

Inter- and Intra-Generational /aI/ Monophthongization, Indexicality, and Southern Appalachian Identity

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You can tell when someone is from the mountains. You become like the ground you grew up on. For us, we are hard and rocky at first, but we can be fruitful.

-Morgan

1. Introduction

One of the many ways that people express a particular identity is through language (e.g. Johnstone 1996, Bucholtz and Hall 2004, Greene 2010). In particular, use of specific features in speech can index locality and a local identity, as described in Eckert (2000), Kiesling (2005), and Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) among others. Speech is constantly variable, as each utterance is always slightly different; however, patterns of linguistic behavior emerge and are present in every individual. Often, speakers do not have conscious awareness of these patterns. Many times, these particular patterns of variation are correlated with some type of socio-demographic reality, such as region, class, or ethnicity. In the Appalachian region, one of these features that seems to have social meaning is monophthongization of /aI/, e.g. *I, ride, right*, realized as [a:], [ɹa:d], and [ɹa:t] respectively. Monophthongization in pre-voiceless positions, as in *right*, is especially salient, as this feature differentiates the Appalachian region from other areas of the South (cf. Hall 1942). Monophthongization in Appalachia, as in other Southern American English varieties (cf. Bailey 1991 and Johnstone 1998 for Texas English varieties), has come to index certain aspects of regional and local identity (Greene 2010). In the epigraph at the beginning of this paper, from one of my participants, Morgan¹, who was born and raised in Appalachia, there is an example of the use of monophthongization when discussing identity in practice. In this short statement, she

expresses how she feels toward her region. She orients toward the region, describing how ‘fruitful’ people from Appalachia can be. In addition, she recognizes that others (perhaps outsiders) could have a negative opinion or perception of the region, as ‘hard and rocky’. This recognition is reflective of the dichotomy of many stigmatized areas with a bifurcation of opinion about the language varieties used. Some speakers, like this respondent, orient positively toward the region due to the association with authenticity or belonging. Others, possibly due to the concomitant negative associations from both within and without such a stigmatized region, have a negative inclination toward the region and thus orient away from the region and toward some other group or area. Other speakers may have ambivalent feelings.² This epigraph is an excerpt drawn from a longer answer to a question where this respondent is explaining why she maintains an Appalachian identity personally and professionally. She is aware of the possible negative reactions from others, yet the positive associations from belonging far outstrip the negative. Her orientation is decidedly toward the region, and she is using many language features representative of the region. Critically, she is using monophthongization of /aI/ in a pre-voiceless context, in the word ‘like’, realized as [la:k], which, as stated above, is a feature of her Appalachian English variety.

1.1. Identity and Language

It is necessary to note that particular linguistic features do not in and of themselves carry social information. The patterns of use by certain individuals that belong to particular groups cause certain features to acquire a social meaning. Crucially, a feature can be associated with more than one type of social information. For example, a feature may be associated with lower socio-economic status speakers and males, or perhaps male athletes. The feature does not just index (point to) one group or one aspect of a group, rather there are multiple levels of association for each linguistic feature (to different groups or aspects of groups), and sometimes these particular levels can be quite different or even conflicting.

For some features, one of the levels reflects membership in a socio-demographic group. Labov (1972) calls this stage of association between the feature and speakers an 'indicator' (178). An indicator simply implies membership in a socio-demographic group, such as 'people from Appalachia'. However, through continued use by particular members of a socio-demographic space, some features can acquire additional social meaning and may be associated (indexed) with this additional meaning. Often, the additional meaning reflects a belief that a feature is more/less correct, only X type people use/can use that feature, and/or use indicates other additional social meanings relevant to the existing socio-demographic space, e.g. a person with a local orientation, etc. At this point, Labov opines that 'all members of the speech community reacted in a uniform manner to its use' (1972: 179), and at this point the variable has become a 'marker'. As a result, native speakers in the speech community understand at some level what the additional social meanings are and associate them with the feature. The feature now has social meaning and is available to mean more than just residence in a particular social space. A speaker has become aware, albeit possibly subconsciously, that a particular feature is associated with some social meaning, such as appropriateness in formal contexts but not in informal ones, and linguistic behavior within a particular society (or part of a society) reflects this. Johnstone and Kiesling explain how this process can come into being, noting that 'the repeated use of different variants in different self- presentational styles associated with locally relevant social groupings can cause particular variants to become semiotically associated with particular ways of being and acting' (2008: 7). This variation is due to the fact that speakers' awareness affects their behavior. If they desire to do 'social work' (Johnstone and Kiesling 2008: 8), they can utilize the feature, or not, depending on the particular social setting. Interestingly, most speakers cannot articulate exactly what they are doing, as it is often subconscious behavior. With some markers, the native interpretation that the use of a feature expresses a particular socio-demographic perception rises to the level of conscious and explicit awareness, and this awareness can extend to overt comment about and reaction to said feature. Speakers and outsiders can develop a

conscious and overt awareness of the social meaning that a feature indexes, and it becomes the topic of meta-linguistic and meta-pragmatic discourse. At this point, Labov terms this a 'stereotype' (1972: 180). What this means is that both group members and outsiders comment on some features, and the use of a particular feature is explicitly tied to a particular social persona or social orientation. Occasionally (and perhaps usually), this becomes a negative association because the social orientation/profile that is reflected is stigmatized.

Given the two prevailing ideas and stereotypes that Appalachia connotes, i.e. an area that preserves values or an area that is backward and rooted in the past (see §2 below for elaboration), how to label particular linguistic features provides a framework for understanding the linguistic behavior of speakers. A particular feature can become associated with the region due to use (indicator). That region itself has differing connotations in the broader culture. Thus, there could be competing notions about those linguistic features that are associated with the region. Some people would have a positive perception of the features, and might interpret them as indicative of a person who possesses long-standing values; thus, the features would be worthy of incorporating into speech or positively perceived in the speech of others. Another person might negatively perceive such features, and these features would index a backwards mentality due to the perception of the region as a backwards area. Such a person would probably avoid using the particular features in production and would rate them as negative in perception. For some native speakers and outsiders, this region and its associated linguistic features index home, a local orientation, or other positive ideas; for others, this region and its language index the stigma that is associated with Appalachia, which may mean a backwards region and people (see §2 below). Any region, group, or community with competing social profiles could have a similar bifurcation of indexicality, due to the association of particular linguistic features to the different interpretations and perceptions of that region, group, or community.

