Francis Lieber's Americanisms as an Early Source on Southern Speech

Stuart Davis
Indiana University

1. Introduction -- Between 1849 and 1851, Francis Lieber, a professor of history and political economy at South Carolina College (present day University of South Carolina at Columbia) as well as its acting president at the time, compiled a manuscript written in ten small volumes (where each volume comprised a small notebook) which he entitled Americanisms, Anglicisms, etc. etc. (henceforth, Americanisms). These volumes contain about 820 entries. Each entry consists of a word or expression that Lieber felt worthy of comment or of explanation. These include words and expressions that Lieber considered new or whose usage or form was novel. Lieber was primarily interested in items that he considered to be Americanisms or Anglicisms (Anglicisms being words or usages found in the British Isles but not in the United States). While the bulk of the manuscript was written between 1849 and 1851, there are entries as late as 1860. It is quite possible that Lieber began compiling the manuscript in response to John Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms, first published in 1848. Lieber
occasionally referenced Bartlett, usually to say that Bartlett does not include something or does not have it right. Lieber's *Americanisms* was never published and can be found today amongst his papers in the Lieber collection in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California (near Pasadena). The manuscript is almost completely unknown, though Heath (1982) provides a discussion of it. Heath only presented a few entries from Lieber's manuscript. The purpose of the present paper is to bring together entries from Lieber's *Americanisms* that in some way relate to the language of the American South. Of the over 800 entries in Lieber's *Americanisms*, perhaps about 10% of them are southernisms or of interest to the history of southern English. These include entries on words that are known to be southernisms, words for designating people, and slang terms. In addition, Lieber provides occasional comments on southern grammatical features such as perfective *done*. Given Lieber's erudition and background, his *Americanisms* can be considered a valuable source for the history of southern English. In Section 3 of this paper I present many of Lieber's entries that are pertinent to the American South while Section 4 offers a concluding summary. However, before doing that, I first provide in Section 2 some background on Francis Lieber who was one of the most well-known academics to the general public in the Antebellum period, but who is almost completely unknown today.
2. Background on Francis Lieber -- As related by his biographer, Freidel (1947), Francis Lieber was born in Berlin in 1798. By the time he immigrated to American in 1827 Lieber had been with the Prussian army at Waterloo in 1815, obtained a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Jena in 1820, travelled to Greece in 1822 to participate in the Greek revolution against the Turks, passed a year in Rome living in the household of the German historian Barthold George Niebuhr as a tutor to his children, spent about a year in a Berlin prison on political charges in 1824, then fled to London in 1826 after being released before finally coming to America. During his time in Berlin, Lieber frequented the salon of Henrietta Herz where he established himself within the highest intellectual circles and became close to Wilhelm von Humboldt, arguably the most important figure in the rise of linguistics as an academic discipline in Germany in the early 19th century, whom Freidel (1947: 180) refers to as Lieber's mentor.

After arriving in Boston in 1827, Lieber conceived the idea for an Encyclopedia Americana. The project came to fruition. The Encyclopedia came out in 13 volumes between 1829 and 1833. Lieber was its first editor. The Encyclopedia went through many printings before the revised second edition, with a new editor, appeared about forty years after the original. Because the
Encyclopedia was a success in terms of sales and was likely to be owned by those pursuing higher educational aspirations, Lieber's name became well-known. The Encyclopedia provides a valuable source of information regarding the state of linguistic knowledge in antebellum America. Important contributions that can be found in the Encyclopedia include John Pickering's Indian Languages of America, Peter Stephen Duponceau's Philology, William Woodbridge's Dumb and Deaf, and Francis Lieber's Creole Dialects. By 1835 Lieber had obtained a position as a professor of history and political economy at South Carolina College. He stayed there until 1856, taking a post at Columbia College (present day Columbia University in New York City) where he was on the faculty until his death in 1872.

