

Fall 11-29-2017

A Jawn by Any Other Name: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Philadelphia Dialect

Ryan Wall
wallr2@student.lasalle.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/honors_projects

 Part of the [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), and the [Other Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wall, Ryan, "A Jawn by Any Other Name: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Philadelphia Dialect" (2017). *HON499 projects*. 12.
http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/honors_projects/12

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in HON499 projects by an authorized administrator of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.

A Jawn by Any Other Name:
A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Philadelphia Dialect

Ryan Wall
Honors 499
Fall 2017

Introduction

A walk down Market Street in Philadelphia is a truly immersive experience. It's a sensory overload: a barrage of smells, sounds, and sights that greet any visitor in a truly Philadelphian way. It's loud, proud, and in-your-face.

Philadelphians aren't known for being a quiet people—a trip to an Eagles game will quickly confirm that. The city has come to be defined by a multitude of iconic symbols, from the humble cheesesteak to the dignified Liberty Bell. But while “The City of Brotherly Love” evokes hundreds of associations, one is frequently overlooked: the Philadelphia Dialect.

This paper will investigate this dialect, but will also attempt to answer how it came to be. The social and cultural history of the city inform how it has undergone significant changes demographically, but also inform how the average person communicates. The city is rife with diversity and socioeconomic stratification, making it an “ideal laboratory for the study of change in sounds,” according to leading sociolinguist William Labov (Labov, 2005). This paper will trace the roots of the dialect by looking into population changes, immigration records, and migration trends.

Naturally, this presents some interesting difficulties; namely the rise of isolated communities and pockets of sub-regional dialects. Of course, this is something Philadelphians do not shy away from; it's not called “The City of Neighborhoods” by accident. As Claudio Salvucci aptly notes in his *Grammar of the Philadelphia Dialect* (1995), the “dialect represented here is an amalgam of common Philadelphianisms.” The patterns of speech described don't represent how everyone speaks, and some neighborhoods tend to have slightly different accents. Again, it all comes down to the history of each area and how the population changes have affected the overall dialect as a whole.

This convergence of history, social sciences, and communication studies is meant to uncover how the Philadelphia dialect came to be, but can also be extrapolated to predict where the dialect will go. In our increasingly globalized city, the average citizen will interact with a more diverse populace in a countless number of ways through a countless number of media. By pairing academic studies with popular articles, we gain a more complete understanding of how people communicate. To further conceptualize this, I will tap into localized recordings of accent change, as well as conduct informal interviews to better understand the guidelines with which Philadelphians shape their communication.

The intent of this paper is to provide a general understanding of the rich and changing dialect of Philadelphia. For a city proud of its origins, it is fitting that its dialect represents the diverse tapestry of residents throughout its history. As new people flock to the city, this dialogue will continue to change—so maybe on your next walk down Market Street (or rather, Mork-it Street), it might just sound a little different.

I: A Sociolinguistic Approach

That walk down Market Street perfectly encapsulates what sociolinguistic studies embody: “the study of our everyday lives” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 1). It describes how language functions in everything from casual conversations and media to formal legal policies and societal norms. Sociolinguistics tends to make generalizations about language usage in society, which is influenced and influences our social identity. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982), write that “to understand issues of identity and how they affect and are affected by social, political, and ethnic divisions we need to gain insights into the communicative processes by

which they arise.” In other words, Philadelphians are as much shaped by their language as the language is shaped by Philadelphians.

On this note, I must clarify some terms. A dialect is not an accent, nor is an accent a dialect. A dialect describes a particular form of a language that is peculiar to a specific region or social group (Oxford). It’s broader and more encompassing than an accent. An accent, on the other hand, is “a distinctive mode of pronunciation of a language, especially one associated with a particular nation, locality, or social class” (Oxford). Simply put, one describes the way a word is pronounced, the other describes the system that informs that pronunciation: the grammar, the syntax, and the slang. “Slang” itself must be defined, as it is often assumed to be interchangeable with other terms. Slang is a colloquial variety of language that is used in highly informal situations. It is always used with people who share similar social backgrounds and age groups and is typically unwritten (deKlerk, 2005). It differs from jargon in that jargon is a special type of language used in a particular context and may not be understood outside of that context (Oxford). Jargon is typically used to describe professional terminology, whereas slang is more common.

Bae (Before Anyone Else) <i>Example of Slang</i>	vs.	IEP (Individualized Education Plan) <i>Example of Jargon</i>
---	-----	---

Slang is also different from colloquialisms. Colloquialisms are the informal language used by people in everyday speech. It’s considered common language and is geographically restricted; slang is not (Oxford).

Bae (Before Anyone Else) <i>Example of Slang</i>	vs.	Jawn <i>Example of Colloquialism</i>
---	-----	---

This paper will also discuss the colloquialisms associated with the Philadelphia dialect.

In choosing to write this paper on dialect rather than accent, I will take a broader perspective on how Philadelphians communicate, taking into account the rich history of regional slang that accompanies the stereotypical Philadelphian accent. Each term represents a different area of scholarship, and should not be used interchangeably.

The study of sociolinguistics similarly relies on the understanding of several key terms. The term *sociolinguistics* itself comes from roots meaning “Society” (socio) and “the study of language” (linguistics). Therefore, sociolinguistics literally means “the study of language in society.” A society is a group of people who are drawn together for a certain purpose or purposes (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). There are other definitions of society, but for the purposes of this paper, we will be discussing society rather broadly. The core society this paper will explore is the society of Philadelphia, more specifically in how this group of people uses language to communicate and how that language has changed over time. Language is a “system of linguistic communication particular to a group, including spoken, written, and signed modes of communication” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 2). These two elements of sociolinguistics inform each other equally: a society must have some sort of language to convey ideas and concepts, and a language would be nothing if not for the people who use it. Simply put, the field of sociolinguistics studies the intersection of society and how it interacts with language. However, this intersection is anything but simple, and sociolinguistics helps “more clearly define and understand both the social groups and the ways they speak” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 8).

To achieve this, sociolinguists typically rely on more traditional linguistic studies. One of the most standard is the study of grammar, which is the structure of language. Grammar is a system, and linguists who study it typically subscribe to one of two approaches to it:

prescriptivism and descriptivism (Salvucci, 1995). Prescriptivism essentially states that there is a standard approach to a language, and any dialects or deviance from that standard approach is incorrect or should be fixed. This is how many students are taught in school: that there is a “proper” way to write and speak, and an “improper” way. What makes sociolinguistics different is that it concerns the descriptive approach to grammar. Descriptivism studies the everyday uses of language; it describes, analyzes, and explains how people actually speak.

In a descriptivist approach, students first learn the rules of grammar, and later learn exceptions (e.g. children say “gooses” then learn it should be “geese”). Sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropologists prefer this approach because it suggests that folk languages and dialects are not “wrong,” but rather they follow different sets of rules. This is especially helpful when understanding dialects like African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), which do have grammar rules, albeit different grammar rules from Standard English (Labov, 1973). Therefore, sociolinguists are aware of the standard prescriptive interpretations of grammar, but focus on the less literary approaches and applications of language. An easy way to comprehend this is to ask any native-English speaker to explain the proper placement of articles (a, an, the). Most speakers would be able to identify when one is needed in a sentence, but wouldn’t have a clear idea why; they might respond something like, “It just sounds right.” This is because so much of our relation to language isn’t formally taught in school: it is absorbed from years of observations and experiences. Labov (2009) wryly notes that “you already know more about your language than any other subject you will ever study. You may not know you know this, since most linguistic knowledge is hidden from conscious view.” Linguists agree that language is built on shared knowledge, but most linguists agree that how this knowledge is shared and acquired is not quite

as understood (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). In this sense, the descriptive approach looks at language as constantly evolving from the bottom-up: the people decide how they speak.

The way people speak helps sociologists group people into several overlapping categories, such as the aforementioned categories of ethnicity and class. However, when we look at language, it is important to remember that it exists at an individual and a group level. Labov (2009) argues that sociolinguistic theory finds that people are programmed to speak in ways that mirror those of the community. In other words, people learn to communicate to fit into their communication (It bears noting that both share Latin words meaning “in common” and “to share”). The relationships within and across groups helps shape how people talk, and it provides a means of assigning identities. An identity is not a fixed attribute of a person or group, but rather dynamically constructed aspects which emerge through discourse and social behavior” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 7). This paper will look at social identities, which Kroskrity (2000, cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) defines as “the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social group or category” (p. 7). In approaching identity from this perspective, it is necessary to remember that communication and identity do not exist in isolation: they are constantly interacting with other factors at play (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982). Much like how every individual has multiple identities (e.g. “mother,” “professional,” “friend,” etc.), social groups have constantly negotiated identities: who is included in certain social groups, how people identify with those groups, and how people assign those groups. For example, being “educated” in 2017 typically assumes one has attained an undergraduate degree; fifty years ago, it might have meant an individual attained a high school degree. Everyone belongs to several social groups, but each person has some influence as to the extent they embrace or publicly exhibit those identities. This begins to involve issues of power and privilege, but for the purposes

of this paper, social identity will be referred to as a means of tracing the origins of the Philadelphia dialect.

The dialect of Philadelphia is one proudly rooted in a rich tapestry of cultures; this is perhaps most clearly visible in the flags lining the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Those ninety flags are specifically chosen to represent countries with significant populations in the city, according to the Parkway Museums District website (2017). The term “culture” can be viewed in several ways. In its broadest definition, it is defined as “the system of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by a particular segment of the population” (Verderber & Verderber, 2013, p. 71). Culture can be viewed as ancestry, place, art/artifact, product, political ideology, worldview, and performance (Dainton, 2017). Culture could also be viewed in terms of Geert Hofstede’s dimensions. Through a sociolinguistic lens, much of the literature subscribes to Goodenough’s definition (1957) that culture is “whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves” (quoted in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 10). This definition narrows the scope of how “culture” will be approached in this paper, and places language squarely as a socially acquired construct.

In Philadelphia, the dialect represents the language used by the dominant culture; that is, it represents how the majority of people in the region use their language. It certainly does not mean every single person speaks that way, nor does it assume that every single person uses the language the same way. Like several of the other aforementioned concepts, it deals in generalities. Within this dominant culture are several co-cultures that simultaneously exist. This will become especially evident as we begin to explore the different demographic groups that comprise the population of Philadelphia. These groups each have their own cultural identity,

which can consist of factors like nationality, ethnicity, location/regional identity, racial identity, social class, gender identity, sexuality, religion, and ability (Dainton, 2017). These factors come together to inform the identity of the individual, who in turn comes together to inform the identity of the group. In Philadelphia, due to the unique and changing demographics, there are several of these factors that interact to form the Philadelphia dialect. Social dialectology refers to the branch of linguistic study that examines how ways of speaking are linked to social differences within a particular region; most prominently through socioeconomic class and race/ethnicity (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

From a sociolinguistic approach, this cultural identity to the city is core to how the dialect has developed over time. Taking a descriptivist approach to language and applying it to the intersecting social constructs of the city will allow for a look into how Philadelphia's changing demographics have informed the everyday language.

This begs the question: what exactly does that “everyday language” sound like?

