

Appendix F: *Overview and Synthesis of Scholarly Literature* by Melissa D. Hargrove

Preface

Anyone who has recently visited the Sea Islands will realize there is not a minute to spare. There are strip malls where basket stands have stood for half a century or more, which once nourished and sustained the community of Mt. Pleasant. Hilton Head Island is unrecognizable as the agricultural homeland of Gullah people for centuries prior to its devastation. Johns Island has become the red carpet rolled across for tourists on their trek to the gated communities of Kiawah and Seabrook. Gullah residents of Daufuskie Island can hardly even be counted as a community, since their displacement to the periphery of their island home to make way for golf courses and tourism. St. Helena Island, which has held on for dear life under the constant threat of encroachment, is constantly battling construction permits and development schemes that threaten to strip them of their homes, their heritage, and their cultural legacy. With every hotel that is built and every road that is widened we lose a piece of the history and heritage of the Gullah people. As scholars, activists, government agencies, and inhabitants, we must begin to take steps toward the preservation of this cultural legacy before it is too late.

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Sea Islands: History, People, and Current Predicaments

The Sea Islands are a site of intrigue and wonderment. The landscapes are picturesque, with moss covered live oaks draping the ground in every direction, and seascapes nothing less than breathtaking. But what is truly amazing is the story of the people who were brought to these islands in chains, first from the West Indies and later from Africa. These enslaved souls, and those who have descended from them, are referred to as the Gullah and Geechee of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands. Their history reads like a tragedy, while their strength and courage inspire all who have been fortunate enough to interact with them.

The Gullah and Geechee have been objects of academic study for more than a century. Scholars from a variety of academic disciplines have studied every aspect of Gullah culture at different times and using different techniques, but there are overarching themes to the body of literature. Language, religion, verbal arts and folklore, land, health and medicine, arts and crafts, leadership patterns, Gullah worldview and cultural values, and development and change will be utilized as topical categories. Operating from such a framework, it is my sincerest goal to illustrate the significant themes of Gullah scholarship historically and contemporarily.

Much of the historical literature will only be used within this overview when necessary for placing complementary research within a broader contextual framework. Historic documentation is necessary, however, more relevant to the issue at hand is research that has required extensive fieldwork within the various Sea Island communities and interaction with those who live and breathe this culture.

Introduction

The Sea Islands are a string of islands that, geographically, extend from Georgetown, South Carolina to Cumberland Island, Georgia. The adjoining mainland for thirty miles inland is also recognized as part of the Gullah/ Geechee area. The broader discourse of Gullah studies often cites Florida as included within the culture areas; however, there is no significant scholarly data that represent Gullah people occupying Florida Sea Islands.¹ This gap should be considered within any future studies aimed at a comprehensive approach to Sea Island research. As a cultural area, the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia have served as home to the Gullah and Geechee. Geechee is recognized as the term used to refer to Georgia Gullah populations, but the blanket term Gullah can be used to designate all communities descended from Africans who have historically inhabited these Sea Islands.

The South Carolina Sea Islands include the following: Bull Island, Sullivan's Island, Yonge's Island, James Island, Johns Island, Kiawah Island, Seabrook Island, Wadmalaw Island, Edisto Island, Lady's Island, St. Helena Island, Hunting Island, Fripp Island, Parris Island, Hilton Head Island, and Daufuskie Island. The Georgia Sea Islands, also known as the Golden Isles, consist of: Tybee Island, Skidaway Island, Ossabaw Island, St. Catherine's Island, Sapelo Island, St. Simons Island, Jekyll Island, and Cumberland Island. It should be noted that among all those listed here, Wadmalaw Island² and St. Helena Island of South Carolina, as well as Sapelo Island of Georgia, can still declare the existence of a recognizable, cohesive, and viable Gullah/Geechee community (Hargrove 2000).

