

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sn.2020.16.09>

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## OBSELETE, OBSOLESCENT, AND RARELY USED VERB FORMS IN CONFEDERATE GRAMMARS

### Abstract

Confederate textbooks published between 1861 and 1865 have recently been receiving more and more scholarly attention. Nonetheless, only a handful of publications deal with the linguistic aspects, focusing mainly on the extralinguistic traits typical of textbooks published in the Confederacy during the Civil War. This article aims to, at least partially, fill this void by means of exploring the realm of irregular verbs; more specifically it focuses on those verbs, whose preterite/past participle forms were deemed obsolete/obsolescent/belonging to solemn style in seven prescriptive grammars of the time. In the discussion section, whenever possible, comparisons to existing studies depicting coeval British and American verbal paradigms are carried out. It is assumed that such an approach allows for showing plausible similarities/discrepancies between the patterns offered in Confederate patterns and in their British/Northern counterparts.

**Keywords:** Confederate grammars, verbal paradigm, irregular verbs, Confederate prescriptivism.

### 1. Introduction

Prescriptivism and its impact (or lack thereof) on language change has long been a subject of scholarly interest. Up to date American normative grammars, however, have received scant attention of researchers, as has the linguistic value of American orthoepical and prescriptive evidence. A notable exception is a series of recent publications by Anderwald (2012a, b), (2013), and (2016) in which the 19<sup>th</sup>-century American grammars are treated *en masse* and no differentiation is made between Northern and Southern publications. The latter, narrowed down to those published in the Confederate States between 1861 and 1865, constitute the topic of the present paper.

It should be emphasized that the normative input of the Confederacy has only relatively recently been acknowledged in such publications as Quigley (2006), Kopp (2009), and Bernath (2010). These, however, focus rather on the extralinguistic traits typical of textbooks of the time, such as the promotion of Southern patriotism, increasing racism, secessionist feelings or cultural elements that surface in a variety of textbooks.

To my knowledge, only within the last two decades have Confederate normative grammars and textbooks been acknowledged as a source worthy of analysis from a purely linguistic angle. More specifically, in Montgomery's (2004) *LAVIS*<sup>1</sup> talk (published in 2015), where the 19<sup>th</sup> century is treated as crucial in the development of Southern American English, focus is on the elements pertinent to historical dialectal data; in particular, Montgomery draws linguistic data from five Confederate textbooks that offer a list of prescribed and proscribed norms. Among these proscribed elements are some which reflect the spoken idiom of the time.

This paper is the outcome of a broader study of textbooks published in the Southern states during the Civil War period and aims at addressing whether a systematic scrutiny of these thus-far-neglected sources will unearth more information on the use of non-standard (=dialectal) features as depicted in the sections devoted to structures and forms proscribed by both grammarians and authors of textbook of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> This paper, in turn, focuses on a selection of seven Confederate grammars (henceforth the *Corpus of Confederate Grammars* = *CCG*) published between 1861 and 1865, which offers lists of irregular verbs, whose alternative primary forms are marked as outdated or rarely used. Bearing in mind that the Confederate authors' goal was to inoculate the minds of the young and the old alike with the purest form of English, an analysis of the set of grammars may shed some light on what verbal forms were understood then as representing the most refined version of English and which were then deemed obsolete, obsolescent, and rarely used. Given the conservative character of prescriptive writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Anderwald 2012a), the paper will go on to ascertain which grammars clung to outdated verb forms, and which discarded them, and whether the primary forms of verbs differ in books by the same author(s). Verb forms found in the said set of Southern grammars are also compared to Anderwald's aforementioned existing studies (and, if need be, others<sup>3</sup>). The aim of such an approach is twofold: (a) it allows for

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<sup>1</sup> *LAVIS*III: Language Variety in the South: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. *LAVIS* III conference was held at the University of Alabama in April 2004.

<sup>2</sup> These might testify to the presumed continuing changes and the process of new dialect formation in the region in (more or less) the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Dylewski's (2002) study of a corpus of Early American English for the years 1620–1720. This study investigates ablaut verbs in written American English of that period.

ascertaining whether the verbal paradigm attested in the Confederate writings conforms to the general, American pattern of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and (b), assuming that chunks of grammars, if not their entire content, had been copied from the earlier sources (not only American), the comparison to British normative grammars of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century seems a legitimate approach.

Finally, the forms of verbs gleaned from the sources at issue are, whenever possible, complemented with the information garnered from Mark Davies's 400 million-word *Corpus of Historical American English*; whenever applicable, and the use of certain forms is checked in *Private Voices*, a searchable collection of Civil War letters, throughout which the elements of spoken word are apparent.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Confederate textbooks: an introduction

Confederate textbooks include the following publications printed in the Confederate States<sup>5</sup> of America between 1861 and 1865: primers, readers, grammars, spellers, elocution manuals, and geography books. As Kopp (2009) maintains, in the Confederate Imprints deposited in American libraries one may find at least<sup>6</sup> 136 textbooks published in the Confederate States during the Civil War. The chronology of their publication is given in Figure 1.

Interestingly, even though during the war the rebellious South faced an economic blockade and later an economic depression, the need to establish its economic independence and, more importantly in the context of this paper, intellectual and educational independence from the Northern states manifested itself in a vigorous effort to provide the Southern student with books intended for their particular needs. The quote below illustrates the obstacles the Confederate publishers were forced to overcome:

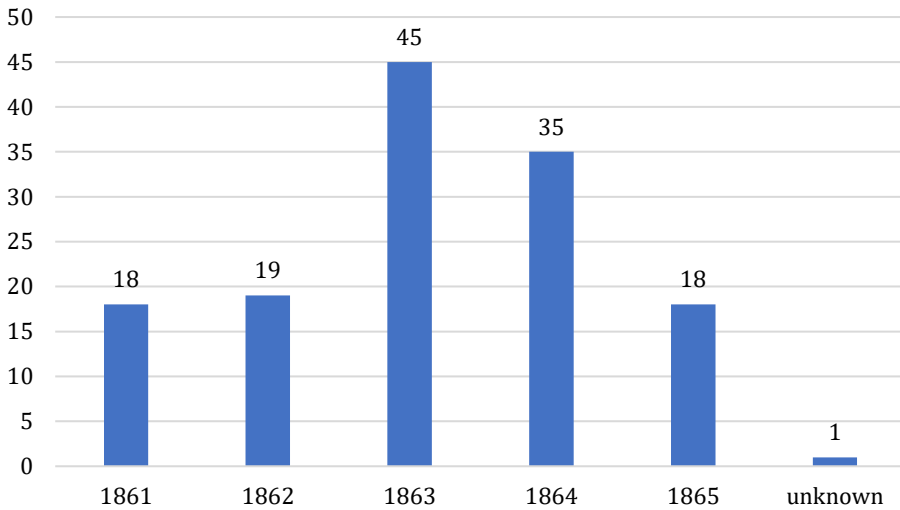
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<sup>4</sup> This website (available at <https://altchive.org/private-voices>) offers "transcriptions of nearly 4,000 letters from four Southern states: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama". Letters of the type written by members of less privileged stations of American society for the most part contain unrestrained language, where many elements of spoken language are observable.

<sup>5</sup> The Confederate States of America comprised 11 states which proclaimed secession once Abraham Lincoln had been elected president of the US. The Confederacy lasted from 1861 to 1865; after its defeat by the North, it ceased to exist. <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/confederate-states-of-america>; date of access: 01.04.2019.

<sup>6</sup> Kopp (2009: 30) says that the exact number of hard to specify: "Many textbooks appeared in multiple editions over the course of the war, and most bibliographers count each edition as a separate work, even when no material was added or deleted from the original content. It is therefore difficult to determine whether or not a new edition of a previously published work should be considered a unique item. A second problem is that many more textbooks may have been produced in the Confederacy than survive today in libraries and archives".

We are happy to be the medium of introducing these books to the public, and we regret that the restrictions of the blockade and the innumerable difficulties of publication in these times forbid their appearance in a style equal to their merit. We prefer to publish them without pictorial embellishments other than a simple frontispiece: first, because the expense would so greatly enhance the cost of the books as to place them beyond the reach of the general public; and secondly, because it would be exceedingly difficult now to procure illustrations worthy of the name. When the war is over it will be easy to obtain suitable cuts in stereotype plates from abroad, when a new edition will be published supplying all present omissions (Chaundron 1864: publisher note).



**Figure 1.** Chronology of textbook publishing (according to Kopp 2009: 106)

Bearing in mind more obstacles that potentially hindered the production of books, such as the growing lack of decent-quality paper and the dearth of large publishing houses in the South, the amount of educational books published between 1861 and 1865 is frankly impressive.<sup>7</sup> As is evident in Figure 1, in the midst of the wartime activities, the production of textbooks was at its prime. These were printed in eight Confederate states: Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Texas, Alabama, and Louisiana, with Virginia and North Carolina leading the way (Kopp 2009). This domination seems to have stemmed from the relative economic prosperity which characterized these two states during the war when, of course, compared to other states of the Confederacy.

<sup>7</sup> The year 1863 was a turning point in the war, and it affected the production of textbooks: the Union army began to succeed increasingly, a year later Abraham Lincoln was elected president for the second time against the hopes of the South and the Union troops moved further South. None of this augured well for a promising future for the Confederacy.

Below the motivation behind the publishing of books in the war-stricken South together with the character of such books is addressed.

### **3. Confederate textbooks: motivation behind their publication**

The issues of Southernness, the promotion of Southern patriotism, values and ideology, religiousness and independence in the textbooks published in the South between 1861 and 1865 has received extensive treatment in scholarly publications. The interest in the Confederate material under discussion may be categorized roughly as follows: (a) ideology, patriotism (promoting the idea of the Confederacy) have been addressed in Kopp (2009) and Bernath (2010); (b) religiosity and Southern way(s) of life, in turn, have been discussed in, e.g., Kennerly (1956), Marten (1998), and Kopp 2009; (c) the struggle for (intellectual) independence has received treatment in Bernath (2010); (d) slavery and white supremacy have been tackled by Faust (1988); (e) instructions for young Southerners constitute a part of Kopp's (2009) thesis; and (f) linguistic prescriptions and proscriptions in Confederate textbooks have been discussed by Montgomery (2004 and 2015).