Monophthongization is a feature, as noted above, that is associated quite broadly with the South and with Appalachia,

which following Labov (1972) would be an indicator and perhaps a marker, reflecting use in a particular area and potentially knowledge of the extra-linguistic connotations that its use brings to mind. What is interesting is that some studies, such as Labov et al. (2006) and Jacewicz et al. (2011a, 2011b) show that, cross-generationally, monophthongization appears to be in recession (along with other features of the Southern Vowel Shift (Labov, Yaeger, and Steiner 1972)). The Southern Vowel Shift (SVS) is a series of vowel shifts that are found across the South. The purported first stage is monophthongization of /aI/, primarily in open syllables and in pre-voiced contexts. Appalachia is a region with an advanced SVS because /aI/ has progressed to pre-voiceless contexts. Thus, the cross-generational recession of these SVS features might indicate that younger generations are orienting away from Appalachia, perhaps due in part to the social stigma associated with the region and its linguistic variety, and thus these features are now stereotypes. Perhaps it may be the case that a different feature or set of features is now used to express a local orientation. However, in contrast to the above cited papers, Irons (2007) finds that the SVS, and /aI/ monophthongization, is advancing across the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky and increasing among certain groups and in successive generations. Irons hypothesizes that an urban/rural distinction might be at work, as his work centered on rural Appalachia whereas Labov et al. 2006 focused on urban areas, although Jacewicz et al. had data from Western North Carolina, a more rural region of the state.

From these contrasting results, two questions emerge: 1) Is monophthongization in Appalachia stable across generations, and 2) To what extent does monophthongization seem to be tied to local/regional orientation and identity? This paper seeks to address these questions by examining the rates and realization of monophthongization of /aI/ for two generations of speakers from the same family, where the younger generation includes speakers with differing levels of orientation and identity with the region.

2. Regional Stereotypes, Identity, and Monophthongization

The idea of a Southern mountain region that is somehow culturally and linguistically different from the rest of the nation has been in the broader American cultural mindset for roughly 150 years, resulting in widely circulating stereotypes that have colored perceptions of the region for both natives and outsiders. In fact, there is substantial literature devoted to debunking stereotypes and giving a more nuanced and realistic picture of this region (cf. Billings, Norman, and Ledford (eds.) 2000). Williams (2002) describes:

two defining stereotypes lodged in the American mind: the Appalachia mountaineer, noble and stalwart, rugged and independent, master or mistress of the highlands environment, and the profligate hillbilly, amusing but often also threatening, defined by a deviance and aberration, a victim of cultural and economic deprivation attributable to mountain geography. (17)

While portions of these stereotypes have roots in reality, such as relatively higher rates of poverty or relatively lower rates of education, their persistent circulation, particularly among outsiders, contributes to a skewed perception of Appalachian culture and lifestyle. For example, the mistaken notion that this region has been untouched by the trappings of progress and technology is still rampant, as exemplified by queries to me about whether or not 21st century inhabitants of the region had telephones. In such questions about basic technology, the notion of backwardness or deprivation is quite clear. Aside from personal anecdotes, these mistaken notions are so prevalent that entire volumes are written as rebuttals to stereotypes about the region. *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes*, (Billings, Norman, and Ledford (eds.) 2000) is a collection of essays, which first began as a response to the 1992 Robert Shenkkan play *The Kentucky Cycle*, that respond to popular stereotypes like moonshining prevalence, common and violent feuds, corrupted language, and environmental degradation. These essays give proper historical and current context to the reality of Appalachia, along with debunking the stereotypes. The authors of this collection explain where some of these myths originated, how they

were first circulated, and how they have persisted over time. These essays also illustrate how appreciation for certain aspects of Appalachian culture, such as handmade artifacts, music, and even legal moonshine has been revived from interest outside the region.

However, for many outsiders and even some natives, the stereotypes remain even when there is an appreciation of the region. In his discussion of stereotypes, Williams writes about how a focus on mountain customs ‘represents metropolitan America’s embrace of mountain people during the twentieth century and their depiction of their culture and lifeways as emblems of what was noble and quaint in the national past and worthy and needful (or degraded and fearful) in the present’ (2002: 5). For many, this is the idea of Appalachia, a region that is worthy and noble or degraded and impoverished. Thus, the linguistic features that index the region (as markers or as stereotypes) can have competing interpretations that fall along these two contrary and competing lines.

How could these two disparate notions be maintained? Perhaps the most elucidating view comes in the seminal 1978 work, *Appalachian on our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness 1870–1920*. In this work, Henry Shapiro examines how these two seemingly incongruent ideas were initiated into the American cultural mindset. Shapiro observes, ‘This is not a history of Appalachia. It is a history of the idea of Appalachia, and hence of the invention of Appalachia’ (ix). According to Shapiro, Appalachia was not considered so different from other rural areas until after the Civil War. Understanding that the perceived differences have a constructed element (perhaps the most crucial element) is key to understanding the persistent nature of the stereotypes.

Shapiro³ explains that in the post-Civil War period a particular type of popular literature flourished, namely, local color. This literature, aimed at the burgeoning middle class, was comprised of articles about interesting and unique areas of the United States and short stories and novels set in these unique areas. This movement emerged from the descriptive travel writing that was popular in the mid-19th century. This writing focused on describing the natural world unfamiliar to urban readers or situating characters within

this unfamiliar environment. From this, often, the focus went to the inhabitants if the writers found anything of ‘interest’, that is, anything that differed from what was considered ‘modern’ or ‘civilized’. As the local color genre developed, competition among the writers to continually find something interesting led to more and more descriptions, and numerous descriptions of regions that generated readership. The writers focused on certain aspects of very particular regions that were the most divorced from the modern reality of ‘civilization’, and began to center on Appalachia due to the natural diversity found there and its geographical proximity to Eastern cities. From the natural descriptions, the writers began to look at the people and their behavior, again focusing on what was the most different from an Eastern middle-class urban norm. While there were certainly some small differences between urban life in the cities of the Eastern seaboard and the more rural mountainous regions of Appalachia, these writers focused on only a small subset of the differences that were the most divergent from the perceived civilized norm, such as dress, household practices, and language. They overlooked Appalachian metropolitan areas, such as Asheville or Jonesborough, usually not too far away, that shared many ‘modern’ qualities with the broader culture, such as access to railways, participation in the larger national and international economy, contact with current events, etc. These stories were marketed to middle-class readers who were entertained by articles and stories about nearby places that were ‘peculiar’. From these reading habits, a mindset began to emerge that saw a large region as homogenous and different, with a culture that was dissimilar to ‘modern’ culture.

