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American English has a reputation for being more conservative, which is to say archaic, than British English. This occasionally ill-reputed condition has been defended by the theory that the English of rural New England (or of the southern mountains, or any speech spoken out of the busy mainstream of Standard American English) is no more characteristic of Standard American English than of Received Standard, but can be matched to rural dialects of England. Comparisons made between Received Standard and Standard American English vary depending on which regions in England and America are examined; American English may appear more conservative, or it may not.¹ However, when one considers that, of the four hundred words and expressions in the following study, all are from rural British English dialect areas and 358 are from Standard American English, it is not hard to see how American English came by its reputation.

These four hundred words were chosen from English Dialect Society volumes regarding six British English dialect areas: Cheshire, Northumberland, Antrim and Down, Cornwall, Leicestershire, and Kent. Several of the English Dialect Society authors have indicated that their glossaries are intended to reflect words which were at that time in common use in their respective counties, but out of "classical"—or, one may assume, Received Standard—use in England. A word is by no means restricted to one county, but is often characteristic of surrounding shires, and may even appear in the glossaries of counties in the opposite ends of England. The criteria for use of words from the English Dialect Society lists in this study are that each word or expression must be in use somewhere in America, and that all words and expressions must refer to the same object or action in American English as in British English, as defined by each English Dialect Society wordlist author, Webster's Third International, and common sense. It is vocabulary that is of interest to this study; as pronunciation and spelling are uninvolved, spelling has occasionally been standardized American-style for the purpose of comparison. English Dialect Society authors had largely used spelling to indicate pronunciation; although to do so here is unnecessary for other than reference purposes, any nonstandard spellings of words will be listed with standardized forms.

Following the glossaries of each county's words which are found to be compatible with American English vocabulary, there will be an examination of ninety-two words which are traceable to various American dialect regions, according to Wentworth's American Dialect Dictionary. Sixty-three of these words have ceased to be peculiar to any American dialect, having rapidly become standard during the few decades since the publication of Wentworth's book. However, it is interesting to see where these words have been; charts comparing these ninety-two words with British and American dialect regions are included preceding the bibliography.

¹Baugh, Albert C. and Thomas Cable, A History of the English Language, Prentiss-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1978, pp 351-353

In 1812 Roger Wilbraham noted, in his introduction to a glossary of Cheshire words he had compiled, that until the latter half of the sixteenth century Cheshire had been a separate jurisdiction from the rest of England, and had been socially isolated from the other counties as well. While the Cheshire folk kept to themselves, their vocabulary kept to itself, and therefore the language in Chester County changed less over the years than language in other counties. By 1876 Egerton Leigh had drawn up his own Cheshire word list, based in part on Wilbraham's gleanings. Many of the words in Wilbraham's glossary had become common throughout England, and Leigh felt obliged to exclude them from his own list. Remarking that Cheshire words may be equally likely to be heard in the surrounding areas of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Wales, Leigh states his criteria for entries in his glossary: the words are used in Cheshire, not used "in the common parlance of society," and that they are unregistered in modern — or any — dictionaries. Robert Holland, collecting words from Cheshire for the English Dialect Society in 1885, remarks that dialectal words from Cheshire have on occasion appeared in dictionaries, only to be copied subsequently into other dictionaries, thereby becoming "classical." Holland further states that many of Wilbraham's words may have fallen into obsolescence in the sixty-three years following their publication. In the ninety-five years which have passed since Holland's work, it is likely that many more Cheshire words have become lost or common in Chester County; in America, nearly all of the words and expressions from the combined lists of Leigh and Holland have become standard, and most of them are now listed in a modern dictionary.