This section draws partially on the existing scholarly contribution and, although the topic of this paper concentrates on Southern grammars and archaic and rare verb forms found there, it also addresses the broader category of Confederate textbooks. This seeks to give a fuller picture of the incentives behind their writing, re-writing, and publishing.

The campaign for Confederate textbooks resulted from the dependence of antebellum Southern educators and school children on Northern works. Once these books were no longer available or acceptable, an alternative was required. The aim of this alternative was to establish the supremacy of Southern textbooks over their Northern counterparts and to promote patriotism, insofar as books instructed children to honor, respect, and memorialize the Confederacy, and religiosity among young learners. Southern schoolbooks sought to teach them not only manners, but also pure English and, all in all, Confederate textbooks were vital in shaping the hearts, minds, and language of Southern youngsters. Publishing books by Southerners for Southerners also marked, not only the struggle for intellectual independence, but also the intellectual superiority of the Confederate States. It also assured the inclusion of qualities regarded as necessary, in which their Northern counterparts were ostensibly lacking.

Confederate textbooks were often prefaced with an explanation of the reason behind their publication, an emphasis of their Southern character and, importantly, their Southern authorship. A case in point would be the

preface to *The Dixie speller and reader*, in which is written: “Her main object has been to supply a Spelling and Reading Book combined, the want of which is seriously felt at the present time, and which, while it is adapted to the different grades of scholarship of the young beginner, should contain nothing objectionable in moral tone, and should be wholly Southern in sentiment”. It also states: “[w]hile the *sons* of the South are nobly battling for her political, a *daughter* thus makes an humble effort to keep open the path to her literary independence” (1863: 6). Lander (1863) emphasized the following: “...the first Arithmetic whose authorship and publication belong exclusively to the Confederate States”. In the preface to Worrell’s (1861: iii) *The principles of English grammar*, the author, on the one hand, offers the following apology:

The only apologies offered for presenting *a new Grammar* to the public are — first, *that every independent nation must furnish its own literature*; and second, *that none of the works hitherto presented to the public are perfect*. The Southerners, in their previous history, have been content to have their books furnished them by the North. This not only *discouraged Southern authorship*, and *cramped genius*, but it allowed the North the *chief means of shaping national bias* — THE Press. But now that the Southern people have separated from the North, and established an *independent nationality*, she will, of course, hail with pleasure every industrious effort of “*her own sons*” to free her from *Abolition dependencies*.<sup>8</sup>

He goes on, however, to maintain that “the author does not claim absolute perfection in the present work; but he *does* claim that, while he has embodied in this work the *best* that he could obtain from other sources, he has presented, in a *clearer, fuller* light, the ‘science of the English language,’ than any other one author of his acquaintance” and that there “are three considerations which should commend this work to Southern patronage: 1. The author was *born* and *educated* in the *South*: 2. The work has been *edited* and *published* in the *South*: 3. The *work itself*: “let it stand or fall on its own merits”” (Worrell 1861: iv).

The books often contain “testimonials in [their] favor”: in Baird (1864: 189), W. Perroneau Finley and John R. Dow recommend the book in this manner:

The Rev. Washington Baird, being about to publish, for the use of schools in the Confederate States, a Spelling Book, interspersed with Reading Lessons in prose and poetry, &c., and having explained to us the system on which it has been prepared, and having submitted many portions of the manuscripts containing lessons adapted to the various stages of a pupil’s progress, we take pleasure in now expressing our opinion of the merits of his work. We consider this book of Mr. Baird’s, not only a great desideratum in our schools, but, as the title page asserts, well calculated to please and instruct the young; and while it imparts useful information, its tendency is to produce correct moral impressions. It has also the special merit of being

<sup>8</sup> Original italics, hyphens, and capitalized words have been retained in this excerpt.

adapted to our Southern latitude, and in accordance with the views and sentiments of the people of the Confederate States. We also think it a valuable acquisition as a family book for the instruction and training of children during their elementary course; and we have no hesitation in recommending it to the patronage of all who are concerned or interested, either professionally or otherwise, in the training of the young and rising generation. We really think, also, that Mr. Baird deserves the gratitude of the Southern people for this elaborate, well-timed and patriotic contribution to the mental and moral furniture of our schools, and the educational resources of our country.

Some of the published titles *per se* also mirrored the need to manifest the Confederate succession and the need to emphasize its unique identity. The books in question therefore bore titles to obviate any confusion with their Northern counterparts, such as *Southern (1863) edition: the elementary spelling book, being an improvement on the American Spelling Book by Noah Webster*, *The Southern pictorial primer* (West & Johnston 1863); *Dixie primer for the little folks* (Moore 1863), *The Southern Confederacy arithmetic* (Leverett 1864), and *The Confederate States speller & reader* (Neely 1865) (Montgomery 2015: 105).

Scrutiny of content, however, often reveals that Southern authors either copied Northern (and British) books in their entirety or in part. Sometimes they introduced minute changes to the Northern originals. *Smith's English Grammar, on the productive system, revised and improved, and adapted to the use of schools*, for example, contained "Confederate rather than foreign<sup>9</sup> names in the examples" and the rest of the content remained unchanged. In the introduction to the *Southern edition, the elementary spelling book* (1863: 5–6), one finds the following: "A few selections from the writings of others have been made, but by far the greater number are entirely original".

In order to establish the originality, the publishers' and authors' testimony, authors would assure the readers that the given publication be by all means genuine and credible. In the section called "publisher's advertisement" of Neely's (1865) *The Confederate States speller*, the publisher thus writes: "The book here offered to Southern Teachers, is neither a reprint, nor a medley hurriedly got up. It is an original book, as far as such a book can be original; and has been prepared with the utmost care, by a practical teacher, whose experience of more than forty years in his profession has enabled him to judge what are the wants both of preceptor and of pupil".

Montgomery (2004: pages not numbered) rightfully recapitulates the discussion on the driving forces behind textbook production and publication: "These new Southern schoolbooks were motivated by more than necessity, opportunism, and sectionalism ... A fourth purpose was

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<sup>9</sup> Foreign here means Northern.

inculcating proper language practices by identifying for correction pronunciations and grammatical usages in the speech of pupils". Indeed, as mentioned before, the purest form of English was the ideal to be attained by Confederate youth. For example, in the preface, Sterling and Campbell (1863: iii) posit that "in spelling and pronunciation we have followed, mainly, the authority of Dr. Worcester, who, in our judgement, approaches nearer the true English standard, and accords better with the usage of our best native authors in the Confederate States than any other lexicographer". This urge for linguistic correctitude and teaching "the true English standard" was to unify: to construct a united society also by means of the English language.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. The importance of the Bible, and biblical and solemn style

The importance of the Bible and biblical language should not be underestimated, bearing in mind the piety of the South (and the history of English *per se*). Bergs and Brinton (2012: 1047) discuss the general tradition which attributes the profound impact of the *King James Bible* "both on English literature and on the development of modern written English". They maintain that this tradition began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the likes of Bishop Lowth (1979 [1775]: 62), who calls the English of the *King James Bible* "the best standard of our language", which may be followed until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, with McGrath (2001: 1), who calls it a "landmark in the history of the English language" whose influence "has been incalculable" (see also McArthur 1992: 121)". The authors simultaneously advise against taking this impact at face value: "although the influence of the *King James Bible* certainly cannot be denied, it seems that, from a linguistic perspective, such sweeping statements need either qualification or confirmation" (2012: 1047).

The importance of biblical English in the case of normative grammars, at least those analyzed for the purpose of this paper, ought not to be overlooked. Before we focus on the biblical forms at length, I would like to give a moment's thought to the presence of biblical/religious references in Southern schoolbooks in general.

Southern schoolbooks are interspersed with references of biblical and religious character regardless of their nature. Such elements are to be found in readers, spellers, arithmetic text books, and grammars alike and the need

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<sup>10</sup> It has to be emphasized that these were the concerns of upper-class Confederates, since the authors of textbook were generally members of the upper class who had the time to spend hours writing books, of finding a publisher, and then spending money on marketing their books.



to study the Scriptures is often emphasized; as for the former, for example, in *Our own arithmetic*, students are presented with the following task: “the Bible contains 31173 verses; how many verses must I read each day, to finish it in one year?” (Lander 1863: 198). In the *First reader for Southern Schools* Moore peppers his textbook with reading tasks characterized by deeply religious overtones. One of the lessons, for example, reads: “Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is able to save us from our sins. He died to save all men. He is now in heaven, but will come again... O Lord make me lit to meet Thee! When I die, take me up to Thee!” (1864: 15). In turn, in the *Confederate spelling book*, Baird (1864: 24–25) provides a spelling lesson in solemn/biblical style, a fragment of which is quoted here: “... neither will I smite every living thing any more as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease”.

In terms of the latter, for instance Sterling and Campbell (1863: 161) write: “The study of the Bible is a great matter. That holy book treats of God, of man, of time, of eternity, of heaven, and of hell. It speaks only truth on all matters. He who knows the Bible well, may be wise and good, and happy, though he never reads any other book”.

Regarding the Biblical language, Bergs and Brinton (2012: 1047) point out that:

“Biblical English” can be seen as the register of English which is based on the language of the *King James Bible*, that is, the language of Tyndale’s translations, with the 16<sup>th</sup> century alterations of succeeding Bible translations and the alterations made by the translators of the *King James Bible*. Its major morpho-syntactic and lexical features have been described by Crystal and Davy (1969) in their discussion of religious language. The most important ones are the use of the second-person pronouns (*ye* vs. *you*, *thou* vs. *you*), the inflectional endings of the second and third persons of verbs (*-st*, *-th*), archaic past forms of verbs (e.g. *spake*) and plural forms of nouns (e.g. *brethren*), older word orders (e.g. inversion after initial adverbials) and, of course, lexical archaisms (e.g. *behold*, *forthwith*). These and other typical features of Biblical English can be said to constitute the major elements of the register of religious English, a variety which today seems to be only partly acceptable even in its proper religious domain and is elsewhere mostly limited to literary or humorous purposes.