The local color writers⁴ succeeded in demonstrating to their readers that Appalachia was ‘different’, both in geography and especially in culture. As the readership grew and these descriptions and stories were more widely circulated, interest in the region began to surge from Northern Protestant churches, which were already involved in reaching out to ‘exceptional’ populations that were out of the mainstream of American society. These Protestant denominations did not have much of a presence in the region. Once the idea that the region was ‘different’ began to be firmly rooted in

the metropolitan social consciousness, the churches wanted to help remedy that situation. Thus, they began to send home missionaries into the region. As Shapiro states, 'The same kind of assumption concerning the otherness of Appalachia, which made the region seem a suitable field for literary exploitation, thus made it seem a suitable field of action for home missionary endeavor.' (1978: 32). This otherness, coming to light from the writings of the local color movement, was perceived to stem from isolation from two cultural vehicles: churches and schools. Thus, the Northern Protestant churches felt that the solution to this cultural otherness was access to religion and education. The churches began to build schools and churches and began to educate the Appalachian people about cultural practices borrowed from the Eastern urban norm. However, Central and Southern Appalachia⁵ was located in the South. Additionally, the nation was still recovering from the devastating effects of the Civil War and the issues surrounding the abolition of slavery. The first missionary work was focused during and just after the Civil War with the newly freed slaves. Many churches worked with the newly freed African American population, and as more and more converts were added, competition began to arise between the various denominational and inter-denominational organizations. While a true interest in people was undoubtedly present, a desire for influence also permeated this work. This desired influence included the imposition of new cultural and social practices, still based on an East Coast norm, that were lacking in these populations (at least from the perspective of the benevolent workers). As the work with African Americans prospered, the realization that there were unreached 'poor white' populations that needed 'modern' culture also developed. Thus, the churches and organizations saw this perceived need, and the mountain people were a prime flock. The 'exceptional' nature of the Appalachian people, contrasted with other groups that were alleged to be needy, was harder to understand. These were white Americans, and yet they were an 'other', according to the local color writers and the perspective of the Northern churches, and in dire need of 'modernization'.

This 'exceptional' nature⁶ of the Appalachian people needed an explanation. The modern progressive culture of the 'civilized'

American culture seemed to have passed over this region. They were white, American, and yet still an 'other', still 'unchurched',⁷ and in dire need of Americanization and modernization. The local color writing had seen and described the differences in culture from the norms of the metropolitan areas, and the home missionaries had discovered how deep these differences ran, but now something had to be done to ameliorate this situation in the mountains. However, the origins of this problem had to be discussed, both for the continuing interest of readers and continued investment from benevolent organizations. For once an 'other' is identified, if there is no hope for change or an understanding of the *raison d'être*, then something else will capture the interest and investment of outside entities. Thus, explanations for the otherness began to promulgate. The two main explanations centered on the history of the region and the environment itself. The history usually began with the settlement of the region, and the misguided idea of a 'pure Anglo-Saxon' strain started. This supposed purity separated the mountaineer from the 'degenerate' strains from other regions. This purity and history, in turn, helped explain how the Appalachia region avoided slavery wholesale (which wasn't true).⁸ The purported purity of the strain allowed for the best aspects of the people to emerge, one of which was a supposed aversion to slavery. These two ideas, that the mountaineers were Anglo-Saxon and non-slaveholders, allowed the Northern philanthropists to invest time and money without the possibility of supporting those who had supported slavery. The reason that this purebred Anglo-Saxon had not progressed the same as other, more civilized regions had to do with the environment itself, and the assumed isolation that the geography forced upon the mountaineers. The perceived isolation from the rest of homogenous America was believed to have led to the different culture of Appalachia, and this situation could be ameliorated with the trappings of civilization, such as household implements and even more schools. Thus, by bringing civilization to the mountaineer, any distinction would be erased.

As more attention was given to the region, a shift began in the attitudes of the benevolent workers and writers.⁹ According to Shapiro, these writers and workers supposed that the otherness was not just a factor of the environment and isolation. The

mountaineers, being pure Anglo-Saxon and thus truly ‘American’, deserved to be civilized. In addition, this different heritage helped them to not be the same as the rest of the degenerate South, as they were Unionists and anti-slavery. This mistaken notion of completely different heritage fueled an idea that it was merely an accident of history that the Appalachian ‘Anglo-Saxons’ were not like their brethren in the North. Even though they were impoverished and an ‘other’, there was a nobility about their state. They were perceived as heroic, fighting for liberty on the side of the Union in the Civil War, detesting slavery because of the inherent nobility of their ethnicity. This, as stated above, allowed interested Northern parties to feel good that they were rescuing the mountaineer from this fate of backwardness and peculiarity, and once rescued, the strength of the ‘stock’ would come through. This explanation of the otherness was quite popular and allowed the denominational workers to continue their work, as the fact that they were saving good Americans resonated with their congregations back home. In addition, their presence and livelihood depended on maintaining that the mountaineers could be civilized and rescued. By bringing faith and education in, they were allowing the purity of the stock to re-emerge.

Thus, from this brief overview, we see the inception of the two main stereotypes of the region that persist to this day; 1) the degenerate nature of the people and their culture because of their backward and impoverished state, and 2), the inherent nobility of this group due to purity, tradition, and history. Both arise from the interplay of the local color writers’ need for an interesting story and the benevolent workers’ need to justify why they were helping the mountaineers. As these stereotypes circulated, the two competing ideas about Appalachia were cemented into the social consciousness. Both natives to the region and outsiders were inundated with the idea that the area was backward; at the same time, the region was somehow noble.

From this contradiction of imagery, a picture begins to emerge as to why attitudes toward the language varieties of the region can be so varied. Depending on a speaker’s perspective, the region could be something to orient toward or away from. For each individual, there are conceptions of the region that could be in

conflict. On one hand, the region is (or was) home or connotes idealized nobility, and thus the region and its speech could be seen as positive. On the other hand, there is the stigmatized conception of an impoverished backwards region. An individual speaker could have different and contradictory notions about the region, its inhabitants, and, by extension, its speech patterns. This idea is not confined to Appalachia, as perceptual dialectology work shows a similar bifurcation for the South as a whole, with low judgments on correctness but with high judgments on pleasantness (e.g. Preston 1989, 1997, 1999, among others). Lippi-Green (1997) expands upon this idea, stating ‘southerners exhibit an insecurity about their language and a willingness to accept responsibility for poor communication or bad language, but they do so only when in contact with the direct criticism of the northerner’ (213). Thus, when confronted with a variety judged to be more standard or more correct in the popular cultural mindset, people from a marginalized language region may have a negative view of their own language, which clashes with the image of the language of belonging and home.

Monophthongization of /aI/ is present in most (if not all) areas of the American South. In his overview of North American vowels, Thomas (2001) finds /aI/ glide weakening from Texas to North Carolina. In fact, Feagin (2000) calls this ‘the most notable unchanging element in Southern states’ pronunciation’ (342). However, this feature is not monolithic, as many different systems exist. Thomas (2003) outlines these systems into two broad divisions as follows: 1) monophthongization occurring in pre-voiced and syllable final positions (PRIZE/PRY), and 2) monophthongization in all contexts (PRIZE/PRICE/PRY). In the Appalachian region, speakers tend toward monophthongization of the PRIZE/PRICE/PRY system, as shown in (1a-c).