Among the nouns listed in the Cheshire glossaries, peculiar to rural British English if not exclusively to Cheshire, are bag, blood-blister, bobbin, brat, coverlid/coverlet, deck (of cards), dander, dab, dollop, elbow-grease, frump, hap, harslet/haslet, high time, jack (a playing card), kink, kit [and caboodle], licking, patch (eye or vegetable), pegleg, pellet, pen (an enclosure), platter, pop (the effervescent beverage), riff-raff, spit (a likeness), sparerib, stud (the vertical rib of wood in a wall to which horizontal boards called laths are nailed), skillet, to-do, and weakend. Verbs include abide (put up with), age, blab, chastize, come by (acquire), duck, egg on, expect (suppose or believe), fetch, gad about, glower, hanker, heave (lift or retract), junket (to go on an excursion for pleasure), knit (said of broken bones), learn (teach), mend (recover from illness), nag, let on, pelt, perk up, pester, rally (from illness), reckon (suppose), sidle, slam, snap at, wish, waft, strip (remove clothes), start, transmogrify, yield (produce agriculturally). Examples of adjectives are angry (inflamed wound), chock-full, decent (good), mad, muddling (said of health), muggy, proud (pleased), queasy, sharp (cheeses or fellows), snotty, sorry (no-account), tubby. There are few adverbs common to both Cheshire and America: gingorty, and leastways/leastwise; and one preposition, off, meaning from, as in, "I bought it off him." Idiomatic expressions include "it's better side of fifty; the better side of a fortnight," meaning "more than," "in all my born days," "come spring" or "come harvest," "in a stew," "no great shakes," "not all there," "under the weather," "up in years," "racked/wracked with pain," and "rack/wrack and ruin."

hear tell, hoof it, lay into, leave (let), pamper, spank, take to, tear (run-fist), use to (be accustomed). Can and could mean "be able," as in "I might can," or "I might could," which are common parlance in the southern mountains in America, as is up-plus-verb: "he up and went, he up and spoke." "Do for" has two meanings: to keep house for or take care of someone, or, possibly related, "to make an end of, abolish, or finish," which in the passive means "exhausted, worn out." Done for can also mean finished as in dead, and many a Leicester baby's grave bore the epitaph,

"Since I 'so soon was to be done for
I wonders what I was begun for."

This tradition has evidently been brought to America, and is engraved on a child's gravestone, date unknown, in Knoxville's own Highland Memorial Cemetery.

Adjectives from Leicester include best (better), better than (more than), bettermost (best, superior, greater), blowzy, bran/brnd-new, canny, beholden, bedfust, agreeable, close (sultry heat), cockswe, cocky, crabby, double-ugly (excruciatingly ugly, and a popular name for one's dog; heard in the southern mountains in the USA., as joking 'insult'), fit (ready, on the point of doing something; "fit to be tied"), flabbergasted, down (dejected), gawky, greedy, happy-go-lucky, loath, his own man, natty, like (be near doing: "I like to died"), out of sorts, perty, nice as pie, put-upon (oppressed), ramshackle, scarce, stubby, tasty, tidy, twang (flavor), ugly (ill-tempered), to the nines, thick (close: "as thick as thieves"), wishy-washy. Adverbs are by far, by rights, by now, clean (entirely), as good as (as much or many as), leastways/leastwise, peart/pert (lively), and thataway.

Physiology and pronunciation are the differences between most Kentish dialect and standard English words. Should the word "arbor" appear in the following word list as Kentish for "elbow"? It would be a matter of pronunciation rather than vocabulary. The further one is from London, the more saturated the Kentish dialect. Few French words have found their way into east Kent, which is not fond of strangers, who are called "furriners," and as an unfriendly touch, "whose names they pronounce any way they please," according to glossary authors W.D. Parish and W.F. Shaw. Parish and Shaw have done much to preserve the peculiarities of Kentish — a fervent wish of most of the dialect scholars — to the point of having included blank perforated pages in the original 1887 English Dialect Society edition, with Parish's Sandwich address, in hopes of receiving readers' opinions and offerings in order to expand and correct their work, rather in the manner of the Northumberland newspaper articles. Results are not evident in the 1965 reprinting, and one wonders how it turned out.