In coeval grammars much coverage is given over to guidance on pronominal and verbal paradigms. For the most part, these paradigms reflect no actual usage of the time, but depict forms already confined as biblical language, a solemn (or grave) and poetic style. More specifically, the grammars analyzed provide the following set of personal pronouns in the singular: the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns *thou* (of the second person, either gender), *thy* or *thine* (possessive) and *thee* (objective); in plural: *you* or *ye* (nominative), *your* or *yours* (possessive) and *you* (objective). Similarly, in

the sections devoted to compound personal pronouns, *thysself* (both nominative and objective cases) occurs in the singular. Archaic forms with *thou* are also provided in the sections devoted to verb conjugation: *art* is to occur with *thou*, the *-st* ending is prescribed to appear on the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular verbs (i.e. *thou wast, thou hadst, thou lovedst, thou tookest, thou mayest*, etc.). In addition, the *-(e)th* ending which had long fallen out of general use, but was still claimed to in the linguistic repertoire of the Quakers, was to appear on the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular verbs next the preferred *-s* ending.

In other types of schoolbooks one may also find reading/spelling instruction where texts written in solemn style were employed. By means of example, *The Confederate spelling book, with reading lessons for the young, adapted to the use of schools for private instruction* by Smith (1865: 55) provides youngsters with text rendered in verse and embellished with poetic style:

When thou art feeble, old and gray.  
My healthy arm shall be thy stay,  
And I will soothe thy pains away,  
My mother!

## 5. Confederate grammars

While Kopp (2009) offers an extensive treatment of textbook publishing in the Confederacy, she does not differentiate between various types of schoolbook. Weeks (1900) in the *Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1898-99* is useful in finding relevant material. He lists and briefly annotates Confederate textbooks between 1861 and 1865. In Weeks' annotated bibliography there are 101 items elegantly divided together with their types and years of publication. Their distribution across the five years of the Civil War is, for the sake of readability, presented in Table 1.

Not only do the numbers given here differ from those given by Kopp (2009), but scrupulous scrutiny of Weeks' bibliography might prove somewhat misleading. Some editions are omitted, certain publications are ignored entirely (for instance, Worrell's 1861 grammar). Others, in turn, find themselves in Weeks' bibliography not on the basis of their physical edition, but via announcements on the covers of other textbooks. *The new Texas grammar*, for example, Weeks (1900: 1149) notes, is "mentioned in Raines's Bibliography of Texas; date of publication not clear; belonged to the New Texas Series of school books". The search for this publication proved, nevertheless, to be fruitless. The same applies to *New English grammar* by Dr. Dagg, which was "announced as ready on the cover to Burke's Picture Primer, published in 1864". An intense search in on-line library catalogs and

the Internet failed to retrieve any satisfying results, but for the sole reference to *Burke's Picture Primer*.

**Table 1.** Textbooks published in the Confederate States (according to Weeks 1900)

type \ year	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	uncertain	total:
primers	2	1	6	7	0	0	16
spellers	5	0	0	9	0	0	14
readers	3	3	0	18	5	0	29
arithmetic	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
grammars	1	1	4	4	1	1	12
geographies	0	0	1	3	0	0	4
dictionaries	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
books on foreign languages	0	1	0	5	0	0	6
Sunday school and other religious books	1	4	3	0	0	0	8
total:	23	10	14	47	6	1	<b>101</b>

Of the grammars that shall be analyzed Table 2 lists seven titles<sup>11</sup> chosen for linguistic scrutiny.

**Table 2.** Grammars published in the Confederacy and subject to analysis

Year of publication:	Author:	Title:
1861	Worrell, A.S.	<i>The principles of English grammar</i>
1862	Smythe, Charles W.	<i>Our own primary grammar for the use of beginners</i>
1862	York, Brantly	<i>An analytic, illustrative, and constructive grammar of the English language</i>
1863	Smythe, Charles W.	<i>Our own elementary grammar, intermediate between the primary and high school grammars, and especially adapted to the wants of the common schools</i>
1864	York, Brantly	<i>York's English grammar, revised and adapted to Southern schools (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)</i>
1864	Bullion, Peter (book revised by Rev. B Craven)	<i>An analytical and practical grammar of the English language</i>
1865	—	<i>Louisiana English grammar</i>

<sup>11</sup> Out of 12 grammars listed by Weeks, two were not found, two were editions of earlier works and in one no list of irregular verbs was present.

Due to space limitations, not much heed will be paid to a more elaborate description of particular grammars. A brief mention, however, is warranted.

The Southern wholesomeness of Worrell's (1861) grammar, its aims, and the apparent merit of its author being born and educated in the South have been mentioned above. Smythe's (1862) *Our own primary grammar* was "announced in North Carolina Journal of Education, October, 1861, and said by that journal to be the 'first North Carolina school book that has made its appearance since commencement of the war'" (Weeks 1900: 1148). Smythe's (1863) *Our own elementary grammar* was designed as a sequel to the primary grammar and was intended to embrace "a complete elementary statement of the subject" (Weeks 1900: 1148). In one of the testimonials at the beginning York's (1862) publication, Reverend A.W. Mangum, A.B. underlines its originality:

But it is his Grammar which I wish especially to recommend. Those who are acquainted with the various Grammars of our language will readily admit that all the pretended new ones, published for the last fifty years, have been little more than copies of the ideas of those before them, with a change in expression or words and arrangement. I can safely say that Prof. York's is a *new Grammar*. It contains originality, and that originality is unquestionably improvement... Several distinguished teachers in high schools in North Carolina have adopted his Grammar as a text book. If it be an improvement on other similar works, surely others should be discarded and it adopted. The author is a North Carolinian, and if his book possesses real merit, North Carolinians ought to encourage his talent and give him their patronage (1862: viii).

Unfortunately, not much can be said about Bullion (1864), since the preface to the edition in my possession is utterly illegible.

York (1864) is an actual introduction to York's *An analytic, illustrative, and constructive grammar of the English language*. In the preface to *York's English grammar, revised and adapted to Southern schools* (1864 or 1865)<sup>12</sup> we read that "...the author has attempted the publication of a Grammar adapted to the capacities of the juvenile mind – which Grammar he denominates "An Introduction to the Illustrative and Constructive Grammar". The plan of teaching, as unfolded in the latter, is precisely similar to that of the former; hence it will be found to be a convenient and easy introduction to the more voluminous and elaborate treatise embraced in the former work".

Finally, *Smith's English grammar, on the productive system. revised and improved, and adapted to the use of schools in the Confederate States* will

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<sup>12</sup> Save that the supposed 1864 edition bears this date on the front cover; on the editorial page, however, there is 1865. To make matters worse, this edition contains an introduction dated 1860 on the basis of which one can infer that it is the date of the first edition of *York's English Grammar, Revised and Adapted to Southern Schools*; that is why it can be treated as an introductory publication to *An Analytic, Illustrative, and Constructive Grammar of the English Language*.

not be taken into account, since it is a reprint of earlier editions the book went through and, importantly, “The North Carolina Journal of Education for March, 1864, has a scathing article on the inaccuracy of this book and on reprinting it for the Confederate States” (Weeks 1900: 1148). The *Louisiana English Grammar. Published by order of His Excellency, Henry W. Allen, Governor of Louisiana* (henceforth *LEG*), however, published in 1865 has not been discarded. It is a compilation from Smith’s *English Grammar* and, as Weeks (1900: 1149) emphasizes, the style of instruction in the book is “eminently adapted to beginners and children of tender years”.

## 6. Analysis and discussion

### 6.1. Preliminary remarks

In Lesson XXVI entitled “the regular and irregular or strong and weak verbs” Smythe (1862: 33) offers the following definitions: “The Regular verbs add *d* or *ed* to form their principal parts. The Irregular verbs do not add *d* or *ed* to form their principal parts”. He regards this division, however, as inadequate and states: “The later and more correct division is into *Strong* and *Weak* verbs ... The Strong verbs form their principal parts by changing the vowel; as, *sing, sang, sung*. The Weak verbs require the addition of a letter or syllable, *t, d, or ed*; as, *keep, kept, love, loved, learn, learned*”.

Even though in modern textbooks some scholars who deal especially with earlier varieties or dialects of English still cling to the notions of *strong* and *weak* verbs,<sup>13</sup> Dylewski’s opinion (2013: 191) that such terminology’s is inapplicable to a description of the verbal system of English beyond the Medieval Ages holds sway here. The more appropriate bipartite division of English verbs into *regular* and *irregular* is thus employed.

An analysis of the lists of irregular verbs found in the seven grammars allowed for the retrieval of the set of verbs termed by at least one of the normative grammarians as obsolete, obsolescent, rare, and as formal or grave, biblical, and poetic style.<sup>14</sup> These primary forms of verbs are past tense and past participle forms, as in Table 3.

<sup>13</sup> The history of English verbs is so complex that it constitutes a topic in its own right; the reader interested in the evolution of the strong-weak (regular-irregular) system ought to consult, for example, Anderwald (2016), Krygier (1994), and Price (1910).

<sup>14</sup> This is done so by either microtypographic means or the separate list of items deemed obsolete.

