

**THE PHONOLOGY OF THE LOST CAUSE**  
**THE ENGLISH OF THE CONFEDERADOS IN BRAZIL**

MICHAEL B. MONTGOMERY AND CECIL ATAIDE MELO

**1. Introduction**

In the wake of defeat after the American Civil War and occupation by Union military forces, thousands of former citizens of the Confederate States of America decided they could not live in the reunified United States. With their past in ashes and their future in doubt, these Southern Americans began to uproot themselves, to scrape together whatever belongings had survived the war and the economic deprivation and military occupation that followed, and to launch an exodus that continued for two decades following the war's end. Hoping to rebuild their former lives, they began colonies elsewhere. Some went to Mexico, others to the West Indies or Central America, still others as far as Japan and Egypt (Rolle 1963:189), but the largest contingent went to Brazil to start colonies, the best-known of which was in the south of that country in an area that gained a new name — Americana — from the immigrants. For most of the subsequent 120 years, descendants of Confederates have remained an English-speaking enclave in a Portuguese-speaking nation, as its citizens maintained English-language schools, used English in their homes and community life, and kept alive memories of their former country. Over the years these ex-Confederates and their descendants became more integrated into Brazilian Society and more fluent in Portuguese as well, so that for those born after World War II Portuguese became the first and dominant language and there are no longer monolingual English speakers in Americana.

However, still living in the Americana area are several hundred older descendants (called “Confederados” by their Brazilian neighbors) of the original settlers for whom English is their first language and whose accent is unmistakably Southern American, although it also has a definite Por-

tuguese flavor. Given the isolation of the Americana community, cut off from other English speakers for over a century, Americana English represents a time capsule that may hold a key to understanding patterns of Southern American English (SAmE) of the mid-19th century. Assuming that present-day Americana English preserves these patterns, especially phonological features, we can begin to document an earlier stage of SAmE and use this as a baseline to determine the progress of subsequent sound changes that distinguish SAmE from other varieties of AmE in the 20th century. At present we know little about the phonology of SAmE a century ago, certainly not enough for us to state the extent to which it has converged with or diverged from other varieties of AmE since the Civil War.

Recently interviews with eleven members of the Americana community have been recorded and made available in a series of excerpts on the television program *The Last Confederates*.<sup>1</sup> The present paper undertakes the first linguistic analysis of their variety of English and focuses in particular on the following: 1) the patterning of seven phonological features, including post-vocalic and syllabic [r], the final nasal in words ending in *ing*, and presence of an offglide with diphthong /ai/; 2) differences for these features between men and women in Americana; 3) the extent of Portuguese influence on Americana speech. Before we present the linguistic analysis, however, we will explore the historical and cultural context of the Americana settlement in greater detail.

## 2. Historical perspective

To the unattentive visitor, Americana today is a small city like any other in Southeast Brazil, about a hundred miles northwest of São Paulo. With less than 200,000 inhabitants, it is perhaps best known as a major textile center. But when Jimmy Carter, then governor of the state of Georgia, visited in 1972 upon the invitation of an American diplomat based in Brazil, his interest was not in cotton planting, textile exports, or international politics. What took Carter and his wife Rosalynn was the chance to explore a forgotten chapter in Southern American history. Who were these people who sounded like they were from the American South but were living five thousand miles away from Georgia in Southern Brazil, and how did they come to be there?

Soon after the final surrender at Appomattox in April 1865 and increasingly with ensuing deprivations of the post-war Reconstruction

period, thousands of Confederates found it intolerable to live in a South under Yankee occupation. Theirs was not only a regional shame at defeat but also personal humiliation, as many, particularly leading Confederate citizens, saw their American citizenship taken away as an act of vengeance by the federal government. As Eugene Harter, himself a descendant of Americana settlers, puts it, "Southerners were to be given a lesson in humility. They would have to seek a pardon from the Washington government before they could be considered Americans again" (Harter 1984:8). Uncompromisingly proud, many defeated Confederates saw expatriation as a "solution to the dilemma of living in a changed South, where defeat and invasion by the Yankees threatened that tender essence of community and customs that defined the southerner" (Harter 1984:ix). Thus wanting to put their suffering, their political shackles, and their dishonor behind them, they began looking abroad. Within months of the war's end, the Southern Colonization Society was formed at Edgefield Court House in South Carolina; at its first meeting in August 1865

it was resolved to send two or more Agents with as little delay as practicable to explore the Southern and Western Territories of the United States and especially the great Empire of Brazil, to ascertain what inducements they might offer for the immigration of our people, and, in the event of a favorable report, to make all necessary arrangements for the procurement of lands, and for the establishment of a good and permanent settlement there. (cited by Hill 1936:115)

Two agents were commissioned and a committee of five fund-raisers appointed. Other organizations soon followed:

There was not a single state south of the Potomac and Ohio rivers that did not have its society for the promotion of emigration; many of them had numerous organizations which served this purpose. About two dozen societies from Mississippi and Louisiana alone cooperated in sending General William Wallace Wood of the former state on an inspection tour in Brazil in the latter half of 1865. (Hill 1936:116-7)

By 1866 Southerners were striking out for Mexico and Brazil, with the large stream embarking for the latter country (Brannon 1930:78). In Brazil and in other colonies, it was felt, Southerners could survive with honor.

