The Cambridge History of the English Language

剑桥英语史

第六卷

（北美的英语）

Edited by John Algeo

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这是迄今为止最为恢弘、最为野心勃勃的英语史，其成就将为所有关注她的人士感到无比骄傲。

—— *Randolph Quirk, London Review of Books*

这是一支非常值得尊敬的杰出的作者队伍，这部精美的著作将成为一部必备的工具书。

—— *John Honey, Times Higher Education Supplement*

《剑桥英语史》是第一部详尽地叙述英语历史的多卷本巨著，无论是其恢弘的气度还是内容的权威性，都远远超过了以往任何一部英语史著作。她不仅仅是为专业人士撰写的，也是为所有对英语的历史有兴趣的一般读者献上的厚礼。其精彩的论述从语言的核心内容（语音学、形态学、语义学、句法学）一直延伸到人名和地名的专名学领域，除了渊博的学识之外，也显示了其独到的视角和多样的分析方法。

我们在此特别想要说明的是：这部英语史决不仅仅是某一种语言的历史，更是一部语言学的百科全书。我们相信，任何一位语言学工作者，无论他是从事语言学的哪一个领域的研究，都将从中受到知识和方法的双重教益。

更有甚者。北欧的海盗与 *Alfred* 大帝签订了协议，他们得以在东部一片狭长的地带居住下来，许多以 *-by* 结尾的地名见证了这一段历史，这是丹麦语“定居地”之意；像 *they* 和 *are* 这样的基本词汇来源于斯堪的那维亚语，这对语言接触的研究应当是一个不小的挑战；还有奥古斯丁莅临英伦，拉丁语再次施加影响；伴随诺曼底公爵的登陆，法语词汇大量涌入；海外殖民的拓展，新的英语变体形成……在流淌的文字中间，是民族斗争和交融的声音；这部英语史同时也是一部民族史，语言的历史中蕴涵着民族的精神历史。什么时候，我们能够有一部汉语史，能让世界人民从中理解我们民族精神的历史呢？“他山之石，可以攻玉”，这正是我们引进这部皇皇巨著的最终目的。

—— 编 辑

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

VOLUME VI *English in North America*

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† Frederic G. Cassidy died on June 14, 2000, before the final editing of this volume; his colleague and successor at the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, Joan Houston Hall, proofed their joint chapter. We are proud to include his share of this chapter as a final contribution of one of the great American scholars of English language and literature.

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

Although it is a topic of continuing debate, there can be little doubt that English is the most widely-spoken language in the world, with significant numbers of native speakers in almost every major region – only South America falling largely outside the net. In such a situation an understanding of the nature of English can be claimed unambiguously to be of world-wide importance.

Growing consciousness of such a role for English is one of the motivations behind this History. There are other motivations too. Specialist students have many major and detailed works of scholarship to which they can refer, for example Bruce Mitchell's *Old English Syntax*, or, from an earlier age, Karl Luick's *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache*. Similarly, those who come new to the subject have both one-volume histories such as Barbara Strang's *History of English* and introductory textbooks to a single period, for example Bruce Mitchell and Fred Robinson's *A Guide to Old English*. But what is lacking is the intermediate work which can provide a solid discussion of the full range of the history of English both to the anglicist who does not specialize in the particular area to hand and to the general linguist who has no specialized knowledge of the history of English. This work attempts to remedy that lack. We hope that it will be of use to others too, whether they are interested in the history of English for its own sake, or for some specific purpose such as local history or the effects of colonization.

Under the influence of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, there was, during the twentieth century, a persistent tendency to view the study of language as having two discrete parts: (i) synchronic, where a language is studied from the point of view of one moment in time; (ii) diachronic, where a language is studied from a historical perspective. It might therefore be supposed that this present work is purely diachronic. But this is not so.

One crucial principle which guides The Cambridge History of the English Language is that synchrony and diachrony are intertwined, and that a satisfactory understanding of English (or any other language) cannot be achieved on the basis of one of these alone.