**Table 3.** Obsolete, obsolescent, and rare verb forms in the *CCG*

<b>Verb</b>	<b>preterite forms:</b>		<b>past participle forms:</b>	
<i>bake</i>			<i>baken</i>	
<i>bear (to bring forth) and (to carry)</i>	<i>bare</i>			
<i>bind</i>			<i>bounded</i>	
<i>break</i>	<i>brake</i>		<i>broke</i>	
<i>cleave (to adhere)</i>	<i>clave</i>			
<i>cleave (to split)</i>	<i>clave</i>	<i>cleft</i>		
<i>drive</i>	<i>drave</i>			
<i>get</i>	<i>gat</i>		<i>gotten</i>	
<i>grave</i>	<i>grove</i>			
<i>hold</i>			<i>holden</i>	
<i>lie (to recline)</i>			<i>lien</i>	
<i>ride</i>	<i>rid</i>		<i>rid</i>	<i>ridden</i>
<i>run</i>	<i>run</i>			
<i>show</i>	<i>shew</i>			
<i>shrink</i>	<i>shrank</i>			
<i>sing</i>	<i>sang</i>			
<i>sink</i>	<i>sank</i>			
<i>slide</i>	<i>slode</i>			
<i>sling</i>	<i>slang</i>			
<i>speak</i>	<i>spake</i>			
<i>spin</i>	<i>span</i>			
<i>spit</i>	<i>spat</i>		<i>spitten</i>	
<i>steal</i>	<i>stale</i>			
<i>stick</i>	<i>stack</i>			
<i>sting</i>	<i>stang</i>			
<i>stink</i>	<i>stank</i>			
<i>strike</i>	<i>strake</i>		<i>stricken</i>	
<i>string</i>	<i>strang</i>			
<i>sware</i>				
<i>swear</i>	<i>sware</i>			
<i>swing</i>	<i>swang</i>			
<i>tear</i>	<i>tare</i>			
<i>thrive</i>	<i>throve</i>			

In the discussion of the study results, verb forms are divided into (1) preterites and past participles (in line with Table 3) and, whenever possible, (2) grouped into categories on the basis of the shared paradigms in the forming of their principal parts. Before this discussion commences, an

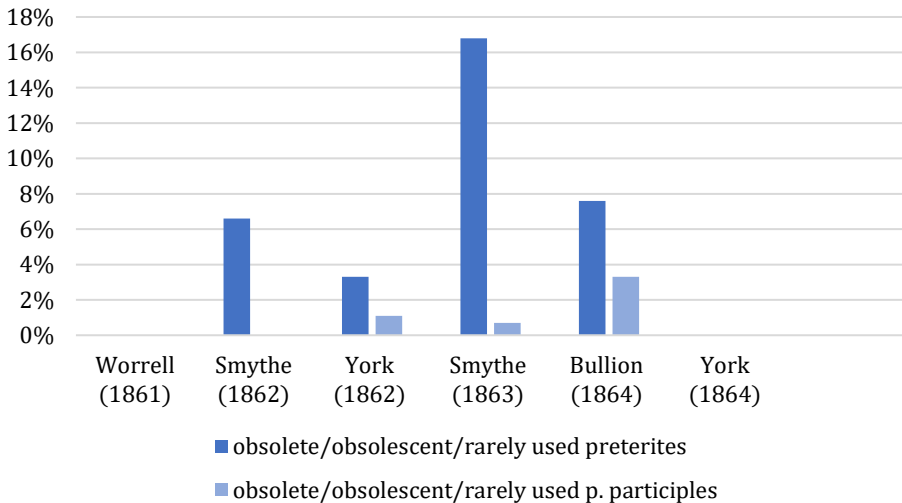
explanation of the distribution of forms across the grammars under discussion is provided.

### 6.2. Verb forms in the CCG

This section deals with the distribution of the forms in question across the grammars published in the Confederate States between 1861 and 1865. Table 4 below gives the (numerical) data, which are illustrated graphically in Figure 2.

**Table 4.** The distribution of verbal forms across seven Confederate grammars

Grammar:	No. of verbs	No. of verbs with alternative forms		Obsolete/obsolescent/rarely used preterites		Obsolete/obsolescent/rarely used p. participles	
Worrell (1861)	173	48	27.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Smythe (1862)	122	39	32%	7	6.2%	0	0%
York (1862)	181	62	34.2%	6	3.3%	2	1.1%
Smythe (1863)	143	56	39.2%	24	16.8%	1	0.7%
Bullion (1864)	184	82	44.6%	14	7.6%	6	3.3%
York (1864)	176	55	31.2%	0	0%	0	0%
<i>Louisiana Grammar</i> (1865)	170	48	28.2%	0	0%	3	1.8%



**Figure 2.** Obsolete, obsolescent and rare preterites and past participials in seven Confederate grammars

Since in neither Worrell (1861) or York (1864) are there forms marked as outdated or rarely used, the discussion automatically shifts to the remaining five sources under scrutiny. In Smythe (1862) the reader is provided with italicized “parts not now in use”. The forms thus marked are the preterites: *bare*, *brake*, *clave*, *drave*, *gat*, *slang* (past form of *sling*) and *sware* (past form of *swear*). Interestingly, such forms as *spake* and *tare* are listed as alternative preterites, but they are not marked as archaic. It is not actually certain whether this was purposeful, or simply an editorial error. In the later version of Smythe’s grammar, there is the richest array of forms which this normative grammarian regards as “forms not now used” (Smythe 1863: 86). These are (a) preterites: *bare* (past forms of *bear* – “to bring forth” and of *bear* – “to carry”); *brake*, *clave*, *cleft*, *drave*, *gat*, *grove*, *shew* (the past form of *show*); *shrank*, *sang*, *slode* (the past form of *slide*); *slang* (the past form of *sling*); *slat* (form of *slit*); *span* (the past form of *spin*); *spat*, *stale* (the past form of *steal*); *stack* (the past form of *stick*); *stank* (the past form of *stink*); *strake* (the past form of *strike*); *strang* (the past form of *string*); *sware*, *swoll*, *swang* (the past form of *swing*), and, unlike in Smythe (1862), *tare*. Amidst past participle forms one finds only one marked as out of current use: *bounden*.

In the case of the *Louisiana English Grammar* (1865), the technique employed to indicate obsolescence of a given form is microtypographic: it is done by means of an asterisk (first footnote), dagger (used when an asterisk has already been employed), and by diesis (double dagger = used to mark the third footnote). The forms of interest are of course listed in the footnote, where the *Louisiana English Grammar* offers only past participle forms: *gotten* (nearly obsolete), but “its compound, *forgotten*, is still in good use”, *ridden* and *spitten* (are both nearly obsolete).

In York’s 1862 grammar a different technique is employed to present outdated verbal forms. On page 103 one finds the following: “[a]s the reader of the Bible will frequently meet with forms of the verb which are now obsolete, consequently they do not appear in the List, a few of these are given in the following”<sup>15</sup>:

**Table 5.** An additional list of verbs with obsolete forms (York 1862: 103)

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
bear (to carry)	<i>bare</i>	borne
bear (to bring forth)	<i>bare</i>	born
drive	<i>drave</i>	driven
get	<i>gat</i>	<i>gotten</i>
<i>shew</i>	<i>shewed</i>	<i>shewn</i>
speak	<i>spake</i>	spoken

\* those marked in italics are deemed obsolete.

<sup>15</sup> What followed was a separate short list of outdated italicized forms.



Finally, Bullion (1864: 83) writes: “The following list comprises nearly all the irregular verbs in the language. Those conjugated regularly, as well as irregularly, are marked with an R. Those in *italics* are obsolete, or obsolescent, and now but little used”. Amongst the italicized verbal forms one may find both preterites and past participles. The former are: *bare, brake, clave, rid, run, shrank, sank, spake, span, spat, sware, tare, throve*; the latter: *baken, broke* (past participle form of *break*), *holden, lien* (of *lie* – to recline), *rid*, and *stricken*.

### 6.3. Past tense forms: verb classes

#### a) *The bare-class*

This group comprises verbs which today display /o/-vocalism and –n suffix in their past participles and which historically would also form their preterites by means of <a>, such as *bear* – *bare*, *swear* – *sware*, *tear* – *tare*. The results attested in the grammars are given in Table 6. A hyphen is used here to indicate the absence of an obsolete/obsolescent/rare/solemn-style form. An asterisk adjacent to a given verb form indicates that, even though it has been attested in a source, it has not been categorized by its author(s) as rare or not in coeval use. Zero indicates that the verb is not listed among irregular verbs at all.

Table 6. The *bare*-group of verbs in the *CCG*

Worrell (1861)	Smythe (1862)	York (1862)	Smythe (1863)	York (1864)	Bullion (1864)	LEG (1865)
—	<i>bare</i>	—	<i>bare</i>	—	<i>bare</i>	<i>bare</i> *
—	<i>sware</i>	—	<i>sware</i>	—	<i>sware</i>	—
—	<i>tare</i> *	—	<i>tare</i>	0	<i>tare</i>	—

In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all said forms were rare in actual usage, and were confined mainly to solemn/poetic style. For instance, Lass (1994: 92) states that in Middle English *bare* was the dominant past tense form of *bear*, which at the beginning of Early Modern English was superseded by *bore* with <o> from the past participle (Jespersen 1942: 59). Dylewski (2002: 170–171) noted the scant appearance of <a> forms (*bare, sware, tare*) in his corpus of Early American English (1620–1720) but for poetry, “which genre often retains or purposefully uses archaic forms for stylistic reasons”.

#### b) *The brake-class*

This class groups verbs forming their preferred past tense variants with <o> and participles by <o> and –en (such as: *break*– *broke*– *broken, cleave* – *clove* – *cloven*, etc.).

**Table 7.** The *brake*-group of verbs in the *CCG*

Worrell (1861)	Smythe (1862)	York (1862)	Smythe (1863)	York (1864)	Bullion (1864)	LEG (1865)
—	<i>brake</i>	—	<i>brake</i>	—	<i>brake</i>	—
—	<i>clave</i>	—	<i>clave, cleft</i>	—	<i>clave</i>	—
—	<i>spake*</i>	—	<i>spake*</i>	—	<i>spake</i>	—
—	—	—	<i>stale</i>	—	—	—

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *break*, v.) writes that “in late Middle English *brāke* became the regular form both in singular and plural, which, being retained in the Bible of 1611, is still familiar as an archaic form. But early in the 16<sup>th</sup> cent., if not before, *brake* began to be displaced by the modern *broke*, formed after the past participle of the past participle”.

The same dictionary gives 19<sup>th</sup>-century examples of *clave* found in the Bible, which points to the fact that its usage lingered, at least in biblical style. Regarding the forms *clave* and *cleft*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *cleave*, v.) states: “A past tense *clave* occurs in northern writers in 14<sup>th</sup> cent., passed into general use, and was very common down to c1600; it survives as a Bible archaism. A weak inflection *cleaved* came into use in 14<sup>th</sup> cent.; and subsequently a form *cleft*; both are still used, *cleft* especially in past participle, where it interchanges with *cloven*, with some differentiation in particular connections, as ‘cleft stick’, ‘cloven foot’”. Smythe (1863) classification of the past tense form *cleft* as “not now used” seems to have reflected its infrequent use rather than its archaic character, especially in view of the fact that the remaining Confederate grammars give it as the second option.