Encouraged by the Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II, who was convinced at the time that "the imperial regime of Brazil would be strengthened greatly by accretions of the landholding aristocracy" (Hill 1936:114), "at least twenty thousand" Confederates left the United States

to start a new life in Brazil (Harter 1984:12). This emigration is a striking historic irony when we consider that the United States at the very same time was welcoming a tremendous influx of immigrants, not only from Europe but from all corners of the world "yearning to breathe free." Colonies of ex-Confederates sprouted throughout the Brazilian empire. Although homesickness and the harsh realities of undeveloped land drove some colonists to return to the United States after a few years, many others determined to stay and to prosper. One colony grew at Santarém, at the confluence of the Tapajós with the Amazon, but never flourished due to precarious conditions in the Amazonian jungle at the time.

The Americana community proved to be the most successful of these attempts. Americana colonists hailed primarily from Alabama, Georgia, and Texas (Medeiros 1982:150), but included natives of most other Confederate states as well (Hill 1936:172). Harter contends that family records indicate that these settlers "tried to marry within the Confederado community wherever possible" (1984:105); although later generations often married Brazilians and relocated elsewhere, descendants of the settlers in Americana today preserve their identification with American Southerners by holding frequent observances to remember their ancestors and honor them for their sacrifices. Over the years, these Brazilian-Americans have contributed to their adopted country in many areas. In agriculture, they were responsible for introducing the Georgia rattle-snake watermelon (Hill 1936:173-4) and reportedly the steel plow and expertise in cotton cultivation as well. In the fields of education and health, they have been credited with founding hospitals and even colleges (James 1972 as reported in Medeiros 1982:150). Today approximately "one hundred thousand U.S. Confederate descendants [are] scattered throughout the vast country of Brazil" (Harter 1984:106).

The historical significance of the Americana settlement has remained almost unknown in both the U.S. and in Brazil. It rarely merits even a footnote in American accounts of the Reconstruction (e.g., there is no mention of Confederate emigration in Randall and Donald's *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (1961), a standard work on the period). In essence, they disappeared from American consciousness when they left the U.S. shore. Two factors may contribute to the lack of public knowledge about them in Brazil. One is the relatively small number of Confederates who settled in Americana as compared to millions of other immigrants to Brazil since the turn of the century, Germans, Italians, and Japanese to name a few.

Although less conservative estimates are that as many as forty thousand Confederates came to Brazil, this is still a small group for a country with continental dimensions which has absorbed millions of people over the past century. Another reason may be that the name “Americana” in Portuguese does not set the town apart from others with Portuguese-based names in the region. Unlike other foreign settlements in Brazil (cf. “Blumenau”, “Witmarsum,” “Novo Hamburgo,” “Nova Veneza,” “Witenberg”), “Villa Americana” was the name by which the ex-Confederate settlement community was known, in response to the obviously foreign (U.S.) character of the majority population. When “the ‘Villa’ (‘Town’) became a city the adjective ‘Americana’ was retained for some unknown reason, though a good guess would be that the Confederates living there requested it — for, perhaps, romantic or poetic reasons” (Harter 1984: 106).<sup>2</sup>

In his 1972 visit to Americana, Carter gave an emotional address to 200 Confederate descendents at the cemetery in Americana where many first settlers were buried. He compared the exiled Southerners’ feelings for their former country to those that the Jewish people have traditionally maintained for Israel (Garner 1972:18). Parallel to the Jewish tradition, today’s descendants of the early Confederates see no conflict in having a dual cultural heritage. In a recent interview, a prominent Americana resident succinctly summed up her feelings in a typical fashion. In her words: “Brazilian first, and then American. I couldn’t separate one from the other. I wouldn’t be whole either way.” The questions at hand in this paper are to what extent the speech of these descendants of Confederate emigrants exhibits features of SAmE and what this tells us about the development of SAmE over the past one and a quarter centuries.

### 3. Data and speakers

This study is based on the speech of eleven Americana residents, one boy about ten years old and five men and five women who were all over sixty and in some cases eighty years old. The data are from excerpts of interviews (conducted in the mid-1970s) with these speakers on *The Last Confederates*. Approximately two-thirds of the data comes from men. They represent a slimmer dataset than we would like, so for vocabulary and grammar there are too few data for us to comment on variation between subgroups of Americana speakers or to say much about the Portuguese influence on their English. But they do provide a sufficient number of phonological environ-

ments (e.g., more than 200 for post-vocalic /r/) to permit tentative, baseline statements about the seven phonological variables detailed below.

All eleven speakers (whose names certainly make them sound like Southerners — such as Sonny Pyles, Sara Bell Matthews, Robert E. Lee Conti) interviewed on the television program were middle-class and most were college-educated. Among the men are a physician, a dentist, and prosperous farmers. One of the women is a local historian, the others public schoolteachers and professors at McKenzie University, which was founded by ex-Confederates and at which many of the speakers for this study were educated. These individuals had almost no contact with speakers of English outside the Americana community; two of them mention a sentimental visit in recent years to Alabama — the home of their immigrant ancestors — “after a hundred years’ absence”. It is clear from the interviews that some of these speakers knew their immigrant ancestors well. At least two of them were children of immigrants, and several others grandchildren. For these reasons, the English of these Americana residents is likely to be quite close to the Confederate immigrants themselves.