While Lieber became primarily known as a legal scholar and an early political scientist, he maintained an active interest in language and linguistics. This is reflected by his publications at the time. Most noteworthy are his 1837 article "On the Study of Foreign Languages, Especially of the Classic Tongues: A Letter to Hon. Albert Gallatin" that appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger where Lieber coined the term 'holophrastic' to describe the polysynthetic nature of many of the Native American languages, his 1839 Dictionary of Latin Synonymes (a translation and an expansion from the German of Ramshorn's Latin dictionary) which shows Lieber to be a Latin
scholar, and his 1850 article "On the Vocal Sounds of Laura Bridgeman, the Blind Deaf Mute at Boston: Compared with the Elements of Phonetic Language" that appeared in *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge* where Lieber describes phonetically the noises made by Laura Bridgman. Moreover, Lieber wrote several language-related manuscripts that were probably intended for publication but that were never published. These include not only his *Americanisms* written between 1849 and 1851, but also his 1835 "Notes on Pennsylvania German" which can be found in part in Reichmann (1945), and his manuscript written between 1839 and 1841 focusing on the language development of Laura Bridgman entitled "Laura Bridgman or an Account of the Education of a Girl Blind, Deaf and Dumb Founded upon the Report of S.G. Howe M.D. with a Portrait and Facsimile By Francis Lieber in Letters to his Son' which is largely unknown and can be found amongst his papers in the Huntington Library (see Davis 2002 for a preliminary report).

When one examines Lieber's language-related writings, both published and unpublished, one sees the following range of topics: Native American languages, the German language in America, Creole languages, American vs. British English, and the language development of Laura Bridgman. In a sense this is not an opportunistic listing of interests, rather they revolve around a common theme of observing language development and
change. Lieber's interest in this theme is apparent from the following quote written by him around 1835 from his unpublished papers at the Huntington Library:

"Geology shows us that creation is all the time going on, that is to say, we live in the very midst of constant changes, almost or wholly imperceptible at the moment, which, nevertheless at the end of thousands of years appears as one stupendous phenomenon and in beholding which our first idea is always that the thing was called into existence in the state in which we find it (just as formerly government, property, etc). This applies to languages. We see the processes of formation of languages constantly, but of course but slowly."

Lieber was interested in those phenomena where one can witness the processes of language formation as it is happening. The differing developments of the European languages in America and those same languages in Europe was something that interested Lieber immensely. Lieber's Americanisms not only tracks developments in American English but also references independent developments in the English of the British Isles showing how the English language on opposite sides of the Atlantic can evolve separately from one another. In the following section I bring together many of Lieber's entries in his Americanisms that
relate to the English of the American South. These provide both an early source for known southernisms as well as a source for terms that have been lost.

3. Terms Pertinent to the American South in Lieber's Americanisms

At the end of the first notebook (volume 1) of his Americanisms, Lieber defines 'Americanisms' as, "Provincialisms on a large scale". He then classifies American provincialisms as West, South, New York, and New England. One can view this as an early (antebellum) classification of American English into its regional dialects. While his terms 'South' and 'New England' are most likely the same as they are today (with 'South' being coextensive with the slave-holding states), his use of 'West' would probably be somewhat different perhaps including the midwest as well as the far west. Lieber does not use the terms 'Northern' (or 'Midlands') as in the traditional classification of the mid 20th century as in Kurath (1949).

In Lieber's entries that specifically relate to Americanisms (as opposed to Anglicisms), he sometimes makes a comment regarding the region of use, if he views the word or expression under consideration as being geographically restricted. For example, in volume 2 (page 56), his entry for the word coasting reads, "A well established term of the N. Engl [New England] boys, for sliding on a sledge down a hill, when
the snow is frozen." With respect to his entries on Southern English, Lieber often gives his impression whether the term under consideration is general southern or restricted to a particular geographical area. An example of the former is his entry for branch (volume 6, pages 165-166) where he states that it is "the universal term for a brook, a rivulet, in the South of the U.S.... Brook would not be understood by our negros and common people". An example of the latter is his comment at the end of volume 4 on the word picayune, "We never hear picayune in the older Southern States — it belongs to the Coast". Here he is distinguishing between the older or eastern South (i.e. the southern states that were part of the original thirteen colonies) from the coastal South along the Gulf of Mexico. Thus, while Lieber presents certain terms as characteristic of the South as a whole, he views other terms as more restricted geographically within the South.