The preterite *spake* is described by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *speak*) as archaic, dialectal, or poetic. The dictionary also provides an 1848 quote from J. R. Bartlett’s *Dictionary of Americanisms*: “*spake*...is still heard occasionally from the pulpit, as well as in conversation”. This, at least partially, chimes with Dylewski (2013: 253) who, in the contexts of the past tense forms *spake* and *rate* found in the corpus of Civil War letters from North-western South Carolina, asserts: “the rarity of the occurrence of verbal paradigms associated with bygone qualities in the history of the English language” He also posits that “most probably, these archaic forms lurked somewhere in the background of the linguistic repertoires of older speakers”.

The appearance of the form *stale* in Smythe (1863) is conspicuous for two reasons: in the first place, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *steal*) gives no examples of the use of the preterite in <a> past the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Scrutiny of the King James Bible for cases of *stale* yielded no results. Assuming that the inclusion of archaic forms in 19<sup>th</sup>-century grammars published in the

South was, *inter alia*, to provide explanations for the readers of the Bible, the absence of this form in the Bible and its presence in Smythe (1863) is intriguing.

c) *The drive-class*

This category groups such verbs as: *drive, ride, rise, stride, smite, strive, thrive*, and *write* (all of which have a diphthong in the past tense form and shot /i/ and *-en* in the past participle. Unfortunately, only two verbs displayed forms indicated as obsolete/obsolescent/rare: *drive* and *thrive* (Table 8 presents their distribution across seven Confederate grammars):

**Table 8.** The *drive*-class of verbs in the CCG

Worrell (1861)	Smythe (1862)	York (1862)	Smythe (1863)	York (1864)	Bullion (1864)	LEG (1865)
—	<i>drave</i>	<i>drave</i>	<i>drave</i>	—	—	—
<i>throve*</i>	<i>throve*</i>	<i>throve*</i>	<i>throve*</i>	<i>throve*</i>	<i>throve</i>	<i>throve*</i>

As Dylewski (2002: 189) writes, according to Jespersen (1942: 56), *drave* is “the northern descendant of the Old English *drāf*, which elsewhere became *ō* (*oo*). Lass (1994: 85), however, maintains that in Early Modern English, owing to dialect borrowing, a historically northern form with /a:/ and its later development in <a> would have no regional indexicalness”. The OED (s.v. *drive*, v.) classifies *drave* as an archaic alternant of *drove*.

In the preterite *throve* interesting tendencies are observable. Firstly, unlike the other six grammars, Bullion alone carries (1864) the form *thrived* as the preferred form. It is also the only grammar in which the two forms have been provided and in which *throve* is regarded as obsolescent.

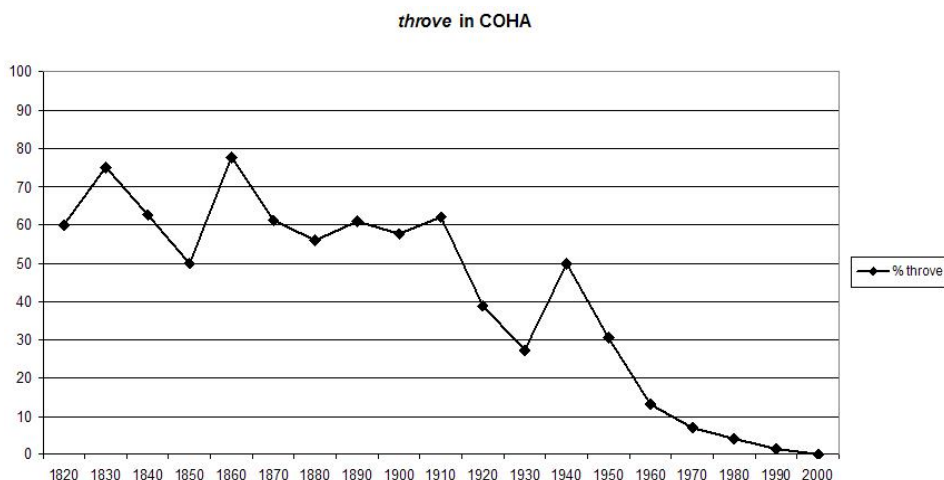
Secondly, if one focuses on the diachronic rivalry between *throve* and *thrived* in American English,<sup>16</sup> an interesting picture emerges (Figure 3).

According to Anderwald (2012a: pages not numbered), “THRIVE is historically a strong verb with the past tense form *throve*, and the strong verb form is still dominant in use over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (according to data from COHA)”, as is illustrated in Figure 3. “*Throve* declines over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and today is practically non-existent. It stops being the majority form after the 1910s, and moves below the 10 per cent mark after the 1960s, becoming truly marginal” (Anderwald 2012a: pages not numbered).

She further states that:

<sup>16</sup> Classifying a given term as archaic or rare is treated here, whenever applicable, as a premise to expand the discussion and supplement it with data drawn from Anderwald (2012a and 2016).

... also shows, however, that the regularization of *THRIVE* is a very recent phenomenon that cannot be traced to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *throve* only shows an almost imperceptible decline; instead, it alternates with *thrived* and is used in over 50% of all cases at most points in time. For this reason it is again interesting to investigate grammar writers' stances on this variable phenomenon, and to investigate whether in this case, prescriptive grammars caused the decline of *throve* towards the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 3.** *Throve* (vs. *thrived*) in the *Corpus of Historical American English* (after Anderwald: 2012a: pages not numbered)<sup>17</sup>

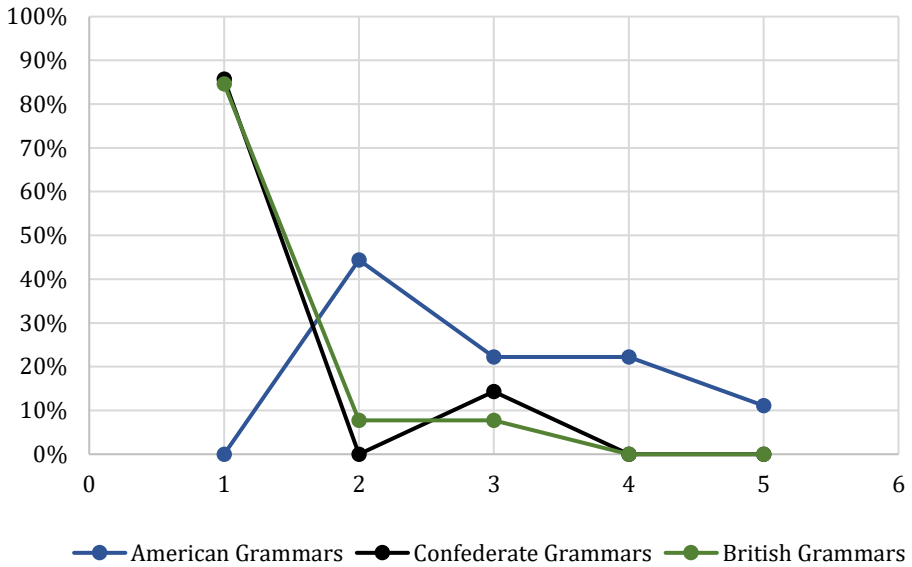
Thirdly, Anderwald (2016: 262–263) discusses the distribution of past tense forms of *thrive* across normative grammars, both of American and British provenience. In Table 9 her results are juxtaposed with those obtained for Confederate grammars. Figure 4 presents the tendencies graphically.

**Table 9.** Preterite of *thrive* in American,<sup>18</sup> Confederate, and British grammars (for 1860s)

Grammars:	1 = <i>throve</i>	2 = <i>throve</i> preferred	3 = <i>thrived</i> preferred	4 = <i>thrived</i> only	[not mentioned]	total
American	0	4 (44.4%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (11.1%)	9
Confederate	6 (85.7%)	0	1 (14.3%)	0	0	7
British	11 (84.6%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (7.7%)	0	0	13

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/10/anderwald/>. Date of access: 20.03.2019.

<sup>18</sup> York's (1862) grammar is included in Anderwald's corpus of prescriptive grammars. In order to assure accuracy, whenever my results are juxtaposed with Anderwald's (2012a and 2016), the numerical data from York's grammar are subtracted from Anderwald's counts.



**Figure 4.** Forms of *thrive* in American, Confederate, and British grammars of the 1860s

Interestingly, in the case of the past tense forms of *thrive*, the Confederate paradigm is conspicuous in its resemblance of that proposed not in American grammars of the 1860s but in British grammars. A claim might be ventured at this point that, in their pursuit to attain the purest form of English and in their contempt for all that was Northern, Southerners consciously oriented themselves to a British, putatively more prestigious, form and reached out for the British paradigm, or they may simply have copied British lists of irregular verbs. This claim, however, is tentative in its nature and needs verification based on a greater pool of data.

Additionally, the prescribed form *throve* in the Confederate books published in the 1860s overlaps with the peak of its use in the *Corpus of Historical English*. This may be incidental or the form prescribed in the contemporary grammars may reflect the actual usage of the time.

*d) sling- and sing-classes*

Anderwald (2016) would have it that in present-day English one may observe “two groups of verbs that on the one hand are very similar”, yet, on the other hand, form “their past tenses in a distinct way. The larger of these groups consists of the verbs *cling, dig, fling, hang, sling, slink, spin, stick, sting, strike, string, swing, win* and *wring*”. All of these form their past tense and past participle identically by way of vowel change to <u> (i.e., *sling – slung – slung, strike – struck – struck*). This category of verb is traditionally called the *sling-class*.

The second group is slightly smaller and consists of *begin, drink, ring, shrink, sing, sink, spring, stink* and *swim*. These verbs form their past tense forms with <a> and past participle with <u>; hence the past tense and the past participle are distinct. All these fall into the category here called the *sing*-class (in accordance with Anderwald 2016 terminology).

In the former group the following words display alternative (obsolete/obsolescent/rare) forms in the corpus of grammars studied published in the Confederate States:

**Table 10.** Forms of *sling, spin, stick, sting, strike, string*, and *swing* in the *CCG*

Worrell (1861)	Smythe (1862)	York (1862)	Smythe (1863)	York (1864)	Bullion (1864)	LEG (1865)
—	<i>slang</i>	—	<i>slang</i>	—	<i>slang*</i>	—
—	<i>span*</i>	—	<i>span</i>	—	<i>span</i>	—
—	—	—	<i>stack</i>	—	—	—
—	—	0	<i>stang</i>	0	—	—
—	—	—	<i>strake</i>	—	—	—
—	—	—	<i>strang</i>	—	—	—
—	—	—	<i>swang</i>	—	—	—

We have to bear in mind that forms in <u> are those recommended by all authors. In Worrell (1861), York (1862) and (1864), as well as the *Louisiana English Grammar* (1865) there are no forms in <a>.

