

Fieldwork Recordings—Dictionary of American Regional English
UW–Madison Digital Collections Center

**Transcript of DARE Interview (1968): El Cajon, California; Primary Informant
CA080 (Tape 0110-S1)**

The DARE fieldwork recordings and transcripts have been released to support research, scholarly work, and other non-commercial usage. This transcript was created for and approved by the Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE) under a grant by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation to DARE and the Wisconsin Englishes Project. To contribute to the DARE project, please consider transcribing additional recordings in the collection and submitting them to DARE@english.wisc.edu.

INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English, tape zero one one zero, side one.

FIELDWORKER: This is a recording of Mrs. Jean [beep] in El Cajon, must be about February twenty, twenty fourth

5 AUXILIARY INFORMANT 2: Twenty-fifth--{twenty-fourth

FIELDWORKER: Twenty-f-, twenty-fourth, twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth, and fieldworker [beep].

INFORMANT: Uh, Argen[tine] ants, there's three kinds, only uh, the first beginning kind is, is a,
10 the first ones you see are little teeny hairlike red ones, well they're not so little, but they're
very thin, and they can run like fury, just terrifically fast, you know, they just run, and they're
pretty nice, they pick up crumbs and things under the table, you know [laugh] real nice, you
know, they get you to like them, and then they bring in, uh, uh, some real huge ones uh,
they're a red ant with a real big pincher on them, but they never been taught to bite, they
15 don't seem to know what to do with it, they just haul stuff away and they make holes in your
wood, you know, eh, for their homes for their things, and then, uh, the ones that are running
the whole thing are the little teeny brown ones, they're very small brown ones, and they run
these other two, I think they steal it from other places and take them, you know.

FIELDWORKER: Oh, like kidnapped ants.

INFORMANT: Yeah, yeah, and the other ones don't know what they're doing, they're slaves,
20 you know, stupid thing. But they are the meanest things, they'll, they'll get into your books,
they'll get into your clothes, they'll get into your food.

FIELDWORKER: Those brown ones.

INFORMANT: Yeah, well, they h-, they're all together, they have, you know, they take care of
25 their babies, and everything, they move from place to place, you can see the babies moving,
you know, I mean, you know, they, they take them in there very carefully in their mouth, but,
uh, they are the nastiest things to get rid of, and they, they, they came from the south, up

from South America, I believe. And they've, t-, any, they've taken over any place that's warm, and they're almost impossible to eradicate. They get underneath the cement, uh, floor, and they can't get rid of them, you know. It's, it's, we had them in, uh, Flinn Springs, they got up
30 behind my stove, and they just ate out the wood there, and they, they were spreading all over the place. You'd see them just in streams in lines {and stuff.

FIELDWORKER: Well, they work} like a termite then.

INFORMANT: Yeah, they were very much like a termite. I hate them. Just hate them. They had no self-respect at all. And if you get near them, they, they pretend like they're dead. It's like if
35 they're on a potholder, they, and it would drop, you know, they'd lay there, pretend they're dead, and afterwards they'd creep off. [laugh]

FIELDWORKER: Oh, they must be {amazingly

INFORMANT: no self-respect} at all, just horrible

FIELDWORKER: Must be amazingly clever.

40 INFORMANT: I'll have to introduce you to some [laugh].

FIELDWORKER: What kinds of stinging things do you have out here, Jean?

INFORMANT: Wasps, um, hornets, bees, bumble bees, um...

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 2: Yellow jackets.

INFORMANT: Yeah, yellow jackets. That's about it.

45 FIELDWORKER: Do you have any, you don't have any scorpions, or anything on that order?

INFORMANT: Yeah, they have scorpions, but not too many, that's usually in Arizona and inland more. I have seen some, though.

FIELDWORKER: I've heard about the, uh, the big scorpions aren't really the dangerous ones, it's the little ones.

50 INFORMANT: The little ones, that's right, that's right. Th-they have several kinds, you know. They drop from the ceiling in the desert,

FIELDWORKER: Yeah.

INFORMANT: crawl around. I hate those.

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: "What time, what, do you know what time it is?" I said, "(I don't
55 know)." "One-thirty AM." [laugh] I thought it was time to go to school.

FIELDWORKER: (xx)

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: I don't know, I just woke up and thought, "Time to go {to school."

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 2: So, did} you go back to bed?

60 AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: Oh, yeah. I ha-, I wasn't going to stay up from one thirty. [laugh] I was only in the seventh or eighth grade.

INFORMANT: Don't really care then. [laugh]

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: Well, I was still young, but, you know, old enough to {know better.

INFORMANT: Old enough}--yeah, it was dark, you must get up in the dark. It had to be dark.

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: It was dark, but I was

65 INFORMANT: Did you ever even notice it was dark?

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: Flipping all the lights on in the place [laugh]. "Get up, everyone." I was in the bathtub [laugh]. "You know what time it is, young man?" "Oh, no. Time to go to school."

