To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Anthony Patterson Cavender entitled "A Phonemic and Phonetic Analysis of the Folk Speech of Bedford County, Tennessee." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Anthropology.

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A PHONEMIC AND PHONETIC ANALYSIS OF THE FOLK SPEECH OF BEDFORD COUNTY, TENNESSEE

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee

Anthony Patterson Cavender

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To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Cavender, and other members of the Cavender family, I should like to express my most sincere appreciation for their moral encouragement and financial support. It is to them that I dedicate this small piece of scholarship.

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the constant assistance of Professor Harold Orton. His generosity in sharing his knowledge and experience of dialectology cannot be measured. To Dr. Norbert R. Riedl I owe particular thanks for believing in me and my work. I should also like to thank Mr. Alan Thomas who devoted a lot of his time to helping me prepare for this thesis. Our many discussions in reference to social linguistics were most instructive. Lastly, Dr. William M. Bass, Dr. Harry Lindquist, and Dr. Nathalia Wright deserve special mention for help given throughout my graduate studies.

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ABSTRACT

Until recently, no systematic study of Tennessee folk speech had been performed. This study, descriptive in scope, will help fill a void and provide valuable data for determining Tennessee's relationship to other American dialects.

Five informants, each one fitting Hans Kurath's Type I, Group A classification, were interviewed using *The Questionnaire for the Investigation of American Regional English: Based on the Work Sheets of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada* (Orton and Wright, 1972). The phonological material obtained from the five tape recorded interviews is presently in a unitary phonemic system along with characteristic allophonic and free variation (incidence of the phonemes).

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INTRODUCTION

This project represents a small, but nevertheless significant contribution to the field of linguistic geography. Studies in area linguistics began in the United States in 1931 under the leadership of Hans Kurath, who organized the first systematic survey of regional speech in the Atlantic coastal states. In 1943 Kurath and his staff published in three volumes *The Linguistic Atlas of New England*, the first publication of *The Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*. This publication contains a prodigious amount of information concerning the phonology, vocabulary, and grammar of the speech of the inhabitants of New England (Bronstein, 1960:40). But even more important is the fact that Kurath and his staff showed that a systematic recovery of data through exhaustive fieldwork is essential to the analysis of linguistic data. *The Linguistic Atlas of New England* must surely be regarded as a milestone in the field of linguistic geography for it provided the stimulus to initiate similar projects all across the nation.

The data collected for *The Linguistic Atlas of the Middle Atlantic and South Atlantic States* is currently being edited for publication by Raven I. McDavid and A. L. Davis at the University of Chicago. *The Linguistic Atlas of the North Central States* was begun in 1956 under the direction of Albert H. Marckwardt. In 1957 Harold B. Allen began work on *The Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest*. Work on the *Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast* began in 1950 and is under the direction of David Reed and Carroll Reed. To date none of these linguistic atlases have been published (Bronstein, 1960:41).

Of particular interest to the people interested in the speech of

the inhabitants of Tennessee is *The Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* (LAGS) which is being directed by Lee Pederson of Emory University. Even though Tennessee is not a Gulf State, it being included in this project. Fieldworkers associated with the project have already interviewed several informants across the state. The reader should consult Pederson (1972) for more information on *The Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States*.

This thesis was originally conceived under the guidance of Professor Harold Orton of Leeds University in England, who was a visiting professor in the Department of English at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in 1972 and 1973. Professor Orton was of the opinion then that Tennessee should be investigated separately since it was not a Gulf State. Professor Orton and other interested individuals in the Departments of English and Anthropology at the University of Tennessee believed that Tennessee may not be adequately surveyed linguistically. With this notion in mind the writer and Professor Orton thought that a thorough investigation of the folk speech of one county would be sufficient in scope for one individual to perform while at the same time provide essential data for determining Tennessee's linguistic affinity to other regions of the United States. Professor Alan Thomas of the University of Wales, now visiting professor in the Department of English at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, recently informed this writer that *The Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* plans to investigate Tennessee as thoroughly as all the other Gulf States.

Even though Tennessee is to be investigated by LAGS it does not necessarily preclude projects of this type. Whereas the *Atlas* is seeking to elucidate upon the three levels of speech as determined by Kurath

(1972:164), this project concentrates singularly on one of those types: folk speech. This study will hopefully enhance or add to the data collected by the fieldworkers associated with LAGS.

Definition of Folk Speech

Kurath and the scholars associated with *The Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada* recognize three levels of speech within each dialect region: (1) cultivated speech, (2) common speech, and (3) folk speech. Folk speech may be defined as "the speech patterns that develop indpendently of formal schooling and are characteristic of, but by no means entirely limited to, the older and relatively uneducated group within any regional dialect" (Richmond, 1972:148). Folk speech may be defined simply as the old fashioned way of talking that is more characteristic of uneducated peoples associated with an agrarian mode of living. The reader must not misinterpret the above definition as meaning either that the peoples who exhibit folk speech are unintelligent or that traces of folk speech are not to be found in urban areas. The writer is simply stating the belief that education tends to "contaminate" or "taint" one's idiolect, especially the older forms of speech that existed for years before education became compulsory. Also, it should be emphasized that many folk expressions and pronunciations can be found in the city, despite the fact that speech patterns are more in flux in such an environment.

Previous Studies of Tennessee Folk Speech

Nearly all the previous work concerned with Tennessee folk speech is of little use for determining the dialectal relationship of the state to other regions of the country. Most all of the early work consists

of the compilation of word lists made up of archaic verbs, nouns, and quaint expressions that did more to intrigue than to inform. It appears that the central thrust of the early investigations is intent upon proving that the speech of the inhabitants of the Appalachian region of Tennessee represented a vestige of Elizabethan English. One need only review the work of Brown (1889), Combs (1931), Pollard (1915), Owens (1932), and Hicks (1949) for examples of this type of work. Because of their primarily antiquarian interest we are left with a distorted and fragmented picture of Tennessee folk speech, the pieces of which, for the most part, are lost to us forever. Perhaps the only respectable work left to us is the study of Southern Mountain speech by Joseph S. Hall entitled *The Phonetics of Great Smoky Mountain Speech* (1942). Considering the time in which he conducted his research, it can be viewed as a valuable contribution to American dialectology. Hall's research, however, suffers from the same methodological problems as that of all the other early investigations. For example, he never explains how he gathered his data, where he gathered it (the exact locations), or the type of informant used for interviewing. All of these factors are crucial for determining linguistic and social affinity, or lack of it, to other regions.[1]

One might wonder why this writer chose to investigate Bedford County. The reasons are many and will be discussed in detail in Chapter II, but one point needs to be emphasized now in reference to

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[1] Two excellent dissertations concerned with the folk speech of East Tennessee were recently compiled by doctoral candidates in the Department of English at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Both dissertations are listed in the bibliography.

previous studies on folk speech in Tennessee. Because of the predominant concern of the early researchers with "antiquarian" English in the Southern Mountains, other areas of Tennessee were virtually neglected, Middle Tennessee being a case in point. What little data of the folk speech of Middle Tennessee does exist is as flawed as the work performed in the Southern Mountains. The writer refers the reader to the work of Neitzel (1936) and Farr (1940) as examples. In contrast to the work performed in East Tennessee, absolutely no detailed description of the phonetics of Middle Tennessee has been performed. Further, many Tennesseans, including both laymen and students of dialectology, believe there may be a distinctive difference between the folk speech of Middle Tennessee and East Tennessee. It was therefore thought by the writer that this study of a Middle Tennessee county might provide some tentative evidence one way or the other.

In conclusion, we know very little about our speaking heritage in Tennessee. The writer views this situation with a great deal of consternation, especially in consideration of the obvious fact that many of the traditional aspects of rural American folk culture are rapidly perishing due to culture change--folk speech being no exception. Prior to compulsory education and the bombardment of mass communication the folk speech of America no doubt reflected more the traditional, localized means of sharing daily experiences. Even though it has altered significantly in the last two decades, it is the belief of the author that it remains a viable part of the agrarian communities of many parts of the United States. This point is more cogently expressed by Hans Kurath:

> Enterprises and activities that are regionally restricted have . . . a considerable body of regional vocabulary. . . . Regional and local expression are most common in the vocabulary of the intimate

> everyday life of the home and farm. . . . Food, clothing, shelter, health, the day's work, play, mating, social gatherings, the land, the farm buildings, implements, the farm stocks and crops, the weather, the fauna, and the flora. These are the intimate concern of the common folk in the countryside, and for these things expressions are handed down in the family and the neighborhood that schooling and reading and familiarity with regional or national use do not blot out (1972:65).

Thus, while it is true that we may still be in a position to capture some of the essence of Tennessee's folk speech today, it is doubtful that it will remain drastically unchanged in the years to come. The writer considered it an urgent task to describe as accurately as possible one dimension of it, believing that he may be preserving a small part of our heritage for future generations.