Consider, for example, the (synchronic) fact that English, when compared with other languages, has some rather infrequent or unusual characteristics. Thus, in the area of vocabulary, English has an exceptionally high number of words borrowed from other languages (French, the Scandinavian languages, American Indian languages, Italian, the languages of northern India and so on); in syntax a common construction is the use of *do* in forming questions (e.g. *Do you like cheese?*), a type of construction not often found in other languages; in morphology English has relatively few inflections, at least compared with the majority of other European languages; in phonology the number of diphthongs as against the number of vowels in English English is notably high. In other words, synchronically, English can be seen to be in some respects rather unusual. But in order to understand such facts we need to look at the history of the language; it is often only there that an explanation can be found. And that is what this work attempts to do.

This raises another issue. A quasi-Darwinian approach to English might attempt to account for its widespread use by claiming that somehow English is more suited, better adapted, to use as an international language than others. But that is nonsense. English is no more fit than, say, Spanish or Chinese. The reasons for the spread of English are political, cultural and economic rather than linguistic. So too are the reasons for such linguistic elements within English as the high number of borrowed words. This History, therefore, is based as much upon political, cultural and economic factors as linguistic ones, and it will be noted that the major historical divisions between volumes are based upon the former type of events (the Norman Conquest, the spread of printing, the declaration of independence by the USA), rather than the latter type.

As a rough generalization, one can say that up to about the seventeenth century the development of English tended to be centripetal, whereas since then the development has tended to be centrifugal. The settlement by the Anglo-Saxons resulted in a spread of dialect variation over the country, but by the tenth century a variety of forces were combining to promote the emergence of a standard form of the language. Such an evolution was disrupted by the Norman Conquest, but with the development of printing together with other more centralizing tendencies, the emergence of a standard form became once more, from the fifteenth century

on, a major characteristic of the language. But processes of emigration and colonization then gave rise to new regional varieties overseas, many of which have now achieved a high degree of linguistic independence, and some of which, especially American English, may even have a dominating influence on British English. The structure of this work is designed to reflect these different types of development. Whilst the first four volumes offer a reasonably straightforward chronological account, the later volumes are geographically based. This arrangement, we hope, allows scope for the proper treatment of diverse types of evolution and development. Even within the chronologically oriented volumes there are variations of structure, which are designed to reflect the changing relative importance of various linguistic features. Although all the chronological volumes have substantial chapters devoted to the central topics of semantics and vocabulary, syntax, and phonology and morphology, for other topics the space allotted in a particular volume is one which is appropriate to the importance of that topic during the relevant period, rather than some pre-defined calculation of relative importance. And within the geographically based volumes all these topics are potentially included with each geographical section, even if sometimes in a less formal way. Such a flexible and changing structure seems essential for any full treatment of the history of English.

One question that came up as this project began was the extent to which it might be possible or desirable to work within a single theoretical linguistic framework. It could well be argued that only a consensus within the linguistic community about preferred linguistic theories would enable a work such as this to be written. Certainly, it was immediately obvious when work for this History began, that it would be impossible to lay down a 'party line' on linguistic theory, and indeed, that such an approach would be undesirably restrictive. The solution reached was, I believe, more fruitful. Contributors have been chosen purely on the grounds of expertise and knowledge, and have been encouraged to write their contributions in the way they see most fitting, whilst at the same time taking full account of developments in linguistic theory. This has, of course, led to problems, notably with contrasting views of the same topic (and also because of the need to distinguish the ephemeral flight of theoretical fancy from genuine new insights into linguistic theory), but even in a work which is concerned to provide a unified approach (so that, for example, in most cases every contributor to a volume has read all the other contributions to that volume), such contrasts, and even contradictions, are stimulating and fruitful. Whilst this work aims to be authoritative, it is not prescriptive, and the

final goal must be to stimulate interest in a subject in which much work remains to be done, both theoretically and empirically.

The task of editing this History has been, and still remains, a long and complex one. One of the greatest difficulties has been to co-ordinate the contributions of the many different writers. Sometimes, even, this has caused delays in volumes other than that where the delay arose. We have attempted to minimize the effects of such delays by various methods, and in particular by trying to keep bibliographies as up-to-date as possible. This should allow the interested reader to pursue very recent important work, including that by the contributors themselves, whilst maintaining the integrity of each volume.