#### **4. Pronunciation of Americana English**

4.0 In general, the Americana speakers are a homogeneous group socially and linguistically. Except for the young boy (from whom there are only four short clauses of data), they are similar in age and in the patterning of most phonological features examined in this paper (see Table 1). While cross-generational comparisons are not possible at present, nor any subgroup comparison except by gender, this study provides more data on a single generation of Americana speech and raises the prospect that further research can address how much and how quickly this fascinating variety of English is changing. Such research must be done quickly, however, because for younger members of the Americana community Portuguese is the dominant language and Americana English is losing ground (Harter p.c.).

More importantly, as stated earlier, Americana speech provides data to describe the phonology of mid-19th century SAmE, about which we know quite little. Americana data not only provide a baseline against which we may determine subsequent sound changes in SAmE and address questions about the extent to which it may be converging with other varieties of AmE, but they will also assist us in the larger task of reconstructing earlier stages of SAmE. To pursue these goals, we now examine the patterning

and variation in Americana speech of seven phonological features. Listed below, these are well known to vary along regional lines and to have characteristic variants in 20th-century SAmE (Kurath and McDavid (1961), C.-J.N. Bailey (1985), McDavid (1958), etc.). (In our discussion “SAmE” refers to a generalized version of Lower Southern pronunciation recognized by such writers as McDavid (1958) as spoken in the traditional plantation belt from Eastern Virginia southwestward to Georgia and then westward to Texas; the similar patterning across the region for the features examined here also justifies considering the ancestors of Americana speakers as one group, since they derived almost entirely from Lower South areas.) The seven features are as follows:

- 1) Syllabic and post-vocalic /r/, as to whether some constriction (evidence of /r/) occurs or not.
- 2) Diphthong /ai/, as to whether an offglide occurs;
- 3) Final *-ing*, as to whether the nasal consonant is alveolar or velar;
- 4) Vowels before liquid consonants /l/ and /r/ in medial position (as in *hellish* and *Sara*), as to whether these vowels have liquid coloring;
- 5) Vowel /u/ after alveolar consonants, as to whether the onglide [j] occurs in words like *tune*;
- 6) Contour of short front vowels such as in *man* and *bed*, as to whether the vowels are drawn;
- 7) Height of front lax vowel /ɛ/ before nasals, as in *pen* and *ten*

Although all seven features vary, sometimes in complex ways, within the South, one or more particular variants for each are widespread in SAmE. These variants are recognized as either more typical of SAmE (such as certain variants of 1, 2, and 3) than of other varieties of AmE or as almost entirely restricted to SAmE (variants of 6 and 7). Thus, although some variants are primarily stylistic (such as 6) and others (such as 1 and 4) have striking social and generational patterns within the South, for each of the seven features there is a variant that occurs more often in, sometimes exclusively in, SAmE.

With this in mind, we can state that SAmE is often marked by

- 1) the lack of syllabic and post-vocalic /r/ (McDavid 1958:521);
- 2) the monophthongization of /ai/, especially before voiced consonants (McDavid 1958:521, 525);
- 3) the alveolar nasal in final *-ing*;

- 4) a tendency for no liquid coloring on vowels before medial /r/ and /l/ (C.-J.N. Bailey 1980);
- 5) the onglide [j] before /u/ (McDavid 1958:525);
- 6) the drawling of front vowels, most often in phrase-final and clause-final environments, and
- 7) the raising of the vowel in *ten* and *pen*, creating homophony of these words with *tin* and *pin*.

Each feature was viewed as a binary variable, with variants being classified on a dichotomous basis (i.e., whether or not any evidence of one variant was present). For instance, post-vocalic /r/ was coded as present if any degree of constriction occurred in a given environment, and any degree of an offglide, whether raised or centered, was sufficient to consider /ai/ realized as a diphthong. Likewise, an onglide of any degree before /u/ was counted as the occurrence of an onglide for feature 5. A given environment was ignored if the pronunciation was ambiguous or if (for features 5-7) it occurred in an unstressed syllable (thus, in assessing the raising of front short mid vowels, unstressed syllables in words like *government* were ignored.) The data were coded independently by each author of this paper, who subsequently compared assessments and consulted the recording together until a consensus of interpretation was reached.

The general impression of the modern-day observer in hearing Americana English is that it is distinctly akin to modern-day SAmE, although, as we will see, distinctive SAmE variants of several of the above-mentioned features occur rarely or not at all in Americana. This in itself is a crucial point, suggesting that SAmE has undergone considerable evolution in the little more than a century following the war and has become in some ways unlike other varieties of AmE.

Table 1: Phonological features in Americana English by gender

	Syllabic and post-vocalic /r/		Diphthong /ai/	
	Constriction	%	No Offglide	%
Men	18/135	13.3	9/80	11.2
Women	12/77	15.6	5/32	15.6
Total	30/212	14.2	14/112	12.5
	Final -ing		Geminate R/L	
	Alveolar	%	Non-Geminate	%
Men	11/25	44.0	1/24	4.2
Women	4/4	100.0	1/18	5.6
Total	15/29	51.7	2/42	4.8



The homogeneity of Americana speech is seen in that only the first four features have more than one variant. In addition, the differences between men and women are minimal, with Table 1 giving the general view of this.