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY

Constructing a theoretical and methodological model that would adapt to the study of folk speech and produce the necessary linguistic data decisive to making relative assumptions of dialectal significance was a major concern of this project. There is nothing novel in the methodology used in this study, although some facets of it are still being debated by linguistic geographers today, both here in America and in Europe. The writer will present his methodology in this chapter and put forth a justification for its use.

Choosing the County

Bedford County was chosen mainly because of its predominantly agricultural economy. The county is located in the south-central portion of the physiographic province known as the Central Basin. This region is characterized by many rivers and streams, all of which drain a sometimes thin, but nevertheless rich soil. All geographical factors considered, this region has been described as one of the best agricultural environments in the state, if not in the entire county (Shiner, 1972:44-45 and Whitaker, 1946:201). It is now noted as one of the state's primary centers for the production of milk, sheep and horses. In earlier days it was famous for the raising of mules (*Agricultural Trends in Tennessee*, 1958:11).

It was alluded to earlier that the rural environs of Tennessee are undergoing rapid cultural and economic change. There were 1,546 farms in Bedford County in 1970 averaging 160 acres per farm. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce (1972:449), 80.2% of the land in Bedford

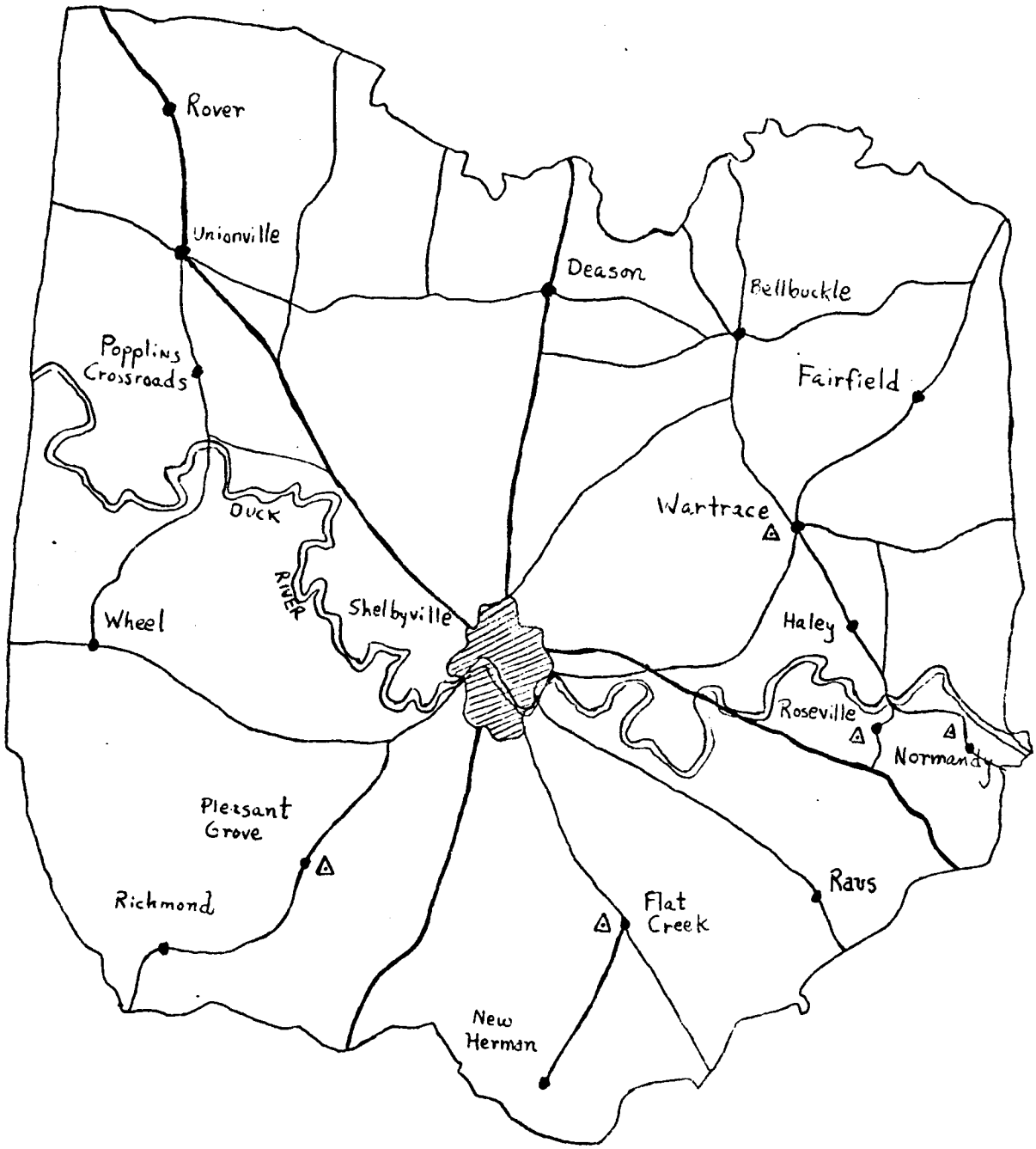


Figure 1. Map of Bedford County.

▲ - Location of informants interviewed.

County is still bound up in farms. But many of these farms are operated on a part-time basis by people who hold down other jobs. This fact is reflected in the overall trend in population residence that has been going on for the last few years. In a report submitted to the state government by the Tennessee State Planning Commission in 1971 concerning the population and economy of the Upper Duck Region, of which Bedford County is a part, the researches point to a distinct loss in population in the rural areas. In 1940, 28.2% of the population of the region lived in urban areas; in 1950, 40%; and in 1970, 53.5%. As the report emphasizes, these significant increases in urban population do not indicate people migrating in from outside the state, although that has certainly occurred. This increase in urban population represents more a migration from *within* the region itself (Tennessee State Planning Commission, 1971:2-17). The major factor responsible for this migration is the inability of the small-scale farmer to compete on the market. It is simply to his advantage to give up farming and find a job in the town. All this is presented to point out the obvious fact that the old-time farmer of the past will soon be no more. This frustrating fact became evident to the writer when he began his fieldwork: good informants are hard to find.

Choosing the Informants

In an effort to capture the "essence" of the folk speech of Bedford County a particular type of informant was interviewed. All five of the informants used in this study fit Kurath's Type I, Group A classification (1939:44). The writer, however, was even more selective than Kurath in the type of informant he chose. All of the informants interviewed in

this project met the following qualifications: (1) at least 70 years old; (2) a life-long resident of Middle Tennessee; (3) little formal education; (4) no extensive time spent outside Middle Tennessee, e.g., military service; (5) familiarity with the farming lifeways; and (6) good health and active mind.

To make the sample as homogeneous as possible, only Caucasian, male and female informants were interviewed. It is the opinion of the author that rural Negro speech should be studied independently.

Finding the appropriate informant presented quite a challenge. Two of the informants interviewed for this project, for example, were found at country stores, a favorite gathering spot for farmers during leisure hours. Another means used to locate prospective informants was the "snow-balling" effect. This is simply using known informants to introduce the fieldworker to other informants. Even this method, however, did not work every time. The writer spent many frustrating hours trying to gain the confidence of individuals who would have made excellent informants who refused to submit themselves to an interview because they believed their way of life was being studied as a curiosity.

Biographies of the informants interviewed for this project can be found in the appendix.

The Questionnaire

"The Questionnaire for the Investigation of American Regional English: Based on the Work Sheets of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada" (Orton and Wright, 1972) was used during formal interviewing sessions.[1]

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[1] A copy of the "Questionnaire" will be stored with the thesis in the library of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Structurally designed along the format of the *Compilation of the Work Sheets of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada and Associated Projects* (ed. A. L. Davis, R. I. McDavid, Jr., and Virginia G. McDavid, 1969), the "Questionnaire" has the questions already formulated for use in the field. Having the questions prepared ahead of time gives the fieldworker a distinct advantage in that it allows him to devote more time to maintaining his informant's interest, which is crucial in eliciting quick and reliable responses.

The "Questionnaire" contains about 1200 actual questions covering lexical, phonological, and morphological features. Since this thesis is primarily concerned with the phonology of folk speech, the writer sometimes omitted questions that were designed to provide data on grammar.

The Interview

All the interviews were tape-recorded in the quiet of the informant's home.[2] Before beginning the recording sessions, however, several hours were spent in informal conversation in the attempt to relieve the informant of the anxiety produced from the thought of having his voice put on tape. None of the informants had heard his voice on tape before and therefore viewed the tape recorder with suspicion. The informal conversation sessions were extremely useful in providing the investigator with an opportunity to familiarize himself with the informant's idiolect. These sessions were also helpful in keying in the writer on valuable folk cultural information which the writer could remember to ask during the recorded interview.