As General Editor I owe a great debt to many friends and colleagues who have devoted much time and thought to how best this work might be approached and completed. Firstly, I should thank my fellow-editors: John Algeo, Norman Blake, Bob Burchfield, Roger Lass and Suzanne Romaine. They have been concerned as much with the History as a whole as with their individual volumes. Secondly, there are those fellow linguists, some contributors, some not, who have so generously given their time and made many valuable suggestions: John Anderson, Cecily Clark, Frans van Coetsem, Fran Colman, David Denison, Ed Finegan, Olga Fischer, Jacek Fisiak, Malcolm Godden, Angus McIntosh, Lesley Milroy, Donka Minkova, Matti Rissanen, Michael Samuels, Bob Stockwell, Tom Toon, Elizabeth Traugott, Peter Trudgill, Nigel Vincent, Anthony Warner, Simone Wyss. One occasion stands out especially: the organizers of the Fourth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, held at Amsterdam in 1985, kindly allowed us to hold a seminar on the project as it was just beginning. For their generosity, which allowed us to hear a great many views and exchange opinions with colleagues one rarely meets face-to-face, I must thank Roger Eaton, Olga Fischer, Willem Koopman and Frederike van der Leek.

The preface to the earlier volumes acknowledged the considerable debt which I owed to my editors at Cambridge University Press, firstly, Penny Carter, and subsequently Marion Smith. Since then the History has seen two further editors, firstly Judith Ayling and now Kate Brett. Both have stepped into this demanding role with considerable aplomb, and the project has been extremely fortunate in obtaining their help and advice. I am very grateful to both. In particular we should all like to express our gratitude to Kate Brett for ensuring that this long trail is now at its end.

Richard M. Hogg

VOLUME EDITOR'S PREFACE

From small beginnings sometimes come big consequences. When the first Indo-Europeans began the trek from their Urheimat, wherever it may have been, an observer could hardly have predicted the spread of Indo-European languages and cultures over the world. When the first Anglo-Saxons crossed the sea to settle in Britain, an observer could not have anticipated that a millennium and a half later much of the globe would be colored pink. And when the first scraggly colonists stepped off the boat onto Virginia soil, no observer could have foreseen French airline pilots talking English to Turkish controllers, Japanese and Arab businessmen negotiating in English, or jeans-clad teenagers all over the world singing English lyrics to raucous music.

American English has lately played a role in those unanticipated consequences and has itself been continually changed in the process. This volume seeks to trace both of those facts: primarily the way the English language in its American variety has changed, from its exceedingly small beginnings to its role as a world force, but also how it has affected others during that historical transformation.

All living languages change constantly. Language change has no simple cause but is the result of changes of two broad kinds. First, changes in the speakers' environment – physical, social, cultural, and intellectual – are responded to by changes in the language. Second, the language system itself undergoes certain internal fluctuations and adjustments (by processes called assimilation and dissimilation, drift, pull-chain and push-chain effects, analogy, and so on). The results of such causes are cumulative differences in the use of a language from one generation to another and, over long stretches of time, shifts so great that the resulting system is a different language from the original one. So Latin transformed into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Romanian, and other Romance tongues; and

Anglo-Saxon transmogrified into the English of stockbrokers, rappers, and computer nerds.

As long as all the members of a speech community are in frequent contact with each other, their language changes in parallel ways. The reason is obvious. If one speaker, for whatever reason, begins to change the way he or she talks, three sorts of responses by other members of the community are possible. First, they may not notice the change (either consciously or unconsciously), or if they do, they may choose to ignore it. In that case, the change has no effect on the language of the community. Second, they may notice the change, dislike it, and respond negatively. In that case, the one who has introduced the change may be induced to correct it; or if not, the negative reaction toward it will reinforce the unchanged use by the community at large, and again there is no effect on the language of the community. Third, the change may be noticed, consciously or unconsciously, and not rejected but responded to favorably and imitated by those who hear it, thus reinforcing the change in the one who introduced it and spreading it through the community, thereby changing the language.