Our approach will be primarily descriptive, secondarily comparative, to present synchronic quantitative statements for each feature in Americana speech along with comments from other studies providing historical and geographical perspectives when possible.

#### 4.1 *Syllabic and post-vocalic /r/*

The lack of constriction in syllabic and post-vocalic /r/ has long been a hallmark of SAmE. More has been written on whether or not Southerners of different kinds produce constriction after vowels than any other phonological feature in the region's speech, with McMillan and Montgomery (1989) listing no fewer than fifty-eight studies focusing on it. These studies detail its historical (Stephenson 1968), geographical (Van Riper 1958), social (Crane 1973, etc.), phonological (C.-J. Bailey 1981), and other dimensions. With regard to its history, Krapp (1925:II:225) states that "r final and before consonants [came] to be generally omitted in Eastern and Southern American speech at the end of the eighteenth century," and Stephenson (1968:69) concludes that r-lessness was a prestige feature that had spread through much of North Carolina from Virginia by 1800. Its prestige must have caused it to spread from this region and from focal areas along the coast farther south — Charleston and Savannah — through the Lower South in the nineteenth century, although linguistic research has yet to document this.

More recent evidence indicates that post-vocalic /r/ has been returning to SAmE. For instance, Crane (1973:49) in a study of white speech in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, finds that "the oldest informants show no /r/-constriction 24% of the time. This figure drops to 5% for the middle age group and to 0% for the youngest age group." Feagin and Bailey (1988) have shown that over the past five generations of South Alabama natives it has been progressively "restored" and have detailed a hierarchy of environments in which this is taking place, a point to which we return below.

Most likely the settlers of Americana were /r/-less or nearly so, since they were middle-class and /r/-lessness was a prestigious feature. Older Americana speakers today are largely /r/-less, with constriction occurring overall at about 14% (30 cases out of 212), although this rate rises to nearly

20% if we consider only environments in stressed syllables (Table 3). Where it appears, constriction is weak. It occurs in several cases as “linking r,” as a bridge between vowels as in *more or less*. In other cases the constriction is more uvular, influenced by Portuguese, than alveo-palatal; this increases the rate of occurrence. Although there is rough equivalence for men and women (Table 1), individuals range from 10 to 29 % in their pronunciation of /r/ (Table 2). This table shows that constriction occurred for all Americana speakers except three (collapsed under “Others”) who had fewer than ten environments — considered the minimum for calculation — in which it could appear. Much variation occurs according to type of phonological environment, as seen in Table 3, which examines occurrence of /r/ according to type of preceding vowel, type of syllable, location of syllable in word, and type of following environment. This table shows that post-vocalic /r/ occurred for Americana speakers in all environments except after front stressed vowels.

Since it is returning to SAmE and the figures in Table 3 suggest that constriction was either still being lost when the Confederate exodus took place or had just begun to be re-established, an important question arises about this process and the status of post-vocalic /r/ in Americana speech: does its reappearance in 20th-century SAmE represent an increase across environments of tendencies present in 19th-century SAmE as shown in Americana speakers? A similar rate of /r/ across environments in the two varieties suggests its incipient re-establishment in Americana English. A dissimilar patterning implies that 19th-century ancestors of Americana speakers might still have been losing /r/. An answer brings us closer to stating how long ago /r/ began to return to SAmE. We cannot address this directly by looking at Americana speech, since data from younger speakers are lacking at present, but we can compare the figures in Table 3 to those from the Bailey and Feagin study from Southern Alabama mentioned earlier. This comparability is enhanced by the fact that some of the Americana settlers were from the same area.

From Table 3 we can observe two things relating to the hierarchy of environments that Feagin and Bailey detail for the incidence of /r/. For one, Americana speakers differ from those studied in Alabama in that in Americana /r/ occurs at a rate of 40% after back vowels, 12.2% after central vowels, but not at all after front vowels;<sup>3</sup> in Feagin’s and Bailey research older speakers (born around 1900) are /r/-less in all environments, with younger ones restoring /r/ first before central and front vowels (with

Table 2: Individual variation in syllabic and post-vocalic /r/

	constriction	environments	%
James Jones	5	49	10.2
Charles McFadden	5	47	10.6
Esther Smith	2	18	11.1
Arlindo Thomas	2	13	15.4
Judith McKnight Jones	4	24	16.7
Sonny Pyles	5	21	23.8
Lilian Smith	6	21	28.6
Others (4)	1	19	5.3
Total	30	212	14.2

Table 3: Influence of environment on presence of syllabic and post-vocalic /r/ in Americana English

Preceding vowel type	constriction	environments	%
Front vowels	0	44	0.0
/ɪ/ ( <i>years</i> )	0	23	0.0
/ɛ/ ( <i>there</i> )	0	21	0.0
Central vowels	17	133	12.8
/ə/ + ø ( <i>were, later</i> )	6	97	6.2
/ə/ + C ( <i>first, work</i> )	7	14	50.0
/a/ ( <i>part</i> )	4	22	18.2
Back vowels	12	30	40.0
/o/ ( <i>port</i> )	12	29	41.4
/u/ ( <i>sure</i> )	0	1	0.0
Diphthongs /ai/ and /au/	1	5	20.0
	Syllable type		
Stressed syllables	28	141	19.9
R ( <i>were</i> )	11	40	27.5
vR ( <i>where</i> )	17	101	16.8
Unstressed syllables	2	71	2.8
	Location in syllable		
Syllable final ( <i>her</i> )	14	147	9.5
Non-syllable final ( <i>art</i> )	16	65	24.6
	Following environment		
Voiced Consonant	11	90	12.2
Voiceless Consonant	9	65	13.8
Pause	3	25	12.0
Vowel	7	32	21.8
Total	30	212	14.2

little difference between them) and then before back vowels. This implies that we have no evidence of the return of /r/ in Americana.