II: Hoagiemouth, and proud of it

The Philadelphia dialect is one that can be defined by several different intricacies. It is not isolated; it certainly has its fair share of common aspects with other dialects around the world. That being said, what makes the Philadelphia dialect so rich and unique is several smaller influences coming together under the same umbrella. Moreover, because of its multiple influences, there is no cohesive set of rules governing how Philadelphians talk; it's a chaotic and unorganized system that merges together in a scrappy and organic way. In a poetic sense, the way Philadelphians communicate serves as a metaphor for our city.

The Philadelphia dialect is often overshadowed in popular culture by its neighbor, the New York City dialect. However, as Katz notes in his 2016 book, *Speaking American: How Y'all, Youse, and You Guys Talk*, although Philadelphia “is only a couple of hours away from New York, [the] speech in the two cities is sharply different...” This comparison is quite prevalent in the literature and in popular sources (perhaps further enabling Philly’s “underdog” psyche). On “Dialect Blog,” actor and dialect coach Ben Smith has authored posts about the “overlooked Philadelphia accent,” in which he acknowledges that “reports vary” on what the Philadelphia dialect sounds like. After analyzing different audio samples of native speakers and providing some videos of Philadelphians in the media, he comes up with this conclusion: “I’ve never met a Philadelphian with every feature of the Philadelphia accent” (2011).

This provides a great look into how vague the Philadelphia dialect actually is. There are several sub-dialects and accents within the larger umbrella of “the Philadelphia dialect,” and despite best attempts by academics and researchers, it is impossible to identify every single aspect of these speech patterns. However, many of the distinguishing features come from pronunciation of stressed vowels, the way vowels interact with surrounding consonants (also known as mergers and splits), and the endings of words (Labov, Rosenfelder, and Fruehwald, 2013). One unique indicator of the Philadelphia accent is that it is one of the few rhotic accents on the Atlantic coast, meaning there is rarely an inclination to drop the “r” after vowels (Metcalf, 2000). This is a glaring difference from neighboring accents like those of New York or the South. In fact, Smith notes that Baltimore is the only other eastern accent that shares this trend (2011), perhaps attesting to the geographical similarities between the two cities. The United States as a whole is perceived as largely rhotic, which puts Philadelphia more in-line with the rest of the country. However, it should be noted that many in the predominately-black

communities of West Philadelphia do not necessarily adhere to this; Anita Henderson finds that most people here speak some form of African-American Vernacular English, which distinguishes them from the more stereotypically “Philadelphia” dialect (1996).

One stereotypically Philadelphian sound is the “short e.” In most rhotic dialects, vowel shifts (when a vowel has a change in how it is pronounced) affect vowels followed by r. In the City of Brotherly Love, the “short e” makes an “uh” sound, especially when followed by an “r.” The most common example shown in popular articles refers to a study done by Labov (1994) in which he and his team asked a group of Philadelphians to read aloud from a script describing a fictitious baseball game involving “Murray” and “Merion.” The script depicts a coach having a conversation with himself as he debates whether to substitute a boy or girl player. Recordings of the 1994 “Coach Test” were then played for other Philadelphians. The script was deliberately written so it could make sense if either name was heard, and the scripts were distributed at random so the speaker and listener couldn’t distinguish between the two (Metcalf, 2000). Subjects were asked which name was heard in the recording, and then were asked follow up questions to elaborate on the dialogue as a whole. This conversation between Labov and the subject showed whether the subject perceived “near-merged vowels.” In an earlier iteration of the experiment, 14 of 15 non-Philadelphians correctly identified which name they heard. By comparison, only 14 of 21 Philadelphians correctly identified the distinction between the two names, indicating they didn’t perceive any vowel distinction (Bell, 2013)

The “merry/Murray” merger also demonstrates a way that the Philadelphia dialect differentiates itself from the rest of the northeast. This merger is typically associated with a larger rhotic trend in which speakers pronounce Mary, marry, and merry the same (Katz, 2016). This is especially true in Northeastern cities like Boston or New York. However, Philadelphia is

one of the few northeastern cities in which residents will pronounce the three completely differently or if Mary and merry sound similar but marry is distinctly different. Labov, Ash, and Boberg (2006) report that only 17% of Americans do not have a complete merger between the three (for context, 57% of Americans have a full merger between all three words, according to a 2003 dialect survey from the Harvard University Department of Linguistics).

Although the “short e” has a profound impact on defining the Philadelphia accent, its cultural impact pales in comparison to that of its longer cousin, the “long e.” This is the sound behind the rallying cry, “Go Iggles!” The “long e” and “long a” sound are shortened before a “g.” Other words that are affected by this sound are “bagel” and “league,” resulting in words that sound like “begel” and “lig.” Similarly, “vague” and “plague” would rhyme with “peg,” resulting in “veg” and “pleg,” respectively (Metcalf, 2000). Wilton further notes that words like “colleague” and “fatigue” are pronounced as “collig” and “fatig” (Wilton, 2002).

So far, Philadelphia has made itself a clear outlier in the northeast with regards to how its citizens speak. It does share some similarities, however; most prominently through its pronunciation of the “short a.” The most popular example of this in the literature and in popular sources is the merger between “Ian” and “Ann.” A “short a” before an “n” has an “ih-uh” sound, so the two aforementioned names would be pronounced the same: “ee-ann.” Similarly, when a “short a” is followed by an “m,” “th,” “s” and “f,” the same would occur (Wilton, 2002). In this case, Philadelphians mimic the accent of other northern inland-cities that share this pronunciation (Metcalf, 2000). In 2016 interviews with Philadelphians at The Melrose Diner in south Philadelphia (a stone’s throw away from the Snyder Subway Station on the Broad Street Line), reporter Mo Rocca showcased these pronunciations with locals (CBS, 2016). Meredith Tamminga, an assistant professor of Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania and the

director of the Language Variation and Cognition Lab, commented in the interview that, “There is a difference between the ‘AH’ and the ‘aaa’ sounds in Philly where the rest of the country might just have ‘ah’ like in “cat,” so in Philly you get ‘mad, bad, and glad.” (CBS, 2016). To clarify, “mad” would be pronounced like “me-yad,” and so on (Loviglio, 2013). The phenomenon described by Tamminga is a tense-lax split, which, in layman’s terms, means that the vowel sound is stretched out (Sunny, 2017). Smith goes on to explain words that have this, like bad, path, pan, and ask, the vowels are pronounced more tensely, meaning that “bad” might sound a bit like “bed” (2011). Another common pronunciation is the shift to a “short a” sound that would result in radiator sounding similar to gladiator, but with an elongated “aaa” sound (Loviglio, 2013). In a similar vein, the “a” sound in “car” would be pronounced more like “caur” or “core” (PhillyTalk, 2006). This tense-lax shift is evidence of generational shifts in pronunciation of the “short a” sound, and will be expounded upon later.

Another example of a vowel being drawn out is seen in the “long o” and “short e” combo. In this combo, the “long o” is preceded by the “short e,” turning “Yo Joe, throw the ball!” into “Yeowuh Jeowuh, threowuh the ball!”(Metcalf, 2000). Like other northern cities, “the ‘long i’ is the full two-part ‘ah-ee’ diphthong, not the ‘ah’ diphthong of the South. I, time, ride, nice all have the ‘ah-ee’ (Metcalf, 2000). This is especially prominent in the way Philadelphians pronounce the word “like” as luyk (Salvucci, 1996). There is also great discussion in the sociolinguistic community over how Philadelphians pronounce the “au” sound (Owens, 2016). Words like caught and taught have a raised pronunciation, which means that the tongue is placed higher in the mouth than it should be, resulting in a distorted or new sound (Paynter, 2017). This is similar to other northeastern accent, especially the New York City Accent (Smith, 2011). Labov told a periodical in 1997 that this particular sound was impossible to describe without

getting technical and involving the International Phonetic Alphabet (Owens, 2016). The writer of that interview, Jim Quinn, went on to say, “I can’t describe it, [but] you can hear it everywhere. And you know how to say it: ‘Come AUWN!’ or ‘Oh no, I cauweaught a cold’” (quoted in Owens, 2016). Interestingly enough, Salvucci (1996) notes that Philadelphians have retained the contrast between the “au” and the “short o” sound, as seen in caught (pronounced “caut”) and cot. Daniel Nester’s 2014 New York Times article puts it succinctly when it comes to diphthongs: “In Philly-South Jersey patois...no vowel escapes diphthongery, no hard consonant is safe from a mid-palate dent.”

Much like the seemingly indescribable “au” sound, the “ey” sound in the middle of words is unique to Philly (Smith, 2011). This sound is not pronounced uniformly in different words, meaning that day and face are not pronounced alike: “When this diphthong occurs in closed syllables (i.e. before a consonant, as in ‘face’), the sound becomes an ‘eh.’ When the sound occurs before an open consonant (as in ‘day’), it is slightly closer to the sound in die” (Smith, 2011). Another diphthong that behaves similarly is the fronted “oi” diphthong, which explains why words like boy and shore are often drawn-out into booy and shoor, respectively. The word shore is also unique in that it sounds like sure, further emphasizing how vowel sounds in Philadelphia are often elongated (Metcalf, 2000; Loviglio, 2013). Some have even gone so far as to characterize this as “whiny” or “twangy,” but these vowel pronunciations have played an integral part in shaping the accent of the region (Salvucci, 1996; Loviglio, 2013).

While all of the discussed elements of the Philadelphia accent thus far have regarded vowel changes, there are several other markers of the accent that result from consonants. Perhaps one of the more noticeable ones is the initial pronunciation of the “s” sound in words. Rather, it is pronounced like a “sh” sound at the start of a syllable. The common example provided in

popular sources is how “shitty shtreets is not a comment on the sanitation department,” but rather a Philadelphian pronunciation of “city streets” (Wilton, 2002).

Another common consonant sound involves a glottal stop, which is essentially when the “t” sound is not pronounced. Vocal cords are briefly closed and then reopened, creating an alternative sound (Paynter, 2017). This is similar to New York City Speech, except in Philadelphia this glottal stop frequently occurs in the middle of words and especially before “m,” “n,” and “l” sounds. The most notable representation of this would be the pronunciation of the “Walt Whitman” Bridge as the “Wall Women” Bridge (Wilton, 2002).

From a grammatical standpoint, Philadelphia is also unique. There is of course, the much-written about “jawn,” which is potentially on the road to being enshrined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Any true Philadelphian knows that jawn is simply “that jawn;” that is, it can be anything, or everything. Dan Nosowitz writes that “jawn” “is an all-purpose noun, a stand-in for inanimate objects, abstract concepts, events, places, individual people, and groups of people” (2016). Philly.com went a step further, calling it “the WaWa of words,” in the most Philadelphian sentence to have ever been written. Jawn has become integral to the identity of the Philadelphia dialect, and Nosowitz accurately concludes that “Jawn is a whole world, unto itself” (2016).

