letters (<waggon> → <wagon>; Latin spellings (<aesthetic> and <foetus> → <esthetic> and <fetus>), word endings (<catalogue> → <catalog>)
- **regularization**: all cases of <-our> become <-or> (<colour> → <color> and <-re> becomes <–er> (→)
- **derivational uniformity**: noun – verb (both <practice>; noun – adjective (both <defense> and <defensive> has an <s>)
- **reflection of pronunciation**: <z> or <s> as /z/ (<civilize> → <civilize>); <gh> in words like <through> or <night> may be simplified <thru> or <nite> in informal spellings thus coming closer to the pronunciation
- **stress indication**: doubling of the <l> indicate stress on the syllable ('traveled vs. re'belled)
- **pronunciation spellings**: often as /ɔ:ftən/ rather than traditional /ɔ:fən/

There are in addition a number of individual, unsystematic differences (<kerb> → <curb> or <cheque> → <check> but also nonce spellings, esp. in advertising, where we find examples such as E-Z ("easy," which works only for AmE, where the letter <z> is *zee* and not *zed*) or *Xtra* or *Kwik*. Finally, it should be noted that AmE usage is not completely consistent; for example, we find <advertisement> with <s> and many people write <Saviour> (a reference to Jesus, with a capital) with <u> and <theatre> with <-re> as if the BrE spelling lent the word more standing.

Much of the variation in AmE lies in the greater willingness on the part of its users to accept the few modest reforms that have been suggested. Canadians seem to be of two minds about this with the consequence that we find far more variation – the Canadians may see precisely the variation as specifically Canadian.

Grammar. StE does not have as much variation in this area as in morphology. Consequently, we will list only few illustrative examples of differences. American speakers seem to be less strict about the adverbs which require the use of the present perfect (*I already saw them* is fully acceptable); *have got* differs in meaning from *have gotten*; *have* is seldom used in negatives and questions without *do*; the frequency of use of the modal auxiliaries is often different and the reduced forms of the semi-modals such as *gonna*, *gotta*, and *wanna*. The mandative subjunctive (e.g. *important that someone go*) is more normal even in spoken standard AmE than in BrE. Notional concord (e.g. *the team are ready*) is less frequent in AmE, but not uncommon. Finally, copular verbs pattern differently in BrE and AmE (e.g. AmE *seems to be/looks like a fool* vs. BrE *seems/looks a fool*).

Morphology. Standard AmE has inherited a few different verb forms than those used in BrE. Well known are the following (in which the AmE form is hardly used in BrE (if at all), but not vice versa: past tense *dove* (for *dived*); past participle *gotten* (for *got*), *shaven* (for *shaved*), *proven* (for *proved*); past and past participle: a preference for {-ed} rather than {-t} as in *burned, dreamed, dwelled, kneeled, leaned, learned, spelled, spilled, spoiled* also *snuck* (for *sneaked*), *quit* (for *quitted*), *bet* (*betted*), *fit* (*fitted*).

Among the numerous differences in prepositions we will list only a few. BrE frequently uses prepositions ending in –*st* where AmE has *amid*, among, *while*; compound prepositions that require *of* as the second element may do without it in AmE, e.g. *to go out the door*, but may take *of* in *alongside of*, *off of*, *opposite of*; clock time in AmE uses *a quarter to/till/of* but BrE only seems to use *to*.

10.2.2 The pronunciation of AmE which is most often recognized as the standard is frequently called General American (GenAm), sometimes also Network Standard, probably so recognized because some version of it is spoken by the largest number of speakers of AmE and also because it is the pronunciation most widely used in the broadcasting media. Yet there is, in fact, no completely recognized standard in the area of pronunciation. In the following we look first at one version of the early development of American English pronunciation, then at three of the major (regional) systems of the phonetics and phonology of AmE.