Samuel Pegge, in a 1735 glossary of Kentisms, reprinted in an 1876 English Dialect Society volume, states what the other dialectologists have restated, that some words and phrases are common to surrounding dialects, but not common to general use throughout England. Some of the examples from Pegge's list which do not appear in Parish and Shaw's over 150 years later, but were used "daily and frequently" in Kent in Pegge's day are kitten, dingy (dirty), flush (even), plum (completely), about (concerning), and the redundant yet, as in "neither this nor yet that." The use of a verb-plus-up was sufficiently unusual in standard English for Pegge to comment: look it up, catch up, heal up, use up. He shows that the adverb "how" was then used to mean near the matter, or sufficiently

near the right way with the example "that's about how to do it," which seems so common today in America as to defy need for second thought, let alone explanation.

From Partridge Shaw's list come andirons, dollop, dunes (sand hills), eyesore, handful (as much responsibility or work as one can do or bear), harcellet/haslet, hull, innards, knoll, parcel (a portion: bread-and-milk, or land), passel (a number: people or objects), plenty (a plenty is enough), poke, scallion, sight (quantity), skillet, spats, spit (likeness: spit on image), swath. Verbs include allow (think, consider), bash, carry on (act unreasonably), cater (to cut ^{diagonally} from which comes the adjective catercorner, or catty-corner), chastize, dull, earth (only "unearth" has survived in America), harvest, heave (throw), ice, kink, lay into, learn (teach), like, lob, sag, use (accustom: "get used to"), wag, yowl. "like" means simply what it does in English today, to find agreeable, to find pleasing, as in the Kentish, "How do you like yourself?" Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary gives examples of this meaning in Kent and in Scotland, but nowhere else in England. Scottish expressions include, "as you like" which means "as you please," and "I can't do what I like." One wonders if it is possible for the use of "like" to be so restricted, and if it is, what Midlander Shakespeare meant by As You Like It. The verb wag means to shake; its use here and in Northumberland is not restricted to dogs' tails, which have been wagging everywhere for quite some time. According to Webster, it is now standard procedure to wag heads, fingers, and tongues in America; in Northumberland people even wag hands (shake hands).

Kentish adjectives are choctfull, caterways, contrary/contray (disagreeable), crummy, cumbersome, flabbergasted, galore, heartening, lingering, lonesome, mad, muddling, slick (slippery), shut of (end of), put-upon (worried, bothered), spry, tidy (considerable: a tidy sum). Among the adverbs are awhile, just-so, leastwise, -like, peart/pert, and pretty nigh. Idiomatically, the Kentish say, "come Sunday," "good money" (good pay, high wages), "She pricked up her ears like an old sow in beans," and "because why?" argumentatively for "why?" which traditionally alternates for several rounds with the answer, "Because." The term "good money" is not listed by Webster or Wentworth, but can be heard in America in the southern mountain region.

Of this collection of four hundred rural British English words and idioms, forty-three fall into the categories of Webster's status labels for words which are other than Standard American English. These status labels are divided into temporal, stylistic, and regional labels. The temporal labels are obsolete, "showing no evidence of standard use since 1755" or likely to again, obsolete being "a comment on the word being defined and not on the thing defined by the word"; and archaic, "standard after 1755 but serving in the present only sporadically or in special contexts." Stylistic labels include slang, substandard, and nonstandard. Slang is a term "affixed to words especially appropriate in contexts of extreme informality, having usually a currency not limited to a particular region or area of interest, and composed typically of clipped or shortened forms of speech. There is no completely satisfactory objective test for slang, and many standard words can be given slang connotations or used so inappropriately as to become slang." Substandard words are defined as "status conforming to a pattern of linguistic usage that exists throughout the American language community but [differing] in choice of word or form from that of the prestige community. This label is not regional." Nonstandard describes "a very small number of words that can hardly stand without some status label but

are too widely current in reputable context to be labeled substandard." The regional label is a dialect label which "indicates a regional pattern too complex for summary labeling usually because it includes several regional varieties of American English or of American and British English." Dialects which can be labeled have the regions to which they belong attached to the dialect label, which corresponds to Hens Kwath's Word Geography of The Eastern United States (1949): West, Southwest, Northwest, North, Midland, South, and New England.