In the following subsections I present some of Lieber's entries that are relevant to southern speech. In Section 3.1 I present southernisms from Lieber. Many of these are known southernisms in the sense that they are also cited in sources such as Dictionary of American Regional English (henceforth, DARE) or Carver (1987). However, many of these have been lost. In the latter category I include some of the college slang terms that Lieber indicates were used by students at South Carolina
In Section 3.2 I provide some of Lieber's entries for terms denoting people of various types in the southern context. In Section 3.3, I present some of Lieber's entries that reference grammatical features of southern English. Taken together, Lieber's entries provide an interesting early source on southern English.

3.1 Southernisms in Lieber's Americanisms -- As mentioned earlier, of the over 800 entries in Lieber's Americanisms perhaps about 10% of them are southernisms or of interest to the history of southern English. In this subsection I present a number of these. Some are still common today; others are not. I present Lieber's entries verbatim but not always in their entirety. Lieber's entries are important because they are typically one of the earliest references (and sometimes the earliest) to a known southernism given other citations in sources such as DARE and OED. For some of the entries, Lieber mentions that they are used all over the South, for others he suggests that they are restricted geographically. In the first part of this Section I present southernisms that are known in that they are cited in contemporary sources. In the second part I provide expressions that Lieber indicates as being used in the South (or some part of the South) which seem to be unknown today. These include some of the college slang
expressions used among students which Lieber had observed at South Carolina College.

Below, in (1)-(16) I present known southernisms from Lieber's *Americanisms*. Each entry is given with its volume and page number. After each entry I briefly mention a relevant contemporary source that mentions the same item as Lieber's entry.

(1) Evening v. 1 p. 28

All over the South evening means after dinner. They say "I'll come to see you this evening at two o'clock." This is very inconvenient. Evening they would call night e.g. Seven o'clock at night i.e. 7 o'clock in the evening".

*DARE* notes that this use of *evening* as "between noon and twilight" is chiefly Southern and South Midlands. Lieber is aware that this use of *evening* is also found in England. He returns to this word in volume 7 (p, 209) where he states that "...the use of the word evening, common here in the South, to denote afternoon, is old Engl, or used in some parts of England".

(2) pullet v. 3, p. 72

From *poulet*, is used by the negros etc in the South almost
exclusively for all the individuals of the hen tribe, 
Perhaps a large cock would not be called so.

This is an interesting term since it is not mentioned exactly in 
this way in other sources. DARE gives the term pully bone for 
'chicken bone' as chiefly a southernism going back to the latter 
part of the 19th century, but does not give the term pully (or 
pullet for 'chicken' or 'hen'. Carver (1987: 142) gives the 
compound poule d'eau 'mudhen' for the Delta South. Lieber thus 
indicates that the term pullet was used on its own and not 
necessarily in a compound. While Lieber assigns this term to 
the black population, when he writes "negros etc" he is almost 
certainly referring to the common white people as well.

(3) Bar. Mosquito bar v. 3, p. 94
This is the common American term for mosquito net--at least 
in the U.S. In the W. I. [West Indies] I believe, they use 
the latter term. I found at least all the English in St. 
Thomas, Puerto Rico etc use mosquito net; but I have not 
been at Jamaica. Here in the South, the word bar alone, is 
used in all cases in which both parties know that no other 
bar can be meant.
DARE mentions this term for a mosquito net and assigns it to Louisiana and other areas of French settlement. Lieber's knowledge of the West Indies comes from personal experience having made several visits there in the 1830s.

(4) stake-and-rider v. 3, p. 97-98

stake-and-rider fence, is the name given here in S. Carolina (and perhaps everywhere further south) to the fence called in Virginia and further North worm-fences. Perhaps, however, stake-and-rider, means more particularly the worm fence with the addition of two rails at every corner, standing upright and crossing over the fence, to give additional strength?

