

# Insufficient Data and the Mystery of the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Northwest

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# Talk outline

- I. Historical issues have complicated the Pacific Northwest English (PNWE) research
- II. Primary challenge: How to conduct comparative sociophonetic research using materials from the past?
- III. The disciplinary history of Linguistics has had significant effects on the sufficiency of dialect records in the Pacific Northwest

Key Question:

In what ways does the present dialect differ from that of the past? (Labov, 1994)

The Pacific Northwest English Study



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

## Example:

- Tracking the prevalence of pre-voiced velar tensing and raising of /æ,ɛ/ BAG, BEG word-classes in the Pacific Northwest
- How did earlier Washingtonians pronounce this form?

LANGUAGE, VOLUME 37, NUMBER 4 (1961)

The first form predominates; the second is infrequent to rare:

[æ] in *glass, half, aunt, can't*

[a] used by a small number of cultured speakers.

[ɛ<sup>1</sup>] [ɛ] in *egg, keg*

[e<sup>1</sup>] [e] infrequent.

# Example

- Tracking the prevalence of pre-voiced velar tensing and raising of /æ,ε/ BAG, BEG word-classes in the Pacific Northwest
- How did earlier Anglo Washingtonians pronounce this form?

LAPNW, Speaker 36

bɔ{i}lɪŋ e^{i}gʒ

# Three mysteries

In what ways does the present dialect differ from that of the past?

Mystery 1: The mystery of the incomplete *Linguistic Atlas Projects* (LAP)

Mystery 2: The mystery of Carroll Reed and the *Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Northwest* (LAPNW)

Mystery 3:

# Mystery 1: Incomplete Linguistic Atlas Projects

- LAP also known as the LAUSC: Linguistic Atlas of the US and Canada (1928-1990)
- Massive endeavor, planned to cover US and Canada in 8 regional projects, independently funded and staffed
- Hans Kurath, original director, was trained by the directors of the Linguistic Atlases of Italy and Southern Switzerland

# Mystery 1: Incomplete Linguistic Atlas Projects

- LAUSC: Linguistic Atlas of the US and Canada (1929-1990)

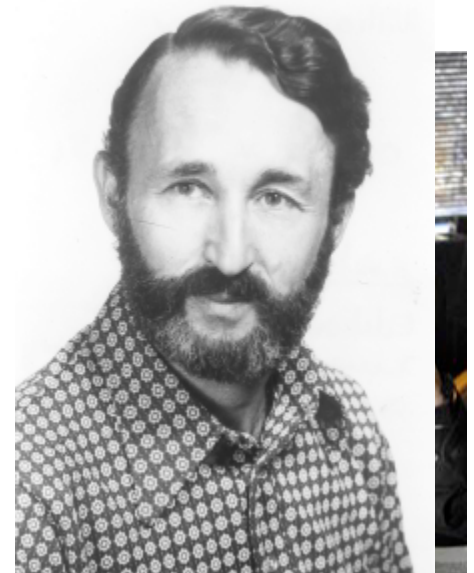
Projects below without dates were never completed (Kretzschmar et al. 2003):

Project (*handbook available)	Completion dates	Region
LANE *	(1939-43)	New England
LAMSAS *	(1980, 1982-6)	Middle and South Atlantic States
LAUM	(1973-76)	Upper Midwest
LANCS	(1976-78)	North-Central States
LAGS	(1981, 1982, 1986-92)	Gulf States
<b>LAPNW</b>		<b>Pacific Northwest</b>
LAPC		Pacific Coast (California and Nevada)
LAO		Oklahoma
LARMR		Rocky Mountain Region



# Mystery 1: Incomplete Linguistic Atlas Projects

- **1950s-60s:** A paradigm shift in dialectology
- Toward **theorizing** about the relationship between social stratification and language change (Koerner 1990, Murray 1998)
- Away from a principal emphasis on lexical form to **phonological variation** (Murray 1990, Kretzschmar 2003)
- Away from LAP methods (Murray 1998) toward **experimental** methods



William Labov

# Mystery 1: Incomplete Linguistic Atlas Projects

**1980s:** Consequence of paradigm shift: Linguistic Atlas Projects fell out of favor

- McDavid (1984): Projects are “underappreciated and insecurely housed”
- Shortly after McDavid’s death in 1984, the University of Chicago determined that they would no longer house the LAP materials.
- 50 years’ worth of project data was nearly lost (Kretzschmar 2003)



# Mystery 1: Incomplete Linguistic Atlas Projects

- **1980s** Consequence of paradigm shift, cont.