- (1) a. Well, that sure was a fun ride [ʃa:d]. (pre-voiced)
 b. I might [ma:t] be able to do that. (pre-voiceless)
 c. Don’t be shy [ʃa:]! (syllable final)¹⁰

Greene (2010), Hall (1942), and Wolfram and Christian (1976) found that in three different areas of Appalachia (Eastern Kentucky, Smoky Mountain Regions of Tennessee and North

Carolina, and Southern West Virginia, respectively) monophthongization was not constrained by any phonetic context. Hall writes, ‘It (the diphthong) may be reduced to [a¹], [a], or [ɑ] under all circumstances – in any phonemic setting, in accented or unaccented position’ (1942: 43). In other Southern areas, the PRIZE/PRY varieties stand in contrast. Hall explains, ‘The tendency observed elsewhere in Southern speech to reduce [ay] before voiced consonants, but to retain it before voiceless consonants is assuredly not characteristic of Smokies speech’ (1942: 43). Thus, following Labov (1972), this monophthongization could be considered an indicator, which represents a type of social or regional identity. Speakers may not be aware, or seem to not be aware of the form; thus, there may not be social variation in a systematic sense. However, given Greene’s (2010) findings that her respondents used monophthongization to orient favorably toward Eastern Kentucky and Appalachia, the monophthongization may be functioning as marker, where a particular feature begins to be noticed by natives, and crucially, begins to show social variation because the feature now carries social significance and can be used for actively creating and maintaining a certain type of identity. A concrete example of this is found in Johnstone and Kiesling (2008), who observed that /aw/ monophthongization in Pittsburgh was an $n^{\text{th}}+1$ order indexical (used as a kind of synonym for marker following Silverstein’s (2003) nomenclature) for some speakers, who used it to index localness and social class. Other speakers did not use it, but could recognize the fact that monophthongized /aw/ represented certain locally-oriented social groups in Pittsburgh.

3. Methodology

3.1. Area and Participants

The data for this study were collected in Morrisville, Tennessee¹¹—a rural community located in the mountainous part of upper Northeast TN, on the border between Central and Southern Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Morrisville falls in relatively close proximity to Sandy Hook, KY (~100 miles away) and the Great Smoky

Mountain National Park (~90 miles away), where Greene (2010) and Hall (1942) conducted their respective studies. Thus, their findings of monophthongization in pre-voiceless environments could allow for comparison and contrast, especially with examining how speakers are creating a particular regional identity. Furthermore, following Wolfram and Christian's (1976: 6) study in West Virginia, certain communities can be seen as representative of aspects of a larger region. Given that there are large portions of Appalachia that are still rural and are populated with small towns, this case study could be indicative of the behavior of families from other rural areas of the region.

As a native of the area under investigation, I bring an insider's perspective to the study, with native intuitions on the process of /aI/ monophthongization itself, as well as a close and personal connection to the study participants. Four speakers from the same family participated in this study (Hazel, Suzanne, Hannah, Morgan). All were female, with age ranges from 30-86 at the time that the study was conducted. The speakers were divided into two generations: one older speaker (Hazel, the grandmother) and three younger (Suzanne, Hannah, and Morgan, sisters and grandchildren). While all of the participants were born and raised in Morrisville, none currently live there.¹² Hazel, a retired schoolteacher and school administrator, lives in a nearby town. She attended college in an Appalachian university and received post-graduate training. She is a widow, and her husband was born and raised in Appalachia (in Morrisville). Suzanne, an attorney, lives in a large metropolitan area not located in the South. She attended college in Appalachia and went to law school in the South. She is married, but her husband is from a suburb of a Northeastern city. Hannah, a business professional, lives in a large Southern city outside of Appalachia. She was educated in an Appalachian university (the same that Suzanne attended) and received an M.A. from a Southern university located outside of Appalachia. She is currently single. Morgan, a university educator/program director, lives in an Appalachian city. She received her B.A. and M.A. from Appalachian universities. She is married, and her husband is from Appalachia as well. Table 1 summarizes the background information for each participant:

Table 1. Participants

Identifier	Generation	Age	Education	Occupation
Hazel	older	86	BA, + certifications	Retired teacher and administrator
Suzanne	younger	37	J.D	Attorney
Hannah	younger	35	M.B.A	Business Manager
Morgan	younger	30	M.S.	University Educator/Program Director

3.2. Interview and Reading Passages

In order to examine the usage of /aI/ monophthongization, I conducted sociolinguistic interviews (Labov 1972) with each participant in December of 2011. Sociolinguistic interviews are semi-structured interviews about a variety of topics, designed to allow for the recording of a range of speech styles and registers. The interview employs open-ended questions designed to elicit monologues from the participants. Following an introductory section for demographic information that helps to set a participant at ease, the actual interview portion begins. In the actual interview, as per Labov (1972), open-ended questions allow a participant to tell an anecdote or give a personal reflection on a question, focusing less on language and more on the message. Often, as in the current study, there are reading passages and word lists toward the latter stages of the interview designed to draw more attention to speech, which should elicit different registers and styles. For all the respondents, this was the first time being interviewed and recorded in an academic manner; thus, initial questions (about the day, weather, along with other questions that emerged naturally from the conversation) served to help the participants become more familiar with an interview setting. In addition, as noted above, I had previous long-standing social relationships with all participants, which facilitated the creation of a more relaxed environment that could encourage more vernacular speech, the

goal of any sociolinguistic interview. The interview then shifted to a discussion of holiday memories and pastimes (the interviews were conducted during the holiday season). Finally, I asked questions related to Morrisville, its county, and the region at large (See Appendix B for questions). Natural follow-up questions based on responses were also asked. In addition, reading passages and word lists that included instances of the /aI/ token (See Appendix C) were read by the respondents to insure comparability between speakers.

Each participant was recorded using an iPod Classic 64Gb with a Belkin microphone attached, with the files digitized into iTunes at 44 kHz as .wav files. In addition, the participants wore lavalier microphones connected to a laptop computer running the freeware audio program Audacity 1.2. The signal was sampled at 44kHz and saved as a .wav file for analysis. These two recording devices were used to allow for interview questions to be heard as well as insuring all speech was recorded. From these interviews and reading lists, all tokens of /aI/ were extracted and the vowel portion of the word was measured.