On the other hand, Americana speech resembles that described by Feagin and Bailey in the distribution of /r/ by syllable type. In Americana speech /r/ is most likely to occur as a stressed syllabic as in *were* (11/40 cases), less likely after a stressed vowel as in *where* (17/101 cases), and least likely in an unstressed syllable (2/71 cases). Feagin and Bailey find that /r/ (hardly used at all by their oldest speaker born in 1890) is restored first as a stressed syllabic, then after a stressed vowel, and finally in unstressed syllables, their youngest speaker (born in 1970) having /r/ exclusively in all types of syllable. In this respect, post-vocalic /r/ in Americana speech resembles 20th-century SAmE. But because it differs in some other, crucial respects, it does not provide clear evidence of how post-vocalic /r/ was restored.

On the whole, postvocalic /r/ occurs at a rather low level, at only ten percent if we exclude environments after /o/. This supports the view that the constriction of /r/ was marginal in 19th-century SAmE and that with respect to this feature SAmE is converging with AmE in more recent generations. Comparable data from other generations of Americana speakers or perhaps from Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States speakers from the Lower South will help us understand what stage in the evolution of post-vocalic /r/ is represented in Americana speech.

#### 4.2 *Monophthongization of /ai/*

Almost as well-known and perhaps a more salient feature of SAmE is the tendency to reduce the diphthong /ai/, either by centralizing the offglide or by monophthongization. Kurath and McDavid (1961:109) state that in the Atlantic states surveyed by the Linguistic Atlas the diphthong “with a vanishing glide occur[s] before voiced consonants and finally throughout the South and the South Midland, except along the coast of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida” and that before voiceless consonants it is prevalent primarily in South Midland areas. Along the same line, Hartmann makes the following general comments about the weakening of the offglide in AmE: “the South tends to have monophthongal variants of /ai/ before voiced consonants; the South Midland has them in even more environments. In other parts of the country, if /ai/ is weakened at all it is most likely to be so before /l/” (1985:lix).

There is little comment on variation in the offglide of /ai/ in the history of SAmE (neither Eliason (1956) nor Krapp (1925) mentions the feature), and Americana speakers show little evidence of monophthongization, suggesting that the monophthong is either innovative in twentieth-century SAmE or was marginal in 19th-century SAmE. As seen in Table 4, in only 12.5% of the cases is there no offglide (14 of 112 environments, including 67 instances of *my* and *I*, both of which tend to occur in unstressed position). The offglide is often phonetically weak and centralized, particularly in unstressed syllables. Monophthongization in Americana, although limited, conforms to the general pattern noted by Hartmann above and by other studies such as Wise *et al.* (1954), who survey speakers throughout the South (but mostly in Louisiana and Mississippi) and find monophthongal pronunciation most common before voiced consonants, less common syllable final, and least common before voiceless consonants. That the offglide is frequently centralized rather than raised may account for the fact that the diphthong is least likely to occur before /l/, a segment generally vocalized in SAmE, causing the monophthong to be indistinguishable from a centralized offglide. As for the onset of the /ai/ and /au/ diphthongs, there is no evidence in Americana speech of a raising or centralizing that today characterizes Low Country South Carolina and Virginia Tidewater pronunciation.

Table 4: Influence of Following Segment on Offglide of /ai/

	no offglide	environments	% no offglide
Voiceless segment	4	41	9.8
Voiced segment	10	71	14.1
/l/	4	9	44.4
Nasal	3	15	20.0
Vowel	1	4	25.0
Voiced obstruent	2	31	6.5
Glide	0	12	0.0
Total	14	112	12.5

The dominance of diphthongal pronunciation in Americana speech contrasts with modern-day SAmE; the status of monophthongization in the latter is not altogether clear. Recent work by Bailey (1989) suggests that the monophthong is increasing in Texas; on the other hand, Pederson (1983: 74) finds that, while all age groups in East Tennessee use monophthongs and centralized offglides, only younger speakers use upgliding diphthongs.

Crane (1973) in his Tuscaloosa study finds variation in /ai/ by social class rather than age, with lower-class speakers having much higher rates of monophthongization for all age groups. The history of this feature in SAmE is complex, but data from Americana speech clearly indicates that the monophthong is now more common than a century ago.

### 4.3 *Nasal in final -ing*

Although it is also found in other varieties of E, the “use of /n/ for /ŋ/ in words with final *-ing* ... occurs more regularly in the South and South Midland than elsewhere” (Hartman 1985:liv). Dating back at least to the 18th century (Krapp 1925:II:213ff.) and found in varieties of BrE then as well as today, the alveolar nasal in *-ing* seems to have continued for two centuries as a stable pronunciation in SAmE, with frequent misspellings in the 19th century revealing that the strictures of schoolteachers were “apparently unheeded by cultivated Southerners” (Eliason 1956:212).