Consonants. In this area there is little variation from region to region (but see some of the remarks below). Standard AmE has a system of 24 consonants, precisely the same ones as in RP (eight pairs of voice-unvoiced obstruents, viz. the six stops: b,p, d,t, g,k; the two affricates: dʒ, tʃ; and the eight fricatives: v,f, ð[10],θ, z,s, ʒ,ʃ). There are three nasals (m, n, ŋ), one lateral (l), the voiceless vowel (h) and three approximants or semi-vowels (j, r, w).[11] While the inventory is identical, there are numerous phonotactic differences and a differing functionality for [hw] and [ʔ]. Among the more important phonotactic points are

- the rhoticity of GenAm (all three *r*'s are pronounced is *reporter*)
- the flapping of /t/ (= [ɖ]) in a voiced environment before an unstressed syllable (*latter* = *ladder*)
- the loss of post-nasal /t/ (*winter* = *winner*)
- the non-occurrence of /j/ after dental or alveolar consonants, i.e. no /nj, tj, dj, sj, lj, θj/ in the same syllable (*new*, *tune*, *due*, *sue*, *lute*, *thew*); instead we find /n,t,d,s,l,θ/ alone or we find palatalization as in *educate* /edʒəkeɪt/

[10] Much as in other national varieties of English /ð/ is realized in non-standard pronunciations as /d/ or as /v/ and /θ/ occasionally as /t/ and more often as /f/.

[11] The labeling is often different for /h/ (glottal fricative) and for /r/ (post-alveolar approximant).

The occurrence of [ʔ] in RP is increasing (a slow move in the direction of London speech) in such environments as represented by the <t> in *not ever* or *see it*. A similar change cannot be observed in GenAm, where, however, [ʔ] is more common before stressed initial vowels (*ask Adam* [ʔæskʔædəm]. In both GenAm and RP [hw] is seldom used though perhaps not uncommon in emphatic speech.

Vowels reveal the most dramatic differences. Taking Kökeritz' reconstruction of the Shakespearean pronunciation as a starting point Pilch (1955) showed the changes that the system used by Webster represent and how these, then, appear in ModAmE as shown in the following table.

monoph-thongs	front			central			back			wide closing diphthongs			
	Sh	Web	Mod AmE	Sh	Web	Mod AmE	Sh	Web	Mod AmE		Sh	Web	Mod AmE
high-long	iː	iː	iː		iː		uː	uː	uː/ʉː	(i)	ʌi	ai	aɪ
high-short	i	i	ɪ				u	u	ʊ	(ou)	ʌu	au	ɑʊ
mid-long	eː	eː	eː/eɪ			ɜː	oː	oː	oː/oʊ	(oi)	ɑi	ai	ɔɪ
mid-short	e	e	e	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ		o					
low-long	æː	æː	æː/æ				ɑː	ɑː	ɑ/ɔː	(yː)	juː	juː/iː	juː/jʉː
low-short	æ	æ					ɑ	ɑ					

Table 10.3: The phonemes of English c. 1600 (Shakespeare), c. 1800 (Webster) and 2000 [check Wells I]

The major changes from Shakespeare (late 16th – early 17th century) to Webster (late 18th – early 19th)):

- the phonemicization of high central /ɨ/
- the phonemicization of short mid-back /o/
- the monophthongization of /juː/ to /ɨː/ after /t,d,ʃ,j/(*truth, duke, sure, your*)
- the continuation of the GVS with the lowering of /əɪ/ to /aɪ/ and of /əu/ to /ɑʊ/ and the monophthongization of both to /a/ in front of stops.

The major changes from Webster's times to today (late 20th – early 21st century):

- reversal of phonemicization of high central /ɨ/
- the dephonemicization of length in favor of phonetic quality, e.g. /i/ as /ɪ/and /u/ as /ʊ/
- phonemicization of /ɜː/
- regionally differing diphthongization of /eː/ and /oː/ to /eɪ/and /oʊ/
- varying loss of the potential low back distinctions between /ɑ(ː)/, /ɔː/, and /ɒ/
- backing of the first element of /ɔɪ/
- varying fronting of [uː] to [ʉː]

Present-day AmE may be described as having a number of vowel systems where different sets of changes are occurring. In fact, three different shifts seem to be in progress: the Southern Vowel Shift, the Northern Cities Shift, and the Low Back Merger.[12] Labov has outlined how such shifts looks and has suggested how some of the principles that lie behind them may look.[13] As a result of these principles there appear to be "two major types of English dialects, moving in diametrically opposite directions" (Labov 1991: 4). By adding in the effect of mergers we get a third major type. They are vaguely parallel to the North – Midland – South division, or even to the more traditional division in AmE into North, South, and West. What is characteristic of the shifts is that the vowel systems undergo radical rotation

[12] A fourth chain shift, the African American Shift, will be outlined in 10.3.2.