Despite this, the average person would be shocked to discover that “jawn” is not a native Philadelphian word. Rather, linguists point out that it is a word that comes from “joint,” frequently used in New York to refer to a location (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Joint was used throughout the country as a slang word, and developed multiple meanings: most prominently as slang for marijuana (Nosowitz, 2016). It most prominently influenced Philadelphia youth with the 1981 single “That’s The Joint” by Funky Four Plus One, an early hip-hop group from the

Bronx (Nosowitz, 2016). Linguist Ben Zimmer believes that “jawn” became a uniquely Philadelphian phenomenon when the word “joint” had a more positive reputation in the song (Nosowitz, 2016). Nosowitz goes on to write, “Calling something “the joint” means it’s something you like, something that you connect with, and a slight tweak of that to “my joint” means that it’s something that you cheerfully embrace as yours” (2016). When it arrived in Philadelphia, it underwent semantic bleaching, meaning it began to lose its intensity (like how “Have a good day!” or “literally” are widely considered to be hollow sayings). This phenomenon relates to how language is flexible and fluid (Merriam-Webster, 2017). The earliest known recording of “jawn” is in Labov’s Philadelphia Neighborhood Corpus, a project started in the 1970s to record how Philadelphians sounded across the city. In 1981, a young African American male was recorded using the term: “He used it to mean a bag, like a bag of chips; a physical place; a variety of different women, like Puerto Rican joints versus Irish joints; and his own genitalia,” according to Taylor Jones, a graduate student and doctoral candidate of Labov’s who worked with the linguist on tracking the Philadelphia dialect (Nosowitz, 2016). Around this time, “jawn” began its rise to prominence as the catch-all word it is today.

As iconic as “jawn” is, there is considerably less attention devoted to another grammatical quirk: the case of “done.” YouTuber Sean Monahan, who created a series of videos capturing the Philadelphia dialect after returning from college in Ohio, describes this phenomenon in an article on Philly.com:

When you say ‘I’m done’ something, it means the task is done. The rest of the country would say, ‘I’m done with my water.’ But if I say, ‘I’m done my water’ in Philadelphia that would mean I’ve had some, and I don’t need to finish the rest. If I say, ‘I’m done

with my water,’ that means I’ve drunk all of it. They mean two different things (Vadala, 2014).

From an outsider’s perspective, I found this construction to be particularly jarring upon my move to Philadelphia. Surprisingly, there is literally no literature on this topic. An extensive search led to an obscure Reddit Board on Philadelphia, on which University of Edinburgh linguist and Philly native Josef Fuerhwald weighed in. In a 2013 presentation at the 37th Penn Linguistics Colloquium, Fuerhwald and Neil Myler presented a paper that argues that this construction “involves a resultative adjectival passive participle” (Fuerhwald & Myler, 2013). In layman’s terms, this means that “done” in and of itself represents an adjective that has undergone a change in state because an event has been completed, written in the passive construction (Dainton, 2017). As Fuerhwald and Myler lament, application of this grammatical rule in relation to the word “done” is “under described” despite it being a “construction common to Canadian and Philadelphian English” (2013).

In the Media

The Philadelphia accent is similarly under portrayed in the media; oftentimes Philadelphians in the media are represented with generic Middle American accents or with a bastardized New York accent, both of which don’t do the true thing justice. Even the quintessential Philadelphia movie *Rocky* does not feature a decent Philly accent. In a CBS report, Penn linguistics professor Meredith Tamminga responded to an inquiry about whether or not Sylvester Stallone had a Philly accent with, “Not to my knowledge. He’s from New York, I guess. I think he was sort of trying to make it sounds different because he was aware that Philly was different from New York, but wasn’t quite sure how” (2016). On this note, *The Washington Post* writes that,

Philadelphia characters often sound like New Yorkers—think Rocky Balboa—perhaps because Philly’s nasal twang is tougher for nonnatives to mimic. In “Silver Linings Playbook,” Robert De Niro hung out with the uncle of a co-star (and suburban Philadelphia native) Bradley Cooper to get the dialect down though the wife of De Niro’s character, played by Australian actress Jacki Weaver, comes closest to nailing it (Loviglio, 2013).

Local media outlets took a different approach to the portrayal of the accent in the film. In true Philadelphian fashion, hometown pride over the city’s involvement in the movie deteriorated into defensive outrage when the accent was misrepresented: a South Jersey native wrote in *The New York Times* that, “We can love a movie despite its getting our voices wrong. Take my sister, Meri (pronounced Murri). She admits that, although she loved ‘Silver Linings Playbook,’ she had an issue with how Tiffany/[Jennifer] Lawrence pronounced the King of Prussia Mall. ‘Everyone knows it’s pronounced ‘Kinga-prusha’” (Nester, 2014). *The Inquirer* was even harsher: “Remember ‘Silver Linings Playbook,’ the Philly-centric love story that scored Oscars for leads Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper? Neither of those pretty things had a Philly accent - not a single flattened A or mutilated O between them” (Polaneczky, 2015). In her *Inquirer* opinion piece, Polaneczky continued to lambast the under-representation of the accent:

And I was sew, sew may-id when that roomful of Philly shipyard workers confronted their congressman in the first season of "House of Cards" when they learned they'd be losing their jobs. Most sounded like New Yawkers, because that's the way lazy directors telegraph that a character is scrappy, earnest and salt-of-the-earth. But one woman's accent was so weird, she sounded like a Vermonter via Long Island, with a stop in Biloxi. It was pathetic, but at least the actors tried. Not so for the cast of "Invincible," the Vince

Papale biopic whose stars never once mispronounced "Eagles" - in a movie about the Iggles! (2015).

Polaneczky argues that because the accent has been underrepresented for so long, that it is intentionally omitted in favor of other accents that general audiences would recognize. Because the accent is so rarely seen, it is never given its time to shine. Others, like Tamminga, argue that it is rarely depicted because, "You almost have to grow up with the Philly accent to get it right" (Polaneczky, 2015).

Several popular articles point to political commentator Chris Matthews as the most prominent media personality with a Philadelphian accent. Matthews himself asserted in a 2008 Philadelphia Magazine article that, "I don't think I ever realized I had a Philadelphia accent until I was away for a while in college and I began to understand that we really did talk differently than most people" (PhillyMag, 2008). Other notable figures in the public sphere who speak in a Philadelphia accent include commentator Jim Cramer, "Jackass" star Bam Margera, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Netanyahu grew up in suburban Cheltenham) (Loviglio, 2013). Notably, Upper Darby native Tina Fey has had some characters on Saturday Night Live with strong Philadelphia accents. Tamminga added in the CBS interview that she approved of Fey's accent, especially in a sketch with Jimmy Fallon airing in October 2016 portraying two suburban Philadelphian moms discussing the presidential election. In a BillyPenn review, culture editor Danya Henninger wrote that "Fey's [accent] slayed, Fallon needs way more practice." (Henninger, 2016).

However, in another sketch starring Fey, Maya Rudolph's "Bronx Beat with Betty and Jodi" character Jodi marveled at Fey's character's accent: "Oh. My. God. Karen [Fey's character] - I forgot what a beautiful accent you have." Maya Rudolph and Amy Poehler, in

character as two moms from the Bronx, continued to heap on the praise: “You sound so fancy. So classy. So Beautiful. You talk like a beautiful fairy” (SNL, 2015). They proceeded to make Karen say words like “water,” which neither Poehler nor Rudolph’s characters could understand: “Do I want what? Some War-der?” Still, while the audience roared over this seemingly intercultural exchange, it was clear that despite being tragically underrepresented in the media, the Philadelphia accent is very much a hidden gem of American regional dialects.

III: A City of Neighborhoods: Historical Trends of Ethnicity

Takenka and Osirim write, “Philadelphia has remained an understudied site of immigration to the United States, yet, immigration has, in fact, played a significant role in shaping the life of our city” (2010). They could not be truer: we are a city of immigrants. Philadelphia has a storied history as one of the oldest cities in the United States. As Philadelphia transplant Lori Litchman writes, “Philadelphia is a product of its past” (Litchman, 2015, p. 157). This is especially true when it comes to the formation of the city’s dialect. Most literature will point to the influences early demographic communities had on the way people speak, but this fails to include the profound impact socioeconomic factors have played in the history of Philadelphia; the city has a well-documented struggle with poverty and divide between educational access. With these factors in consideration, the origins of the Philadelphia dialect become much more complex.

To begin, I examined Census records for the past few decades, and delved into the history of the city. After being founded by William Penn as his “green countrie towne,” Philadelphia was mostly home to Protestant Anglo-Saxon English immigrants, many of whom were Quakers (Conn, 2006). There was a strong German presence from nearby Amish and Mennonite

communities further west, as well as noted ties to the Dutch in New Amsterdam (now New York City). The city grew in size at an aggressive rate, and the first immigrant boom came in the 1820s, when the Irish began to settle in the area as a result of the Potato Famine. Soon, other Catholics began to call Philadelphia home, including those from Germany (Bergquist, 2013). This was also around the time that the first Chinese immigrants to the city arrived and established Chinatown. Much like the rest of the country, Philadelphia was a hotbed of nativist clashes between these new transplants and established families. This contributed to a large riot in 1844 and the rise of the Know-Nothing Party. Conditions for immigrants were poor, and to make matters worse, there was significant competition for unskilled labor from the influx of freed slaves coming from the south (Bergquist, 2013). Ironically, the “City of Brotherly Love” was proving to be anything but.

From a historical perspective, the 1854 Act of Consolidation drastically altered records of Philadelphia demographics and forever changed the landscape of the city. The Act expanded the boundaries of the city to include all of Philadelphia County, so the two would become co-terminal. Overnight, the city went from two miles square to over one hundred thirty, and with the stroke of a pen, the population of the city increased five-fold (Heath, 2013). The reasoning behind consolidation was to improve public safety and increase efficiency of public services. After several years of opposition, the Act was finally implemented, and along with it came radical changes for the city. From a demographic perspective, the city now formally encompassed several smaller communities with varying ethnic breakups. A quick drive around the perimeters of the county will show this diverse breakup in the names of neighborhoods and towns: Germantown, Bala Cynwyd, Bryn Mawr, etc. More notably, the initial hiring process of police officers to maintain order was, true to its time, very nativist and did not encourage

minorities to apply (Bergquist 2013). Although the Act of Consolidation paved the way for the modern Philadelphia we all know today, one of its strongest criticisms was that its resources have been spread thin as a result of providing city and county-level services to citizens. Some have argued that this has helped increase the socioeconomic divide in the city (Cutler & Gillette, 1980). Others have argued that it placed a financial burden on the city by acting as a “playground” for those living in the surrounding suburbs who don’t directly pay taxes towards city infrastructure and cultural opportunities but still benefit from them (Conn, 2009). This rift has continued to this day, with a November 2017 *Inquirer* editorial arguing that a borough system similar to that of New York City might alleviate these issues by allowing for more neighborhood control over local municipal functions (O’Callaghan, 2017). Ironically enough, the first such suburbanite was William Penn, whose Bucks County estate, Pennsbury Manor, was deliberately outside of the city proper (Conn, 2009).

By the turn of the 20th century, Philadelphia underwent another massive influx of immigrants, much like other cities in the northeastern United States. Even more Catholics arrived to the “Workshop of the World,” mainly from countries like Poland, Italy, and Ireland (Klaczynska, 2014). This continued until the United States slowed immigration in 1924. The city’s Jewish population grew, as did its Russian population, and the Great Migration from the South led to an increase in the city’s already prominent African American community. At this point, several ethnic communities had begun to pop up throughout the city, most prominently the Italian enclave in South Philly. In the last few decades, several similar communities have developed, due to the increasing size of the Latino/Hispanic population. In the 1960s, Mount Airy received national recognition as a successful, intentionally-integrated neighborhood. In the past twenty or thirty years, the city has at once grown more diverse; it is currently a minority-

majority city, and within a few years, it is expected that the white population will no longer be the largest demographic section. (Pew, 2011). To this note, Philadelphia “has [recently] lagged behind other major cities in attracting immigrants...unlike other major cities in the country, [it] largely remains black and white” (Takenaka & Osirim, 2010 p. 2). While it is recognized as one of the most diverse cities in the country, Philadelphia is also one of the most segregated—in fact, only Chicago, Boston, and Milwaukee are less integrated, according to a 2015 report by pollster Nate Silver (Otterbein, 2015).