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[2]The tapes will be stored with the thesis in the library of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Three of the informants were quite apprehensive about the interview, believing that their intelligence was being tested. This is a ticklish situation and every dialectologist who has been in the field has his own method of coping with this problem. The writer had the most success in relieving his informant's tension by telling them they were making a valuable contribution toward preserving an American tradition. After being told this all five informants were eager and even proud to contribute their time, thinking, if the writer may borrow an expression from one of his informants, that they were preserving part of the "good old days."

All of the interviews lasted approximately four to five hours. As was previously mentioned, in some of the interviews the writer omitted asking the questions dealing with grammar. This occurred during the interviewing of informants #4 (I.S.) and #5 (L.F.). Informant #4 is old and too weak to endure the whole interview. Informant #5 simply refused to be interviewed after the first two sessions because she, too, found the interview to be quite taxing mentally as well as physically. Rather than make a nuisance of himself, the writer thought that he should content himself with the phonological data he was able to obtain. For those individuals interested in obtaining information on grammar the writer refers them to the recorded sessions of informants #1 (T.H.), #2 (A.B.), and #3 (E.A.) as well as the moments of free conversation of each informant the tape-recorder captured. The free conversation also provided a lot of interesting information relating to folk culture, e.g., making stick chimneys, constucting log houses, superstitious beliefs, etc. Such information makes the tapes even more valuable.

Nothing more than some occasional phonetic transcription was done during the interview, since the conversation was being recorded on tape. There are some scholars who believe that the tape recorder cannot be trusted to accurately register the discrete sounds pertinent to proper phonological analysis of a diasystem and therefore favor "on the spot" transcription. The author, howeber, believes that the tape recorder of quality can be trusted. While a tape recorder cannot pick up, for example, certain degrees of plosion, it can accurately reproduce the vowel and consonant sounds. All things considered, having the informant's responses on tape gives the phonetician the advantage of listening to a sound over and over again at his convenience. Perhaps the best thing about having the informant's responses on tape is that his speech is preserved for many years, thereby allowing students in the future to listen to it.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BEDFORD COUNTY

A cultural geographer once wrote: "Tennessee has been both blessed and cursed by the contrasts within her limits" (Whitaker, 1946: 206). These "contrasts" are not limited to physiography alone because each of the three regions of Tennessee has a unique history, too. To comprehend the founding, growth, and development of Bedford County, one must naturally embrace the history of Middle Tennessee and see how that history relates to East Tennessee.

The first permanent settlement in the Middle Tennessee area occurred in 1779 with the arrival of a small party of men under the leadership of James Robertson at what is now known as Nashville. The party came overland from Watauga to the Cumberland region via Daniel Boone's Wilderness Trail through the Cumberland Gap. Another group of settlers led by John Donelson, consisting mainly of women and children, joined Robertson's party in 1780, having come by the waters of the Tennessee, Ohio, and Cumberland Rivers (Abernethy, 1932:156). The settlement remained relatively isolated until 1787, when the North Carolina Assembly ordered that a road be cut from the south end of Clinch Mountain to Nashville (Abernethy, 1932:156). This road did much to facilitate the settlement of Middle Tennessee. Migration into the region was not easy, however, until a wagon road was built in 1795 from Knoxville to Nashville by way of Southwest Point, Fort Blount, and Gallatin. The 1795 wagon road and the Pinckney Treaty with Spain in the same year, which put an end to Indian hostility, did much to induce rapid settlement of the Cumberland region.

It was not long until the area around Nashville became populated enough to seek governmental autonomy. Therefore, in 1783 Davidson County was erected out of Greene County, both of which were still under the auspices of North Carolina. Seven years after its erection Davidson County could boast of a population estimated to be around 3,459 (Free, 1895:254). The rapid increase of the population of Middle Tennessee is attributable to several factors. Of course, land was the most attractive incentive, but certainly not the only one. For example, many East Tennesseeans were moving into the Cumberland region because the North Carolina Assembly was placing an unbearable tax burden upon them. One must also keep in mind the fact that America was receiving its greatest population influx during the late 1700's and early 1800's. Most of the lands along the southern coast of the United States were dominated by what amounts to nothing more than a gentry (Abernethy, 1932:34). The best lands were bound up in large land holdings by the aristocracy, leaving little, if anything, for the people immigrating from foreign countries. In short, the immigrant's choice was a simple one: he could retreat into the hills of isolation where there was hardly any land suitable for farming, or he could move west.

Following the 1818 treaty with the Chickasaw Indians, migration into West Tennessee began. By 1830 Tennessee had lost most of its frontier image and began contributing many of its native sons to other states. Census records of 1850, for example, show that 241,606 native born Tennesseans were living outside the state, Missouri and Arkansas receiving the largest numbers (Scott, 1968:128).

One can assume that Bedford County was populated as a result of the attrition of unclaimed lands in the northern portion of Middle

Tennessee. Initial settlement of the county began in either 1805 or 1806 (Goodspeed Histories, 1886:862). Documented evidence exists, however, suggesting that settlers were moving in as early as 1792 (Jacobs, 1968:6).

Bedford County was erected out of Rutherford County in 1807 with the first session of the county court held at the home of Mrs. Payne at the head of Mulberry Creek that same year (Goodspeed Histories, 1886: 864). Shelbyville, named in honor of Colonel Isaac Shelby who fought at the Battle of King's Mountain in the Revolutionary War, was founded in 1810 and became the county seat (Foster, 1923:46). The population of the county in 1810 is estimated to have been 8,242. In 1820 the population increased to 12,336, including 3,646 Negroes. In 1830 Bedford County was the most populous in the state with 30,444 people, including 5,748 Negroes (Eatin, 1832:61).

Upon its founding, Bedford County was the largest county in the state with a total area of 332,800 acres, but its size was greatly reduced with the formation of Lincoln County in 1809 and Marshall and Coffee counties in 1836 (Goodspeed Histories, 1886:864).

Bedford County did not have its first turnpike until 1832, when the Shelbyville, Murfreesboro, and Nashville Road was built. The many other turnpikes that were constructed did not appear until 1852 and later, all of them radiating from Shelbyville (Goodspeed Histories, 1886:875). The first railway service, a branchline of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, was opened in 1852 in the towns of Bellbuckle and Wartrace.

Educational institutions were established rather early in Bedford County. Mount Reserve Academy, the first school, was established in 1815. The first newspaper, the *Shelbyville Herald*, was founded in 1821.

Migration and Linguistic Affinity

An accurate assessment of the people who migrated into Middle Tennessee and of the way they came has never been made, but some students of history, geography, and linguistics have speculated on the matter. One scholar who has investigated the migration patterns of the South is Hans Kurath. According to Kurath, the people who moved into Middle Tennessee in the early 1800's came mainly from the valley of Virginia and the Piedmont of the Carolinas (1928:391). These settlers moved east from the Piedmont through the Watauga Gap, Flower Gap, or Swannanoa Gap into the Ridge and Valley Province, a vast corridor extending northeast-southwest some 1,200 miles like a spine along the eastern United States. Once there, the next major obstacle was the Appalachian Plateau which was passable to the pioneers by means of the Cumberland Gap and the gap made by the Tennessee River near the site of Chattanooga (Whitaker, 1946:197). There were, of course, the river routes by which one could have moved into Tennessee, but the early construction of roads provided a quicker means of reaching the Cumberland region.

Following Kurath's speculation, we have a somewhat different pattern in East Tennessee. Kurath believes that "the Cotton Belt of western Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and eastern Tennessee was settled very largely by the cotton-growers out of the tide-water of Virginia and the Carolinas" (1928:392).

These are crucial factors to consider if one is interested in speculating on the historical origins and development of Tennessee folk speech. The Tide-water region of Virginia received most, its early population from southern Britain, while the Valley of Virginia and the

Piedmont of Virginia and the Carolinas were settled by and large by the Scotch-Irish during the early part of the 1700's (Kurath, 1928:393). If Kurath's generalization is correct, then one should be able to find distinguishing linguistic features characteristic of East Tennessee alone. It is the writer's opinion, however, that an amalgamation of the Scotch-Irish dialects and the dialects of southern Britain occurred in both Middle and East Tennessee. The probability of this happening is quite likely since many of the peoples moving into East Tennessee from the Tidewater area of Virginia more than likely pushed further west into both Middle and West Tennessee. Another important factor to consider is the fact that the cotton-growers who moved into Tennessee, whether it be East, Middle, or West, probably amounted to an aristocratic few. These peoples were not the precursors of the folk speech of Tennessee. The socio-economic status of the peoples who moved into Tennessee has not been thoroughly investigated by historians.

The evidence put forth as a justification of a "pure," "unmodified" form of Elizabethan English in the Southern Mountains, supposedly remnants of various dialects of southern British English in East Tennessee if Kurath is correct, is a generalization of a speculative nature and nothing else. The writer has similar evidence of archaic English from the informants he interviewed in Bedford County. This can be interpreted either one of two ways: (1) many southern British speakers moved into Middle Tennessee or (2) Scotch-Irish English was the predominant form of English in both East and Middle Tennessee.