Americana speakers vary more in pronouncing final nasals than in any other feature discussed in this paper, although the low number of environments (only 34) prevents definitive statements about this variation. Its pronunciation by men and women does not contrast in Americana, and, as for other features, our small homogeneous sample prevents comparisons by age or social class. Alveolar [n] occurs at a level of 44.1% (15/34 cases, seen in Table 5), more often before a consonant than a vowel or a pause, and most often with a progressive verb (*was doing*) or a gerund (*cotton picking*) than with grammatical forms like a participial adjunct (*Having met on the ship*) or when *ing* is not a morpheme as in the indefinite pronoun (*nothing*).

Table 5: Occurrence of alveolar nasal in final *-ing*

Following environment	Alveolar nasal	% Alveolar nasal
Consonant	11/21	52.4
Vowel	2/9	22.2
Pause	2/4	50.0
Total	15/34	44.1
Grammatical category		
Gerund	8/16	50.0
Progressive	4/5	80.0
Participial adjunct	3/8	37.5
Attributive adjective	0/2	0.0
Indefinite pronoun	0/3	0.0
Total	15/34	44.1

#### 4.4 *Gemination of medial liquids /r/ and /l/*

This feature concerns whether a medial liquid, an /l/ or /r/, is spread or ‘geminated’ over two syllables (when the first syllable is a stressed one) and thus whether a preceding vowel has liquid coloring; in traditional Southern pronunciation this often does not occur, so that names like *Helen* and *Sara* are pronounced without an offglide or liquid coloring on the initial vowel (C.-J. Bailey 1980), that is, [hɛlɪn] and [sɛrə] rather than [hɛˈlɪn] and [sɛˈrə]. In Americana speech, non-gemination is categorical with /l/ (fourteen cases of this, although thirteen of these are for the word *Brazilian* and Portuguese influence is indisputable here). Almost the reverse is the case with /r/, with gemination occurring in forty of forty-two cases. Why Americana English, which is largely r-less, so strongly has r-coloring on the stressed vowels of words like *parents*, *very*, and *Americans* seems something of a paradox (of course, these words were not considered as having environments for post-vocalic /r/), but this is a point that space does not permit us to explore further.

Table 6: *Frequency of gemination of medial liquids in Americana speech*

	Geminate liquid	%
/l/	0/14	0.0
/r/	40/42	95.2
Total	40/56	71.4

#### 4.5 */u/ after alveolar consonants*

The [j] onglide before /u/ and after alveolar consonants has “general currency in the South and the South Midland” (Kurath and McDavid 1961: 174), although this may have begun to shift in recent years (Pitts 1986 finds that younger Southerners often adopt the glideless pronunciation, while younger Northerners are increasingly using the glide). The Americana data contain only three environments for this vowel but no variation, with all three cases having the onglide, the traditional Southern pronunciation.

#### 4.6 *Contour of front vowels (the ‘drawl’)*

Perhaps because it is a highly variable feature both linguistically and sociolinguistically, very little quantitative study has been devoted to the ‘Southern drawl’, a salient feature of contemporary SAMe, which Feagin

(1987:137) says is characterized by vowel lengthening, vowel offglides, and “remarkable change of pitch.” Thus a word like *bid* when drawled is pronounced [bi<sup>o</sup>d] or even [bij<sup>o</sup>d]. That it occurred in mid-19th century SAmE is likely but is very difficult to determine because of the lack of comment in the literature (an early characterization of it, by Wise (1933) is consistent in detail with recent ones), but in Americana speech there is no evidence of the drawling of vowels.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.7 *Lax vowel in pen/ten*

The raising of /ɛ/ before /n/ and /m/ in *ten* and *tempt* is a distinguishing feature of SAmE, although apparently a recent one. Thomas points out that “the phonemic distinction between [ɪ] and [ɛ] is sometimes lost before nasals, chiefly in the South, but also to some extent in the southern parts of the various Midland areas” (1958:209). In a recent paper, Brown contends on the basis of data from North Carolina and Tennessee that the homophony of *ten* and *tin* has spread only in the last hundred years and speculates that this “was affected by the growth of industry and its consequent wave of urban migration during the Post-Civil War period” (1989:15). Scattered evidence for the earlier raising of /ɛ/ comes from misspellings in antebellum documents according to Eliason (1956), and Krapp argues that it was brought by Ulster Scots in the eighteenth century and was once “a general feature of popular American speech” (96). But the raising of /ɛ/ has undoubtedly increased rapidly in the twentieth century and has become a mark of many varieties of contemporary SAE. Pederson (1983:85-86) finds a sharp contrast between generations in his East Tennessee Linguistic Atlas informants, with speakers under the age of forty neutralizing the vowels but the older speakers not, which raises the possibility of a later spread of raised /ɛ/ than Brown’s evidence indicates. In his Charleston, South Carolina, study conducted in the 1960s, O’Cain finds that /ɪ/ in *lend*, *men*, etc. occurs 6% of the time for speakers in their seventies, but at a rate of 60% for speakers in their thirties (1977:139).

