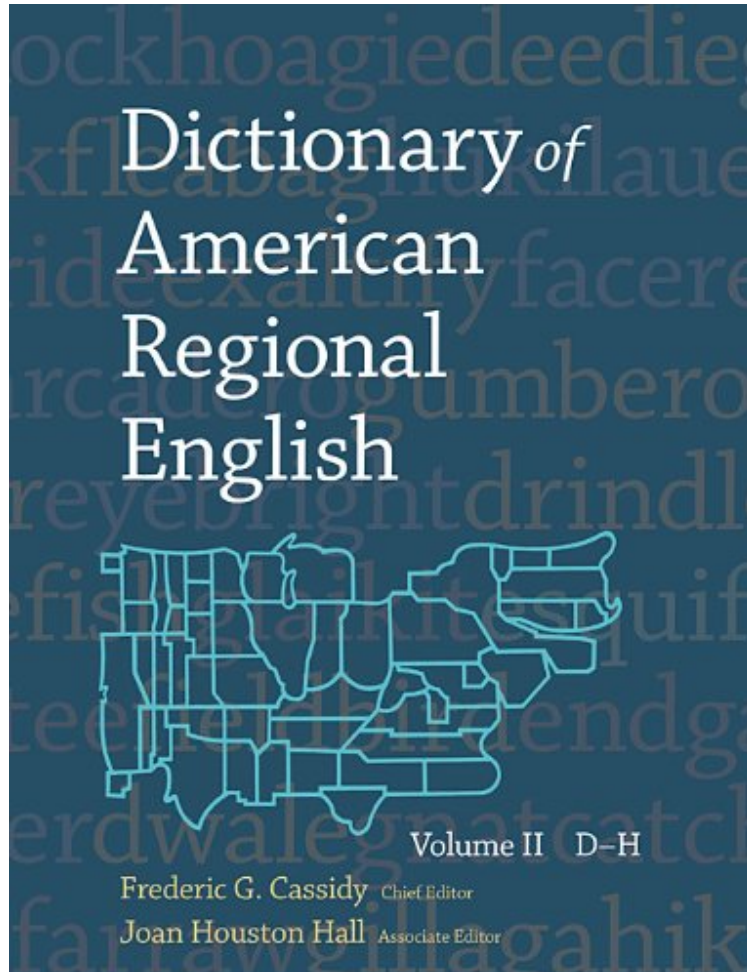


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Dictionary of American Regional English: Volume 2: D-H

Frederic Gomes Cassidy, Joan Houston Hall
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Frederic Gomes Cassidy, Joan Houston Hall : Dictionary of American Regional English: Volume 2: D-H before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dictionary of American Regional English: Volume 2: D-H:

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Volume I of the Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE), published to wide acclaim in 1985, captured the wondrous variety and creativeness of American folk words and expressions and tickled the imagination of lovers of

language around the world. Decades in preparation, the DARE corpus reflects the liveliness of English as it is spoken on America's main streets and country roads--the regional metaphors and similes passed along within homes and communities. Like its popular predecessor, Volume II is a treasury of vernacular Americanisms. In Virginia a goldfinch is a dandelion bird," in Missouri an insufficient rain shower a "drizzle-fizzle." "Gate" was Louis Armstrong's favorite "sender" (a verbal spur to a sidekick in a band), a usage that probably originated from the fact that gates swing. Readers will be dazzled by the wealth of entries--more than 11,000--contained in this second volume alone. The two and a half pages on "dirt" reveal that a small marble is a "dirt pea" in the South. "To eat dried apples," a curious rural euphemism for becoming pregnant, appears in the five pages on "eat." Seven pages on "horn" and related words take readers on a tour of the animal and nether worlds: horned lark, horned frog, horned pout (look that one up), and that horned fellow, the devil. Initiated under the leadership of Frederic G. Cassidy, DARE represents an unprecedented attempt to document the living language of the entire country. The project's primary tool was a carefully worded survey of 1,847 questions touching on most aspects of everyday life and human experience. Over a five-year period fieldworkers interviewed natives of 1,002 communities, a patchwork of the United States in all its diversity. The result is a database of more than two and a half million items--a monument to the richness of American folk speech. Additionally, some 7,000 publications, including novels, diaries, and small-town newspapers, have yielded a bountiful harvest of local idioms. Computer-generated maps accompanying many of the entries illustrate the regional distribution of words and phrases. The entries contained in Volume II--from the poetic and humorous to the witty and downright bawdy--will delight and inform readers.

Volume II is every bit as excellent as A-C, and as thought provoking. It's sad to have lost words like faunch (to rant, rage, or fret). The words form a picture of the country a century back, when folks stored their stuff in a hide-nasty (closet), and when they hifered (loitered) and someone asked what they were up to, they might say "Oh, I'm just helping Andy" (doing nothing). The lesson: If I faunch less and just put projects away in the hide-nasty, I can hifer more and take up the art of helping Andy. Because these volumes are the most complete lexical records we have of the American experience, much of the history and contemporary condition of American society can be found in their pages...We are very fortunate to have DARE; it is not a dictionary; it is a national treasure. (Edward Callary *Language in Society*) The long-awaited, definitive and fascinating Dictionary of American Regional English [DARE]...is all we had hoped for and more. It includes the regional and folk language, past and present, of the old and the young, men and women, white and black, the rural and the urban, from all walks of life. Although DARE will be one of the most scholarly, comprehensive and detailed dictionaries ever completed...it will also be one of the easiest and most enjoyable to use or browse in...This is an exciting, lasting work of useful scholarship accomplished with excellence, a work that scholars and laypeople alike will study, use and enjoy for generations. (Stuart B. Flexner *New York Times Book*) Proof that tourism, television and technological change haven't rounded off all the gaudy and gracious edges of the way we talk. (L. A. Jolidon *USA Today*) A staggering work of collective scholarship...DARE is not only a reference treasure for the scholar and the general word lover, it's a lode for raiding parties by specialists of all kinds...Most of all, DARE is evidence that American speech will never become stale and fusty, that the great linguistic homogenization of television is a myth. (Henry Kisor *Chicago Sun Times*) In its scope and thoroughness, Cassidy's dictionary is unmatched as a kind of refuge for colloquialisms threatened with extinction ...Writers, etymologists and other devotees of verbal arcana have never been given a richer browsing ground. (Ezra Bowen *Time*) To open its pages is to thrill at the exploration of the New World and to trace the course of American history through its language...Its editors, led by Professor Frederic G. Cassidy, have caught the native poetry of America on every page. (Fred Strebeigh, *Smithsonian*) DARE is a monumental and impressive work...For those studying American English or linguistics, this is a work that will be consulted again and again. (Daniel F. Phelan *Language and Linguistics*) For the first time, in the nation of homogenized milk and golfheaded pifflespeakers, we have a definitive picture of who says what where when the TV is off. This picture, literally dotted out on helpful maps, provides a raucous hymn to linguistic diversity. Even more important, it serves as a sort of verbal game preserve where all manner of endangered species--from big hats to blind tigers--may linger a while longer. (Boston *Globe*) The most exciting linguistic project going on in the United States. (William Safire *New York Times*) About the Author Frederic G. Cassidy was Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.