Raven McDavid's speculation on the migration patterns into Tennessee follow, for the most part, the thoughts of Kurath. McDavid, however, points out two other important sources of migration not mentioned

by Kurath. First, there is the penetration from the southwest by peoples moving in from South Carolina and Georgia by way of the "upper reaches of the Savannah and its tributaries, around the southern slope of the Smokies" (McDavid, 1971:127). Second, McDavid points out that many peoples moved down from Pennsylvania through the ridge and valley province (McDavid, 1971:125). Again, it was predominately the Scotch-Irish who moved into both East and Middle Tennessee from South Carolina and Georgia (Weeks, 1916:249). The peoples moving down the ridge and valley province, however, were a combination of both Scotch-Irish and German (Abernethy, 1932:146).

Unfortunately, the U.S. Census prior to 1850 made no inquiry into the origin of peoples migrating from one state to another. After 1850 the statistics show that North Carolina by an overwhelming margin is the "mother of Tennessee," followed by Virginia and then South Carolina (Weeks, 1916:242).

In conclusion, the information concerning the origins of the persons who migrated into Tennessee is scanty. More research into the ancestry of Tennesseans is a must if we are to answer any questions revolving around the historical development of Tennessee regional English. John C. Campbell's suggestion of initiating a county survey of historical records and surnames would be a positive step in determining the history of migration patterns, thereby allowing scholars to pinpoint the origin and development of not only folk speech, but material folk culture as well (1921:49).

CHAPTER III

THE PHONEMIC STRUCTURE OF BEDFORD COUNTY FOLK SPEECH

A unitary phonemic model is employed in the analysis of the phonic data collected from the informants interviewed in this study. There are, of course, other theoretical models upon which phonemic analysis can be performed, viz. the binary approach. The writer, however, favors the unitary approach because it is a convenient means of consolidating the material collected as well as being an effective and tested method of analysis. Since this project is not concerned with the theoretical quibbling over whether one phonemic model is better than another, the writer refers the reader to Kurath (1957:111-122) and Kurath and McDavid (1961:3-6) for a cogent defense of the unitary phonemic approach.

In a unitary phonemic system the vowels are classified as being either "free" or "checked." Free vowels are vowels that occur before consonants and in word final position. Checked vowels are vowels that occur only before consonants. Diphthongs, except when they are interpreted as being related allophones of a particular phoneme, are treated phonemically the same as monophthongs on the free and checked vowel classification.

The cardinal vowel system[1] is used as a datum from which the phonic realization of each phoneme is theoretically or impressionistically positioned. For example, if the phoneme / O / is described in

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[1] An excellent treatment of the cardinal vowel concept may be found in David Jones' *An Outline of English Phonetics* (1960, 9th edition), pp. 31-41.

the text as being significantly advanced, then that means that / 0 / is significantly advanced from the cardinal position. Figure 2 is a vowel diagram depicting the position of the tongue of the cardinal vowels. Figure 3 represents the contrasting position of the cardinal vowels as they are realized in the folk speech of Bedford County. The writer must point out that Figure 3 is an impressionistic portrayal of the vowel system of Bedford County folk speech that is certainly more heuristic than definitive. This is the case for two major reasons: (1) no sound is produced the same way every time and (2) there is a tremendous amount of variation within idiolects. In reference to the second point, the writer, after hours of listening, had to make what amounts to nothing more than subjective decisions in classifying certain sounds. And, when some situations presented an extreme amount of free variation, he had to result to *consistency* of usage. For example, in the folk speech of Bedford County there is evidence of reciprocal substitution of /ɑ / and /ɔ /. In *hospital, swamp* and *bottom* some of the informants used /ɔ / rather than /ɑ /, but not all the informants made identical substitutions. One informant may use /ɔ / in *swamp*, but /ɑ / in *hospital* and *bottom*. The writer, therefore, concluded that even though there was variation in usage of /ɑ / that there was nevertheless some consistency as well, enough to confirm the identity of /ɑ / as a phoneme.

To a limited degree, some phonetic description is included within the discussion of each phoneme in an effort to aid the linguistic geographer in determining the comparative position of the folk speech of Bedford County to other dialect regions of the United States.

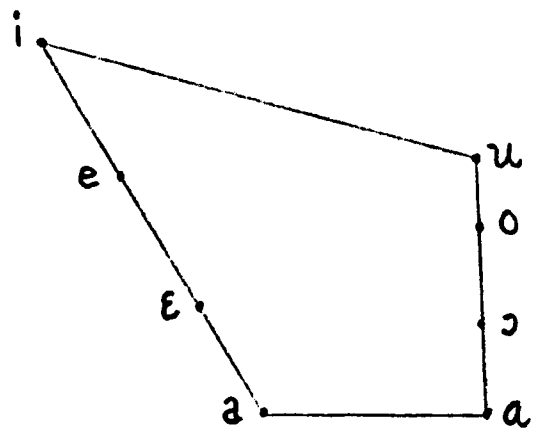


Figure 2. Cardinal vowel diagram.

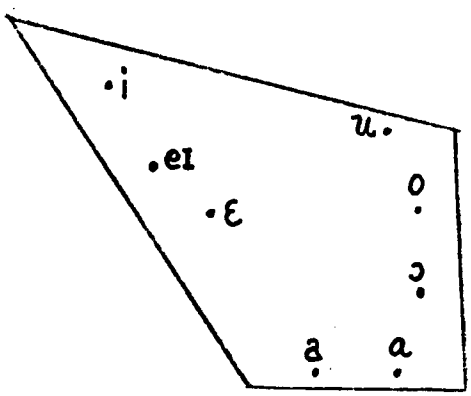


Figure 3. The position of the vowels of Bedford County folk speech relative to the cardinal vowels.

There are 10 phonemes in the folk speech of Bedford County which are realized as free vowels and 7 which are realized as checked vowels. The following is a classification of the vowel system:[2]

Free Vowels

/ i /, /eɪ /, / u /, /oʊ /, / ɔ /, /ɝ /, / ɑ /, /ɔɪ /, /ɑʊ /, / ə /

Checked Vowels

/ʊ /, / ɛ /, / ʌ /, / æ /, / ɒ /, / a /, / ɪ /

The free vowels will be dealt with first in this chapter, followed by the checked vowels, then the occurrence of the vowels before / ɚ / and / r /, and finally the consonants.

/ ɔ /

DESCRIPTION

/ ɔ / is a low-mid-back, lax and rounded vowel in cardinal position.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ɔ / occurs in the following monosyllable, most frequently as the diphthong [ ]: *gone, hog, dog, loft, caught, hawk, boss,* and *frost.* / ɔ /, however, does occur as a pure monophthong in *moth* and *boiled.*

/ ɔ / is realized in a stressed syllable of a polysyllable, again both as a monophthong and a dipthong, e.g., *always* [ˈɔ:lweɪz], *almond* [ˈɔ:lmənds], *walnuts* [ˈwɔ:lnəts], *strawberry* [ˈstɹɔʊbɛɹi], *coffin* [ˈkɔfɪn], *awkward* [ˈɔkwɚd], *Baltimore* [ˈbɔɻtəmoɚ], *across* [əˈkɹɔs] and *because* [bɪˈkɔz].

/ ɔ / occurs in word final position in *haw* (the term used in directing the course of a mule in plowing), *draw* and *saw.* / ɔ / also

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[2]All the phonetic symbols used in the transcription correspond as much as possible with the International Phonetic Alphabet. A copy of the I.P.A. can be found in Bronstein (1960:289-299).

occurs in word final position of words ending in / l / in which the / l / is lost, e.g., *haul* [hɔ̝·ɻ̩] and *fall* [fɔ̝ɻ̩].

/ ɔ / does not occur in pre or post stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

In Bedford County folk speech the allophonic variants of / ɔ / range from a lowered, less rounded form moving toward / ɒ /, to a raised variant that is more rounded and moving up to / o /. / ɔ / is consistently realized as a diphthong in monosyllables. The first element of the diphthong is nearly always advanced the merges with a raised form of / O / or a slightly lowered and advanced allophone of / U /. There is evidence for / ɔ / occurring as a monophthong in a stress syllable of a polysyllable, but not so in a monosyllable.

FREE VARIATION

/ ɔ / substitutes / æ / in *tassel* [tɔ̝ɻ̩sɬ]. The writer has not only heard this substitution in the speech of his informants, but in the speech of many other elderly farmers in other areas of Middle Tennessee.

/ ə /

DESCRIPTION

/ ə / is a lax, central vowel.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ə / occurs in an unstressed syllable of a polysyllable in the following words: *ago* [əgoʊ], *Georgia* [ˈdʒoədʒə], *Florida* [ˈflo̞ɹədə], *sofa* [ˈsoʊfə], *magnolia* [mægˈnoʊlɪə] and *Virginia* [vəˈdʒɪ·njə].