Of the forty-two words which are not labeled Standard, two are obsolete: "peart" and "lay into"; four are archaic: list, nick (if the action is done on purpose—standard if it was an accident), machine, and spell (the work shift; the period of time is standard). The four slang words are nail, lip, catch it, and crummy; learn, -like, and leave are substandard; and there are no examples of nonstandard in this group. The verb "earth" is a British dialect word, "poke-pudding" is Scottish, "proud" is Midland, "lopper" is Northern, and "peart" is Midland and Southern. The rest of the words labeled dialect are hap, reckon, muddling, born days, man, leastways (leastwise is standard), mind, red, cruds, better, passel, widow-man, widow-woman, cream, cruddle, heap, can, could, bettermost (meanings "best" and "greater" are dialectic; "superior" is standard), thataway, sight, cumbersome, allow, and cater.

Twenty^{nine} of these words are listed in Harold Wentworth's American Dialect Dictionary, along with sixty^{three} words Webster leaves unlabeled. In 1944 when the dialect dictionary was published, all ninety^{two} belonged to American dialects. Of several dialect dictionaries available, Wentworth produced by far the most useful information. Mortford Matthews' two-volume Dictionary of Americanisms, William Craigie's Dictionary of American English, Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary, and the Oxford English Dictionary, all give thorough dates and quotations, but few, and usually no, dialect regions. Matthews also indicatesⁱⁿ his preface that an Americanism originates in America—whereas all the words in this study tend not to, though a few of them appear in his dictionary. All in all, Wentworth provided useful information regarding the regions into which ninety words fall in 1944. All of the words from Webster's status categories are found in Wentworth's book except borndays, list, nick, nail, lip, machine, cream, catch it, crummy, cumbersome, cater, earth, and lay into. The sixty^{three} standard words found in Wentworth include covered, dander, dab, haslet, licking, patch, skillet, to-do, abide, chustize, come by, duck, fetch, hanker, heave, let on, pester, chock-full, come (+ noun), off, belly flopper (a dive into water, by the way, not a sledding term); also are bit, fatty, ramps, skillet, snap (cookie), spit, stoop, brand-new, wrought, disremember, favor, hear tell, tear, like (as), awhile, spell (time), hoiy-toy, spigot, gumption, twang, abide; and take to, use to, best, bettermost (best), beholden, like (to died), ramshackle, ugly, androns, innards, spit, chock-full, catercorner/caterways, contrary, mad, slick, shut of, pretty nigh, verb (+ up), up (+ verb), and yet. These ninety-two words are listed on charts comparing the six British regions with twenty-six American dialect areas, beginning on page 12.

The twenty-six dialect regions for America are chosen largely from Raven I. McDavid's map from his article "The Principal Dialect Areas of the United States" with information also made from his article "The Principal Dialect Areas of the United States" with information also

from Roger W. Shuy's "Dialects: How They Differ," and from Carroll E. Reed's Dialect of American English, both of which provide maps.² The composite map of regions listed on the charts on pages 12-14 include Far West (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada), Rocky Mountain (Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah), Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, Southwest Oklahoma, Texas), Central Southern (Southeast Texas, Louisiana, Southeast Oklahoma, Southern Mississippi, Arkansas, Western Alabama, Southwest Tennessee), South Midland (Northern Oklahoma, Southern strip of Kansas, northern Mississippi, southern Missouri, northern Alabama, and Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the southern edges of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois), Southeast (Southwest Alabama, southern Georgia, Florida), North Midland (Kansas, northern Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio), and Upper Midwest (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Iowa). The remaining eighteen dialect areas are patterned exactly after M^cDavid's Atlantic Seaboard areas, adapted from Hans Kwath's Word Geography of The United States, numbered from one to eighteen on the charts in this work to correspond with the map in M^cDavid's. The fourth region, Inland North, on these charts refers to Wisconsin, Michigan, the northern edges of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and northwest central New York. Unlike the categories North, Midland, and South on M^cDavid's map, the terms on these charts do not include the numbered areas but only the states listed here which lie outside the more definite boundaries which have been given numbers.