A more interesting picture emerges from Smythe's (1862) list, where next to *slung*, the archaic form *slang* is provided, and next to *spun* an alternative that is unitalicized *span*. In a similar vein, Bullion offers alternative forms in <a> for *sling* and *spin*: *slang* and *span* respectively. Here, however, it is *slang* unmarked for obsolescence or its contemporaneous "little usage". Smythe (1863) acknowledges variation in this class of verbs, but, according to him, all the alternatives are forms "not now used". It must be emphasized that acknowledging variation in these grammars is done only in a minority of cases.

Anderwald (2016: 78) writes that in her study of American grammars throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century all authors display remarkable uniformity "in prescribing forms in <u> for *sling, slink, swing, and spin*". British grammars,<sup>19</sup> as Anderwald (2016: 79) summarizes:

... allow, or prescribe, variable forms much more widely for [*spin*] This permitted variation decreases significantly after the 1870s, but constitutes the majority opinion for many individual decades before, especially during the middle of the

<sup>19</sup> For the explanation of the more permissive treatment of the *sling*-class of verbs see Anderwald (2016: 80).

century (from the 1830s to the 1860s). Overall, we can see a change in opinions in British grammars from allowing variable forms to giving *spun* as the only option. Given that also before, over the course of the eighteenth century, *spun* was practically never criticized in grammar, what becomes visible in British grammar writing resembles a U-shaped curve, from advocating *spun*, to allowing variation in the middle of the century, back to advocating only *spun*.

Finally, according to Anderwald (2016), the prescribed prevalence of forms in <u> reflects the actual usage in written American English, a conclusion reached on the basis of the *COHA* data. It should also be mentioned that the domination of <u> forms and the treatment of forms in <a> as marginal or little or never used in the *CCG* conforms to the general American rather than British pattern, which runs counter to the treatment of the preterites *throve* and *thrived*.

As for the latter class, the *sing*-class, the tabulated forms are given in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Forms of *shrink*, *sing*, *sink*, and *stink* in the *CCG*

Worrell (1861)	Smythe (1862)	York (1862)	Smythe (1863)	York (1864)	Bullion (1864)	LEG (1865)
<i>shrunk/ shrank*</i>	<i>shrunk/ shrank*</i>	<i>shrank/ shrunk*</i>	<i>shrunk/ shrank</i>	<i>shrank/ shrunk*</i>	<i>shrunk/ shrank</i>	<i>shrunk</i>
<i>sang/ sung*</i>	<i>sang/ sung*</i>	<i>sang/ sung*</i>	<i>sung/ sang</i>	<i>sang/ sung*</i>	<i>sang/ sung*</i>	<i>sung/ sang*</i>
<i>sunk/ sank*</i>	<i>sunk/ sank*</i>	<i>sank/ sunk*</i>	<i>sunk/ sank*</i>	<i>sank/ sunk*</i>	<i>sunk/ sank</i>	<i>sunk/ sank*</i>
0	0	<i>stunk</i>	<i>stunk/ stank</i>	0	0	<i>stunk</i>

As is evident from the above Table, different grammars permit a fluctuation in different verbs.<sup>20</sup> In Worrell (1861), Smythe (1862), York (1862), York (1864), and the *Louisiana English Grammar* (1865) no obsolescent forms are listed. Whenever alternative forms are given, these are forms still in use, albeit these may not be the preferred forms.

Crucially it is in Smythe (1863) and Bullion (1864) that one finds italicized forms in <a>; in Smythe (1863), the past tense forms *shrank*, *sang*, and *stank* are “not now used”. In Bullion (1864), *shrank* and *sank* are either “obsolete, or obsolescent, and now but little used”.

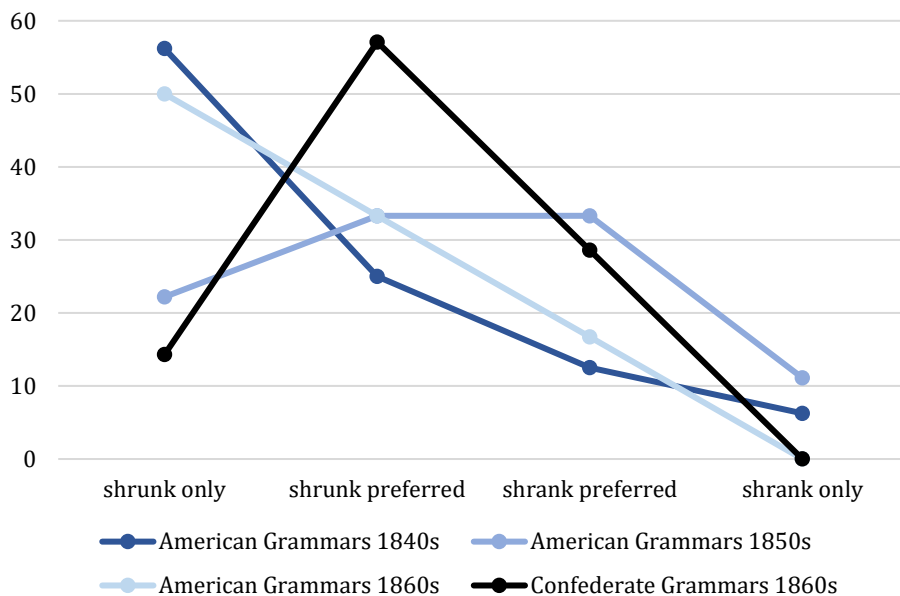
Anderwald’s (2016) research juxtaposes her results from both American and British grammars with those retrieved from the Confederate grammars.

<sup>20</sup> In the body of grammars studied there are more verbs that belong to the class that has two possible preterits. For the sake of this paper, however, only those whose alternative forms were marked as archaic or not/little used in at least one grammar are discussed.

Table 12 gives the pooled data; for the sake of readability, their graphic presentation is split into two consecutive Figures.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 12.** Preterite forms of *shrink* in American, British, and Confederate grammars

		<i>shrank only</i>	<i>shrank pref.</i>	<i>shrank pref.</i>	<i>shrank only</i>	Total:
American	1840s	9 (56.2%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	16
	1850s	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	9
	1860s	3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	6
British	1840s	5 (26.3%)	4 (21.1%)	3 (15.8%)	7 (36.8%)	19
	1850s	5 (23.8%)	4 (19%)	6 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	21
	1860s	0 (0%)	2 (18.2%)	4 (36.3%)	5 (45.5%)	11
Confederate	1860s	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0%)	7



**Figure 5.** Past tense forms of *shrink* in American and Confederate grammars

As is evident from the graphs (Figure 5, 6), the Confederate paradigm corresponds to neither of the above-mentioned paradigms. This pattern is less neat than that observed for the past tense forms of *thrive*. This is interesting bearing in mind that grammarians and publishers from the South often copied their verb lists or modeled them on earlier editions.

<sup>21</sup> For the sake of transparency and readability the discussion is confined to a span of four decades.



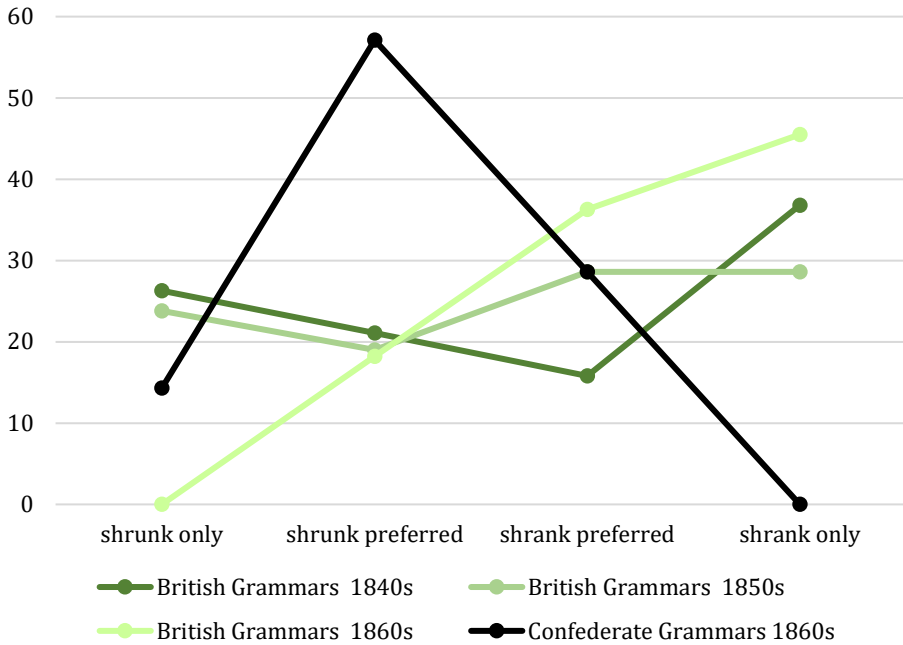
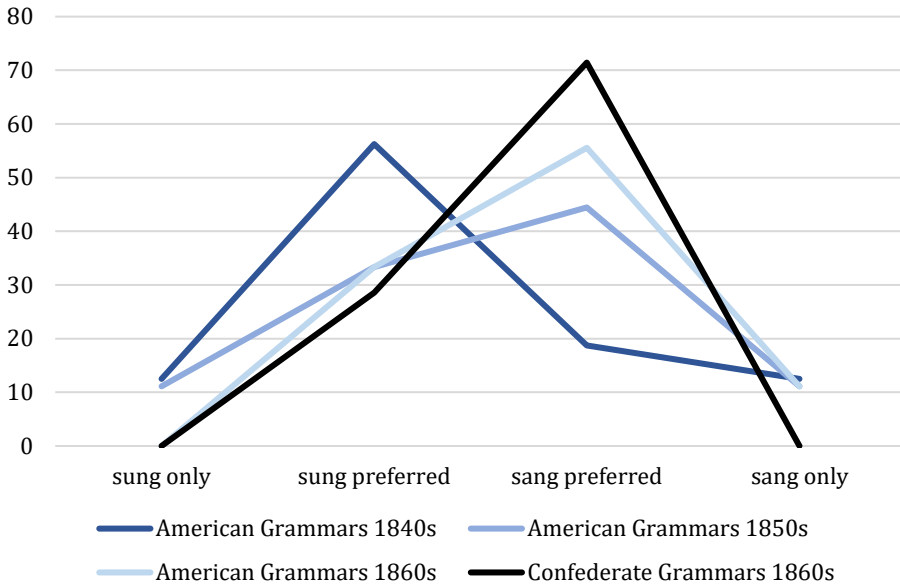