/ ə / occurs in word final position in *sofa, Georgia,* and *Florida.*

/ ə / occurs in a position of pre-stress in *majority* [məˈdʒɑ̝ɻ̩ɾi] and in a position of post-stress in *sofa* and *Georgia.*

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

/ ə / can be realized in a myriad of positions with no consistent pattern.

FREE VARIATION

/ ə / sometimes replaces /OU/ in *tomorrow*, *borrow*, and *harrow*, e.g., [tə'mɑ̟ɹə], ['bɑ̟ɹə], and ['hæɹə].

/ ɝ /

DESCRIPTION

/ ɝ / is a half raised r-colored vowel. In the folk speech of Bedford County / ɝ / never occurs without r-coloring.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ɝ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *bird*, *worms*, *first*, *third*, *work*, *girl*, and *nurse*.

/ ɝ / is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *circumstances* ['sɝkəmstænsɪs], *bursted* ['bɝs̬tɪd], *fertile* ['fɝ̬ɬ], and *colonel* ['kɝn̩].

/ ɝ / occurs in word final position in *her* and *burr*.

/ ɝ / does not occur in pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

Occasionally, / ɝ / is realized as an upgliding diphthong, e.g., *worms* [wɝəmz] and *bird* [bɝəd].

FREE VARIATION

/ ɝ / differs little from Received Pronunciation in incidence. Two informants, however, pronounced *pretty* as ['pɝ̬ɾi] and *careless* as ['kɝlɪs].

/OU/

DESCRIPTION

[O] is a high-mid-back, tense, and rounded vowel. Since its occurrence as a pure monophthong is extremely rare in the folk speech of Bedford County, the phoneme / OU / is therefore postulated because [O] in nearly every instance merges with the low-high-back, more lax / U /.

DISTRIBUTION

/ OU / occurs in the following monosyllables: *owns, stone, post, coast, coat, boat, shoat, slow, go, know, mow, grow,* and *cold.*

/ OU / occurs as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable, e.g., *frozen* [ˈfɹoʊzn̩], *broken* [ˈbɹoʊkn̩], *toadstool* [ˈtoʊdstuɬ], *sofa* [ˈsoʊfə], *magnolia* [mægˈnoʊlɪə], and *October* [ɑkˈtoʊbɚ].

/ OU / occurs in a position of pre-stress, e.g., *November* [noʊˈvɪɹbɚ].

/ OU / occurs in a position of post-stress and work final position in *depot* [diˈpoʊ] and *Ohio* [oʊˈhaɪoʊ].

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

The first element of the diphthong / OU / is frequently advanced and raised from the cardinal position in both monosyllables and stressed syllables of polysyllables.

FREE VARIATION

/ OU / is frequently substituted by / ɚ / in word final position of post-stress in the following polysyllables: *swallow* [ˈswɑ̝lɚ], *yellow* [ˈjɛlɚ], *mosquitoes* [məˈskiɾ̞ɚz], *potato* [pəˈteɪɾ̞ɚ] and *tomato* [təˈmaɪɾ̞ɚ]. / OU / is substituted by / ə / in *tomorrow* [təmɑ̝ɹə] and *fellow* [ˈfɛlə]. One informant, A.B., dropped his / ɚ / in monosyllables which end with / oɚ /, e.g., *poor* [pʊ̝], as in "it's a hard life *for* a *poor* man."

/ ʉ /

DESCRIPTION

/ ʉ / is a high back, tense, and rounded vowel in cardinal position.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ʉ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *hoot, roots, spoon, wound, boo, two, roof, suit, hoof,* and *food.*

/ ʉ / is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in the following words: *gloomy* [gl̟ʉ̟ːmɪ̟], *Cooper* [kʰu̟̟ːpɚ], *rheumatism* [ˈɹu̟̟ːmətɪzm̩], *music* [ˈmju̟̟zɪk], *humor* [hju̟̟mɚ], *cucumber* [ˈkju̟̟kəmbɚ], *tourist* [ˈtʰu̟̟ɹɪst], *July* [ˈdʒu̟̟laɪ̯], *Missouri* [mɪ̟ˈzwɹə] and *afternoon* [æftɚˈnu̟̟ːn].

/ u / occurs in post-stress, e.g., *mushroom* [ˈmʌʃɹu̟̟ːm] and *nephew* [ˈnɛfju̟̟ː].

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

In Bedford County folk speech / u / is usually advanced considerably, i.e., the tongued arch is somewhat lower and the lips less rounded. / u / is sometimes realized as an upgliding diphthong in tensely stressed monosyllables, moving from a low-high-back, less rounded / U / to a high-back more rounded / u / that is advanced, thus forming [Uu̟], e.g., *spoon* [spᵘu̟̟ːn] and *roof* [ɹᵘu̟f].

FREE VARIATION

/ u / is frequently substituted with / ə / in *value* [væ̟ːjə]. See the section on / i / for more information on the distributional variation associated with / u /.

/ eɪ /

DESCRIPTION

/ e / seldom, if ever, occurs as a pure monophthong in this diasystem.

It usually combines with / ɪ / thereby forming the syllabic diphthong / eɪ /. Therefore, the phoneme / eɪ / is produced by combining the high-mid-front, tense and unrounded / e / with the low-high-front, lax, and unround / ɪ /.

DISTRIBUTION

/ eɪ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *eight* [ẹɪt], *bake* [bẹ˖ɪk], *pay* [peɪ], *ate* [eɪt], *shades* [ʃẹɪdz], and *pail* [pẹ˖ɪɬ].

/ eɪ / occurs as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable, e.g., *April* ['eɪpɯɬ], *Mary* ['meɪɹɪ], *lazy* ['leɪzi̤], *granary* ['gɹeɪnəɹi̤], *stables* ['steɪbɬs], *potatoes* [pə'teɪɾoʊz], *tomatoes* [tə'meɪɾoʊz], *today* [tə'deɪ], and *obey* [o^{v}bẹɪ].

/ eɪ/ does not occur in pre-stress, but can be found in post-stress, e.g., *castrate* ['kæstɹẹɪt].

/ eɪ/ occurs in word final position in *obey, hay, day, say, may,* and *lay.*

ALLOPHONIC VARIATIONS

/ eɪ/ exhibits no significant allophones in the folk speech of Bedford County although the first element of this dipthong is sometimes raised and retracted slightly in both monosyllables and stressed syllables of polysyllables, e.g., *bake* [bẹ̝ɪk] and *castrate* [kæ̠stɹẹɪt].

FREE VARIATION

/ æ / is frequently substituted by the phoneme / eɪ/ in *aunt* [eɪnt], *dance* [deɪns], *can't* [keɪnt] and *calf* [keɪf]. Three informants (A.B., T.H., and E.A.) consistently made these substitutions. *Mary* is consistently pronounced as [meɪɹɪ] by the informants in this study; *merry* is pronounced ['mɛɹɪ]. / ɑʊ / substitutes / eɪ / in *haunted* ['heɪnɾɪd].

/ɔɪ/

DESCRIPTION

This phoneme is a composite of the low-mid-back, lax and rounded /ɔ/ and the low-high-front, lax and unrounded /ɪ/.

DISTRIBUTION

/ɔɪ/ occurs in the following monosyllables: *boy* [bɔ̟ɪ], *joint* [dʒɔ̟ɪnt], *hoist* [hɔ̟ɪst], and *oil* [ɔ̟ˑɪ|].

/ɔɪ/ occurs as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *oyster* and *poison*.

/ɔɪ/ is realized in word final position in *boy*, *toy* and *joy*.

/ɔɪ/ does not occur in a position of pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

The first element of this phoneme is frequently raised and advanced in both monosyllables and polysyllables (see above examples). The second element is also raised and slightly retracted in monosyllables and polysyllables.

FREE VARIATION

/ɔɪ/ is sometimes replaced by the monophthong /ɔ/ in *boiled* [bɔ̟ːɬd].

/aʊ/

DESCRIPTION

This phoneme is a composite of the low-front, lax and unrounded /a/ and the low-high-back, lax and rounded /ʊ/.

DISTRIBUTION

/aʊ/ occurs in the following monosyllables: *proud*, *down*, *cloud*, *south*, *house*, *souse*, and *plow*.

/aʊ/ occurs as a stressed syllable in *country* [ˈkaʊnt̪i], *flowers*

shower [ˈʃaʊ̯ɚ], *mountain* [ˈmaʊ̯ntn̩], *coward* [ˈkaʊ̯wɚd], *about* [əˈbaʊ̯t], and *around* [əˈɹaʊ̯n].

/ aʊ / is realized in word final position in *how*, *cow*, and *plow*.