3.3. Impressionistic and Acoustic Measurement

First, all extracted tokens were impressionistically coded as monophthongal or diphthongal. Then, for each extracted token of /aI/, formant measures were taken using the Formant function in Praat (Boersma and Weenik 2013). From 3–5 formants were requested, depending upon the need for each token. Measurements from points 25%, 50%, and 75% of the vowel duration were taken to have a better idea of the formant movement, and to avoid possible interference of co-articulation from surrounding segments as much as possible. In addition, previous work (Reed 2012b) has shown that for some speakers of varieties with monophthongal /aI/, the formants transition very late in the vowel duration, which impressionistically sound monophthongal although acoustically they are diphthongal. By taking several measurements, this oversight was avoided. From the measurements of the formant values, the Euclidean distance between the formants of the onset

and glide were computed from these measures. The Euclidean distance is the distance between two points, in this case the distance between two points in the articulation of the vowel. This distance reflects the relative closeness of two vowels or the closeness of the nucleus and glide for an individual speaker, and thus normalizes across speakers. A small Euclidean distance means that the two qualities are close, thus are monophthongs, as monophthongs maintain a constant vowel quality (the relationship between F1 and F2) throughout the articulation. A large distance would indicate that there is a greater difference in the vocalic quality of the two points, and thus diphthongs, as diphthongs are complex vowel sounds with a change in the relationship of F1 and F2 during the vowel's articulation. Two-tailed T-tests were then performed on the Euclidean distance to determine whether the speakers were significantly different from one another in their realizations of /aI/. In a case (which was infrequent) where the impressionistic coding was different from the acoustic measures, I relied on the acoustic measure to make the final determination.

4. Results

4.1. Impressionistic Evaluation

For the Older generation, Hazel was categorically monophthongal, with 100% of tokens coded as monophthongal, regardless of phonetic context (pre-voiced, pre-voiceless, open syllables) and style, conversation or reading.

For the Younger generation, a rather different situation occurred. Hannah was monophthongal 84% of the time overall, averaged across phonetic contexts. In pre-voiced and open syllables, she was 87% monophthongal. In pre-voiceless contexts, she was 76% monophthongal. When looking at the various styles, Hannah was 70% monophthongal in Reading style, and 98% monophthongal in Conversational style.

Morgan was monophthongal 78% of the time, averaged across the phonetic contexts. In pre-voiced and open syllable contexts, she was 79% monophthongal. In pre-voiceless contexts, she was 73% monophthongal. When split by style, there was a difference in monophthongization. In Reading style, the more formal style,

Morgan was 65%; in the more casual Conversation style, she was 90% monophthongal.

For these two Younger speakers, these percentages are slightly lower than what e.g. Greene 2010 found in Sandy Hook, KY among speakers of a similar age group, but these realizations still suggest a monophthongal norm for these two speakers, regardless of phonetic context or style.

In stark contrast to the other family members, Suzanne was 2% monophthongal (3 tokens that may be the result of undershoot (Lindblom 1963))¹³, thus practically categorically diphthongal regardless of phonetic context or style, a rather complete contrast to her other family members. Tables 2 and 3 summarize these impressionistic results, with Table 2 displaying overall rates of monophthongization and Table 3 displaying the rates of monophthongization split by the differing styles. Figure 1 graphically represents the data from Table 2. Figure 2 graphically represents the data from Table 3.

Table 2. Summary of Impressionistic Results^a

Identifier	Generation	% Overall	% Pre-voiceless	% Pre-voiced	% Open
Hazel	Older	100 (142/ 142)	100 (36/36)	100 (51/51)	100 (55/55)
Suzanne	Younger	2 (3/128)	3 (1/30)	2 (1/47)	2 (1/51)
Hannah	Younger	84 (97/ 115)	76 (19/25)	81 (36/44)	91 (42/46)
Morgan	Younger	78 (/118)	73 (19/26)	77 (37/48)	82 (36/44)

^a Percentages reflect percentage of monophthongized tokens divided by total number of tokens.

Figure 1. Rates of Monophthongization

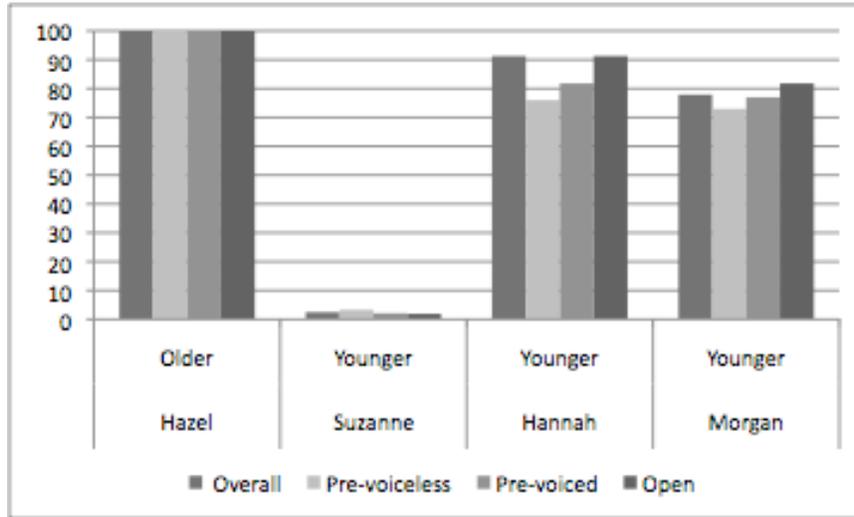


Figure 2. Percentage of Monophthongs by Style

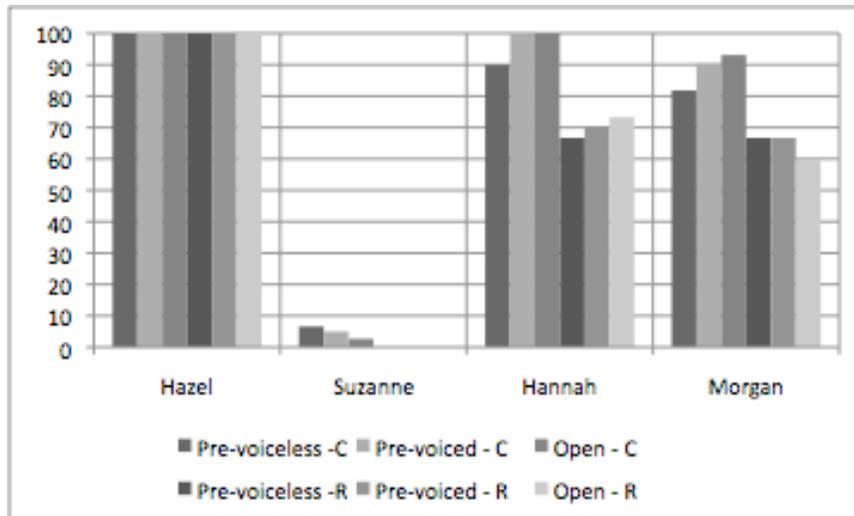


Table 3a. Summary of Monophthongization Rates by Style

Identifier	% Pre-voiceless – Conversation	% Pre-voiced - Conversation	% Open - Conversation
Hazel	100 (21/21)	100 (24/24)	100 (40/40)
Suzanne	6.6 (1/15)	5 (1/20)	2.7 (1/36)
Hannah	90 (9/10)	100 (17/17)	100 (31/31)
Morgan	81.8 (9/11)	90.4 (19/21)	93.1 (27/29)