In Americana speech, there is no evidence of the raised vowel before nasals, based on 35 environments in stressed syllables. It provides further evidence of the recentness of this neutralization in SAmE and argues that the homophony of *pen* and *pin* is a phonological feature distinctive of modern-day SAmE.



### 5. Portuguese influence on Americana English

Although they are native speakers of English, the older Americana speakers are all bilingual and use Portuguese more freely than their ancestors. Portuguese influence on their English is thus almost inevitable. Since this is a subject for a paper in itself, we will limit ourselves to observations in three areas: (1) suprasegmentals, (2) lexicon, and (3) phonology. The suprasegmental influence comes through most clearly in the intonation; the pitch range of speakers and the speech rate differ from English, the latter because Portuguese is a syllable-timed language rather than a stressed-timed one. An example of lexical influence is the reference of one Americana speaker to a *register* rather than a *birth certificate*. Phonologically, the influence of Portuguese is clearest in the general lack of aspiration of initial voiceless consonants and in the devoicing of final /z/ in words like *years* and *relatives*, both of which occur for all the Americana speakers. In addition, the Portuguese influence is also present in the tendency to uvularize post-vocalic /r/, mentioned earlier. In other cases, it is difficult to determine because of the similarity of SAmE and Portuguese phonology; for instance, the nasalization of vowels, very widespread in Brazilian Portuguese, is a tendency in SAmE as well. Now we offer a few words in conclusion.

### 6. Conclusions

Our analysis indicates that although Americana speech lacks evidence of several hallmark features of SAmE pronunciation, it is clearly Southern speech, particularly in the patterning of syllabic and post-vocalic /r/. For these reasons and because of demographic factors, the speech from the Americana colony is a conservative variety of SAmE that represents or closely approximates that of the settlers over a century ago, i.e., it represents mid-19th century SAmE. With this in mind, we can make further, tentative inferences about the phonology of that period and, by comparing it to patterns in the phonology of 20th-century SAmE, assess and interpret the evidence for the extent to which the latter has converged with or diverged from other varieties of AmE since the Civil War.

Specifically, the absence of raised /ɛ/ before /n/, the lack of drawing, and the relative lack of the monophthongal pronunciation of /ai/ all suggest

that Americana speech represents a stage of SAmE that was closer to other varieties of AmE than is present-day SAmE. This could indicate that sound changes have taken place more recently that represent a divergence of SAmE from General AmE. Attempting to explain such a divergence with our current knowledge of the social history of SAmE is a great challenge. One possibility is that it is connected to the isolation of the defeated South in the two generations after the war. Historians have often cited the solidification of regional identity and a barricade mentality that were fostered by the Civil War and its aftermath. For instance, Wilson (1989:590) states that “the late 19th century was perhaps the age of the most cohesive regional culture and an identifiable, distinctive southern way of life.” This suggests that the linguistic changes in the period in part reflected the evolving consciousness of the region’s distinctiveness. While it is premature to make a more specific claim at this point, such a possibility may usefully guide future research on SAmE.

More likely, though, the divergence of SAmE is related to the spread of South Midland linguistic features into the Lower South as many Southerners migrated out of the hills of the Upper South and into the towns and cities of the Piedmont beginning a generation after the war. For a century, South Midland pronunciation has been marked by /r/-fulness, monophthongization of /ai/, and homophony of /I/ and /ɛ/ before nasals. McDavid has emphasized the increasing size and prominence of these urban areas — Nashville, Charlotte, Birmingham, Atlanta — over the past four generations, pointing out as well that such shifts were “bound to increase the importance of the South Midland component of Southern speech, at the expense of coastal Southern” (1970:226) and cites as an example that “as early as 1946 [he] noticed that upland vowels were common among native Savannians” (227). The spread of raised /ɛ/ and centralized and monophthongal /ai/ has in the past two generations even reached into other bastions of traditional prestige like Charleston, South Carolina, where O’Cain found Midland pronunciations much stronger in the 1960s than McDavid did a generation earlier.

Further research must compare the data presented in this paper from older Americana speakers to the speech of younger members of the Americana community, to speakers recorded by the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States from the areas of the Southeast from which ancestors of Americana settlers derived, and to older historical data, such as examined

in Norman Eliason's *Tarheel Talk* in North Carolina, to further pin down both the conservativeness and the stability of the pronunciation represented by the speakers discussed here. To explore grammatical and lexical features of Americana speech, the data and methodology used in this paper are inadequate. Interviews designed in part to elicit specific items are necessary for that, and happily, the work has recently begun (Bailey and Smith 1989). It is now safe to say that, linguistically speaking, the Americana colony is no longer lost at all, but rather is becoming an important link in reconstructing the history of SAMe.

### Notes

1) The authors are grateful to Mississippi Authority for Educational Television, particularly to Roy E. Duncan, Director of Production, for permission to use the excerpts of interviews with Americana speakers from *The Last Confederates*, a half-hour television documentary produced in 1984 by MAET with the assistance of Eugene C. Harter. They wish to thank Eugene Harter for supplying personal information about the speakers interviewed on the program. They are also grateful to Guy Bailey and Crawford Feagin for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Any errors of transcription from the telecast or of categorization of the data analyzed in this paper are the authors' alone.