This is an interesting early reference to an item that is found in Carver (1987). What is noteworthy is that while Lieber views "stake-and-rider" as a term used in South Carolina and further south, Carver assigns this term exclusively to the Lower North. This suggests a changing isogloss for this term over time.

(5) A heap v. 4, p. 114

"A heap" is used in the South, by negros, etc for much, very similar to the German hänfig (frequent) only that the German word heap is applied to time".
DARE describes this as an old and widespread term that is Southern and South Midlands.

(6) Tote v. 5, p. 137

Tote, the well known southern word for fetching, pulling etc, but I did not know that it is used as a verb neuter, for toting one's self in which it is not quite unlike Dragging one's self. It is thus used at the beginning of the following clip, content of the Columbia Telegraph, June 1, "C. once toted into the village tavern."

As we see from Lieber's comment, in his day the term was already a well known southernism. His comment is on the peculiar use of the term as a verb neuter.

(7) Biánt v. 5, p. 163

Biánt, from beyond or Be ánt?, a word much used by the negros of this region, perhaps of all S. Carolina. It means too bad, extravagant, beyond endurance, beyond corruption. So e.g. if they see a girl extravagantly dressed, or if a child is peculiarly naughty they will say: You are or she is biánt. They exclaim occasionally merely "biánt´!"...Is not biant perhaps Irish? and have not the negros adopted it from them?
The common white people use it too...

The form beyant is listed in DARE as a chiefly Southern and South Midlands variant of beyond with a reference to 1837. As Davis (2003) discusses, it is almost certainly of Irish origin as Lieber suggested.

(8) Gully v. 6, p. 166
In the South no other word is use for a deep rut or channel washed by the heavy rains, frequently 20 feet deep, by educated as well as other people.

The use of gully in the sense above is virtually identical to the use of gully washer found in DARE where gully is given as one of the variants. However, DARE does not restrict its geographical range to the South.

(9) Cook-house v. 7 p. 219-220
Common people here (S. Carolina) occasionally say cook-house for kitchen.

DARE shows sporadic use of the term cookhouse but does not indicate that it is a southern term.
Doty, Doddered v. 8 p. 248-9
Doty is a very common expression here about (Columbia S.C.) for spongey rottenness inside a tree, among common white people and negros. I donot know how far it extends, or whether it may be provincial even in England.

Both Carver (1987) and DARE give doty as a southernism. The earliest reference to the term cited in DARE (and the OED) is from 1883. Lieber's reference predates this by more than thirty years.

Givy weather means here in the Eastern South, moist, warm weather, "growing weather". I donot know how far the word extends, or whether it occurs in England or Scotland.

DARE gives this as a South Atlantic and Mid Atlantic term for 'muggy'. The geographical range seems largely coextensive with Lieber's "Eastern South".

Truck means here in the eastern South everything like the
Italian roba. What truck have you here; my truck is growing (by the farmer). It means stuff in its widest sense.

The term truck with the meaning of 'things' is given in the OED and goes back to the 16th century. It is also listed in Montgomery and Hall (2004) with the earliest reference to 1860 and the latest reference to 1937.

(13) Season v. 9, p. 327
Season is frequently used here, and always in Mississippi etc (as Oscar [Lieber's eldest son] tells me) for a good rain, a rain of some duration, one that is not a mere sprinkling. Sometimes it is used for rain altogether.

The use of season in the sense that Lieber describes is mentioned in DARE as an old Southern and South Midlands term with a reference to 18th century Jamaica.

(14) Frenching v. 9, p. 335
This is a curious word. Mr. Brumby tells me that it is common in Florida to say a field frenches cotton or corn etc when the plant promises well but at certain periods becomes poor and dies owing to the soil. Mr. Thornwell
said he heard it lately 1854, for the first time, from his overseer. Where does the word come from? Surely not from French? Or has some clever fellow used it first thus tropically?