African Americans in Philadelphia

While the city has historically enjoyed a large African-American community for centuries, segregation has kept this population from influencing the dialect as profoundly (Fischetti, 2017). The first African residents of the city arrived in the 1630s with their Swedish, Dutch, and Finnish masters. There were relatively low numbers of slaves in the early 1700s, largely because most manual labor could be performed by lower-class European workers. Right before the advent of the American Revolution, the slave trade spiked and when the war started, slaves accounted for roughly one-twelfth of the city’s population: “In the half century leading up to the Civil War, Philadelphia attracted the largest black population outside the slave states even though the city’s acceptance of African Americans was mixed at best” (Wolfinger, 2013). While Philadelphia had a large black population, it was still mostly segregated. In largely black communities, however, “all-black churches, schools, and voluntary societies were numerous” (Hershberg, in Davis & Haller, 1973). According to Hershberg,

residential segregation is measured in two dimensions: (1) the *distribution* of the household population- that is, the number of grid squares in which Negro households

were located; and (2) the *density* of the population that is the number of households per grid. (1998)

The grids Hershberg mentions refer to the area roughly one and one quarter blocks square that city developers used to plan out geo-political entities like districts and wards. Residential segregation rose starting in the 1820s and increased steadily until 1860 when it plateaued; it again rose in the time period immediately following the Civil War. In neighborhoods like Kensington, Northern Liberties, and Spring Garden – all areas far from the hustle and bustle of Center City—communities of ex-slaves clustered with disproportionate demographics (Hershberg, in Davis & Haller, 1998). Even the “African American bourgeois” were subject to “overt racial discrimination” that, ironically, led to housing disruptions for white people who were trying to keep their communities segregated. Because black renters were required to pay more for housing than their white counterparts, it became more profitable for landlords to rent to black families (Hepp, 2003). This process continued throughout the city, a trend that eventually came to be known as “White Flight.” The black population continued to grow well into the 20th century, to the point that the community was used in W.E.B. Du Bois seminal 1899 study *The Philadelphia Negro*. The largest wave of African Americans into the city came as part of the Great Migration, which saw the black population double from 1900 to 1920 (Wolfinger, 2013). This led to racial tension that erupted in violence in several instances. The black community began to establish a larger presence in North and West Philadelphia and continued to grow until it was slowed considerably by the Great Depression. Philadelphia, once a giant of manufacturing power and industry, was hit especially hard, and the unemployment rate of the African American community rose to over 50% (Wolfinger, 2013).

It is in this segregated context with which one must examine the influence, or lack thereof, of African Americans on the Philadelphia dialect. Labov studied African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) early in the 1970s, but a distinct Philadelphia dialect had emerged at that point without incorporating elements of AAVE: “black Philadelphians and white Philadelphians don’t mingle nearly as much as, say, black New Yorkers and white New Yorkers, so a word created or altered in the black community can develop without outside influence” (Jones, quoted in Nosowitz, 2015). One key hallmark of AAVE, according to Labov, is its inherent grammar rules and structure, which causes differentiation in Philadelphia AAVE and the descriptivist understanding of the Philadelphia accent; despite this, Philadelphia AAVE has nuances separating it from the AAVE of other cities (Labov, 2010; Fischetti, 2017). For example, Jones notes that words like “bag” have completely different pronunciations for white and black Philadelphians. A white Philadelphian will likely pronounce it as “beyag” while a black Philadelphian will likely pronounce it as “beg” (Nosowitz, 2015). According to Jones, these two sounds represent prominent sound changes across the greater region; what makes it interesting is the white and black Philadelphians chose to adopt two different patterns. This only reinforces the effect that segregation has had on the city and how this has shaped its dialect, though this is not unique to Philadelphia: nearly every city in the country has experienced a similar phenomenon involving evolving white dialects and relatively unchanging black dialects (Labov, 2005). As the Philadelphia dialect came to develop in white neighborhoods, the sounds of black Philadelphians were not as incorporated (Labov, 2010). Despite this, Hershberg et. al (1981) shows that the rise of the Black community’s index of dominance, “which is the proportion of a person’s census tract that consists of the same group,” has grown steadily over the last century, while white indices have similarly declined. This means that the influence of the

Black community has risen as the influence of white populations like the Irish, Italians, Poles, and Germans have declined. As of the 2010 census, the city was 44.1% African American and 44.8% Non-Hispanic white; according to the 1960 census, the city was 26.4% African American and 73.3% Non-Hispanic white (US Census; Gibson & Jung, 2005, p. 94). Despite this population shift, there has been little impact on the greater Philadelphia dialect.

Two notable exceptions to this are the aforementioned “jawn” and the interjection/greeting “Yo!” While “jawn” has been quickly embraced by the city as a whole, Jones argues that “White Philadelphians are quick to note that they too use the word jawn, and that it’s a Philly thing and not just a black Philly thing” (Nosowitz, 2015). Though black and white communities have both come to use the term in the past thirty years, there are still differences in uses: Jones further opines that “white Philadelphians seem to use it in a more limited way, not really exploring [jawn’s] full breadth and range” (Nosowitz, 2015). Jawn continues to be cited as the quintessential Philadelphia word despite growing national recognition, but its varied usage—which is what makes it so distinctive—still reflects the segregated nature of the city. Another notable AAVE contribution to the Philadelphia dialect is “Yo!” which has its roots in AAVE, despite being popularized by Italian Americans (including Rocky Balboa’s iconic “Yo Adrian!”) (Kelley, 2015). It should be noted that these both relatively recent inclusions to the Philadelphia dialect, again emphasizing the segregation.

Italian-Americans

The Italian-American Population in Philadelphia has certainly been an influential one: as noted earlier, the entire neighborhood of South Philadelphia has come to be synonymous with the culture. Despite their large presence today, Italians in Philadelphia had humble origins. They have been present in the city since colonial times as a small but versatile demographic, working

as musicians, artists, impresarios, merchants, importers, tavern keepers, and farmers (Toll & Gillam, 1995). Italian Immigration rose slowly throughout the 19th century and was centered on the southeastern portion of the city. There was an uptick following the unification of Italy in 1861, when some immigrants came to America with the hope of a better future. This newer group of immigrants was largely composed of young single males hoping to work in the quickly-industrializing city; they soon found work laying railroads. By this point, the Italian community had come to move beyond its small enclave downtown: “It was not a single “Little Italy,” but a collection of *paesani* communities” that popped up in Manayunk, Roxborough, West Philadelphia, North Philadelphia, Frankfort, Overbrook, Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy, Nicetown, Mayfair, and Germantown (Troll & Gillam, 1995; Luconi, 2017). These communities built churches and relished in their small, exclusive connections. The 1920s proved to be a period of transition to American society (Varbero in Davis & Haller, 1998). Unlike African Americans, who wanted to live alongside their fellow white citizens, there was a deep level of distrust towards outsiders among Italian-Americans due to the incredibly loyal *paesani* culture. As such, over 400 Italian-American cultural societies sprung up during this time. Parishes were broken down by regions, which contributed to the fierce locality of the earliest immigrants. However, these devoted ties weakened significantly when second-generation children with looser connection to their homeland began to compete for jobs: they were just considered “Italians” despite their previous self-identity of Genoese or Napolitano or Venetian. The isolating effect of “otherness” in the United States drew those from different regions together. Over the 20th century, Italian Americans continued to come into Philadelphia, and the city had the second-largest Italian-American population in the country by 1980 (Troll & Gillam, 1995). While the population is slowly on the decline, it still wields significant power. For example, several political scientists

have attributed the mayoral victories of Italian-American Frank Rizzo to his heritage. Luconi hypothesized that he was propelled to office, in part due to a “whitelash” from encroaching African-American populations on South Philadelphia in the 1970s and 1980s (2017). Luconi writes that this sort of mentality was perhaps rooted in the *paesani* mentality of loyalty and community.

Philadelphia’s Italian community has contributed to the dialect in many ways, most notably through the introduction of the term “skeeve/skeevy” and the popularization of the word “yo.” As discussed previously, “yo” has African American origins, but some argue that it might have also arisen from the Italian community:

In the 1930's a large proportion of the residents of South Philadelphia were Italian immigrants, mostly from the Campania region of southern Italy, the principal city of which is Naples. In the Neapolitan dialect "guaglione" (pronounced guahl-YO-nay) signified a young man. The chiefly unlettered immigrants shortened that to guahl-YO, which they pronounced whal-YO. That was inevitably further shortened to yo. The common greeting among young Italian-American males was "Hey, whal-YO!", and then simply, "Yo!" And so it remains today (Paolino, 1993).

Slang words like “yo” often have different origin stories, so conflicting accounts are fairly common, especially as most slang words come about as a slow transition into the mainstream (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

Italian influence on Philadelphia is also evident in the introduction of the word “skeeve,” as in “*That skeeves me out!*” Skeeve has also come to be used as an adjective: “skeevy.” It “refers to someone or something that is physically or morally repulsive” according to Merriam-Webster.

Its origins lie in South Philadelphia, with a 1976 *Philadelphia Magazine* article noting, “The word ‘skeeve’ used by South Philadelphians to indicate something disgusting is from Italian ‘schifare’, to loathe” (Merriam-Webster). While there is nothing particularly unusual about languages co-opting words from other languages, what makes “skeeve” so unique is the way it is used in the sentence. In Italian, the phrase “Fa schifo” roughly translates to “That’s disgusting!” Like some other Romance languages, it shows the object being acted upon by the subject: “When used as a noun, it is generally in conjunction with the verb, ‘fare,’ or to make, or to do. In other words, something ‘makes schifo,’ ‘fa schifo.’” (Shwartz, 2012). A point of comparison would be the Spanish verb to be hungry: “tener hambre.” Literally, it means “to have hunger,” as “hambre” is a noun and “tener” is the verb. This relates to the phrase “It skeeves me out” in that the object is acting upon the subject. This small grammar quirk from Italian lives on in the popular slang word that is now used throughout the larger Philadelphia region (Fischetti, 2017).

Irish-Americans

Ireland’s ties to Philadelphia go back to William Penn himself: Penn was half-Irish and his father helped conquer Ireland (Watson, 2017). Prior to Revolution, over 200,000 Irish and Scots-Irish lived in the American colonies, with several of them settling in Philadelphia or the surrounding region. The Irish saw Philadelphia, and the greater Pennsylvania colony, as a respite from more critical British rule. Irish Catholics saw Penn’s “Holy Experiment” as a place to settle with another marginalized group, the Quakers. Penn intended his colony to be one of tolerance, and after decades of fighting against Protestant lords, the Irish Catholics were looking for a change of scenery. Some other “undesirable” Irish were indentured servants (Clark, 1973).