Figure 6. Past tense forms of *shrink* in British and Confederate grammars

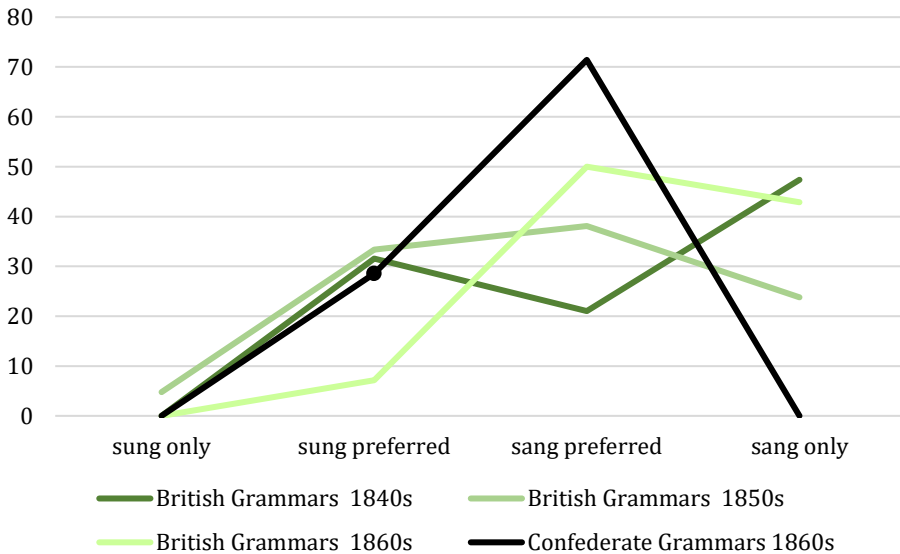
The data for the past tense forms of *sing* drawn from prescriptive grammars and discussed by Anderwald (2016) allow for the same procedure as with the past tense forms of *shrink*.

Table 13. Preterite forms of *sing* in American, British, and Confederate grammars

		<i>sung</i> only	<i>sung</i> preferred	<i>sang</i> preferred	<i>sang</i> only	Total:
American	1840s	2 (12.5%)	9 (56.3%)	3 (18.8%)	2 (12.5%)	16
	1850s	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (11.1%)	9
	1860s	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (11.1%)	9
British	1840s	0 (0%)	6 (31.6%)	4 (21.1%)	9 (47.4%)	19
	1850s	1 (4.8%)	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	5 (23.8%)	21
	1860s	0 (0%)	1 (7.1%)	7 (50%)	6 (42.9%)	14
Confederate	1860s	0 (0%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0%)	7



**Figure 7.** Past tense forms of *sing* in American and Confederate grammars



**Figure 8.** Past tense forms of *sing* in British and Confederate grammars

Here the paradigm attested in the *CCG* aligns more with the general American pattern of the 1860s, but differs from those prescribed in British grammars.

In order to be able to gauge the influence of grammar writing on real language developments, Anderwald (2012a) investigates the *Corpus of Historical American English* for the past tense forms of *begin*, *drink*, *ring*, *shrink*, *spring*, *sing*, *sink*, and *swim*. She concludes that “although the direction of change is the same in all cases (towards fewer past tense forms in <u>), the trajectories of change clearly differ significantly”.

When one focuses solely on lexemes that appeared in the Southern grammars and were marked as obsolete or rarely used and which were studied by Anderwald (2012a), in the *COHA*, forms of *sing* “move from being variable at the beginning of the century”, where the ratio of <u> to <a> forms is approximately 50:50, to dropping to 20% in the 1860s, to finally losing forms in <u> to the prevalent forms in <a>. Of this Anderwald (2012a) says: “Exemplarily, compare the switch-over point for *sung* with the recommendation in grammar books: although *sung* already moves below 50% after 1820 in written American English, the recommendation to use *sang* instead of *sung* only becomes the majority opinion in grammar books around 1850 – a time lag of over 20 years”. This pertains to the recommendations offered in the set of Confederate grammars.

The two verbs *shrink* and *sink* also seem to “undergo the most striking developments, from preferring past tense forms in <u> at the beginning of the century, to preferring past tense forms in <a> at the end”. On the basis of collected data, Anderwald (2012a) orders the verbs chronologically in the following manner:

Preferring past tense in <a>:

- After 1820: *sing*
- After 1830: *sink*
- After 1850: *shrink*

My data allow for postulating the existence of an apparent time lag between the actual use and the recommended forms in the books published between 1861 and 1865. Five of the Confederate grammars out of seven (i.e. 71%) recommend *sunk* as the preferred form. Anderwald (2012a) writes that the time lag lasted until the 1850s. The Confederate grammars are therefore more conservative in their recommendations, extending, as they do, the duration of the lag by over a decade.

The same applies to *shrink*. Even though after 1850 the past tense forms in <a> gained ground, the majority of Confederate grammars (71%) still give *shrunk* as the majority variant. Interestingly, it is York (1862 and 1864) who consistently prescribes forms in <a> for *shrink*, *sing*, *sink* and <u> for *stink* only.

#### 6.4. Past tense forms: individual verbs

##### a) *gat*

The lists of irregular verbs studied in the *CCG* include *gat* (the past tense form of *geť*). This archaic form has been attested in Smythe (1862), Smythe (1863), and Bullion (1864). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *geť*), this verb displayed the same paradigm as Class V historically strong verbs (for example, *speak*), hence the past tense singular in <a>. “Forms in -o- in the past participle (which are common from an early date) probably result (as in many verbs historically of Class V) from influence from the paradigm of verbs historically of strong Class IV,” for instance, *bear* and *steal*. The “(generally later) spread of forms in -o- to the past tense probably also partly reflects the analogous influence from the paradigms of other verbs. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> cent. *got* had become the usual form of the past tense in the developing standard variety (both *gat* and *got* are found in the King James Bible of 1611)”.

Dylewski (2002) found that throughout the seventeenth century the number of such preterites as *gat*, *gate* or *for gat* diminished and like other older forms in <a>, these were ousted by those displaying /o/-vocalization. He further claims that the infrequent appearance of *gat* (and *for gat*) in his corpus of early American English might be recognized only as a literary style marker.

##### b) *grove*

Only in Smythe (1863) does one find the italicized form of the verb *grive* – *grove* (next to the regular preterite *graved*). The *OED* (s.v. *grave*, v.) classifies the past tense form *grove* as appearing in Middle English, but *grove* can be found in none of the examples used to illustrate an array of meanings of *to grave*).

##### c) *run*

The preterite *run*, marked as obsolete, or obsolescent, and now but little used, occurs in Bullion (1864) and the other grammars give no alternatives to the preterite *ran*. Classifying it as “little used” seems not to reflect the linguistic environment of the South. Firstly, Dylewski’s (2013) study of Civil War letters from North-western South Carolina indicates that the past tense *run* was apparently the prevalent form in the languages of selected Civil War soldiers (“the unmarked variant *run* used to be by far the dominant one (15/15 tokens, 100%), at least among the commoners representing the selected part of South Carolina”).

Secondly, Atwood (1953: 20) maintains that the preterite *run* was used “by nearly all the informants of both Type I and Type II” in Virginia and North Carolina” during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bearing that in mind, the preterite *run* was in use both in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

d) *slode*

As well as *slide*, Smythe (1863) provides the past tense form *slode*; a form recorded neither in the *Corpus of Historical American English* nor in the King James Bible of 1611. Examples of the use of the form in <o> in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *slide*) remain prior to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. One may therefore venture the claim that Smythe (1863) might have compiled a list of irregular verbs on the basis of sources a good deal earlier.

e) *shewed*

This form was indeed rarely used in the American English of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Figure 9 indicates. *Showed* was by far dominant and *shewed* but a minority variant.

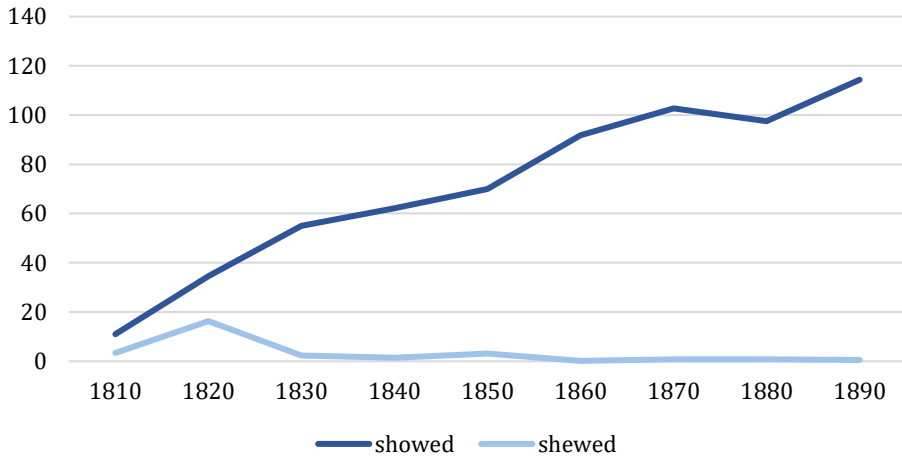


Figure 9. The past tense *showed* vs. *shewed* in the *Corpus of Historical American English*

### 6.5. Past participle forms

a) *baken*

Bullion (1864) lists the past participle *baken*. This “strong past participle of *bake* is now superseded by *baked* in literary English”. The *OED* describes it as archaic or obsolete (s.v. *bake*, v.)