This is a term found in both the OED and DARE and seems to be dated to the 1850s. DARE notes the term usually refers to tobacco whereas Lieber has it as more general.

(15) Honing v. 9, p. 341

a word among the illiterate here-about (S.C.) [South Carolina] for longing.

The word honing with the meaning 'longing for' is found in DARE and is given as a Southern and South Midland term with the earliest references to the 1850s.

(16) Saving v. 9, p. 357

In Virginia they use saving for harvesting, gathering: I am saving my hay—he saves his corn

This word is found in DARE with the meaning 'harvest' and is given as a Southern and South Midlands term.
In addition to the known southernisms given above, there are entries in Lieber's *Americanisms* that he ascribes to the South or part of the South that seems to have been lost. Some of these are in the realm of college slang, specifically, terms Lieber recorded as used among students at South Carolina College. Other terms Lieber mentioned were also lost such as those in (17) and (18).

(17) Dipper v. 2, p. 65

People in the South and West drink a great deal of water, owing to the warm climate, and the unfortunate *chewing* and whiskey drinking. Every where therefore stands a bucket on the back or the front piazza, filled with water, and a ladle, sometimes of cocoa nut, sometimes of tin etc is near it. Out of this ladle every one drinks, and it is called a dipper. All are accustomed to drink out of this dipper, one after another, without any feeling of disgust, but it would create much disgust, and be considered very impolite, to put the water which may remain in the ladle, again into the bucket.

(18) Soffké v. 5, p. 150 The Cherokee name for a dish of soft corn and peas, boiled together, and which, according to Webster is called elsewhere as *Succatash*. 
The whites in Georgia, near the Cherokees use likewise the term Soffké

Similarly, there are occasional expressions that Lieber ascribes to the South, but seem to be unknown today. Two examples are in (19) and (20).

(19) Most generally sometimes  v. 1, p. 32
A very common expression in the South among negros and low white persons. "Do you go to church?" "Most generally sometimes". If I am asked what is the meaning, I would answer just what it indicates. It is an expression of an unskilled person, asserting and taking away again, as an unskillful draughtsman rubs out half he has drawn. It means more than sometimes, less than most generally, brief it means generally.


Lieber was very interested in slang expressions. He recorded slang expressions that are still known as well as those that have been lost. He sometimes tried to determine their
origins both in terms of what group they came from and, when relevant, in terms of their grammatical formation. As an example of the former is his entry for 'spanking'.

(21) Spanking v. 1, p. 27

Our president Preston when in very good humour, praises, by calling a student or his performance spanking. He is a spanking fellow; a spanking speech, i.e. brilliant, making a fine effect. Is the word Virginian? I once heard that it is naval slang

With respect to understanding the grammatical (morphological) formation of a slang term consider Lieber's entries for bodyacious (i.e. bodacious) and judgmatical where he notes that a longer suffix such as -ocious makes a word sound more scientific.

(22) Bodyacious v. 1, p. 21

In the upper part of S. Carolina, bodyacious is used by the vulgar people for entire, whole, root and branch; f. i. [for instance] the pigs broke into my fence and destroyed the potato patch bodyaciously”.

(23) Judgmatical v. 6, p. 193-4
one of those odd words common in the West and even here (the South where I live). As in bodacious or bodyacious (q. v. in this collection) the reminiscence of acious in audacious and voracious helped to generate the word, so has a reminiscence or Aucklang as the Germans would say, of mathematical, problematical and altogether, the lengthened spread sound contributed to produce this word sounding to the unlettered undoubtedly more scientific, more dignified than judicious, while a number of persons use it half in joke and half as "as good a word as any other."

There are slang terms that Lieber discusses that he does not specifically limit to the South. These include fogy (as in old fogy, v. 9, p. 311) and smash down as in "A smash-down captain of a feller" (v. 1, p. 32). However, some of the most interesting slang terms Lieber presents are the college slang terms used by students at South Carolina College recorded by Lieber in the 1840s. His entries for these are given below. These seem to have been completely lost.