/ aʊ / does not occur in a position of pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

The first element of this phoneme moderates little from the cardinal position, although it is at times clearly raised in both monosyllables and polysyllables. The second element is frequently advanced and lowered, again in both monosyllables and polysyllables, e.g., *proud* [pɹaʊ̯d] and *around* [əˈɹaʊ̯n].

FREE VARIATION

None.

/ ɑ /

DESCRIPTION

/ a / is a low-front, lax, and unrounded vowel in cardinal position.

DISTRIBUTION

/ a / occurs monosyllabically in the following words as a monophthong or upgliding diphthong: *nine* [nɑːn] or [nɑːən], *time* [tɑːm] or [tɑːɪm], *fine* [fɑːɪn] or [fɑːn] and *dry* [dɹɑːɹ].

/ a / is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable, again both as a monophthong and a diphthong, e.g., *grindstone* [ˈgɹɑːɪnstoʊn], *bridle* [ˈbɹɑːd l̩] or [ˈbɹɑːɹd l̩], *bicycle* [ˈbɑːsɪk l̩], *spider* [ˈspɑːdɚ] or [ˈspɑːɹdɚ], *excited* [ɪkˈsɑːɾɪd] and *molasses* [məˈlɑːɪsɪs].

/ a / occurs in word final position in *my*, *why*, *dry*, and *by* as a diphphong and monophthong.

/ a / occurs in a position of pre-stress in *Italian* [ɑːˈtɑːjən] and in post-stress in *quinine* [ˈkwɑːɪnɑːn].

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

/ a / is significantly retracted and slightly raised from the cardinal position and, as pointed out above, can occur both as a monophthong or an upgliding diphthong in monosyllables and polysyllables. Even when diphthongized, / a / maintains its status as a falling diphthong due to the prominent stress on the first element and very weakly stressed second element. That is why the diphthongs transcribed above have the second element in a superior position.

FREE VARIATION

There is no evidence of sub-phonemic variation of / a / in the folk speech of Bedford County, although one informant (T.H.) substituted [ɑ̝ˀ] for / i / in *fiancé* [ˈfɑ̝ˀɑ̟ˀseɪ].

/ i̝ /

Note: i corresponds with i - meaning lowered.

DESCRIPTION

/ i / is a high-front, tense and unrounded vowel in cardinal position.

DISTRIBUTION

/ i / occurs in the following monosyllables: *team, teeth, dream, lead, sweet, grease, seed, green, three, feet, creek,* and *yeast.*

/ i / is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *evening* [ˈi̝ːvnɪŋ], *seesaw* [ˈsi̝ːsɔɪ̯], *December* [ˈdi̝sɪmbɚ], *preacher* [ˈpɹi̝ːtʃɚ], *teacher* [ˈti̝ːtʃɚ], *fever* [ˈfi̝ːvɚ], *depot* [ˈdi̝ːpoʊ], *evil* [ˈiːvɬ], *twenty* [ˈtwɪnti̝], *pulley* [ˈpʊ̟li̝·], *seventy* [ˈsɛvənti̝·], *people* [ˈpi̝ːpɬ] and *heavy* [ˈhɛvi̝·].

/ i / occurs in a position of post-stress in *seventy, thirteen,* and *doubletree.* / i / does not occur in pre-stress.

/ i / occurs in word final position in *he, bee, see, key* and *knee.*

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

/ i / is always lowered from the cardinal position, especially in post-stress, e.g., *twenty* and *pulley* (see above transcriptions). / i / is often manifested as the upgliding diphthong [ɪi] in *dream, three,* and *fever.*

FREE VARIATION

A distinctly lowered allophone of / i / merges with / ɚ / to form the diphthong [i̞ɚ] in *heard* [hi̞ɚd], a corrupted past tense form of the verb *hear.* The reader is referred to the section on free variation of / ʊ / for more information concerning / i /.

/ I /

DESCRIPTION

/ I / is a low-high-front, lax and unrounded vowel.

DISTRIBUTION

/ I / occurs in the following monosyllables: *sins* [sɪ̞ˑᵊns], *rim* [ɹɪ̞ˑᵊm], *get* [gɪ̞ˑᵊt], *bit* [bɪ̞ˑᵊt], *fix* [fɪ̞ˑks], *mix* [mɪ̞ˑks], *pig* [pɪ̞ˑg], *hen* [hɪ̞ˑᵊn], *knit* [nɪᵊt], and *switch* [swɪ̞ˑʧ].

/ I / is realized in a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *drizzle* ['ɹɪ̞ˑzl̩], *November* [noʊ'vɪ̞mbɚ], *dinner* ['dɪ̞nɚ], *suspenders* [sə'spɪ̞ndɚz], *Christmas* ['kɹɪ̞ˑsməs], *privy* ['pɹɪ̞vi̞], *empty* [ɪᵊmtɪ̞], and *pillow* ['pɪ̞loʊ].

/ I / occurs in a position of pre-stress in *rejected* [ɹi'ʤɛktɪd], *Missouri* [mɪ'zʊ̟ɹə], *themselves* [ðɪm'sɛlvz], and *diphtheria* [dɪp'θɪɚə]. / I / is in a position of post-stress in *basket* ['bæɪskɪt] and *biscuit* ['bɪ̞skɪt].

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

In monosyllables / I / if frequently raised and retracted and commonly manifested as the down gliding diphthong [ɪ̟ᵊ]. In polysyllables, however, / I / is either realized as [ɪ̟] or [ɪ̞] and rarely diphthongized. See above transcriptions for examples.

FREE VARIATION

None.

/ ɛ /

DESCRIPTION

/ ɛ / is a low-mid front, lax and unrounded vowel in cardinal position.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ɛ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *dress* [dɹɛ̟˖ᵊs], *dead* [dɛ̟˖ːd], *deaf* [dɛ̟˖ᵊf], *chest* [ʧɛ̟˖ᴵst], *kegs* [kɛ̟˖ᴵgs], *best* [bɛ̟˖ᴵst], *web* [ɯɛ̟˖ᵊb], and *pet* [pɛ̟˖ᵊt].

/ ɛ / is realized in a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *vegetable* ['vɛ˖dʒtə bɬ], *weatherboarding* ['ɯɛ˖ðəbɔəɹdɪŋ], *necklace* ['nɛ˖klɪs], *jelly* ['dʒɛ̟˖l̩], *rejected* [ɹɪ'dʒɛ̟˖ktɪd], and *umbrella* [əm'bɹɛ̟˖lə].

/ ɛ / occurs in a position of pre-stress in *September* [sɛ˖p'tɪmbəɹ].

/ ɛ / does not occur in a position of post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATIONS

All the informants interviewed in this study consistently use an upgliding diphthong, either [ɛ̟ᴵ] or [ɛ̟ᵊ], in which the first element is nearly always raised and slightly retracted. This phenomenon is particularly characteristic in monosyllables as opposed to polysyllables (see above transcriptions).

FREE VARIATION

/ æ / is substituted by / ɛ / in *catch* [kɛ>tʃ] and *radishes* [ˈɹɛ>dɪʃɪs].

/ ɑ /

DESCRIPTION

/ ɑ / is a low-back, lax and unrounded vowel in cardinal position.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ɑ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *stop, calm, John, psalm, dock, hearth, mop, father, pot, cot,* and *swamp.*

/ ɑ / is realized in a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *tomorrow* [təˈmɑ̟ːɹə], *majority* [məˈdʒɑ̟ːɹəti], *fiancé* [fiˌɑ̟ːnseɪ], *college* [ˈkɑ̟ːlɪdʒ], *hominy* [ˈhɑ̟ːmənɪ], *father* [fɑ̟ːðɚ], *hospital* [ˈhɑ̟ːspɪɾl̩], and *bottom* [ˈbɑ̟ɾm̩].

/ ɑ / does not occur in a position of pre-stress. It does, however, occur in post-stress in some polysyllables, e.g., *grasshopper* [ˈgɹæˑsˌhɑ̟pɚ] and *wristwatch* [ˈɹɪstwɑ̟ːtʃ].

Unlike other dialect regions in the United States, / ɑ / does not occur in word final position in the folk speech of Bedford County because of the consistent use of the postvocalic / r /.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

/ ɑ / is significantly advanced and slightly raised from its cardinal position in both monosyllables and polysyllables (see above transcriptions).

FREE VARIATION

It is not unusual for / ɑ / to be substituted for / ɔ / in the folk speech of Bedford County. In *hospital, swamp,* and *bottom* some of the informants used / ɔ / rather than / ɑ /, but not all the informants made

identical substitutions, i.e., one informant may use / ɒ / in *swamp*, but / ɑ / in *hospital* and *bottom* while another informant may use / ɒ /, or even / ɔ / in *hospital*, but / ɑ / in *swamp* and *bottom*.

/ ʊ /

DESCRIPTION

/ U / is a low-high/back, lax and rounded vowel.