Whether an incident of change is suppressed or reinforced and extended, the language of the community remains relatively homogeneous. There is, to be sure, no completely uniform speech community anywhere. Every language has internal variation, and every language community has varieties. But some variation and some degree of varieties can be institutionalized, that is, accepted by speakers generally and accorded a place within the total system of the language. The speakers will then regard the different ways of talking they hear around them as "one language," and we can speak of a "relatively homogeneous" speech community.

If, on the other hand, the members of a single speech community are divided into two groups with severe impediments to free communication between them, a quite different result ensues. The impediments may be physical separation by oceans, mountains, deserts, or merely distance. Or they may be social separation by ghettos, castes, occupations, economics, education, clubs, or cliques. In either case, when people do not talk together, they come to talk differently. When there is no mutual correction and reinforcement between the members of two groups, their ways of talking drift apart, becoming increasingly different over time. After some generations of such uncoordinated drift, the result is two distinctively different varieties of language: two dialects or two standards, or ultimately two languages.

The process of differentiation between the English of Britain and that of America began with the first settlement in America. The colonists were

divided from their fellows in the British Isles by a wide ocean, whose crossing by sail took weeks or months, and so not many persons made it often. No other means of communication was available. Contact with the mother country continued, but it was not easy or convenient; and its frequency and intimacy varied from one colony to another and from one social group or class to another.

The English used in America and the English used in Britain began consequently to drift apart. This process was not (as it is sometimes erroneously described) one of American English becoming different from British English. It is rather one of the English used by American speakers and the English used by British speakers both changing, but in unlike ways. So American English and British English became different from each other and both became different from the English of which they were mutual descendants. As a result, these two varieties must be considered synchronically by comparison with each other and diachronically by comparison with their common ancestor – a distinction that is sometimes confused.

American English and British English are the two major national varieties of English today, in terms of number of native speakers, volume of texts, and influence. Consequently, the most convenient way to describe either of these two present-day varieties as distinct from general English is to compare them with each other. In effect, what is distinctively American is what is not British, and what is distinctively British is what is not American. Other varieties – which are minor by the same factors of number of speakers, volume of texts, and influence – are conveniently described by comparing them with either British or American, whichever they are most like.

The synchronic descriptive convenience of comparing British and American with each other does not imply, however, a corresponding diachronic description. That is, present-day American English can no more be appropriately derived from British than present-day British English can be derived from American. They are equally derived from their common ancestor, the English of the sixteenth century, which was neither American not British because American usage had not yet begun to develop and the English spoken in the British Isles had at that time nothing to define it by comparison.

Before English speakers began to spread around the world, first in large numbers in America, there was no British English. There was only English. Concepts like "American English" and "British English" are defined by comparison. They are relative concepts like "brother" and "sister." A single offspring cannot be a sibling, which is a category that requires more than

one member. So language dialects or varieties cannot be spoken of until there are at least two of them, being mutually defining.

All languages have internal variation ranging in scope from idiolects (the particular ways different persons use the language) to national varieties (standardized forms of the language used in a particular independent political unit). Those two categories on the cline of language variation are major terminuses, although below the idiolect there are variations in the way a single person uses the language system and beyond the language itself there are families (Germanic, Indo-European, and perhaps Nostratic or even common Human). Between the idiolect and the national variety are dialects, regional and social, of various dimensions.

Pre-seventeenth-century English certainly had variations of many kinds. There was even a period, before the 1707 Act of Union subsumed the Scottish government under the English parliament, when it is appropriate to speak of two national varieties within the British Isles: Northern (Scottish English) and Southern (England English). But Scots ceased to exist as a separate national variety after the Act of Union. It then became a regional variety with strong local attachment and pride.

The colonists in America spoke dialects of the mother tongue, for in the early eighteenth century there were no contrasting national varieties of English. But with the American Revolution, the variations that had developed in the colonies became a new national variety, contrasting with what from that point can be called the British national variety. The year 1776 is the conventional beginning, not just of American English, but also of its correlative, British English.

A language does not exist in a landscape, but in the brains and on the tongues of its speakers. Neither the land of England nor the British Isles has a privileged position with respect to the identity of English. The speechways we now call English were used in prehistoric times on the continental European shores of the North Sea; they are used today around the globe, from Barrow, Alaska, on the north to the Falkland Islands on the south. For more than a millennium, between the middle of the fifth and the end of the sixteenth centuries, they were used primarily in the British Isles. But that long period of local use does not confer tenure on the locality.