(24) Chawcastic v. 7, p. 211-212
a word among our students, probably invented here, possibly imported into our college from a western region.
To chaw a person is to say sarcastical things to or of him, and this slang word is formed as so many others, e.g. *judgmatical*, that is of a common word, sometimes a cant word, with an addition which gives it a ludicrously pompous or scientific sound. If the word has been made here, and only lately too, as I am told it has, it only shows how such words originate.

(25) *rat-fresh*  v. 3, p 74
Freshmen in our institution are called *rat-fresh*, if they have entered college when the Freshman class was formed, to distinguish them from the freshman who enter the class in October and remain in it, but a month and a half, the class then rising to Sophomore. This term, though universal now, has come into use only these last 6 or 8 years, yet I have never been able to ascertain its origin. No one knows it.

(26) *Splurging*  v. 8, p. 273
means among our students (S.C. College) to make a showy recitation with the display of much collateral reading.

(27) *Bugs about*  v. 9, p. 329-330
Bugs about is the call of our students when there is disorder, and the professors come out. The *bugs* are of
course the professors, and probably is connected with "big-bugs" for great important people like big-whigs.

3.2 Terms denoting people -- Lieber provides a number of terms denoting people. While some of these terms are not exclusively southernisms, they are of interest because they present a synchronous understanding of how such terms were used. Along these lines, one of the more interesting entries is Lieber's entry for Creole given in (28).

(28) Creole v. 2, p. 52-53

In Louisiana means native, no matter whether man, animal, or thing — white, mixed, or black. They speak there of creole ladies, creole lawyers, creole negros, creole cane, mules, eggs, trees. It does by no means indicate an admixture of negro blood. A creole Indian would be a native Louisiana Indian. Nor does it indicate "of French descent". The son of German parents, is a creole if born in Louisiana. In Europe they always connect the idea of colour with creole, but this is neither Spanish nor Louisianish.

What is interesting about Lieber's statement is that it reflects an antebellum understanding of the term creole in the Louisiana
context where it can refer to nonhumans and even inanimate objects (Tom Klingler, personal communication). This corresponds with the antebellum citations of creole found in DARE that originate in Louisiana which includes "a creole cow" and "a creole potatoe".

A number of Lieber's entries that refer to different types of people make specific reference to those of African origin in the slave context of the South. These include the terms in (29)-(33) and provide us with an awareness of how these terms were viewed.

(29) Servant v. 2, p. 53
means here always a slave, and is preferred both by whites and coloured, to slave.

(30) Coloured v. 2, p. 53
is used by negroes for all who have colour, and also by whites who wish to speak inoffensively. Properly speaking coloured people are mulattos. Negro is disrelished by negroes.

(31) Yellow v. 2, p. 53
Means here in the South, if applied to human beings, coloured, mulatto...Mulatto is not as frequently used as
yellow, in common parlance"

(32) Lady [woman] v. 8, 240-241
In the South woman means a black female...In hotels etc an American asks for his wife as his lady. They write in the book: Mr. Brown and lady.

(33) Cuffy v. 9, p. 304
Cuffy (I donot know whether it is thus written) is a nickname for a negro. Formerly it was used without any intention of insult or teasing. But it is not relished now by the negroes. Whence does it come? I found Cuffe as a family name in England.

We can take Lieber's descriptions in (29)-(33) as providing a common synchronous understanding of the terms referring to people of African origin. The term in (33), Cuffy, most likely originates with the African day-name Kofi (Friday).

Lieber also provides entries that reference other types of people living in his midst. For example, he gives an early description of the term cracker. His entry is provided in (34).

