

SAYING WHAT □ YOU MEAN

*A Commonsense
Guide to American Usage*

R. CLAIBORNE

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*A Commonsense Guide
to American Usage*

ROBERT CLAIBORNE

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THEIR MINDS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people helped in the writing of this book. Pride of place goes to my daughter, Amanda Claiborne Schulman, who with Mark Sherman, of Columbia University, carried out the laborious job of collating and indexing the source materials I have drawn on. Without their work, the writing would have taken months longer than it did. No less helpful was my sister, Clara Claiborne Park, Professor of English at Williams College, who read the entire manuscript and made many useful comments and suggestions. Thanks are also due my editor, Starling Lawrence, my agent, Peter Skolnick, and especially my copy editor, Otto Sonntag, who labored hard and long to ensure that the text contained only those "grammatical errors" that I wanted.

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Later aid or comfort came from Gerard Piel, former publisher (and editor in all but name) of *Scientific American*, and, most of all,

from Eric Partridge, author of *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*⁷ and many other invaluable works on our native tongue, whose friendship is warmly remembered and sorely missed. Special thanks are due, as always, to Sybil, my wife.

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SAYING WHAT

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ON EVERY DAY AND NIGHT

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE

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