The American variety of English is the language used by English speakers in America. It is just as continuous with the English of Cadmon and Ælfric, of Chaucer and Langland, of Shakespeare and Milton, as is the language of English speakers between Land's End and John o' Groats. The process of differentiation between the English spoken in America and that spoken in Britain went on for about three hundred years. It began with the

first English colonization of America at the start of the seventeenth century, and continued until about the time of World War I. Thereafter the improved means of transportation and communication that developed in the twentieth century seem to have arrested and even reversed the process. Because of the complexities of linguistic systems, it is impossible to speak with confidence about how much alike or how different two speechways are or to compare two dialects with respect to their overall rate or degree of change. Only general impressions are possible. However, it is clear that the two national varieties have been growing closer together since the beginning of the twentieth century. As Albert Marckwardt (Marckwardt and Quirk 50, 55) remarked:

> Ultimately, I suppose, the unifying forces slowly began to outweigh those making for separation. If we must give dates, I suppose we'd have to say that between 1900 and 1920 the trend towards separation was really reversed. . . . What we see here, instead, is really an increasing unification of English, resulting in a steady, almost relentless, march towards the status of a world language.

Indeed, this process of reunification points out the danger of taking our metaphors too seriously. We talk about varieties of a language, such as British and American, as though they were well-defined objects in space. We speak of them as "separating" or "splitting." We talk about mother languages and sister languages and language families, and we depict the relationships between languages by a family tree, on the analogy of a human family with parents and offspring. To talk in that way is to reify language, that is, to treat an abstract system as though it were a physical thing. To talk about language in such metaphors is useful and not to be avoided. But it is wise to remember that such talk is metaphorical, not literal.

Because a language is not a thing, but an abstract system in human brains, it does not behave in a thingy way. The system is constantly being modified in the brain of every person, and the modifications in the brain of one person affect those in the brains of other persons by way of the messages sent between them by air vibrations or light waves. Concepts like "a dialect," "a language variety," or "a language" are further abstractions – classes of the already abstract systems in the brains of a number of persons, which are in some ways alike. But the systems in all those individual brains are ever changing, and so consequently are the classes of them that we call British English and American English.

New differences continue to arise in the way English speakers use English all over the world – including Britain and America. Those

differences reinforce the status of British and American as different varieties. But the spread of new uses from one country to the other, often with surprising speed, now preserves and promotes the fundamental unity of the English language.

The focus of this volume is on how English in North America, that is, the United States and Canada, got to be the way it is as a result of inevitable changes in the ways Americans and Canadians use the abstract language systems in their brains.

• Chapter 1 ("External History," by John Algeo) surveys the political and social history of Americans from the first settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, to the present day, as background to the language Americans use and the ways their language has changed during those four hundred years. It divides that history into three great periods. During the Colonial period (1607–1776), settlers brought the English language to America, where it began to change in ways not fully parallel with changes underway in Britain. In the National period (1776–1898), the sense of a distinct variety arose, which was standardized especially in dictionaries and spelling books and spread over the continent during the westward expansion of the nation. Throughout the International period (1898 onward), Americans became increasingly involved with the world overseas, and American English gradually became a variety of the language used around the world.

The chapter focuses on events relating to several major themes. The English-speaking population of America had notable mobility, beginning with the colonists and extending through the pioneers to present-day business people, tourists, scientists, and scholars. Americans have been innovative in their response to the new environment, in technology and in language. Although clearly derived from English roots, American society developed a sense of discontinuity with the past and of newness as a correlate of its self-identity. American government and culture was decentralized, so that no single standard of style or language developed. Democracy or social mobility accompanied geographical mobility and reinforced the resistance to centralized authority and models. The large land area of the American continent provided a range of topography from arctic tundra to tropical swamp and a richness of resources. The American population, regionally varied among the first colonists, has been continually diversified by the immigration of new ethnic groups.