Table 3b. Summary of Monophthongization Rates by Style

Identifier	% Pre-voiceless - Reading	% Pre-voiced - Reading	% Open - Reading
Hazel	100 (15/15)	100 (27/27)	100 (15/15)
Suzanne	0 (0/15)	0 (0/27)	0 (0/15)
Hannah	66.7 (10/15)	70.3 (19/27)	73.3 (11/15)
Morgan	66.7 (10/15)	66.7 (18/27)	60 (9/15)

4.2. Acoustic Results

The acoustic results confirm the impressionistic results. The results of the T-test show that the average Euclidean distance for Hazel is not significantly different from Hannah ($p=.11$) or Morgan ($p=.16$). Small Euclidean distances indicate that there is not much distance between the onset and the glide, which means a monophthongal realization of the vowel. The same findings occur for Hannah and Morgan, as their average Euclidean distances were not significantly different from one another ($p=.112$), thus indicating monophthongization and similarity.

Consistent with the impressionistic judgments, Suzanne's results indicate that she is diphthongal. Her T-test results show that

her Euclidean distances are greater than her siblings (Hannah $p < .0001$; Morgan $p < .0001$) or grandmother (Hazel $p < .0001$).

4.3. Discussion

From these results, we can see a split in the linguistic behavior with regard to /aI/ within this family. The older speaker is completely monophthongal, while two of the younger speakers are also quite monophthongal. Yet, one member of the younger generation is completely distinct in that she is almost categorically diphthongal. These results were interpreted within the context of some specific questions relating to Appalachian culture and identity, which I posed during the sociolinguistic interview. For example, in response to the question ‘Is there a particular area or location that you identify with,’ Hazel, the older speaker, responded as follows,

- (2) ‘Well, I’ve been born and raised here¹⁴, and lived here my whole life. I guess, I would say, I identify with Morrisville’.

Hannah, one of the monophthongal younger speakers, who currently resides in another city in the South, said,

- (3) ‘Well, hmm, that’s tough. Appalachia is home, so I guess I would say Knoxville, or well, no, maybe East Tennessee in general. I love the hills, and I would love to live in Knoxville again, but it’s, it’s not just Knoxville. I would say East Tennessee’.

Morgan, the other monophthongal younger speaker responded,

- (4) ‘I am straight-up Southern, straight-up Appalachian. You know when you’re Appalachian, and I am one, both at work and in my private life’.

From these statements, it is quite clear that Hazel, Hannah, and Morgan had close ties with Appalachia and an affinity for the region. In contrast, Suzanne, the diphthongal younger speaker, responded to the question,

- (5) ‘Hmmm, I like to call myself a, uh, a displaced hillbilly, but that really isn’t the truth. I love the South, but it’s more the whole South, and it’s hard to pinpoint a particular location, but if I had to say it, maybe New Orleans, but, I’m really a

citizen of the world. I love home, but I don't think it's exactly who I am. I am proud of where I came from, but I have a broader outlook now'.

Her orientation was not toward Appalachia, rather perhaps toward the South as a whole. However, as she elaborates, it becomes evident that her particular identity is of a broader nature. She mentions 'citizen of the world', which could indicate that a more parochial regional identity would not seem as cosmopolitan, and thus, possibly less desirable. In another response, she addresses this more directly,

(6) 'There isn't much diversity in Morrisville. Once I left, the world was my oyster. I've seen as much of it as I could, as I can'.

This lack of diversity could be reflective of the idea that Appalachia has not progressed as much as other parts of the country and world. To linguistically associate with this region could be perceived as accepting this lack of diversity. This does not appear to be how Suzanne wants to be identified. This is relevant not only to the linguistic behavior, but also in other lifestyle aspects. Suzanne does not live in Morrisville (her hometown) or in Appalachia. This change in outlook seemed to have affected more than just vowels.

This difference in response would seem to be an explanation for part of the dissimilarity in monophthongization, and interestingly, the responses seem to exemplify the differing types of interpretation as described by Labov (1972). For Hazel, the monophthongization of /aI/ seems to be an indicator. As she responds to the question of areal identification, she points to her childhood and residence. In addition, her categorical monophthongized variant could indicate that for her, monophthongization is a factor of region. Her birth, childhood, education, residence, career, and now retirement have all taken place within Appalachia, specifically her childhood, primary and secondary education, and career were in Morrisville. Thus, her monophthongization can be seen as an indicator, given that it is related to a particular socio-demographic reality, for her, the place in which she was born, raised, and currently lives. Her orientation

is to the region, but there is not a shift in style to indicate that /aI/ monophthongization was performing any particular social work; rather it indicates that she is from the Appalachian region.

For Hannah and Morgan, it seems that monophthongization is a marker. They approach categorical /aI/ monophthongization in conversation, when they are interacting and narrating; however, the rates drop rather dramatically when they move to reading. With this stylistic variation, we could see the clear manifestation of a marker, socially constrained variation in the form of stylistic shifts. Thus, /aI/ monophthongization is not associated with reading, an instance of formality. However, when interacting and relating personal memories and anecdotes, the association with /aI/ monophthongization is strong. Thus, it appears that monophthongization is associated with interpersonal communication, where a regional identity and orientation can be negotiated. However, for a more formal situation, reading a text, this form seems to not be available or at least perceived to be not advisable to use. This perception may stem from an association of monophthongization with incorrectness or some other negative ideology. Thus, a regional feature is incongruent with this activity related to education and/or school. One fact that deserves discussion is that Hannah no longer resides in Appalachia, whereas Morgan does. But, Hannah's rate of monophthongization is actually higher than Morgan's in every context. This could indicate that Hannah is emphasizing features representative of her Appalachian identity beyond that of a person with similar socio-demographic attributes (the cross-over effect¹⁵), perhaps as a way to express her Appalachian identity while not living there. As Schneider (2000: 361) states, 'we use language to actively signal who we want to be', and Hannah seems to desire to be seen as Appalachian, especially given that she wants to move back and strongly connects with the region. This difference in rates of monophthongization between Hannah and Morgan, while slight, could be seen as clear attempt to evoke associations of what Hannah envisions that an Appalachian person should sound like.