[13] I. Tense or long (peripheral) vowels rise.
II. Lax, short (non-peripheral) vowels fall (IIa: nuclei of upgliding diphthongs and short nuclei do not merge).
III. Back vowels move to the front.
IV. In chain shifting, low non-peripheral vowels become peripheral.
V. In chain shifting, high peripheral vowels become non-peripheral before peripheral glides.
VI. Peripherality is defined relative to the vowel system as a whole.
VII. Mergers expand at the expense of distinctions.
VIII. Mergers initiate pull shifts and inhibit push shifts.
Principles I – III are widely operative in Indo-European languages. IV is also quite general. V applies only to Baltic, Slavic, and Germanic languages, not to the Indic, Greek, Italic, or Celtic branches or to Albanian, perhaps because the phonetic space in these languages is simpler (without tense and lax tracks) (Labov 1991: 10f).

without convergence or divergence within the overall inventory of the vowels concerned: "In these rotations, whole sets of vowels reverse their relative positions to each other; phones that represent one phoneme in one dialect represent an entirely different phoneme in another" (ibid: 3), e.g. *talk* in one accent sounds like *tuck* in another.

General Principles of Chain Shifting. Labov's principles depend on the distinction between tense and lax vowels. In the first (I.) tense or long vowels, which are peripheral, rise. For example, /æ/ (a phonologically short vowel) splits into two types in New York City: (a) long (before voiced consonants) and (b) short before voiceless ones[14]: [æ̝ːᵊ] vs. [æ] as in *bad* and *bat*. Or: *caught* stand in oppostion to *cot* (with [o̝ːə] vs. [ɒ]. The second principle (II.) stands in contrast to this: Lax or short vowels, i.e. non-peripheral ones fall. The first principle has been active for many hundreds of years in English (cf. the GVS; see chap. 6). Despite changes over time, a balance is maintained due to principles that are at work between the subsystems of the vowel system, of which there of four in English (in most dialects).

> "Sound changes affect phonological systems in one of two opposing ways. Chain shifts rotate features and preserve distinctions; mergers neutralize features and lose distinctions. Chain shifts are evidence of the tendency of sound systems to preserve their primary function of identifying meaningful units, and mergers are evidence that some other force powerful enough to override that function, must be at work" (Labov 1991: 28).

To make up for loss of peripheral vowels, new ones come into being according to principle IV, which says that in chain shifting, low non-peripheral vowels become peripheral. The mirror image of this is the change of high peripheral vowels to non-peripheral ones as the first element of diphthongs (glides) (Principle V). This seems to be happening in English but not in other Germanic languages (ibid.: 10).

Two Pivot Points of AmE. The first is the low front vowel, which has historically been unstable and has tended to rise, as it still does (from [æ] or [a]). The second is the unstable distinction between *long open o* and *short open o*, i.e. /ɔː/ and /ɒ/. This has been resolved in two ways: (a) [ɒ] is unrounded and lowered to [ɑː] and /ɔː/is raised and overrounded; (b) merger.

The Northern Cities Shift. (1) Short [æ] becomes long and tensed and rises along the front periphery. (2) Long and short *o* remain distinct, and short *o* is unrounded and low and moves to peripheral position, then forward toward low front [æ]; long *o* remains lower mid back, but eventually moves forward to a more centralized position according to principle III, in which back vowels move to(ward) the front. This shift applies from Western New England and westward in the upper northern areas (NY, PA, OH, IN, IL, MI, WI), where we find:

Peripheral [æː] rises to [eːᵊ](I);
non-peripheral [ɪ]
falls to [e]; [e] to [æː] (II);
non-peripheral [ɒ] falls to
peripheral [ɑː], which begins to
front; it pulls [ɔː] behind it (IV and (V).
For example: *Ann* = *Ian*; *bit* = *bet*;
talk = *tuck*; *locks* = *lacks*.

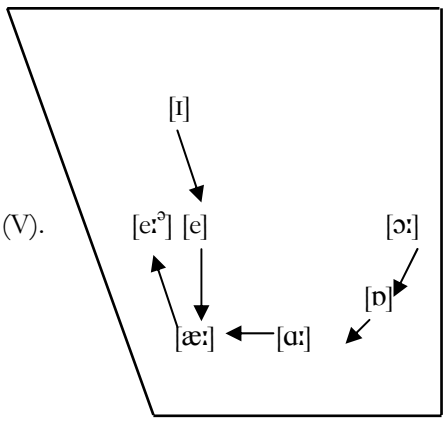

Fig. 10.3 The Northern Cities Shift

The Northern Cities Shift is unusual in English because it involves the short vowels, which historically have been stable. Furthermore, it is extremely complex. The larger the city, the more advanced the change. It is most extreme in Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago:

[14] This is the result of phonetic lengthening in English before a pause or (somewhat shorter) a voiced consonant as opposed to a short allophone before a voiceless consonant. The ultimate cause of this difference in length is not clear.