(34) Cracker, Sandhill cracker, sandhiller v. 3 p. 92-93
There is in the Southern States a peculiar species of population of white men - squatters (that is unauthorized settlers) on pine lands of little value. They are called, by way of contempt, crackers etc. Some of them may well be called the savages in the midst of civilization. They generally have a miserable horse or harness, a cow to their pityful little cart, on which they bring a puny load of wood, stolen in the forest around them, to town. I have seen boys and men riding such a cow harnessed to the cart. They are sallow, even greenish, live upon whiskey, and stolen hogs or cattle, and mostly live without any fear of God or men. Very many of them cohabit promiscuously, change concubines and cases of fearful incest have occurred. I have known them. A stone jug is invariably dangling under the cart. In it they take the whiskey from town which they buy from the money they get for their wood. Often have I seen their children as drunk as the parents. Here is a field for missionaries, instead of distant countries in the East.

While Lieber is more colorful in his caricature of a 'cracker', Carver (1987:130) cites a 1766 source where cracker is originally referred to as "a backwoodsman who was a braggart and
sometimes an outlaw". Lieber also provides the humorous term Pinetuckian.

(35) Pinetuckian  v. 3 p. 94

Pinetuckian (a jocose imitation of Kentuckian) is used for cracker, the pine alluding to their squatting on pineland.\(^7\)

There are other terms for people that Lieber gives that seem to have been local to parts of South Carolina during his time, but no longer seem to be used and are not known today. Two such terms are in (36) and (37).

(36) Burried Jew  v. 5, p. 156-157

In this region (Columbia, Camden S.C.), I donot know to what farther extent, burried jew means in common parlance, what the Germans call "baptized jew", that is christians who have been jews. The difficulty arising out of the fact that Jew has the double meaning of religion and national descent, and that while the one can be changed, the other remains still to be designated, is felt every where. In Germany however, it ought to be added that a desire exists or at least existed illiberally to designate the "baptized Jews" by way of contempt which neither in France, England nor here exists.
(37) Corner-Man v. 6, p. 191-192

In Charleston S.C. there are a great many foreigners, especially Germans from Bremen etc. who keep the lowest grogshops generally placed at the corners where they carry on much illicit trade with negros. These people are greatly disesteemed, as an injurious part of the population. It is natural, therefore that, a name for them corresponding to the idea of a class of men, should come to be settled, and Cornerman is this, now settled worder. Etymologically it is similar to the famous Berlin Eckensteher (corner standers) though this signifies a different class of people, viz. men who wait for jobs at certain corners...

3.3 Grammatical features -- In his Americanisms Lieber sometimes references a grammatical feature of the language and some of these are of relevance to the English of the American South. A couple of grammatical features are only touched on in passing without any comment. For example, while Lieber never discusses a-prefixing, he does include sample sentences with it. At the end of volume 4 he mentions the expression to go a catting which he describes as "meaning whatever you undertake to do, do that and nothing else. When I go a catting, I go a
"Catting." In his entry for the term **gunning** (volume 8, p. 298), Lieber writes the following, "Gunning, for going out a-hunting with the gun, is an Americanism". While Lieber never tries to explain a-prefixing, his example of "going out a-hunting" suggests that its use was not uncommon. Lieber also noted the use of **like to** in the sense of 'about to'. His entry for this reads as follows (volume 1, p. 7): "He had liked to be shot for he was on the point or in a hair's breadth of being shot, or very near, etc." This is listed in **DARE** as being Southern and South Midlands. More interesting is his observation on participles given in (38).

(38) v. 4, p. 131 The Imperfect instead of the participle past. It is common to say: **I had went**, but I did not know that this is done with all verbs whose imperfect has if I can say so, a participial sound as all irregular monosyllabic Saxon verbs have. It is odd on the other hand: illiterate persons frequently add the common participle ending of **ED** to irregular participles ending in **T**.

Later on, in volume 5, p. 159 Lieber notes examples like **Attacted** for **attacked**.
Another entry that Lieber makes regarding a grammatical feature of southern English is in his three page entry for (perfective) done. The relevant part of the entry is cited below.