John Algeo

- David Carlson (LAPNW director following Reed) literally rescued Reed's LAPNW materials from shredding, on short notice
- John Algeo (U of GA) retrieved all surviving materials, and negotiated the ongoing agreement between the LAP and U of GA that endures into the present (William Kretzschmar, current editor-in-chief)

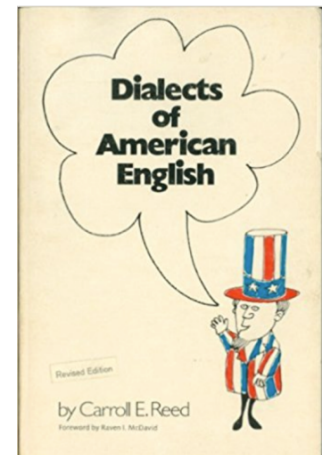
# The plan for the LAPNW

- Three state area:
  - Washington
  - Oregon
  - Idaho
- 700 subjects
- Field interviews + mailed surveys
- *Why Pennsylvania?*



## Mystery 2: Carroll Reed and the LAPNW

- Records of his work do not appear where we expect
- Reed was a Germanist:
  - PhD thesis: Brown University (1941) on Pennsylvania Dutch
  - Instructor (1946-48), then Assistant Professor of Germanics (1948-52), then Associate Professor (1952-59), University of Washington
- Joint appointment in Linguistics (only)
  - Acting Chair, Department of Linguistics, University of Washington (1964-65) and Dean of the Graduate School (1965-66)
  - Prof. of Germanics, U California – Riverside (1966-69); U of Massachusetts-Amherst (1969-1984)
- Reed's CV makes no mention of the LAPNW
- death: 1985



Reed (1967, rev. 1977)

## Mystery 2: Carroll Reed and the LAPNW

- He preferred “facts rather than elusive data” (Moelleken 1984, Metcalf 1984) – preference for field data collection rather than introspective methods
  - Reed (1952:189) calls for more ‘intensive study’ of language variation
- This may have distanced him from Generativist (Chomskyan) linguistics



The University of Washington

## Mystery 2: Carroll Reed and the LAPNW

	LAMSAS	LAPNW planned	LAPNW surviving
# Field Records:	1162	787 (+LAPC)	51 (“hundreds”?) (Metcalf, 1986)
Paper (mailed surveys)	1162	700	✗
Audiotaped	57		33
Handbook (prompts, speaker demographic information)	✓	✓	✗ (notes only)

- The 51 surviving records of the LAPNW underrepresent the larger work effort
- What was the level of phonetic detail used in the transcriptions?

## Mystery 3: The mystery of earlier PNWE forms

- We have LAPNW (1955) in digitized form
- sample entries:

		/ɛ/		/æ/
ID	age	boiled eggs	keg	nose bag
30	35	ɛ{I}gz bɔ{I}ld	kɛg	fi·d bæ{I}g , no·{u}z bæ{I}g
36	25	bɔ{i}lɪŋ e^{i}gz	kɛ^g	--
44	30	bɔ^v{ɛ}ld ɛ^{I}gz	kɛ{I}g	'no·z , bæ{ɛ}g

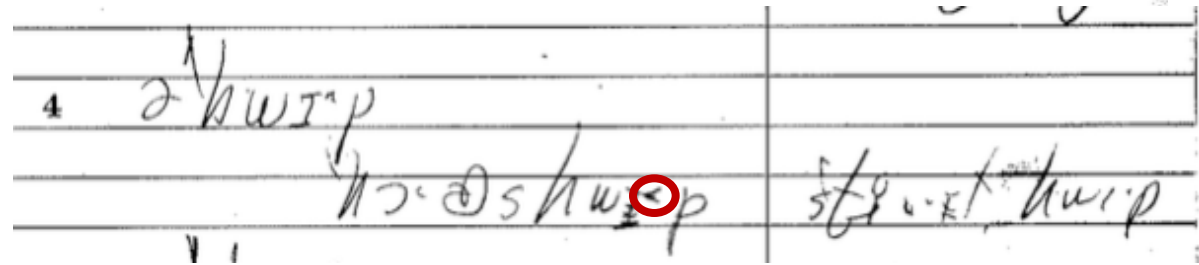


## Mystery 3: The mystery of earlier PNWE forms

- Discovery: LAMSAS handbook allows us to decipher the phonetic conventions of the LAPNW

*LAMSAS Handbook*

Figure 6.2: Sample Field Book Page (Raven McDavid)  
Informant 88 (NY31A), page 19