Though Penn himself was rather tolerant, others in the region were not: his own administrator for the colony, James Logan, called Irishmen and women “bold and indigent

strangers” (Clark, 1973). Despite this outward disapproval, the Irish settled in Philadelphia with a fervent zeal for their adopted home, especially in the late 18th century: “as time-tested foes of England, their traditional orientation against the Crown and colonization endowed them with the primary patriotic potential as citizens of the new republic” (Clark, 1973, p. 10). Most of these Irish Catholics settled in “the river wards” alongside the Delaware River (Northern Liberties, Kensington, Port Richmond, Bridesburg, Frankford, Wissinoming, Tacony, and Torresdale). Others settled along the Schuylkill (Germantown, East Falls, Manayunk, Kingsessing, Elmwood, and Eastwick) (Watson, 2013). It was in these communities that they began to find unskilled employment opportunities. In their communities, organizations like the Society of the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick helped foster a sense of community and maintain Irish heritage (Toll & Gillam, 1995).

The next wave of Irish immigrants to Philadelphia came after the Revolution, and an even larger wave came in the buildup to the Great Potato Famine; Irish immigration to the United States was in its peak from the 1840s to the 1860s (Farley & Kilbride in Takenaka & Osirim, 2010). Many Irish came over poor and unskilled, and this resulted in great animosity:

The antipathy toward them rested not only on their reputation for violence and their religious difference from the bulk of the city’s natives, but also upon their competition for jobs at the lowest occupational levels, their menial status, their foreign aspect and clannishness, and their notorious intemperance (Clark, 1973)

Clashes between the Irish and nativists occurred throughout the city, but were most prominent in Irish neighborhoods like Kensington (which saw riots in 1828, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843 and 1844) (Watson, 2013). The Irish were not entirely cast aside: they found friends in the Quakers, who helped run the Philadelphia Irish Famine Relief Committee at the height of the influx of

displaced Irish (Watson, 2013). Like the Italians, many Irish found work in industry and as laborers for canal and railroad companies. Slowly, as nativist sentiments began to wane, the Irish began to serve in fewer unskilled positions, included law enforcement and fire prevention. In fact, between 1832 and 1862, the number of occupations held by Irishmen nearly doubled, demonstrating an unprecedented social mobility unfamiliar to the Irish (Watson, 2013). After a generation, Irish finally began to ascend into prominent business and political roles as they assimilated into American culture. Throughout the 20th century, the Irish continued to play a large role in the public life of the city.

One lasting effect the Irish have had on the Philadelphia dialect is the inclusion of the word “youse” (alternatively spelled ‘yous’). Metcalf (2000) notes how Philadelphia is in the territory that uses the phrase “you guys” to commonly address a group of people, but “youse” is another common element of the Philadelphia dialect that has the same sort of general usage. It is not unique to Philadelphia, but rather unique to the larger Northeastern region, which saw a large influx of Irish immigrants. The lexis behind “youse” is fairly straightforward: Old English had an alternative second person plural (Thou/you/ye), which gained popularity in Ireland due to the English colonization of the island. In modern English, “you” is used as both a singular and a plural (i.e. “You are a nice person” and “You are all nice people”) (Stack Exchange, 2016). To differentiate, some Irish attempted to pluralize “you” by creating the plural form of “you ones.” It had become an accepted part of Hiberno-English (Fischetti, 2017). This lost favor overall for the sake of linguistic purity, but was still used by some Irish. When they immigrated to the United States, some continued to use this plural alternative, and it became part of the lexicon of the Irish diaspora (Fischetti, 2017). “You ones” slowly became “yous” in the United States after several generations (Fischetti, 2017). Over time, as Irish children became less attached to their

native tongue, this evolved into more localized variants: Pittsburgh's "yins," Scranton's "yas," and, of course, Philadelphia's "youse" (Fischetti, 2017). By now, the saying has become an integral part of Philadelphia: much like the Irish population that created it.

Another potential Irish contribution is the usage of the word "anymore." In much of the English language, "anymore" is used in the negative when describing an action: "I don't drink anymore." In Northern Ireland, however, "anymore" is used in the positive as well to talk about something that was not true in the past but is currently true: "Cars are so expensive anymore" (Marzec, 2004). This word became a part of the Philadelphia dialect as the Irish became more prominent players in the city, but appears to be falling out of style with younger generations.

German-Americans

The German influence in Philadelphia is palpable: a quick drive down Germantown Avenue for some scrapple after the Mummer's Day Parade will quickly attest to that. William Penn wanted his colony to be one of tolerance, and the first example of this was the 1683 settlement of Germantown. Founded by Penn's friend Francis Daniel Pastorius, this so-called "Germanopolis" quickly exploded due to the "rich black earth...pleasant springs...a meadow...and ample lumber" (Oberholtzer, 1912). There was a steady stream of immigration into this bustling neighborhood, where German Quakers lived rather peacefully with other ethnic and religious minorities from Europe. In many ways, Germantown was a microcosm for what America strived to be: a place of diverse intermingling and acceptance; in fact, in 1688 – a century before independence and nearly one hundred fifty years before the Civil War-- four white Germantown settlers wrote a document condemning slavery in what is widely regarded as the first of its kind in North America; a marker at Wister Street and Germantown Avenue commemorates this (Young, 2009). Sadly, not all Philadelphians were as tolerant. Benjamin

Franklin, the quintessential Philadelphian beloved by millions over hundreds of years, wrote of Germans:

[W]hy should the Palatine Boors be suffered to swarm into our Settlements, and by herding together establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of *Aliens*, who will surely be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our complexion (quoted by Pfleger, in Takenaka & Osirim, 2010)

Writing in his “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, etc.,” Franklin showed the xenophobia of several Philadelphians despite rhetoric suggesting the city was a utopia of tolerance.

German immigration continued throughout the 18th century, slowed shortly around the turn of the 19th century, and exploded in the 1830s and 1840s (Toll & Gillam, 1995). By 1850, the German population in the city was substantial: over 22,000 and growing. Germans continued to pour into the city through much of the 19th century, mostly due to the turmoil in Europe surrounding the unification of Germany. Many Germans were able to come the United States due to the vast influence of the German Society of Pennsylvania, which started in 1764. The intent of the organization was to support the German community, unlike other ethnic organizations which emphasized the social aspect of membership. It particularly helped the poor immigrants who were unable to support their families, or who were forced to work as indentured servants.

(Pfleger in Takenaka & Osirim, 2010). The Society helped sponsor immigrants and provided social services to the German-American population. Its influence was tremendous during the 18th

and 19th centuries, but suffered greatly during the early 20th century thanks to the anti-German backlash stemming from the World Wars.

At this point, the Germans had spread out across the city, rather than remain in enclaves: “We probably don’t think of any particular neighborhood in Philadelphia as German—not even Germantown. That may be because as an immigrant group—quite unlike Italian Americans of the same period—Germans lived in many neighborhoods and were relatively integrated” (Esposito, 2013). Due to this, the German influence on the dialect of Philadelphia is a bit more subtle. Perhaps the most iconic is the usage of the word “with.” In the Philadelphia dialect, oftentimes speakers will use “with” without anything following: “Do you want to come with?” Marzec (2004) writes that this construction is similar in German, and hypothesizes that this was introduced to the region through German immigrants. Of course, anyone who has ever been to Philadelphia knows the classic Pat’s King of Steaks rallying cry: “Wiz Wit?” While Pat himself was Italian, the question might have its roots in the German immigrants who came hundreds of years prior.

On Immigration

In this section, I focus on the main ethnic groups that have shaped the Philadelphia dialect: namely, the Irish, Italians, and Germans. Throughout the literature, these groups, especially the working class Irish and Italians, are cited as the most influential immigrant groups with regard to the Philadelphia dialect. While these were the main influences on the dialect, this should not discount the several other groups that came to call Philadelphia home, as referenced in the earlier section “City of Neighborhoods” Section. Overall, the Census shows that Philadelphia saw rapid growth and development before it began to slow following World War II. Right now, the city’s population is similar to what it was in 1910, though immigration is not the

largest cause of population growth like it used to be in past centuries. As noted above, working class Irish and Italians are widely cited as the most influence on the formation of the Philadelphia dialect, and the next section will elaborate on the economic hierarchies of “The Divided Metropolis.”

IV: The Divided Metropolis

Just as Philadelphia is a city of ethnic enclaves, it is also a city of socioeconomic enclaves. As Susan Neuman and Donna Celano document in their (2012) book *Giving Our Children a Fighting Chance: Poverty, Literacy, and the Development of Information Capital*, a short bus ride in Philadelphia— “four or five songs on your iPod”—proves to be a world of difference in socioeconomic privilege:

“Those with money are more likely to live in homogeneously privileged neighborhoods...interacting almost exclusively with other affluent people. Those without money are increasingly confined to homogeneously poor neighborhoods... yielding a density of material deprivation” (3).

Sadly, there is nothing “new” about socioeconomic divide in Philadelphia. An 1830 account by Thomas Hamilton, a Scot traveling through the United States, noted that, “There is no American City in which the system of *exclusion* is so rigidly observed as in Philadelphia.” (Kilbride, 2006, p 3). This socioeconomic polarization led Cutler and Gillette to dub Philadelphia the “Divided Metropolis” (1980).

Perhaps one of the greatest indicators of disparity is access to education. Horace Mann, the Father of American Education, famously said that “education...is the great equalizer,” and

Philadelphia, like several other large American cities, has not shied away from its rocky relationship with public education. Recently, Mayor Jim Kenney announced his intent to bring public schools back under city control in an attempt to improve educational quality (DeKok, 2017). Access to education has huge implications in sociolinguistic study: it informs how a population is taught to communicate. The fact of the matter is that “everyday life” looks very different for students attending a public school in North Philadelphia and a public school in Chestnut Hill. That means their patterns of speech will be different, which contributes to how the dialect is formed.

There are different ways language is used in society: elaborated code and restrictive code. Quite simply, elaborated code is more formal and “standard,” with “accurate” grammar and syntax. It utilizes complex sentences and a variety of sentence structures, modifiers, and nuances. Conversely, restrictive code uses short, grammatically simple, and nonstandard syntax with is straightforward. Restrictive code also uses idioms, implicit meanings, and employs ‘sympathetic circularity’ (for example “You know?”) (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Everyone has access to the restrictive code because everyone uses it at some point, especially between those we interact with often. However, not all social classes have access to elaborated code, because it is less reinforced and less likely to be used in their daily interactions. What this means is that the way the poor and rich communicate on a day-to-day basis is very different.

This presents an obstacle for children of the lower class or lower-middle class who are expected to learn elaborated code—a.k.a. proper English—at school:

“when schools attempt to develop in children the ability to manipulate elaborated code they are really trying to change cultural patterns, and such involvement may have

profound social and psychological consequences for all engaged in the task” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 342)

This makes logical sense, especially when discussed in context. As Neumann and Celano (2012) observed, the neighborhood stimuli that surround a child vary greatly across the city. They found that only 26% of public signs in the “Badlands” were legible and in good condition, compared to 99% of public signs in Chestnut Hill. While the “Badlands” may have had more signage overall (209 to 77, respectively), the signs were in worse condition and had more symbols rather than words (i.e. a picture of animals compared to the written-out word “Veterinarian”) (Neuman & Celano, 2012, p. 24). What this means is that children in some parts of the city are exposed to more words on a daily basis, and therefore grow up more immersed in elaborated code.