(39) Done v. 6, p. 167-170

Bartlett does not give this word as it ought to be given. Done is the word by which the negros of the southern U.S. form the participle past, similar to the process by which the modern languages substituted the auxiliary have with the participle to the simple form of the ancient perfect...Now the negros use this done either with the participle present which is rare or past or the infinitive, and often, may generally leave out the auxiliary have, thus for I have gone there they say: I have done going there; I done going there, I done gone there, I done go there (rather thaar). The lower white persons have much adopted this done, which is an amplification and still further fixing of the idea of the past, the complete finishing of an action.

While much can be said about Lieber's comment and how it may relate to the origins of this feature (see Davis 2003 for discussion), it is an important entry given both in its
coherence and in the likelihood that it constitutes the earliest discussion on this feature of southern English.

4. Conclusion -- The purpose of this article has been to make known Lieber's Americanisms as an untapped source on the early history of the English of the American South. While I have not presented all of Lieber's entries that are of relevance, I have focused on what I consider the most important ones. These often provide one of the earliest if not the earliest source of known southernisms, they include local southernisms that have been lost, and they provide an early source on some grammatical features such as perfective done. Also, of interest, but not pursued here, is Lieber's view of the regional varieties of American English as reflected in his entries since it constitutes an early conception of the emerging dialects. In sum, given Lieber's background and academic credentials as well as his knowledge of diverse varieties of English, Lieber's Americanisms is not only an untapped source but a unique source on the development of American English.
References


DARE. Dictionary of American Regional English. 1985-. Vol. 1


Acknowledgements --- Financial support for this work has come from two short-term fellowships from the Huntington Library and from a grant-in-aid for research from Indiana University. I would like to thank Julie Auger, Clancy Clements, Daniel Dinnsen, Steven Franks, Brian Jose, Salikoko Mufwene, and Walt Wolfram for their support and comments. I would also like to thank Hartmut Keil, Shawn Kimmel, and Karl Müller-Vollmer for sharing with me their insights into Francis Lieber. Finally, I would like to especially thank Shirley Brice Heath for generously providing me with many of her materials on Francis Lieber from work she had done on Lieber in the 1970s. These individuals may not necessarily agree with the interpretation presented in this paper. I acknowledge the Huntington Library for giving me permission to quote extensively Lieber's Americanisms.

1. On the side of the page, Lieber also lists "Louisiana" and "German" under his list of American provincialisms. I am interpreting this to mean that Louisiana is a domain of American provincialisms both with respect to French and English. In Lieber's private notes on language there is occasional reference about the French in Louisiana and there are at least a couple of entries in his Americanisms that reference English usage in Louisiana. With respect to German, Lieber's Americanisms
contain a number of entries that refer to German usage among
German speakers in America. This is a topic that Lieber wrote
about in his (1835) Reminiscences of Barthold George Niebuhr as
well as his "Notes on Pennsylvania German" (partially reproduced
in Reichmann 1945).

2 Lieber sometimes makes comments on the speech of the blacks
who dwelt in South Carolina. His comments provide an
interesting source on the nature of early African American
English. This is a topic that I have addressed in Davis (2003,
2005) and will not pursue here.

3 I do not pursue here how the geographical restrictions on
terms within the South suggested by Lieber relate to the
subdivisions within southern English proposed in such works as
Carver (1987). It needs to be emphasized that Lieber's comments
on geographical divisions within the South are based on his own
impressions. These come from his observations in South
Carolina, comments from his colleagues who travelled in the
South, and his readings of various articles in which relevant
terms are mentioned. While Lieber wrote the bulk of his
Americanisms while living in South Carolina, he had very little
personal travel experience in the South, outside of South
Carolina which he knew well. Lieber had a strong dislike for
slavery and travelled to the North virtually every summer that
he lived in South Carolina. He left South Carolina for New York in 1856 largely because of his anti-slavery views.

44. Lieber's use of dinner as a noonday meal is not unusual. DARE indicates that its use was widespread.

55. Lieber's entry for most generally sometimes is also mentioned by Heath (1982).

66. See McDavid and McDavid (1973) for a discussion of the term cracker.

77. Lieber had given an entry for pineland (v. 3, p. 88) as "a type of land of little value that can't be used for agriculture"