## Mystery 3: The mystery of earlier PNWE forms

- Reed's data were not quantitative (qualitative statements)

Wassink's PNWE Study (n=6)			Reed's LAPNW Study (n=8)		
Year of Birth	Age at Recording	Speaker No.	Year of Birth	Age at recording	Speaker No.
1919	93	13	1920	35	30
1921	91	16	1920	35	35
1926	86	21	1923	32	45
1931	81	15	1924	31	33
1936	76	8	1924	31	42
1939	73	24	1925	30	44
			1930	25	36
			1930	25	40

## Mystery 3: LAPNW vs. PNWE

- Comparison: PNWE speakers vs LAPNW speakers born 1920-1930

	Wassink's PNWE Study (n=6)			Reed's LAPNW Study (n=8)		
	Audibly Tensed/ Raised	Audibly Diphthongal	Count	Audibly Tensed/ Raised	Audibly Diphthongal	Count
/æ/	17 (71%)	23 (96%)	24	1 (2%)	22 (59%)	37
/ɛ/	24 (100%)	8 (33%)	24	3 (17%)	15 (83%)	18

a new mystery?

...Community change? (Sankoff and Blondeau 2007)

...Methodological differences?

...Underrepresentation of raising/tensing?

# Conclusion



- “Perfect storm” causing insufficient data for historical dialectological research into PNW English:
  - Shift in the practice of dialectology, compounded by loss of dialect records
  - Reed’s primary appointment was Germanics
  - Reed’s untimely death
- Current efforts by the PNWE research team:
  - Document the story
  - Continue comparative work
  - Make materials findable by scholarly community and interested public

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# Extra slides

## Mystery 2: Carroll Reed and the LAPNW

	LAMSAS	LAPNW planned	LAPNW surviving
# Records:	1162	787 (+LAPC)	51
Paper (mailed surveys) + Field interviews	1162	700 (Reed 1967)	?
Audiotaped	57		33
Handbook	✓	✓	x (notes only)
Table of Communities Surveyed	✓	✓	x
List of Prompts	✓	✓	x
Conventions used for Phonetic Transcription	✓	✓	x
Instructions to Fieldworkers	✓	?	x
Records (words and phrases)	✓	✓	✓

## Mystery 3: The mystery of earlier PNWE forms

- Reed's demographic data was sparse
- We then reconstructed the years of birth of Reed's respondents, and compared his phonetic transcriptions to those of PNWE subjects of similar year of birth.

INF#	Project	Gender Known	Gender assumption	Age	ABW Projected DOB (assuming Yr of Int=1955)	City	State	Interviewer	Race	Education	Occupation	Date of interview	Additional recorded comments:
030	LAPNW	F	F	35	1920	Summer	WA	Fred Breugelman					
035	LAPNW	F	F	35	1920	Seattle	WA	Fred Breugelman					
045	LAPNW	F	F	32	1923	Seattle	WA	Fred Breugelman					
033	LAPNW		M	31	1924	Coeur d'Alene	ID?	C. Reed		M.S. Degree			
042	LAPNW			31	1924	Caldwell	ID	Margaret Palmer			Medical doctor		Caldwell, ID [Parma]
044	LAPNW	F	F	30	1925	Bremerton	WA	C. Reed					
036	LAPNW	F	F	25	1930	Seattle	WA	Fred Breugelman					
040	LAPNW	F	F	25	1930	Pocatello	ID	Margaret Palmer					



# LAMSAS demographic table (excerpted)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1010	835	SC35A	236.1	Y	M	S	47	I	B	N	F	59	1	K	W	U
1011	835	SC35B	236.2	N	M	S	47	I	B	N	M	37	2	O	W	U
1012	835	SC35C	236.3	N	O	C	67	II	A	N	M	76	2	F	W	R
1013	835	SC35D	236.2*	N	M	S	47	II	B	N	M			M	W	U
1014	835	SC35E!	236.3*	N	O	C	67	III	A	Y	M	84	6	P	W	R
1015	836	SC36A	237.1	Y	M	S	46	I	A	N	M	73	2	F	W	R
1016	836	SC36B	237.2	Y	M	S	46	I	A	N	F	76	2	K	W	U
1017	836	SC36C	237.3	Y	M	S	46	II	A	N	M	73	5	F	W	R

A. Serial B. Community C. Informant ID D. Old ID E. Auxiliaries F. Field Worker G. Work Sheets H. Year  
I. Type J. Generation K. Cultivation L. Sex M. Age N. Education O. Occupation P. Race Q. Locality