2) Ex-Confederates gave names to a number of other Brazilian communities as well, including Virginia, New Texas, New Richmond, Dixie Island, and Valley Home (Harter, p.c.).

3) In a recent paper based on sociolinguistic interviews with a number of Americana residents, Bailey and Smith (1989) found /r/ occurring most often after the central vowel /ə/, next most often after back vowels, and least after front vowels.

4) Crawford Feagin (p.c.) points out to us, quite reasonably, that "the situation of a TV interview would evaporate any drawl that your informants might have had" and that the women informants who were schoolteachers would have an additional reason for avoiding the drawl. Only further fieldwork recording the speech of Americana residents in less formal contexts can reveal the influence of these factors.

### References

- Bailey, Charles-James N. 1980. "The patterning of sonorant gemination in English lects". In Roger W. Shuy and Anna Shnukal, eds., *Language Use and the Use of Language*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1-11.
- , 1981. "Restructuring of nuclear length in "r-less" Southern states Eng-

- lish". *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 6, 119-25.
- /. 1985. *English Phonetic Transcription*. Dallas, Tex.: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Bailey, Guy. 1989. "Some phonological changes in Southern American English". Paper read at the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics XL meeting, Norfolk, Va.
- /Clyde Smith. 1989. "Southern American English in Brazil, No?" Paper read at American Dialect Society centennial meeting, Denton, Texas.
- Brannon, Peter A. 1930. "Southern emigration to Brazil: embodying the diary of Jennie R. Keyes Montgomery, Alabama". *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 1, 74-95.
- Brown, Vivian. 1989. "Evolution of a sound change in Tennessee". Paper read at the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics XL meeting, Norfolk, Virginia. Forthcoming in *American Speech*.
- Crane, Lindsay Benjamin, Jr. 1973. "Social stratification of English among white speakers in Tuscaloosa, Alabama". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts.
- Eliason, Norman E. 1956. *Tarheel Talk*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press.
- Feagin, Crawford. 1987. "A closer look at the Southern drawl: variation taken to extremes". In Keith M. Denning et al., eds., *Variation in Language NWAV-XV at Stanford*. Stanford: Stanford University Department of Linguistics, 137-50.
- /Guy Bailey. 1988. "The restoration of R in Southern States English". Paper read at the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics meeting, Washington.
- Garner, Phil. 1972. "Jimmy Carter in Latin America". *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, June 11, pp. 12, 14, 16, 18.
- Harter, Eugene C. 1984. *The Lost Colony of the Confederacy*. Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi.
- Hartmann, James W. 1985. "Guide to pronunciation". In Frederic G. Cassidy, ed., *Dictionary of American Regional English*. Volume 1, A-C. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, xli-lxi.
- Hill, Lawrence F. 1936. "The Confederate exodus to Latin America". *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 39, 100-34, 161-99, 309-26.
- Krapp, George Philip. 1925. *The English Language in America*. 2 vols. New York: Ungar.

- Kurath, Hans/Raven I. McDavid, Jr. 1961. *Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- McDavid, Raven I., Jr. 1958. "The dialects of American English". In W. Nelson Francis, *The Structure of American English*. New York: Ronald, 480-543.
- 1970. "Changing patterns of Southern dialects". In Arthur J. Bronstein, et al., eds., *Essays in Honor of Claude M. Wise*. Hannibal, Mo.: Standard, 206-28.
- McMillan, James B./Michael B. Montgomery, eds. 1989. *Annotated Bibliography of Southern American English*. Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press.
- Medeiros, Regina Del Negri. 1982. "American Brazilian English". *American Speech* 57, 150-2.
- Mississippi Authority for Educational Television. 1984. "The last Confederates". Jackson, Miss.
- O'Cain, Raymond K. 1977. "A diachronic view of the speech of Charleston, South Carolina". In David L. Shores and Carole P. Hines, eds., *Papers in Language Variation: SAMLA-ADS Collection*. University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 135-50.
- Pederson, Lee. 1983. *East Tennessee Folk Speech*. Bamberger Beiträge zur Englischen Sprachwissenschaft 12. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Pitts, Ann. 1986. "Flip-flop prestige in American tune, duke, news". *American Speech* 61, 130-8.
- Randall, J.G./David Donald. 1961. *The Civil War and Reconstruction*. 2nd edition. Boston, Mass.: Heath.
- Rolle, Andrew F. 1965. *The Lost Cause*. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Stephenson, Edward A. 1968. "The beginnings of the loss of the post-vocalic /r/ in North Carolina". *Journal of English Linguistics* 2, 57-77.
- Thomas, Charles Kenneth. 1958. *Phonetics of American English*. 2nd edition. New York: Ronald.
- Van Riper, William A. 1958. "The loss of post-vocalic r in the Eastern United States". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan.
- Wilson, Charles Reagan. 1989. "History". In Charles R. Wilson and William Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 583-95.
- Wise, Charles Merton. 1933. "Southern American dialect". *American Speech* 8, 2, 37-43.

-----/W. Scott Nobles/Herbert Metz. 1954. "The Southern American-diphthong /ai/". *Southern Speech Journal* 19, 304-12.

Michael B. Montgomery  
Cecil A. Melo  
Dept. of English  
University of South California  
Columbia, S.C. 29208, USA