For Suzanne, monophthongization is not a feature of her linguistic behavior. She is almost categorically diphthongal, and

her orientation does not seem to be toward Appalachia. She orients toward a broader, more cosmopolitan identity. Even though she was raised in the same household and attended the same primary and secondary schools as both Hannah and Morgan, in addition to attending the same Southern university as Hannah, her linguistic behavior is different with respect to /aI/ monophthongization. Her identity and orientation are quite distinct from that of her siblings and grandmother, and thus is suggestive that, for her, monophthongization carries a stigma or at least has lower prestige than diphthongized variants. Suzanne overtly stated that she does not orient toward Appalachia, and her identity is based on something that we could call more 'mainstream'. Since /aI/ monophthongization is not a feature of a mainstream American English variety, her orientation toward this more mainstream identity would mean that monophthongization would not be a feature of her speech. Since she orients toward something broader, it would be natural to avoid monophthongized variants, which could be viewed as indicative of membership and affinity toward a stigmatized region. Suzanne's avoidance would be a clear example of avoiding such an indication.

5. Conclusion

The research questions that guided the study were: 1) Is monophthongization stable across generations?, and 2) To what extent does monophthongization seem to be tied to local/regional orientation and identity? For the former, I conclude that within my sample /aI/ monophthongization is not in recession across generations, as 2 of the 3 Younger speakers were quite monophthongal; however, given such a small sample I cannot concretely conclude that this will hold across a larger group. Yet, I cannot say that monophthongization is completely stable. What is suggested is that, for some speakers, a feature can have different interpretations. For some, it is an indicator, and for others this has extended to being a marker across generations. This does not mean that this feature is going to disappear or even recede; rather the feature takes on a new function within the society. For Hannah and

Morgan, this means monophthongization expresses their orientation toward Appalachia. The monophthongization now helps to demonstrate their close connection to the region. However, certain features can become stereotypes, and due to the fact that additional associations exist, some of which are stigmatized and negative, speakers can opt to not use a feature. For these speakers, the feature is in recession, and for some it has disappeared or will disappear. Suzanne is emblematic of this, as her /aI/ monophthongization is strikingly different from the rest of her family. For the second research question of whether or not personal identity plays a role in monophthongization, the answer appears to be yes. Given that the linguistic behavior of Suzanne is so divergent from Hazel, Hannah, and Morgan, we can assume that the personal identity expressed as areal affinity is one of the driving forces of the difference. Suzanne, Hannah, and Morgan grew up in the same household and thus received the same input. In previous preliminary work (Reed 2012b), I observed that in high school (age 18), Suzanne had high, almost categorical rates of /aI/ monophthongization, very similar to her siblings. Given this evidence, it seems reasonable to say that Suzanne had monophthongization earlier in life. As her identity shifted away from Appalachia, as demonstrated by the findings in the current work, monophthongization is now no longer a feature of her speech. This sub-phonemic feature can be considered a stereotype and evokes negative associations for some speakers. As such, at least for some speakers, it is now absent from their speech.

Some may argue that using the Labovian labels for the behavior of individuals is wrongheaded. These terms are typically associated with communities as a whole. However, are communities are not composed of individuals? For a particular interpretation to be adopted into a community would mean that individuals are ascribing to the various interpretations. Thus, a marker only becomes a marker when individuals recognize that particular features reflect social differentiation, or a stereotype is only stigmatized when individuals acknowledge the interpretation the use of a particular feature explicitly creates in the minds of

listeners. We cannot talk about communities without recognizing that individuals comprise communities.

From this difference within a single family, and in particular, within three sisters from a single generation of a family, individual differences and individual identity were able to inform both macro- and micro- sociolinguistic inquiry. From a macro-viewpoint, it is not surprising to see individuals from Appalachia demonstrating features of Appalachian English. However, wholesale inclusion of all members of a particular region (and by extension class, ethnicity, etc.) with the features associated with that region is not prudent. We must look at how each individual presents herself, the orientation and identity that each wishes to construct and project to others. In addition, when looking at language change, individual differences may trump the direction of change. Other researchers (Labov et. al. 2006; Jacewicz, Fox, and Salmons 2011a, 2011b) found that certain features, such as /aI/ monophthongization, were in recession and were indicative of generational change. However, in line with Irons (2007), reality, as always, is more complicated. Irons suggests that the distinction is of a rural/urban distinction. I would add that the individual identity of each speaker is also a factor, perhaps the most important one.

NOTES

¹ All participant names, including this one, are pseudonyms to protect privacy.

² Cf. Smitherman's concept of linguistic push-pull *vis à vis* African American English (1977; 2006).

³ This is a summary of Ch. 1, pp. 3-31 of Shapiro (1978).

⁴ This is a summary of Ch. 2, 32-58.

⁵ The actual region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission stretches from Mississippi to New York, but most people associate Appalachia with the South (see Raitz and Ulack 1981 for fuller explanation)

⁶ This is a summary of Ch. 3, pp. 59-84.

⁷ This is a false perspective from the Northern Protestant denominations. For an overview of the religion and history of religion in Appalachia, see MacCauley 1995.

⁸ See Inscoe (2008) for a detailed introduction to the complex picture of race and slavery in Appalachia.

⁹ This is a summary of Ch. 4, pp. 85-112 of Shapiro (1978).

¹⁰ These examples are all from the author's speech, a native of this region. See Appendix A for spectrograms. Also, due to the variation of Appalachian Englishes, the actual vowel quality can vary from place to place and also along traditional sociolinguistic lines.

¹¹ This is a pseudonym to protect anonymity.

¹² Hazel had just recently moved at the time of the interview.

¹³ These particular tokens were from the conversational data with very short durations. For this reason, and given her other results, I suspect the short duration may have contributed to this token sounding more monophthongal.

¹⁴ She says 'here', but given the rest of the answer, she was not referring to where the interview occurred. She was referring to Morrisville.

¹⁵ This is a type of hyper-correction (Labov 1972: 126), where a speaker uses more than the anticipated percentage of features.