• Chapter 2 ("British and American, Continuity and Divergence," by John Hurt Fisher) emphasizes the actual continuity of British and American English, not only on the basis of historical derivation from a

common source, but because of the continual interaction between the two national varieties throughout the time of their separate existences. The basic identity of the two national varieties balanced the patriotic and sometimes chauvinistic celebration of differences.

The institutions that both defined American as a distinct variety and preserved its links with changing British English – sometimes by influencing the latter – included Noah Webster's dictionaries as authorities, the educational system, the literary tradition, and prestige models of pronunciation as well as other aspects of language. The chapter also surveys the relationship between American and British dialects and their role in creating a recognizably American speech.

• Chapter 3 ("British and Irish Antecedents," by Michael Montgomery) deals in some detail with the complex question of the sources of American English in the dialects of the British Isles and four issues involved in identifying those sources (reconstruction, demography, data, and generalization). It identifies the sources of our knowledge of Colonial English as popular observations by outsiders, comments by grammarians and lexicographers, literary attestations, rhymes, and records and manuscripts.

The chapter surveys the history of attempts to relate American English to its roots in the British Isles and summarizes the perceived connections by both region and linguistic feature. The regions of Colonial America whose British roots have been investigated are New England, Pennsylvania, Appalachia or the Upper South, Virginia and the Lower South. Irish, Scottish, and regional British influences affected all of these regions in varying proportions. Prominent linguistic features are vowel mergers and shifts, rhotacism, *wh-* aspiration, verb inflection, and pronoun forms.

The chapter concludes that dialects from the British Isles were not replicated in America, but were mixed with each other and with indigenous developments in a process combining "cultural transference and cultural re-creation."

• Chapter 4 ("Contact with Other Languages," by Suzanne Romaine) surveys the extensive language contacts that have existed between English and a variety of other languages in America from the earliest explorations and colonization until the present day. Those languages include potentially all 350 to 500 Amerindian languages spoken within the boundaries of what became the United States. The most influential were languages of the Algonquian family, but the Iroquoian, Siouan, Uto-Aztecan, Athabaskan, and Penutian families were also to be reckoned with. Lingua francas like Mobilian Jargon and Indian pidgin Englishes were also contact languages for the European settlers.

European colonizing languages in North America other than English were Danish, Dutch, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish. The most important immigrant languages between the middle of the nineteenth century and the Immigration Act of 1921 were French, German, Italian, Polish, and Spanish. African languages, Chinese, and Yiddish were also to make significant contributions, and Hawaiian Creole English is taken as a typical instance of its type.

• Chapter 5 ("Americanisms," by Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall) treats the most innovative and influential aspect of American English, its vocabulary. The term *Americanism* dates from 1781, when it was coined by analogy with *Scotticism* by John Witherspoon, himself a Scotsman. The term has, however, been used in two principal senses, one historical or diachronic and the other synchronic.

The earliest diachronic Americanisms were loanwords of Amerindian origin relating to New World flora, fauna, and artifacts, which antedate the English settlement of North America. Colonization, however, produced a situation of dialect split that resulted in the retention or promotion of some native English options in the colonies that were lost or marginalized in the mother country. The latter terms thus became synchronic Americanisms, although historically they were part of general English.

Americanisms did not spring into existence all over the colonies at once. They were often regional in origin and use, specifically Southern, New England, Middle Atlantic, and Appalachian, each with subregions, such as south central Pennsylvania, the site of German influence known as "Pennsylvania Dutch." The westward moving frontier was another significant factor in the creation of Americanisms, including the most successful of all Americanisms, *OK*, whose origin and early spread has been documented in detail by Allen Walker Read.

If we were to identify a single person who influenced the adoption of Americanisms in the United States, it would be Noah Webster through his dictionaries and spelling book. In addition, however, John Bartlett documented Americanisms and promoted pride in their use. The Civil War and the succeeding Reconstruction were important sources of new Americanisms, as were the experiences the pioneers and cowboys had on the Great Plains, especially through contact with Spanish speakers in the south central and southwestern parts of the nation.

The urbanization and technological advances of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were other productive sources for American vocabulary, as were both World Wars and the social changes that followed them. The non-Anglo ethnic group that has made the most pronounced