*b) bounden*

This only appears in Smythe (1863), where it is also described as rare. The form *bounden*, as an adjective, is described by the *OED* as obsolete and archaic. The last attestations in the *OED* are from the 1860s and 1870s.

*c) broke*

Bullion's (1864) classification of this form as obsolete or rarely used runs counter to what we know of the earlier and later usage. Even though the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *break* v.) claims that "*broken* is still the regular form. but from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> cent. this was often shortened to *broke*, which was exceedingly common in prose and speech during the 17–18<sup>th</sup> cent., and is still recognized in verse", the usage of the past participle *broke* in Southern American Englishes lingered. By means of example, in Miles' (1980) study of the characteristics of verbs in Haywood County, North Carolina, and Dylewski's (2013) research the dominant variant in the past participle among informants was *broke*. As reported by Atwood (1953: 7), the past participle *broke* was also frequently recorded in the speech of older speakers with limited education from the Middle and South Atlantic States in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*d) holden, gotten, spitten, stricken, and ridden/rid*

*holden*

This form appears in Bullion (1864) exclusively. As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, according to Dylewski (2002), its use was conditioned by stylistic concerns. This form appears in the *King James Bible*, which may serve as an explanation for its inclusion in the grammars.

*gotten*

The *Louisiana English Grammar* describes the past participle *gotten* as nearly obsolete and York 1862 terms it an obsolete form. The prescribed forms most probably reflected the use current at the time. Firstly, the data from the *COHA* show the domination in the use of *gotten* from the 1970s (cf. Figure 10).

Secondly, in the corpus of Civil War material analyzed by Dylewski (2013: 263) the form *got* predominated (57/58 tokens = 98.28%), which was "by far the preponderant form, and only one incidental case of *gotten* (1.72%)".

The data from both Dylewski and the *COHA* point to the domination of the past participle form *got* when the grammars under discussion were published.

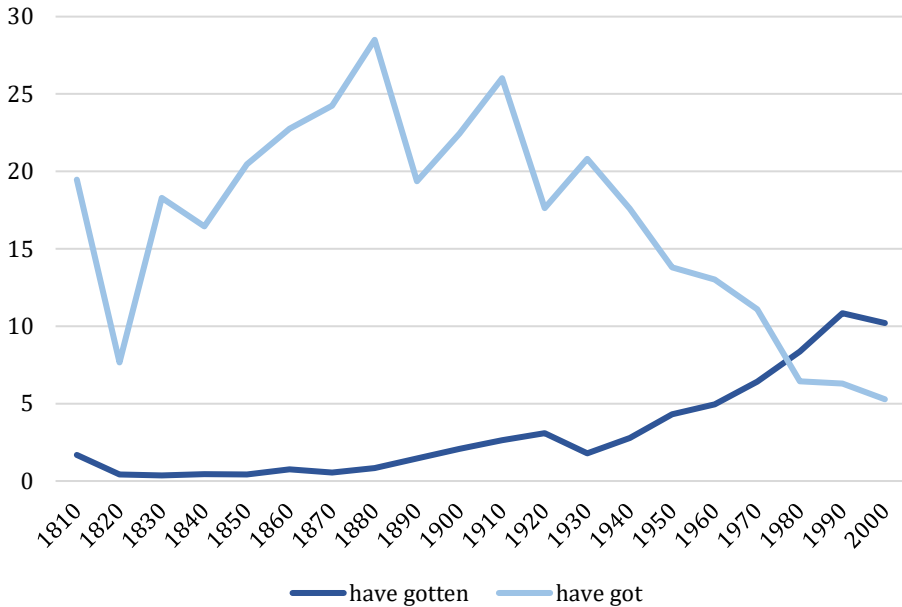


Figure 10. *Have gotten* vs. *have got* in the *Corpus of Historical American English*

*spitten* and *stricken*

Not much can be said about *spitten* and *stricken*. The former is commented on only in the *Louisiana English Grammar* as “nearly obsolete” and a search in online corpora yielded no results. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (s.v. *spitten*) regards this participle as dialectal, as does the *OED* (s.v. *spit*, v).

*Stricken* is given only in Bullion (1864). This participle form is unattested in any of the corpora consulted.

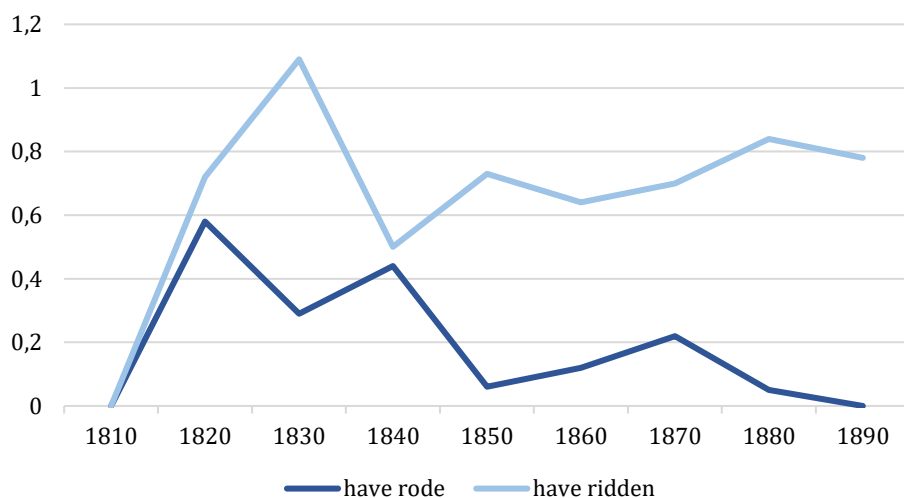
*ridden/rid*

Table 13. The past participle forms of *ride*

Worrell (1861)	Smythe (1862)	York (1862)	Smythe (1863)	York (1864)	Bullion (1864)	LEG (1865)
<i>ridden/rode*</i>	<i>ridden/rid*</i>	<i>ridden</i>	<i>ridden/rid*</i>	<i>ridden</i>	<i>ridden/rid</i>	<i>rode/ridden</i>

Bullion (1864) italicizes the past participle form *rid*. Price (1910: 16) maintains that the variant had never become as common as *rode*, possibly due to a need to distinguish it from *rid* meaning “to get *rid* of.” The existence of the participle form *rid(d)* finds the following explanation: it may emerge as a consequence of the *-n* loss in *ridden* (Dylewski 2002).

The rivalry between *ridden*, *rode* (and *rid*) is reflected in all grammars but for the *Louisiana English Grammar*. The data from the *COHA* (cf. Figure 11) show the evident domination of the participle in *-en* over that in *<o>*, although it diminished temporarily in the 1840s. Only isolated cases of the form *rid* are to be found throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is also indicative of the fact that it was the minority, if not archaic, variant in written American English.



**Figure 11.** *Have rode vs have ridden* in the *Corpus of Historical American English*

### e) *lien*

The participle *lien* (*lyen*) is listed in Bullion (1864). This form is classified by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as an obsolete participle. Examples of this variant are hard to come by in the corpora consulted. Just one instance has been recorded in the on-line corpus of Civil War letters:

- 1) I had bin loocking for a letter from you for the last weak But never come tell this morning it was *lyen* own the Road some wheir the one before this was Dated the 8th and this one was Dated the 16<sup>th</sup> and it did not Reach me (August 30. 1863; Issac Lefevers to Catherine Lefevers from Catawba County. NC).<sup>22</sup>

This case, however, permits no detailed discussion.

### f) *shewn*

*Shew*, and its forms, is described by the *OED* (s.v. *show*, v.) as archaic. The past participle form, *shewn*, is demonstrated by York as present in the Bible

<sup>22</sup> <https://altchive.org/private-voices/node/12087>. Date of access 01.05.2019.



and even then obsolete. The diachronic data from the Corpus of Historical American English show the steady decline of this participle until the 1850s. Thenceforth *shewn* enjoyed marginal popularity in written American English during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 7. Conclusions

However productive was the rebellious South regarding the production of schoolbooks, it produced relatively few original grammars and this prevents far-reaching conclusions. Those offered below are rather tentative in nature and require further verification.

It is hoped that this paper has demonstrated that the grammars published in the Confederate states separately from their contemporary Northern, or American, counterparts are worthy of study. The comparison of the results retrieved from the *Corpus of Confederate Grammars* with those obtained by Anderwald (2012a and 2016) shows that sometimes the authors of the former conformed, to a greater or lesser extent, to the general American pattern. At times the results bear a resemblance to coeval British paradigms. On the one hand, it may have been a coincidental similarity, but on the other, it may have reflected the Confederates' search for the purest form of English in books published overseas.

This study offers no equivocal answer to the question of the extent to which the Southern authors based their recommendations on the actual usage or that to which they sought inspiration in contemporary, or earlier, grammars. It may be concluded, however, that the importance of biblical language or, more precisely, the need to explain the idiosyncrasies of biblical English to the pious Southerners exerted no profound impact on the alternative forms of irregular verbs listed. It is only in York (1862) that one may find a special section appended to the actual list of irregular verbs and devoted to archaic verb forms typical of biblical language.

Interestingly, the same authors differ markedly in their treatment of forms dubbed obsolete/obsolescent, rarely used or belonging to the solemn/poetic style. Whereas York (1862) offers the special section mentioned above, *York's English grammar, revised and adapted to Southern schools* (1864) presents the reader with no archaic or rare forms.

A similar trend is observable in the case of Smythe's grammars. In *Our own primary grammar for the use of beginners* (1862) out of 122 verbs listed, only seven (= 6.2%) are given obsolete alternative forms. *Our own elementary grammar, intermediate between the primary and high school grammars, and especially adapted to the wants of the common schools* (1862) also lists 143 irregular verbs, of which 25 (17.5%) fall outside the

mainstream usage of time. The target audience may have been the reason for this. Whereas Smythe (1862) was designed for the use of beginners, Smythe (1863) was intended for the needs of more advanced readers, hence a more complex verbal system.

In conclusion, the grammars published in the South, albeit not numerous, constitute a valuable, but thus far greatly neglected, primary material worthy of linguistic analysis. It is hoped that further studies, based on a wider array of traits, may reveal either their originality or similarity to either Northern or British counterparts.

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