Moreover, their families might speak in more complex sentences, which further increases a child’s likelihood he or she will too: “it has been shown that young children adopt the linguistic system of their primary caretaker in fine quantitative detail (Labov, Rosenfelder, Fruehwald, 2013, p. 38). By the age of 5, brains become less flexible, meaning adapting to new languages or dialects becomes more difficult, according to Katherine Nielson, chief education officer at a language-learning company (Vadala, 2014). Further, “most speakers stabilize their linguistic system in late adolescence, with a decreasing tendency to adopt new forms” (Labov, Rosenfelder, Fruehwald, 2013, p. 30).

Going back to the Philadelphia dialect, this education gap across neighborhoods in the city shows that people communicate differently because they learn and use language differently. This might suggest why people in different parts of the city might have slightly different dialects that exist within the broader aggregated Philadelphia dialect (Owens, 2016). Oftentimes, the dialect of Philadelphia is described as originating from the “working-class” (CBS News).

Fruhwald notes that “A lot of what we know about Philadelphia, it’s focusing on working-class white Philadelphians— not exclusively, but if it was a pie [chart], it would be most of the pie” (Owens, 2016). Jankopovich (2014) offers this idealized definition of the working class:

The “working class” denotes the great majority of the population which is expropriated from the essential means of production, distribution and exchange, has no supervisory function and is forced (through impersonal market forces) to sell its labour power to capitalists. Workers have to sell their labour power for a price lower than the overall value of the fruits of their labour (p. 13).

Jankopovich goes on to add nuance to this definition, concluding that it is a rather subjective term that can be intentionally ambiguous to serve different purposes: a 2008 Pew poll confirms that 53% of Americans consider themselves part of the Middle Class, despite respondents indicating their income as low as \$20,000 and as high as over \$100,000 (Morin, 2008). The study notes that “part of the explanation [for this disparity] likely lies with the powerful attraction that the label “middle class” has on most Americans and the stigma that some might associate either with the upper or lower class labels” (Morin, 2008).

With Jankopovich’s definition in mind, it’s easier to contextualize the vast majority of competing immigrants seeking employment around the late 18th century. At the time, Philadelphia was growing rapidly—census records show it grew by over 160% during the fin-de-siècle period (roughly 1876-1926)—and there was stiff competition for jobs among the poor and lower-middle class. Prior to public transportation, industrial communities popped up in the shadows of factories and mills. This created tensions between immigrants, native-born Philadelphians, and African Americans competing for the same jobs in manufacturing, industry, and construction (Mires & Downs, 2014). They lived in close proximity, albeit on different

blocks. However, this began to change with the advent of the railroad and streetcar around the 1890s. As the city expanded geographically, it ultimately grew smaller due to increased public transportation options. Workers could begin to move further away from their workplaces in favor of emerging suburbs or planned communities. Before long, Philadelphia became part of “one big stretch of middle class” as John Cecil Holm, a 20th century actor and playwright noted (quoted in Hepp, 2003, p. 168). It ultimately ended up turning from a “Victorian middle-class city” to a “middle-class metropolis” as more prosperous individuals flocked to the spacious peripheral areas of the growing city. The communities they left behind were burdened with high crime rates and poverty, but these neighborhoods were welcomed by new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. These trends contributed to neighborhoods being segregated by income, with the poorest and newest individuals crowding around factories because they could not afford the five-cent transportation fare to commute (Mires & Downs, 2014). This began a level of disparity that continues to this day.

V. Analysis

It is abundantly clear that Philadelphia has changed over the course of its history, and so has its dialect. In 1826, traveling journalist Anne Royall wrote:

“Representing the literati of Philadelphia...the dialect of the citizens, particularly of the children...is very defective, and the young misses are detestably affected in their manners, dress, and dialect.... They have, withal, a whining tone in their speech, extremely disgusting; though the higher classes pronounce the English language with purity and even elegance” (quoted in Salvucci, 1996)

Royall's critique of the dialect represents one long gone—what she heard on the streets of the city is likely not what we would recognize today as the quintessential Philadelphia dialect.

Rather, the timing of this account—in the midst of an immigration boom and before the city grew into an industrial powerhouse—hints at the forerunner to the modern dialect as we know it today. With prior knowledge on the history of the city's demographics, immigration patterns, and socioeconomic disparity that this observation serves as a launching point to describe how the Philadelphia dialect came to be.

Dialect Formation

Geographically, Philadelphia is the “northern-most southern city” (McQuade, 2014; National Science Foundation, 2013), which has proven to be crucial to the formation of the dialect; Labov notes that “Philadelphia is torn between its northern and southern heritage” (Malady, 2014). In the *Atlas of North American English (ANAE)*, the researchers categorize Philadelphia in this way because it sits on the cusp of the Southeastern super-region, which attests to the profound impact the southern dialect has had on Philadelphia's (Labov, Rosenfelder & Fruehwald, 2013). While immigration from countries like Ireland, Italy, and Germany were incredibly influential on the way residents communicate, domestic migration and interaction played a huge role as well.

Sitting just north of the Mason-Dixon line, the city had its fair share of interactions with its southern neighbors. As one of the largest cities in the country, Philadelphia has long been a center of commerce. Southern businessmen found themselves welcomed by the upper class of Philadelphia, despite their different ways of life: “Planters and Philadelphians saw each other far less as southerners and northerners than as fellow aristocrats...for a long time, class united more than section divided” (Kilbride, 2006, p. 2). As planters traveled to northern cities like New York

or Boston to sell crops, many stopped to stay in Philadelphia, filling boardinghouses and ensuring a constant Southern presence in the city up until the Civil War. The wealthy planters were revered by their Philadelphian counterparts: “everything Southern was exalted and worshipped,” journalist Charles Godfrey Leland bitterly noted (quoted in Kilbride, 2006, p. 3).

Given this congenial attitude, a glimpse at this regional relationship through the lens of social psychology provides an interesting perspective. Social Identity Theory posits that part of an individual’s self-identity comes from the groups with which they associate, and leads them to emphasize certain characteristics of that group (Giles & Giles, 2010). There is an ingroup, which is a group with which a person strongly identifies, and an outgroup, which is a social group with which a person does not identify (Giles & Giles, 2010). These groups are distinguished by many factors, including communication patterns like colloquialisms, jargon, or accents. Social Identity Theory suggests that by publicly expressive distinctive characteristics, people can assume pride in their group and can show how they belong. In the context of the Philadelphia dialect, it is highly likely that Philadelphians may have adopted Southern communication habits to include themselves in the planters’ ingroups. Given the fanfare with which the planters were embraced, and the frequency of planters in the city, this further reinforces how Philadelphia came to slowly embrace its Southern sound.

Upon extrapolation, Social Identify Theory gives more insight on the relationships within the city and the dialect. As noted earlier, rich Philadelphians especially identified with rich planters, and in attempting to endear themselves to their southern brethren, might have adopted aspects of the Southern dialect. Now extend this to working class Philadelphians, who aspired to have the social prestige of the bourgeois. Continue to the new immigrants, who hoped to be as successful as the working class. Social Identity Theory suggests that mimicking communication

patterns of desired ingroups can help a person become accepted by that ingroup (Giles & Giles, 2010). However, it is important to consider the ways with which sounds becomes diluted over time (Fischetti, 2017). In this case, a Southerner will sound very different than a working-class laborer mimicking a rich Philadelphian businessman mimicking a Southerner. What results is a watered-down sound that maintains some of its original twang while sounding nothing like the original Southerner himself.

Also important to consider is the social networks involved. As noted previously, Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods; these neighborhoods were made up of loose or tight (also called dense) social networks (Fischetti, 2017). A tight social network would describe a typical immigrant enclave. It describes a network in which the people an individual interacts with also interact with the same people regularly (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Fischetti (2017) describes a scene in Kensington:

“If you live at 2653 Cedar Street, and your brother lives at 2657 Cedar Street, there is one connection. If you go to your local butcher around the corner, there is another connection. But the butcher is the same man your brother goes to, and all three of you share the same tailor down the street. If everyone goes to the same parish, this creates a strong network where everyone knows each other and interacts regularly.”

The parish was in fact a huge gathering place for immigrant communities- in fact, “in some Philadelphia neighborhoods, such as Port Richmond... several churches stood in the shadow of one another” (Rzeznik, 2017). In tight social networks, linguistic change comes from within, and it is often slow and subtle (Fischetti, 2017). Compare this to loose social networks, which describes a social network with less overlapping ties and connections. This is apparent in the suburbs or Center City, where people are less likely to interact with their neighbors and there are

more local businesses to interact with. Because there is a wider and more diverse group of people involved, these social networks are more susceptible to change (Fischetti, 2017).

On this note, tight social networks also prime newcomers to these networks, which affects how newcomers communicate (Fischetti, 2017). Similar to the mimicking of the Southern dialect, this describes how immigrants learn from other immigrants. For example, if an Italian family arrives in South Philadelphia in 1860, they might never have to learn English because they live in such a tightly-knit community of Italian speakers. But if they do begin to learn English, they might learn it from a family who arrived before them, in say, 1840. This family learned English from individuals who arrived slightly earlier, and so on (Fischetti, 2017). Each new wave of immigrants is primed due to the experiences of earlier immigrants, so the very first Italians teach second-wave Italians English, who then teach third-wave Italians English, and so on. In a tight social network, with a strong ingroup and little interaction with native-English speakers, this might prevent a strong grasp of the language, as it is essentially being taught by people without a native grasp of the language. These ethnic ingroups slowly dilute the language over generations, which is how they have such profound influences on the modern Philadelphian dialect (Fischetti, 2017).

All of these social changes contributed to the formation of the Philadelphia dialect as it entered the 20th century: it was truly representative of the history of the city and its people. But language is constantly evolving, and in the past century, as the demographics of the city have changed, so too has the Philadelphia dialect.

The Next 100 Years

Much of this paper addresses Philadelphia's demographics pre-World War II; in the past 60 years, Philadelphia has fallen from its heyday. Though Philadelphia was a destination for African Americans during the Great Migration of the 1940s, its overall population suffered from white flight and the exodus of residents to the inner suburbs (Dayanim, 2017). Every census from 1950 to 2010 reflected a shrinking population (though the 2010 census showed a modest 0.6% growth) (US Census). Industry has declined, and Philadelphia has ceded its prestige to nearby cities like New York and Washington, D.C. This has been well-covered in a variety of media, which currently have adopted a "comeback" narrative due to several high-profile events held in the city in the past half-decade (e.g. NFL Draft, Democratic National Convention, World Meeting of Families, etc.).

Much of the conversation about the Philadelphia dialect in recent years has centered on a 2013 study by Labov, Rosenfelder, and Fruehwald that details "One Hundred Years of Sound Change in Philadelphia." The study utilized a powerful computer program to document the changes in the dialect over the past century. It featured over 1,000 people born from 1889 through 1991 in 89 different neighborhoods, and data collection began in 1973 (National Science Foundation, 2013). The most important finding was that the Philadelphia dialect is shifting from a Southern one to a Northern one.