Peripheral [æː] rises to [eːᵊ]; non-peripheral [ɪ] falls to [e]; [e] to [æː]; non-peripheral [ɒ] falls to peripheral [ɑː], which begins to front; it pulls [ɔː] behind it. For example: *buses* sounds like *bosses* as well as the changes shown above.

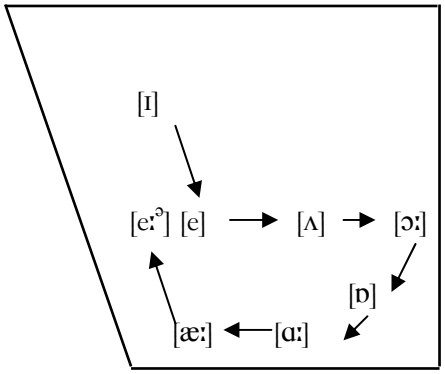

Fig. 10.4: Expanded Northern Cities Shift (Michigan, Cleveland, Chicago)

BrE regional accents do not follow the Northern Cities Shift since the two pivot points remain stable virtually everywhere. That is, there is no raising of /æ/ in Northern England, Scotland, and Ireland (ibid.: 20f). In Glasgow, for example, /æ/ is realized as [a]; and /ɒ/ and /ɔː/ remain distinct, and /ɒ/ does not unround. The long vowels /iː/ and /eː/ remain monophthongal. What does change as in the Northern Cities Shift is the centralization and lowering of non-peripheral /ɪ/ to [ɨ] or [i̽] and of /e/ to tensed, peripheral mid front [eːᵊ] (and in a few items to low front-central [a]). This similarity need not be the result of historical continuity, but may well be a matter of the logic of vowel shifts: (1) a vacancy in the [æ] position (here at low central [a]) and (2) the stability of /iː/ and /eː/ (ibid.: 21f).

The Southern Shift is to be found in southern England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the US (Middle Atlantic states, the Southern Mountain region, the Upper and Lower South). In it we find that

(1) /æ/ remains while in most American ones it splits into long, tensed [æː], which moves much as in the Northern Cities Shift, and short, lax [æ], which remains in place.
(2) long and short *o*, realized as ɔ(ː) and ɑ(ː), remain separate.
(3) the first element of the closing diphthongs downshift:

[ɪⁱ] → [əɪ]
[eɪ] → [aɪ] so that [aɪ] → [ɒɪ] (BrE, AusE varieties)
or [aɪ] → [ɑː] (Southern AmE varieties)
[ʊᵘ] → [əʊ]
[oʊ] → [əʊ] → [aʊ] so that [aʊ] → [æo]

(4) the back vowels are fronted

[uː] → [ʉː]
[oʊ] → [əʊ] → [ʌʊ]

(5) the short front vowel become peripheral and move upward:

[æ] → [a̝]
[e] → [e̝]
[ɪ] → [ɪ̝]

General Principles Governing Merger. "Sound changes affect phonological systems in one of two opposing ways. Chain shifts rotate features and preserve distinctions; mergers neutralize features and lose distinctions. Chain shifts are evidence of the tendency of sound systems to preserve their primary function of identifying meaningful units, and mergers are evidence that some other force powerful enough to override that function, must be at work" (Labov 1991: 28). After merger, the phonetic space available to the merged phoneme is greater, and this inhibits push shifts. At the same time the merger itself is part of a strong pull phenomenon. This means that a merger enlarges the stock of words involved in a pull chain but removes words from participation in a push chain by removing the pressure from a potential push.

Low Back Merger (the third dialect). There are two centers for this change, Boston and Pittsburg. But it is found throughout the US and applies to Canada as well, though there is very little evidence of it

in the South and it is diluted in the area of the Northern Cities Shift. This is a phenomenon essentially restricted to AmE (ibid.: 30). In it (1) /æ/ is relatively stable [æ] and (2) long and short *o* merge (*cot* = *caught*). It is progressing rapidly, and girls tend to be the leaders (cf. Labov 1972 on the role of Low Middle Class women as change leaders).

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