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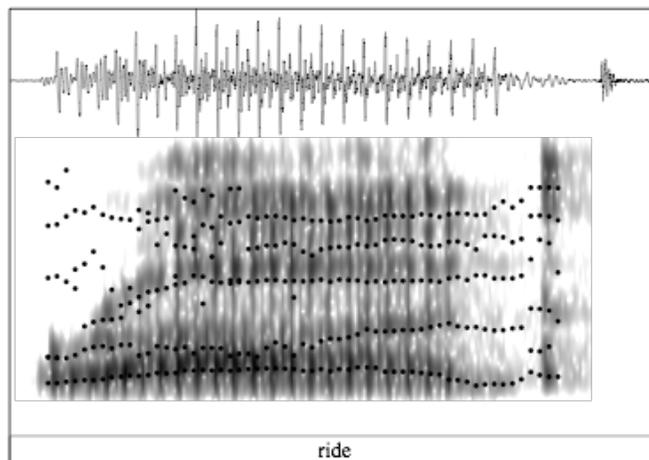
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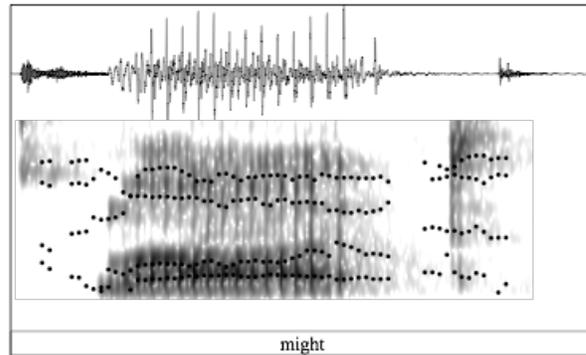
APPENDIX A

Examples

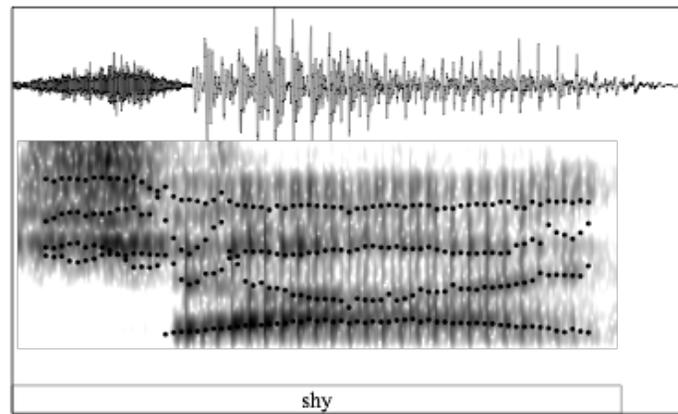
Pre-Voiced: *ride*



Pre-Voiceless: *might*



Open Syllable: *shy*



APPENDIX B

Questions—other naturally occurring follow-up questions were posed.

How are you? Everything going well?

How about this weather? (It was cold this particular week, and had just snowed).

How was your Christmas Holidays? Did you do anything fun?

Do you have a favorite Christmas memory? Why?
Do you do anything as a family tradition?
What did you like about XXX County and Morrisville?
What was your favorite thing about growing up here?
Do you have a favorite memory?
One that really sums up living here?
What makes that your favorite?
Were there any negatives? Why?
Do you have a story that can explain that?
As you moved on, were there things you missed? Why?
Were there things you didn't? Why?
Is there a particular place that you identify with? Why?
What makes it so special?
Has there ever been a time when you thought, this is it, it's over for me?

APPENDIX C

PLEASE READ THIS STORY OUT LOUD:

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 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, stomping with her foot, for she couldn't bear to see the young rat so cold-blooded.

"I don't know" was all he ever answered, and then he'd walk off to think for an hour or more whether he would stay in his hole in the ground or go out into the loft.

One night the 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 the beams 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 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 young Arthur—that was the name of the shirker. He wasn't in the line, and he wasn't exactly outside it—he stood just by it.

"Come on, get in line!" growled the old rat coarsely. "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 any more, 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 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 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 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 and half out of his hole.

Thus the shirker got his due, and there was no mourning for him.

PLEASE READ THIS STORY OUT LOUD:

Since it was too cold Saturday to soak in his pool and too foggy to shoot arrows, Sam decided to tour the countryside. His golf partner, Pike, was gone, and his daughter was playing the fife, which made his ears throb. As a result, he wanted to get out of the house, so he dashed to the family car before his wife, Joan, caught him. He still hadn't started washing the dishes from last night. He took off as fast as he could and hit the culvert as he pulled out of his drive. "I can't stay cooped up inside on such a nice day," he thought. Watching the telephone poles zip by, he passed both a school and a hospital. After five minutes, he drove around Hoover Dam, where he saw a sight to behold—there must've been a thousand seagulls eating dead fish. On Friday, all he'd seen were men pushing a boat through the water along the end of the dam. Next he rode through some farms with soybean fields and the ragweed in the dust-filled air was so bad it made him cough. He'd be a fool if he didn't have the sense to avoid those plants. They made his voice sound hoarse. Not far away, he heard a dog barking. Maybe the ragweed bothered it, too. At least August was peaceful. He enjoyed looking at a hawk above and the hogs, horses, cows, and a bull this Saturday morning, and now he felt refreshed. Even a goat chewing on a tin can looked happy. He headed back to town. There he passed Cooper's Forks, where he'd renewed his medical insurance on Tuesday. Checking his pocket for cash, he stopped at a Gulf station and bought some gas because Joan wanted a full tank.

"You don't have any driveway salt, do you?" he asked the manager.

"No, but Tharp's tool store ought to sell ten-pound bags cheap," the manager answered.

"I only need five right now," he nodded, "plus some hooks, bolts, and a bushel basket." He rushed to the store, which was having a special on light bulbs, and first he bought those things and then, second, two cots on sale. With the spare tire, they were a

tight fit in his small-sized foreign auto. On the way home, he saw a guy fixing the roof of his house and thought, “I need to put a fall coat of paint on my own house—it looks dull.” The tar on the road had gone from hard to soft, since it had gotten hot, and he recalled that Joan would be hostile if he didn’t wash that big, dark cooking pot on the stove. Picturing the fire in her eyes, he took a shortcut down Tuttle Street and got home just in time to hear his other daughter practice the violin. She sounded as horrible as her sister. “Oh, my poor ears,” he muttered as he poured out the dish soap. “I guess there’s no cure for this.”

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING WORDS.
SOME OF THE WORDS APPEAR MORE THAN ONCE.

tide.....tight	five.....fife
cot.....caught	indoor.....endure
pin.....pen	height.....hide
hard.....heart	sighted.....sided
pool.....pull	heart.....hard
sighting.....siding	hall.....hull
tour.....tore	dies.....dice
hi.....hay	ate.....aid
golf.....gulf	hag.....Hague
bite.....bide	taught.....tot
pole.....pull	tribe.....tripe
cart.....card	feel.....fill
hawk.....hock	how’s.....house
day.....die	hill.....heel
side.....sight	gate.....gait
gull.....gall	lout.....loud
how.....hoe	fill.....feel
sided.....sighted	endowed..in doubt
Abe.....ape	tripe.....tribe
tyke.....take	dawn.....Don
bide.....bite	sight.....side
coal.....cool	surely.....Shirley
fife.....five	tock.....talk
doll.....dull	heel.....hill

bake.....bike
tight.....tide
ten.....tin
tote.....toad
dice.....dies
full.....fool

Harper.....harbor
card.....cart
shied.....shade
pool.....pole
siding.....sighting
boat.....bout