70 INFORMANT: Ever do that on Saturday? Every once in a while I forget it's Saturday. I think, I got to get up. No, I can sleep. Oh, boy, I'm so glad.

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: I think the same thing on a Monday morning, "Oh, it's only Sunday, I'll sleep a little bit, then get up then get for church, then I think "Oh, it's Monday, ah." I'll get up and I'll be depressed the whole day.

75 INFORMANT: That's the opposite, uh, I never think that I can sleep when I can't. Never make that mistake.

FIELDWORKER: I'm not sure that I dream in technicolor. I think maybe I just tell myself later that I did, and, you know, think of things that were in it and put them in color.

INFORMANT: You know what I've wondered, and I'd like to make a survey on this, what do people blind from birth dream? Do they {dream--

80 AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: Yeah}

INFORMANT: Do they dream figures and things, or do they dream colors? What do you suppose they dream?

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 1: Of Braille. [laugh] Those dots.

FIELDWORKER: Textures and things they might dream.

85 INFORMANT: I'd like to ask one. I know a man's been blind since he was ten, but he still s-, thinks he remembers things. His, one of his last memories that were just beautiful was, was a one of the most magnificent desert bloomings, you know. It happened to be a really good year.

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 2: Mother?

90 INFORMANT: And he still remembers the, miles and miles and miles of flowers that he saw.

AUXILIARY INFORMANT 4: Mother?

INFORMANT: It was a beautiful thing to see, just before—

FIELDWORKER: Just before he went blind.

INFORMANT: He had a firecracker go off in his face.

95 AUXILIARY INFORMANT 2: Who?

FIELDWORKER: Firecracker, really?

INFORMANT: Yeah, our chiropractor, yeah. Isn't that pitiful? Ten years old.

FIELDWORKER: And he's a chiropractor now?

100 INFORMANT: Uh-huh. Very good. Almost gifted, he knows exactly what's wrong and where. I really trust him. Haven't been to him {in quite a while.

FIELDWORKER: Does he} do a lot of x-raying, or does he--

INFORMANT: He does x-rays, but somebody else has to read them for him.

FIELDWORKER: Has to read them for {him.

105 INFORMANT: Uh-huh.} And he also prescribes vitamins or things like that, but not much, you know, unless you ask him what he would prescribe. It's something. The story of Arthur the Rat. Once upon a time there was a young rat who couldn't make up his mind. Whenever the other rats asked him if he would like to come out hunting with them, he would answer in a hoarse voice, "I don't know." And when they said, "Would you rather stay inside?" he wouldn't say yes, or no either, he'd always shirk making a choice. One fine day his Aunt Josephine said to
110 him, "Now look here. No one will ever care for you if you carry on like this. You have no more mind of your own than a greasy old blade of grass." The young rat coughed and looked wise as usual, but said nothing. "Don't you think so?" said his aunt, stamping with her foot, for she couldn't bear to see the young rat so cold-bloo-, cold-blooded. [laugh] "I don't know," was all he an-, ansu-, all he ever answered, and then he'd walk off to think for an hour or more,
115 whether he should stay in his hole in the ground or go out into the loft. One night the la-, rats heard a loud noise in the loft. It was a very dreary old place. The roof let the rain come washing in, the beams and rafters had all rotted through, so that the whole thing was quite unsafe. At last, one of the joists gave way, and a beam fell with one edge on the floor. The walls shook, the cupola fell off, and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror. "This
120 won't do," said their leader. "We can't stay cooped up here any longer." So they sent out scouts to search for a new home. A little later on that evening, the scouts came back and said they had found an old-fashioned horse barn where there would be room and board for all of them. The leader gave the order at once, "Company, fall in!" And the rats crawled out of their holes right away and stood on the floor in a long line. Just then the old rat caught sight of
125 young Arthur--that was the name of the shirker. He wasn't in the line, and he wasn't exactly outside of it--he stood just by it. "Come on, get in line," growled the old rat hoarsely. "Of course, you're coming too." "I don't know," said Arthur calmly. "Why the idea of it! You don't think it's safe here anymore, do you?" "I'm not certain," said Arthur undaunted. "The roof may not fall down yet." "Well," said the old rat, "we can't wait for you to join us." Then he turned

130 to the others and shouted, "Right about face! March!" and the long line marched out of the
barn while the young rat watched them. "I think I'll go tomorrow," he said to himself. "But,
then again, perhaps I won't. It's so nice and snug here. I guess I'll go back to my hole under the
log for a while just to make up my mind." But during the night, there was a big crash. Down
135 came beams, rafters, joists--the whole business. Next morning--it was a foggy day--some men
came to look over the damage. It seemed odd to them that the old building was not haunted
by rats. But at last one of them happened to move a board, and he caught sight of a young rat,
quite dead, half in, half out of his hole. Thus the shirker got his due, and there's was no
mourning for him.

FIELDWORKER: Amen. [laugh]