The charts do not supply conclusive evidence that the vocabularies of the British counties listed migrated directly to the corresponding American regions. Any number of words could have come from counties other than Cheshire, Northumberland, Antrim and Down, Cornwall, Leicestershire, or Kent; and it is possible that some words in use in American dialects in this century escaped the notice of this writer, who generally responds to North Midland or South Midland words and expressions. New England's coast, and much of the south were settled largely by southeastern Britishers, though the south was infiltrated by Scotch-Irish people, which means there is an element of northern British there also. New York State, west New England, and western Ohio were inhabited by north English settlers, while the Delaware Valley around Philadelphia, western New Jersey, and elsewhere in Pennsylvania became home to Quakers who arrived from England where they had dwelled in the Midlands and North. Hans Kwath says southerners colonized the Virginia Tidewater area, in his "Origin of Dialectical Differences,"² but Baugh and Cable have different ideas, that it was north as well as southeast. They also list northern England for Louisiana's colonists, whereas Kwath adds southern. The remaining regions of the United States share north and south British heritage, and also, of course, vocabulary. The charts on page 12 ignore migration patterns, all six displaying rather obvious Inland North, New England, Midland, and Southeast-Central South preferences; and nearly every word has one foot in the Midlands. This is to be expected, as these ninety-two words are of necessity Midland words, having been chosen by a Midlander.

What the charts do supply, however, is a cross-section of part of our language, with

² For further information on these articles, see Bibliography, p. 15.

a view of where some of our homelier words have come from, and where they stayed
briefly once in America before drifting into the oblivion of standardization in American English...

ANTRIM & DOWN better than bread news cruds dismember favors hap bear kill let on - like like (as) far	UPPER MIDWEST MIDLAND NORTH WEST NEW ENGLAND EAST NEW ENGLAND SOUTH NEW ENGLAND MILCON VALLEY METROPOLITAN NEW YORK DELAWARE VALLEY/PHILADELPHIA SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY UPPER OHIO VALLEY/PITTSBURGH NORTHWEST VIRGINIA NORTH MIDLAND SOUTH MIDLAND VIRGINIA CAROLINA & EAST TENN Southern N. VA. & EASTERN KY. UPPER POTOMAC & SHENANDOAH DELMARVA - EASTERN SHORE VIRGINIA PIEDMONT Northern North CAROLINA CAPE-FEAR & PEEDEE VALLEYS SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY Southeast CENTRAL SOUTH Southwest ROCKY MOUNTAIN FAR WEST	KENT allowed aside caterwauls come around coarsely haslet inwards learn leastwise - like muddling peart patty nigh passel shut of - skillet - stick - while use to	4 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 10 11 13 12 9 14 15 16 17 18	MURPHY-13
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COMMON WORDS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
cruddle																			
gumphon																			
kit																			
passel																			
spell (shift)																			
spall (food)																			
slash																			
widow's walk																			
widow's window																			
ugly																			
pract leave (vt)																			
LEICESTERSHIRE																			
abide																			
bedridden																			
best (better)																			
bib																			
blowzy																			
snapp(cockey)																			
can																			
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cuddle																			
cruds																			
dab																			
dafer																			
spigot																			
gumphon																			
hear fill																			
heap																			
leashings																			
leave (vt)																			
scarce																			
shut- up take to kitchenway twang ugly use to																			

- UPPER MIDWEST
 INLAND NORTH
 NEW ENGLAND
 SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND
 SOUTHWEST NEW ENGLAND
 HUDSON VALLEY
 METROPOLITAN NEW YORK
 DELAWARE VALLEY/PHILADELPHIA
 SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY
 UPPER OHIO VALLEY/PITTSBURGH
 Northern WEST VIRGINIA
 NORTH MIDLAND
 SOUTH MIDLAND
 WESTERN CAROLINA & EASTERN TENN.
 Southern W. VA. & EASTERN KY.
 Upper POTOMAC & SHENANDOAH
 DELMARVA - EASTERN SHORE
 VIRGINIA PIEDMONT
 NORTHWESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
 CAPE FEAR & PEEDEE VALLEYS
 SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY
 SOUTHEAST
 CENTRAL SOUTH
 SOUTHWEST
 ROCKY MOUNTAIN
 FAR WEST

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