DISTRIBUTION

/ U / occurs in the following monosyllables: *brooks*, *woods*, *good*, *soot*, *hoops*, *hoof*, and *look*.

/ U / is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *woman* [ˈwʊ̟ˑmən] and *pulley* [ˈpʊ̟ˑlɪ̟ˑ].

/ U / does not occur in a position of pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

/ U / is nearly always advanced and raised in both monosyllables and polysyllables. This is particularly evident in tensely stressed monosyllables in which / U / occurs before / l /, e.g., *bull* [bʊ̟˖˖ɬ] and *pull* [pʊ̟˖˖ɬ]. / U / is sometimes realized as an upgliding diphthong, e.g., *woods* [wʊ̟˖ᵊdz] and *good* [gʊ̟˖ᵊd].

FREE VARIATION

/ U / substitutes / ʌ / in *bulge* [bʊ̟˖ɔldʒ] and *bulk* [bʊ̟˖ɔlk].

/ æ /

DESCRIPTION

/ æ / is a high-low-front, lax and unrounded vowel.

DISTRIBUTION

/ æ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *snack* [snæ̝˕ɪk], *mad* [mæ̝˕ɪd], *pants* [pæ̝̃˕ɪnts], *swam* [swæ̝̃˕ɪm], *patch* [pæ̝˕ᵊʧ], *clam*

[kl$\tilde{æ}^{ɪ}$m], *glad* [gl$æ^{ɪ}$d], *class* [kl$æ^{ɪ}$s], and *last* [l$æ^{ɪ}$st].

/æ/ is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *pantry* ['p$\hat{æ}$ntɹi], *January* ['dʒ$\hat{æ}$njʊ̯ɹwɛɹi], *cattle* [kæɾl̩], *magnolia* [mæ'noʊliə], *pasture* ['pæ^{ɪ}stjʊɚ], *cabbage* ['kæbɪdʒ], and *castrate* ['kæ^{ɪ}stɹeɪt].

/æ/ does not occur in a position of pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

As the above transcriptions point out, the upgliding diphthong [æ^{ɪ}] is a frequent allophonic manifestation of /æ/ in monosyllables. The first element of the diphthong is usually lowered and retracted, although in some instances it is raised, e.g., *afternoon* ['æftɚnuːn] (Informant T.H.) In polysyllables the monophthongal [æ] is the most prevalent allophone.

FREE VARIATION

See the section on /eɪ/ for information on distributional variation of /æ/.

/ɔ/

DESCRIPTION

/ɔ/ is a high-low-back, lax and rounded vowel.

DISTRIBUTION

/ɔ/ occurs in the following monosyllables: *fox* [fɔ^{ə}ks], *God* [gɔ^{ə}d], *shot* [ʃɔt], *cog* [kɔ^{ə}g], and *notch* [nɔtʃ].

/ɔ/ is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *October* ['ɔktoʊbɚ], *oxen* ['ɔksn̩], and *swallow* ['swɔlɚ].

/ɔ/ does not occur in a position of pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATIONS

/ ɔ / is sometimes realized as the upgliding diphthong / ɔ^{ə} / in monosyllables (see above transcriptions).

FREE VARIATION

See the section on / ɑ / for information on the distributional variation of / ɔ /.

/ ʌ /

DESCRIPTION

/ ʌ / is a central-low, unrounded vowel.

DISTRIBUTION

/ ʌ / occurs in the following monosyllables: *drunk* [dɹ̥ʌ̥nk], *doves* [d̥ʌ̥vz], *cut* [kʌ̥t], *mumps* [mʌ̥̂mps], and *one* [wʌ̥n].

/ ʌ / is realized as a stressed syllable of a polysyllable in *pumpkin* [ˈpʌ̥ŋkɪn], *bumblebee* [ˈbʌ̥mbɬbi:], *eruption* [ɪɹ̥ˈʌ̥pʃən], *mushroom* [ˈmʌ̥ʃɹ̥ʊ̥m], *country* [ˈkʌ̥ntɹ̥i], and *bushels* [ˈbʌ̥ʃɬs].

/ ʌ / does not occur in a position of pre- or post-stress.

ALLOPHONIC VARIATION

/ ʌ / is consistently manifested as the allophone [ʌ̥] in both monosyllables and polysyllables.

FREE VARIATION

None.

Vowels Before / ɝ / and / ɹ̥ /

Nine vowels occur before / ɹ̥ / as either a monophthong or diphthong when /ɹ̥/ is in final or preconsonantal position. They are: / i /, / ɪ /, / eɪ /, / ɛ /, / ɑ /, / ɔ /, / o /, / æ /, and / ʊ /.

/ i / occurs as the diphthong [iɝ] in the following monosyllables:

beard [bi:ɚd] and *year* [jɪ:ɚ]. / iɚ/ occurs in the polysyllable *prettier* [ˈpɹɪtɪɚ].

/ I / occurs as the diphthong [ɪɚ] in both monosyllables and polysyllables, e.g., *year* [jɪɚ], *queer* [kwɪɚ], *ear* [ɪ:ɚ], and *cheerful* [ʧɪ:ɚfɬ].

/ ei / is realized as the triphthong [eɪɚ] in *mayor* [meɪɚ] when the / j / is omitted and in *Mary* [ˈmeɪɹi] as the phonemic diphthong.

/ ɛ / occurs as the diphthong [ɛɚ] in the following monosyllables: *chair* [ʧɛɚ], *fair* [fɛɚ], and *stairs* [stɛɚs]. /ɛ/ occurs as a monophthong in the following polysyllables: *cherry* [ˈʧɛɹi], *merry* [ˈmɛɹi], and *berry* [ˈbɛɹi].

/ æ / is realized as the diphthong [æɚ] in the following polysyllables: *careless* [ˈkæɚlɪs] and *repair* [ɹɪˈpæɚ]. In some polysyllables where /æ / occurs before / r /, however, / æ / occurs as a monophthong, e.g., *barrel* [ˈbæɹɬ], *marry* [ˈmæɹi], and *parents* [ˈpæɹənts].

/ɑ/ occurs as the diphthong in the following monosyllables: *barn* [bɑ:ɚn], *farm* [fɑ:ɚm], *tired* [tɑ:ɚd], *wire* [wɑ:ɚ], *fire* [fɑ:ɚ], and *hearth* [hɑ:ɚθ]. In polysyllables / ɑ/ can occur as both a monophthong and a diphthong, e.g., *guardian* [ˈgɑɚdiən], *cigars* [si:gɑɚs], *tomorrow* [tuˈ:mɑɹə], and *borrow* [bɑ:ɹə].

/ɔ/ can occur as the diphthong [ɔɚ] or as a monophthong in the following polysyllables: *forward* [ˈfɔɚwɚd] or [ˈfɔ:ɹwɚd] and *oranges* [ˈɔ:ɚnɡɪz] or [ˈɔ:ɹənɡɪz].

/ u/ also combines with / ɚ/ forming the diphthong [uɚ] in the words *pure* [pju:ɚ] and *sure* [ʃu:ɚ].

The Consonant Phonemes

There are 24 consonant phonemes in the folk speech of Bedford County. They are: /p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/, /g/, /dʒ/, /tʃ/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /s/, /f/, /h/, /v/, /ð/, /z/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /j/, /r/, /w/, and /hw/.

/p/ is a voiceless, bilabial plosive. It occurs initially, medially, and finally. /p/ is frequently strongly aspirated initially in such words as *posts* [pʰoʊsts] and *purse* [pʰɝs]. In other words beginning with /p/ the aspiration is not nearly so intense, but /p/ in an initial position is always aspirated more than it is in a medial or final position. The only exception to this pattern would be the unusual amount of aspiration in *wasp* [wɔ̥ʊsp̥ʰ] as exemplified in the speech of informants #1 (T.H.) and #2 (I.S.).

/t/ is a voiceless, alveolar plosive. /t/ is aspirated most in the initial position, e.g., *teeth* [tʰi:θ] and *tenth* [tʰɪnθ] and in final position in *cut* [kʌt̚ʰ] and *put* [pʊt̚ʰ]. /t/ is frequently voiced in the folk speech of Bedford County, e.g., *forty* [fɔɹɾi], *tomatoes* [tə'meɪɾɚs], *seventy* ['sɛvn̩ɾi] and *bottom* [bɑ̰ɾm̩]. Excrescent /t/ is common in the word *twice* [twɑ:ɪst̚ʰ] where /t/ is strongly aspirated.

/k/ is a voiceless, aspirated, velar plosive. As in most English dialects /k/ is aspirated most in initial position, next strongest finally, and weakest medially. One informant (I.S.) substituted [k] for [t] in the word *brittle* ['bɹɪkʰ].

/d/ is a voiced, alveolar plosive. /g/ is a voiced velar plosive. Like the phoneme /k/, /d/ and /g/ differ little phonetically from most other English dialects in that /d/ is usually weakly aspirated while /d/ is consistently unaspirated.