There are several reasons why this is possible, but none are definitive. Loviglio (2013) suggests that "higher education appears to be a factor, as does simply being aware the certain local inflections are disparaged by others." This hyper-awareness of self-presentation boils down to the stereotype that "sounding Southern means sounding dumb," as Southern writer Tricia

Moore notes. Moore cites a 2012 *Scientific American* study in which children from Chicago and Tennessee were given three-second audio clips of speakers talking in both accents:

The authors suggest that Southerners do not categorize speakers of either accent as being alien, because they hear Northern accents at a young age from National news anchors, film and television characters. The kids in Chicago don't have the same opportunity to hear a Southern accent. As they grow up, attend school, and develop social awareness, Southern children begin to associate the Northern accent with people being "in charge and smarter," because these prestigious "celebrities" of high social status and respect speak with a Northern accent. This nurtures a self-perpetuating stereotype which takes root by at least the age of nine (Fields, 2012).

This finding shows that attitudes in Philadelphia have shifted dramatically from hundreds of years ago when Southern planters were revered. Metcalf (2000) notes that "Northern speech has the advantage of being "normal" American English (p. 93). Unlike in the past, there was no major migration from Northerners to the city; however, the city now has stronger ties to its northern neighbors than in the past (Badger, 2013). Rather, the Southern dialect overall is retreating, and this includes its influence on cities like Philadelphia that sit on the cusp of the aforementioned "southeastern super-region" (Badger, 2013).

Other changes that Labov et. al. found include how younger speakers are using sharper "i" sounds and are changing their "a" sounds to be closer to "e." This means that "foit" and "boik" have become "fight" and "bike," while "eight" and "snake" are closer to "eat" and "sneak" (Loviglio, 2013). These changes are generational, because children tend to speak like their peer group rather than their parents (Loviglio, 2013). Fruehwald notes that all of the changes represent slight changes in how speakers articulate and where they position their

tongues in their mouth (Badger, 2013). They're small changes, but notable nevertheless because they represent larger trends.

I would, of course, be remiss if I did not mention one of the biggest casualties: *wooder*. The pronunciation of "water" is one of the quintessential hallmarks of the Philadelphia dialect, but Loviglio notes it may be "drying up" (2013). According to Labov, "that sound is moving towards 'ah' so instead of 'cawfee,' more Philadelphians are saying 'coffee,' wooder' becomes 'water.' As people become aware...they tend to reverse them. They say, "Oh, we shouldn't talk that way" (quoted in Loviglio, 2013). An Associated Press interview series documented this. Trish Fiorella, speaking in an interview at her family's sausage company just across from the Italian Market in South Philly, described her plans to travel to Las Vegas: "I said, 'I'll have a wooder [sic]...[my husband said] when you get to Las Vegas, and you ask for that, they won't know what you're talking about. You have to say 'water'" (2013). Another subject in the interview, Joe Lomanno, recounted how he is trying to annunciate words for the sake of his one year old son. Overall, these accounts show that Philadelphians are aware of the way they sound, which might contribute to the shift in how "wooder" is pronounced.

The focus now for Labov and his colleagues is to identify how such changes were able to occur across the city as a whole and where they might go in the future (2013). It is especially interesting to note how changing demographic trends, such as the influx of Puerto Rican immigrants, will affect the dialect (Pew, 2010). Moreover, as Philadelphia continues its much-touted "comeback," the changing face of the city may impact the dialect. For example, Philadelphia has aggressively campaigned for the second Amazon Headquarters. This included a very public marketing blitz in Seattle, where Amazon is currently headquartered, that included advertisements on public transportation, billboards, and social media (Craig, 2017). If Amazon,

or any other large company from another region, comes to Philadelphia, is it possible that this could impact the dialect? Only time will tell.

Conclusion

From atop City Hall, William Penn looks downwards upon the city that he loved so much. But the city that Penn founded is drastically different today than it was in 1682. This paper has made it clear that Philadelphia, like so many large cities around the world, is a city divided by culture, race, and socioeconomics. These divisions have long existed, and show no signs of going away. However, as divided as “The City of Brotherly Love” may be, it is unified by a dialect that truly tells its story.

The story of Philadelphia is one of its people: *we*, the people. What started out as a small village exploded into an industrial mecca before a precipitous decline. As the city looks to brighter days, it hopes to enjoy some of the prosperity that transformed it into “The Workshop of the World.” Demographics suggest that Philadelphia is slowly beginning to grow again. Of course, the future is still very uncertain, but research suggests it is quite likely the city’s sound in coming generations will continue to evolve as well.

This paper intended to delve into the past to better understand how the Philadelphia dialect ended up where it is today. Sociolinguistics is a broad field, and focuses on several different factors to inform how a particular society communicates. It is also a field that is bound by limitations, as this paper will attest to. It’s hard to look to historical written records and deduce how someone sounded (Fischetti, 2017). It assumes that the creators of these records represent the habits of their larger populations, which can be problematic and presumptive. Then

there is the geography of the matter: Owens (2016) observes that certain neighborhoods of Philadelphia, notably the Northeast, are less accessible to linguists from Penn and are therefore understudied. Moreover, she points out that the observer's paradox is constantly a factor, especially when research suggests Philadelphians are self-aware of the perception of their speech habits (2016).

With all of this considered, sociolinguistics can at times be frustrating and elusive: "Asking a linguist 'why' anything happens is usually a quick way to elicit a shrug" Nosowitz writes (2016). But its study is crucial to not only understanding the history of a place, but also the people who live there and the attitudes (or "addy-toods") that have guided them. The story of the Philadelphia dialect is imperfect, but then again, so is the city. And, like most quintessentially Philly things—like the Eagles, cheesesteak, or *Rocky*—it is something residents are intensely proud of, and rightly so.

Appendix: An Urban Dictionary of Philadelphia

Writing in the *New York Times*, poet Daniel Nester asserts that, “The Philadelphia regional accent remains arguably the most distinctive, and least imitable accent in North America” (2014). This list of words associated with the Philadelphia dialect, compiled from daily interactions with Philadelphians and online media, attests to Nester’s claims. This is by no means a complete list, and merely gives some examples of the more quintessential words and phrases associated with the Philadelphia dialect. Some of these have begun to fall out of style, but are still used by residents nevertheless.

- *Anymore*- At the present time, currently. Typically used in the affirmative. (PhillyTalk, 2006).
- *Aiite*- “Alright”
- *Ard*- “Alright”
- *Baby Coach*- Baby carriage
- *Bag School*- Skip school
- *Badlands*- a section of Philadelphia that was known for its high crime and drug markets in the 1980s and 1990s. The borders of this area are not universally agreed-upon, but it is typically classified as being within the 25th Police District.
- *Boul*- describes a male
- *Center City*- in lieu of a traditional “downtown,” Philadelphia has a “Center City” region that serves as the center of commerce and municipal activity.
- *Drawlin*’-doing something out of character
- *Hoagie*- A long sandwich with meats and cheeses. Katz (2013) notes that 82% of the country calls this a *sub*. There are several theories for the origin of the term, and none have been completely verified.
- *Hotcake*- Pancake
- *Iggles*- “Eagles,” The NFL team of Philadelphia.
- *Jawn*- “the WaWa of words” (Gensler, 2016). An all-purpose noun.

- *Jimmies*- Sprinkles
- *MAC Machine*- An ATM. “MAC” stands for Money Access Center
- *Mummer*- costumed entertainers who celebrate the New Year in an annual parade in Center City. Mummers typically wear expressive masks and over-the-top costumes, and some play instruments or perform in short vignettes, depending on the troop they belong to and which category of “Mummer” they belong to.
- *Pavement*- sidewalk
- *Schuylkill Punch*- A local nickname for tap water originating from the Schuylkill River
- *Scrapple*- ground scraps of pork mixed with cornmeal and molded into a loaf. Sliced and fried before serving. Of German origin (Wilton, 2002).
- *Shore*- i.e. The Jersey Shore; where Philadelphian residents spend summers at the beach
- *Square*- City Block
- *Water Ice (Wooder Ice)*- An icy confection like Italian Ice, but runnier. Made from water and flavored syrup and popularized by the chain *Rita's*
- *Whiz*- Goopy Cheese, typically put on a Cheesesteak
- *Wit/Witout/Widdout*- “With/ Without,” popularized by the strict ordering tradition at Geno’s Steaks in South Philadelphia. It usually refers to whether or not the customer wants onions on their cheesesteak
- *Wooder*- Water
- *Yo*- Interjection used for greeting
- *Youse/Yous/Youz*- Plural of “you;” comparable to *y'all*

References

Accent [Def 1] (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionary*, Retrieved September 20, 2017 from

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/accent>

Associated Press [AP] (2013, April 26). *No more 'wooder'? Philly's odd accent evolving* [Video

File]. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POdKrnjIMNI>

Badger, E. (2013, April 2). The strange decline of the Philly accent. In *City Lab*. Retrieved from;

<https://www.citylab.com/design/2013/04/strange-decline-philly-accent/5135/>

Bell, A. (2013). *The guidebook to sociolinguistics*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley- Blackwell.

Bergquist, J. (2013). Immigration (1790-1860). *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

Retrieved from <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/immigration-1790-1860/>

CBS News (2016, July 26). An earful and accent that's distinctly Philly. In *CBS News*. Retrieved

From: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/philadelphia-mid-atlantic-dialect-accent-democratic-national-convention-2016/>

Clark, D. (1973). *The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience*. Philadelphia,

PA: Temple University Press.

Colloquialism [Def 1] (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionary*, Retrieved September 20, 2017 from

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/colloquialism>

Conn, S. (2006). *Metropolitan Philadelphia*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Craig, D. (2017, November 1). Philly launches ad campaign in Seattle to woo Amazon. In *Philly*

Voice. Retrieved from: <http://www.phillyvoice.com/philly-launches-advertising-campaign-seattle-woo-amazon/>

Cutler, W.W. & Gillette, H. (1980). *The divided metropolis: Social and spatial dimensions of Philadelphia, 1800-1975*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Dayanim, S. L. (2017). Inner Suburbs. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/inner-suburbs/>

de Klerk, V. (2005). Slang and swearing as markers of inclusion and exclusion in adolescence. In A. Williams, C. Thurlow (Eds.) *Talking adolescence: Perspectives on communication in the teenage years* (pp. 111-127). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

DeKok, D. (2017, November 16). Philadelphia moves one step closer to return of local control of public schools. In *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-philadelphia-education/philadelphia-moves-one-step-closer-to-return-of-local-control-of-public-schools-idUSKBN1DH07L>

Dialect [Def.] (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionary*, Retrieved September 20, 2017 from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/usage/dialect>

Esposito, N. (2013, March 14). Ghosts of German Olney. In *Hidden City Philadelphia*. Retrieved from: <https://hiddencityphila.org/2013/03/ghosts-of-german-olney/2/>

Farley, N. J. J. & Kilbride, P.L. (2010). Changes in behavior of immigrants: The Irish in Philadelphia. In Takenaka, A. & Osirim, M. J. (Eds.) *Global Philadelphia* (p. 156-177). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Fields, R.D. (2012, December 7). Why Does a Southern Drawl Sound Uneducated to Some? In *Scientific American*. Retrieved from: <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/why-does-a-southern-drawl-sound-uneducated-to-some/>

Fuerhwald, J. & Myler, N. (2013) I'm done my homework. - Case assignment in a stative passive. Paper presented at Penn Linguistics Colloquium, Philadelphia, PA, March 22-24, 2013. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from:
http://jofrhwld.github.io/papers/fruehwald_myler_done_my_homework_plc_handout.pdf

Gensler, H. (2017, October 5). Merriam-Webster analyzes 'jawn,' the Wawa of words.

Philadelphia Inquirer. Retrieved from:

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/merriam-webster-analyzes-jawn-the-wawa-of-words-20171005.html>

Gibson, C. & Jung, K. (2005). Historical census statistics on population totals by race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic origin, 1970 to 1990, for large cities and other urban place in the United States. In *United States Census Bureau*. (P. 94). Washington, D.C: Population Division of the United States Census Bureau.

Giles, H. & Giles, J. (2013). Chapter 7: Ingroups and Outgroups. In Kurylo, A. (Ed.)

Inter/Cultural Communication. (p. 141-162). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Grumperz, J.J. & Cook-Grumperz, J. (1982). Introduction: language and communication of social identity. In Grumperz, J.J. (Ed.) *Language and Social Identity*. (p. 1-21). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, A. (2013). Consolidation Act of 1854. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/consolidation-act-of-1854/>

Henderson, A. (1996). The short 'a' pattern of Philadelphia among African-American speakers.

University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 10. p.

137-139.

Henninger, D. (2016, October 9). Video: Tina Fey, Jimmy Fallon bring Philly to 'SNL,' cuz

Trump's a Mummer. In *Billy Penn*. Retrieved from:

<https://billypenn.com/2016/10/09/video-tina-fey-jimmy-fallon-bring-philly-to-snl-cuz-trumps-a-mummer/>

Hepp, J.H. (2003). *The Middle-Class City*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hepp, J.H. (2017). Public Transportation. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/public-transportation/>

Hershberg, T. (1973). Free Blacks in antebellum Philadelphia. In Davis, A.H. & Haller, M. H.

(Eds.) *The Peoples of Philadelphia*. (p. 111-134). Philadelphia, PA: University of

Pennsylvania Press.

Hershberg, T. (1981). A tale of three cities: blacks, immigrants, and opportunity in Philadelphia,

1850-1880, 1930, 1970. In Hershberg, T (Ed.) *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family and*

Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century (p. 461-495). New York, NY: Oxford

University Press.

Jankopovich, D. (2014). The concept of class. In *Cambridge Studies in Social Research*, 14.

SSRG Publications. Retrieved from: <https://www.sociology.cam.ac.uk/research/srg/cs14>

Jargon [Def 1] (n.d.) In *Oxford Dictionary*, Retrieved September 20, 2017 from

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/jargon>

Katz, J. (2016). *Speaking American: How Y'all, Youse, and You Guys Talk*. Boston, MA:

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Kelley, D. (2015, December 2). Jawn - it's the new 'yo'. In *Metro*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.metro.us/philadelphia/jawn-it-s-the-new-yo/zsJola---iR0kUASCcK0nI>

Kilbride, D. (2006). *An American aristocracy: southern planters in antebellum Philadelphia*.

Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Klaczynska, B. (2014). Immigration (1870-1930). In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

Retrieved from <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/immigration-1870-1930/>

Labov, W. (1973). *Language in the inner city: Studies in the Black English vernacular*.

Philadelphia, PA: Penn Press.

Labov, W. (2005). A Linguist's Journey. *PBS*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.pbs.org/speak/speech/sociolinguistics/labov/>

Labov, W. (2009). *Dialect diversity in America: The politics of language change*.

Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

Labov, W. (2010). Unendangered dialect, endangered people: the case of African American

Vernacular English. *Transforming Anthropology*, 18(1), 15-28. doi:10.1111/j.1548-7466.2010.01066.x.

Labov, W. & Rosenfelder, I. & Fruehwald, J. (2013). One hundred years of sound change in

Philadelphia: linear incrementation, reversal, and reanalysis. *Language* 89(1), 30-65.

Linguistic Society of America. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from Project MUSE database.

Retrieved from: <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/503024>

Litchman, L. (2015). *The Philadelphia story: Founders and famous families from the city of*

brotherly love. Birmingham, AL: Clerisy.

Loviglio, J. (2013, April 29). Philadelphians have a unique accent, with pronunciation evolving over decades. In *Washington Post*. Retrieved from:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/philadelphians-have-a-unique-accent-with-pronunciation-evolving-over-the-decades/2013/04/29/fcfe7b18-ae74-11e2-98ef-d1072ed3cc27_story.html?utm_term=.a239cbd53ef9

Luconi, S. (2017). Italians and Italy. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/italians-and-italy/>

Malady, M. J. X. (2014, April 29). Where yinz at. In *Slate*. Retrieved from:

http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_good_word/2014/04/pennsylvania_dialects_from_pittsburghese_to_philadelphia_speak_the_keystone.html

Marzec, R. (2004). *The Mid-Atlantic Region: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Regional Cultures*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

McGee, S. (n.d.) 25 words that mean something different in Philadelphia [Blog Post] *Movoto*.

Retrieved from: <https://www.movoto.com/guide/philadelphia-pa/philadelphia-words/>

Merriam-Webster (2014). Word history: skeevy. In *Merriam-Webster*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/skeevy-meaning-origin>

Merriam-Webster (2016). Words we're watching: some jawn about 'jawn.' In *Merriam-Webster*.

Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/jawn-meaning-origin>

Metcalf, A. (2000). *How we talk: American regional English today*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Michaels, Lorne [Saturday Night Live] (2015, December 19). *Bronx Beat*. [Video File].

Retrieved from: <http://www.nbc.com/saturday-night-live/video/bronx-beat-2015/2957169?snl=1>

Mires, C. & Downs, J. (2014). Industrial Neighborhoods. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater*

Philadelphia. Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/industrial-neighborhoods/>

Morrin, R. (2008, July 29). America's four middle classes. *Pew Research Center: Social and Demographic Trends*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2008/07/29/americas-four-middle-classes/>

National Science Foundation (2013, August 20). Detecting social patterns from shifting dialects.

In *National Science Foundation*. Retrieved from:

https://www.nsf.gov/mobile/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_id=128868&org=NSF

Nester, D. (2014, March 1). The sound of Philadelphia fades out. In *New York Times*. Retrieved

from: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/02/opinion/sunday/the-sound-of-philadelphia-fades-out.html?_r=0

Neuman, S. & Celano, D. (2012). *Giving our children a fighting chance: poverty, literacy, and the development of information capital*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Nosowitz, D. (2016, March 24). The enduring mystery of 'jawn', Philadelphia's all-purpose

noun. In *Atlas Obscura*. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-enduring-mystery-of-jawn-philadelphias-allpurpose-noun>

Oberholtzer, E.P. (1912). *Philadelphia: a history of the city and its people*. Philadelphia, PA: S.J.

Clarke Publishing Company.

O'Callaghan, Q. (2017, November 15). Boroughs can fix Philly's broken government - just don't call us New York's 'sixth'. In *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/commentary/philadelphia-new-york-sixth-borough-northeast-liberty-20171115.html>

Otterbein, H. (2015, September 22). Philly is the 4th most segregated big city in the country. In *Philadelphia Magazine*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.phillymag.com/citified/2015/09/22/philadelphia-segregated-big-city/#KL6cFAJVCO3gz1Hx.99>

Owens, C. (2016, April 11). How does Philly's accent change around the city? Hear for yourself.

In *Billy Penn*. Retrieved from: <https://billypenn.com/2016/04/11/how-does-phillys-accent-change-around-the-city-hear-for-yourself/>

Paolino, E. (1993, August 19). Sorry, New York, 'yo' was born in Philadelphia. In *New York*

Times Opinion. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/19/opinion/sorry-new-york-yo-was-born-in-philadelphia.html>

Parkway Council Foundation (2017). *How are flags chosen for display on the Parkway?*

Retrieved from <http://www.parkwaymuseumsdistrictphiladelphia.org/About-the-Parkway/FAQs/25/>

Pew (2011). A City transformed: The racial and ethnic changes in Philadelphia over the last 20 years. In *Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia Research Initiative*. Retrieved from:

http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/philadelphia_research_initiative/philadelphiapopulationethnicchangespdf.pdf

Pfleger, B (2010). German immigration to Philadelphia from the colonial period through the twentieth century. In Takenaka, A. & Osirim, M. J. (Eds.) *Global Philadelphia* (p. 125-155). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

PhillyMag Staff (2008, April 22). Features: How to Speak Philadelphian: Accent on Chris Matthews. In *Philadelphia Magazine*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.phillymag.com/articles/2008/04/22/features-how-to-speak-philadelphian-accent-on-chris-matthews/#7IYsJpWliGxPmKSo.99>

PhillyTalk. (2006, July 16). Philly slang. In *Philly Talk*. Retrieved from:
<http://phillytalk.com/philly-slang>

Polaneczsky, R. (2015, December 23). The Philly accent, finally having its mewmint. In *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Retrieved from:
http://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/ronnie_polaneczky/20151223_The_Philly_accent_is_finally_a_thing.html

Rzeznik, T. (2017). Roman Catholic parishes. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/roman-catholic-parishes/>

Salvucci, C.R. (1995). *A grammar of the Philadelphia dialect*. Bucks County, PA: Evolution Publications.

Salvucci, C.R. (1996). *Philadelphia dialect dictionary*. Bucks County, PA: Evolution Publications.

Schwartz, Z. (2012, January 23). Word of the day: Schifo. In *Young in Rome*. Retrieved from:
<https://younginrome.com/2012/01/23/word-of-the-day-schifo/>

Smith, B.T. (2011, July 15). The overlooked Philadelphia accent. In *Dialect Blog*. Retrieved from: <http://dialectblog.com/2011/07/15/philadelphia-accent/>

Stack Exchange (2016). “Youse” as a plural second person pronoun [Blog Post]. Retrieved from: <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/361217/youse-as-a-plural-second-person-pronoun/361267>

Takenaka, A. & Osirim M.J. (2010). *Global Philadelphia: immigrant communities old and new*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Toll, J.B. & Gillam, M.S. (1995). *Invisible Philadelphia: community through voluntary organizations*. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent

United States Census (1960-2010). *Demographics*. [Data File]. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/philadelphiacountypennsylvania/PST045216>

Vadala, N. (2014, September 9). Science says you’ll probably be stuck with hoagiemouth forever. In *Philly.com*. Retrieved from: <http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/lifestyle/Science-says-youll-probably-be-stuck-with-hoagiemouth-forever.html?c=r>

Varbero, R.A. (1998). Philadelphia’s south Italians in the 1920’s. In Davis, A.H. & Haller, M. H. (Eds.) *The Peoples of Philadelphia*. (p. 255-276). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Wardhaugh, R. & Fuller, J.M. (2015). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (7th Ed.)*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Watson, T. (2017). Irish (The) and Ireland. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/irish-the-and-ireland/>

Wilton, D. (2002, December 1). American dialect: Pennsylvania. In *Wordorigins.com*. Retrieved From:

http://www.wordorigins.org/index.php/site/comments/american_dialect_pennsylvania/

Wolfinger, J. (2013). African American migration. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

Retrieved from: <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/african-american-migration/>

WYL (2016, February 17). 12 words you need to know if you live in Philly [Blog Post].

Retrieved from: <https://www.whoseyourlandlord.com/blog/2016/02/12-words-you-need-to-know-if-you-live-in-philly/>

Young, D.W. (2009). Historic Germantown: New knowledge in a very old neighborhood. In *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Retrieved from:

<http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/historic-germantown-new-knowledge-in-a-very-old-neighborhood-2/>