/ʤ/ is a voiceless alveolo-palatal affricate. It occurs initially, medially, and finally.

/ʧ/ is a voiced alveolo-palatal affricate that occurs initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *church* [ʧɜʧ], *chimney* [ˈʧɪmˌli], and *nature* [neɪʧɚ]. One informant (I.S.) pronounced the word *rinse* as [ɹɪnʧ].

/f/ is a voiceless, labio-dental fricative. It occurs initially, medially, and finally as *fever* [fi:vɚ], *often* [ɔfṭn̩], and *deaf* [dɛəf].

The phoneme /θ/ of *throw* [θɹoʊ], *Martha* [maɚθə], and *hearth* [hɑ̈ɚθ] is a voiceless, dental, fricative continuant. It occurs initially, medially, and finally. /θ/ is sometimes substituted by the voiced, dental, fricative continuant /ð/, e.g., *moths* [mɔ̈ʊðs]. There are no examples of /ð/ being unvoiced in the materials collected from Bedford County. /ð/ occurs initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *those* [ðoʊz], *father* [ˈfɑ̈ðɚ], and *smooth* [smu̇:ð].

/ʃ/ is a voiceless, palato-alveolar, fricative continuant that occurs initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *show* [ʃoʊ], *bushel* [ˈbʊ̈ʃɬ], and *ash* [æəɪʃ]. *Sumach* is pronounced [ˈʃu̇meɪk] by all the informants.

/ʒ/ is a voiced, palato-alveolar, fricative continuant. It occurs medially in *measure* [ˈmɛʒɚ] and *occasion* [oʊˈkeɪʒn̩].

/h/ is a glottal fricative that occurs initially and medially, but never finally, e.g., *heat* [hi:t] and *behind* [bəˈhaɜnd]. Three of the informants in this study consistently pronounced the pronoun *it* as [hɪt].

/v/ is a voiced, fricative, labio-dental continuant. It occurs

initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *thousand* [θaʊsənd] and *whose* [hwʉ̟ːz].

/m/ is a bilabial, non-fricative, nasal continuant. It occurs initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *merry* [mɛɻi̟], *tomorrow* [t̪əmɑ̟ɻə], and *ham* [hæ̟ːm].

/n/ is a lingua-alveolar, non-fricative, nasal continuant. It occurs initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *nice* [nɑ̟ːɪs], *morning* [mɔɹnɪn], and *sin* [sɪ̂ⁿn]. All vowels that precede /n/ are nasalized.

/ŋ/ is a lingua-velar, non-fricative, nasal continuant. It occurs medially and finally, e.g., *bring* [bɹɛɪŋ] and *singing* [sɛɪŋɪn]. *Pumpkin* is pronounced [pʌŋkɪn] by all the informants interviewed in this study. [ɪn] frequently replaces /ŋ/ in the folk speech of Bedford County, e.g., *hanging* [hæ̟ᵉŋɪn] and *laughing* [læ̟ːfɪn].

/l/ is a voiced, alveolar, lateral continuant. It occurs initially, medially, and finally, e.g., *live* [lɪəv], *William* [wɪɬjəm], and *kill* [kɪ̟ːɬ]. Clear [l] is most common in the initial and medial positions, although [ɬ] is sometimes present in medial position as well. [ɬ], however, always occurs in final position, e.g., *hell* [hɛɬ], *fell* [fɛɬ], and *fall* [fɔ̟ːɬ]. /l/ is sometimes lost, e.g., *haul* [hɔʊ] and *value* [væjʉ̟]. Syllabic [l] occurs in *kettle* [kɪ̟ɾ̩ɬ] and *brittle* [bɹɪɾ̩ɬ].

/r/ is a voiced, retroflex, alveolar continuant. It occurs initially and medially as the voiced, alveolar continuant [ɹ], e.g., *roof* [ɹuːf] and *tomorrow* [t̪əmɑ̟ɻə]. In final or preconsonantal position in monosyllables /r/ is realized as the constricted mid-central allophone [ɚ], e.g., *fair* [fɛɚ], *chair* [tʃɛɚ], and *queer* [kwɪɚ]. [ɚ] also

occurs in the following polysyllables: *guardian* [ˈgaɹdɪən] and *oranges* [ˈɔɹnɡɪz].

/ r / is dissimilated in the pronunciation of *February*, *library*, and *secretary* by three informants interviewed in this study (T.H., A.B., and E.A.): [ˈfɛbəwɛɻɪ], [ˈlaːɪbɛɻiˌ], and [sɛkətɛɻiˌ].

Intrusive [r] is rare in the folk speech of Bedford County, although one informant (L.F.) pronounced *wash* as [waɹʃ].

/ j / is a frictionless, voiced, palatal glide. It occurs initially and medially, e.g., *yours* [jˌuˑɹz] and *January* [dʒænjwɛɻiˌ]. It is never realized in final position.

/ w / is a voiced, bilabial, frictionless continuant. It occurs initially and medially, e.g., *William* [ˈwɪˑɪjəm] and *always* [ˈɔɹwɛɪz]. It is never realized in final position.

/ hw / is a voiceless labial and velar fricative. It occurs initially in the following words: *wheel* [hwiˑɬ], *which* [hwɪtʃ], and *what* [hwɐˑt]. / w / frequently substitutes / hw /, e.g., *when* [wɪn] or [hwɪn].

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There may be little difference in the phonemic structure of Bedford County folk speech in comparison with other American dialects. The manner in which the phonemes of Bedford County folk speech are realized, however, could show considerable variation. One would naturally have to compare the allophonic (phonetic variation of this particular diasystem with other diasystems from within the state as well as outside it before any conclusions as to distinctiveness, or lack of it, could be drawn. As previously pointed out, this project represents the necessary first step toward evolving those conclusions. In short, this project is descriptive, not comparative.

Despite the usual amount of variation in pronunciation between the five informants interviewed, all of them exhibited a phonetic consistency. For example, all the informants were similar in the way they raised and lowered or advanced and retracted vowels. The variation between informants, however, is just as important as the consistency that is apparent amongst them all. Two of the informants, for example, exhibited a more "rustic" type of speech that was characterized by archaic pronunciations--archaisms once thought to be found in the Southern Highlands alone. The writer feels that such evidence jeopardizes the prevalent belief that Southern Mountain speech was ever a vestige of Elizabethan English.

More studies of this type would be beneficial in revealing the complex social and linguistic history of Tennessee. Even though the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* is presently canvassing the state,

the writer is of the opinion that a county by county linguistic survey together with a county by county study of surnames and court records would tell us much about the settlement history of Tennessee. For example, it would be most interesting to compare the folk speech of East and Middle Tennessee with that of the Piedmont and Tide-water Virginia. It may, indeed, shine a more definitive light on who first settled Tennessee.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

INFORMANT BIOGRAPHIES

T. H. Informant #1

Male. Born 1891 in Moore County. Sheriff of Moore County 1911-1919. Moved to Bedford County in 1922. Worked as a farm hand until 1946 when he purchased his own farm outside the town of Normandy. Eighth grade education. Now a retired farmer. Very intelligent man with a keen sense of observation. Very knowledgable about folk culture. Unsure of family ancestry. Uses many archaic forms of English.

A. B. Informant #2

Male. Born in 1892 in Bedford County. Retired farmer. Presently lives on a small farm near Flat Creek. Eighth grade education. Served as a magistrate to the county court for over fifteen years. Believes his ancestors came from North Carolina. Quick mind. Helpful in pointing out old words and expressions.

E. A. Informant #3

Male. Born 1896 in Wartrace. Retired mechanic/carpenter. Presently lives on a small farm seven miles south of Shelbyville. Fifth grade education. Traces his ancestry to North Carolina. Good informant, but sensitive about his idiolect.

I. S. Informant #4

Female. Born 1886 in Roseville. Associated with farming all her life. Widow. Presently lives on a small farm near Roseville. Believes her ancestors came from North Carolina. Fifth grade education. Intelligent, lively informant, but slightly hard of hearing. Uses many archaic forms of English.

L. F. Informant #5

Female. Born 1881 in Marshall County. Moved to Bedford County at the age of three. Widow. Associated with farming all her life. Presently lives on a small farm near Pleasant Grove. Has never been out of Bedford County in her life. Fourth grade education. Uses many archaic forms of English. Traces her family ancestry to South Carolina. As an informant she was difficult to interview because of her many digression of an inconsequential nature.

VITA

Anthony Patterson Cavender was born on Friday, August 13, 1948 in Nashville, Tennessee. He attended the public schools in Nashville and enrolled in Belmont College in 1966. He graduated from Belmont in 1971, receiving a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English. In 1971 he began graduate work in anthropology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He was awarded the Master of Arts degree with a major in Anthropology in June, 1974.