These islands can be classified as low-lying; this area is often referred to as the "Lowcountry," separated from the mainland by small inlets, tidal creeks, and grass-covered marshlands. The islands possess a warm marine environment rich with various types of tropical and subtropical vegetation (Salter 1968). Beneficial to these islands is their extremely long growing season: from 250 to 300 days a year (Salter 1968). The sandy-loam soil of the Sea Islands is well suited to many types of agricultural production, which made them ideal for the plantation economies of rice, indigo and cotton, all of which fed the need for enslaved labor. West Africans seemed the best choice for such a labor force, due to their superior knowledge of rice and indigo cultivation (Schwalm 1997). Those captive

Africans, which we now know as the Gullah, forged a common culture out of their shared misery and will to survive and surmount obstacles.

It is indeed the entire chain of Sea Islands that became home to hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans, but the islands of South Carolina are believed to have retained the most sizeable population directly descended from enslaved Africans (Creel 1988). Many scholars maintain that the Sea Islands of South Carolina are the most authentic source of African culture history in North America, due to the overwhelming existence of “Africanisms” (Turner 1949; Guthrie 1996; Pollitzer 1999). Extensive study of the existing literature suggests more research has been conducted in South Carolina Sea Island communities than in Georgia Sea Island communities.

Among the earliest English settlers to the Sea Islands were several families from Barbados, already familiar with the system of plantation slavery and the utilization of African labor (Johnson 1930; Schwalm 1997). These first West Indian planters brought close to a thousand laborers with them (Creel 1988). Early settlers who came from England in search of an area to settle landed at St. Helena, but moved on to Charles Town upon hearing of the better soil conditions there (Johnson 1930). Charles Town became the major docking point for incoming African captives who were sold in the slave market, which now serves as a tourist attraction in present-day Charleston, South Carolina. It was not until 1700 that the first birth of a Euro American child was reported (Johnson 1930). This event has come to signify the beginning of the colonization of the Sea Islands.

Within the literature there are ongoing controversies concerning the origins of enslaved Africans who we now recognize as Gullah and Geechee. The most comprehensive study, to date, appears in the recently published work of William S. Pollitzer, *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage* (1999). As a scholar who has devoted a lifetime of study to Gullah research, Pollitzer reviewed a wealth of data concerning the documented origins of South Carolina’s African population. The results can be broken down as follows: 39 percent came from Angola (which includes the Congo), 20 percent from Senegambia, 17 percent from the Windward Coast, 6 percent from Sierra Leone, and 13 percent from the Gold Coast (Pollitzer 1999). However, 23,033 (20 percent of the total number of slaves legally imported into South Carolina) were omitted from these calculations because their specific regional origins were not recorded.

These Africans formed communities out of their shared enslavement. What developed is a syncretic, creolized culture which was constructed out of a remodeling of various cultural traits brought across the sea from many different parts of West Africa (Mintz and Price 1992), with subsequent influences from European and indigenous sources. This process happened throughout the African Diaspora in locations where slavery became the principle economic strategy for colonial expansion (Mintz and Price 1992). Therefore, there are evident and well established linguistic,³ cultural, and religious connections between the Caribbean and the Gullah and Geechee people of North America.

Establishing the connection between the Caribbean and Gullah/Geechee culture area is an important endeavor, which will “highlight its differences from the rest of the American South” (Montgomery 1994a, 8) as well as expound on “the diversity of Lowcountry culture” (ibid, 14). One of the significant aspects of the Gullah/Geechee- Caribbean connections is the demography of the first Carolina colonies. The first enslaved Africans to work the soil of South Carolina were transplanted there from Barbados and Jamaica (Cassidy 1994). Cassidy, speaking from a linguistic standpoint, suggests that the striking similarities among the Creole languages of the Caribbean and the Sea Islands cannot be accidental (1994, see also Hopkins 1992). Culturally, the Caribbean and the Sea Islands share a number of connections. For example, Beckwith (1924) uncovered the links between them through trickster tales, best illustrated by the presence of Anansi stories in the Caribbean and South Carolina (which ultimately connects both areas, culturally, to West Africa). The folklore collection of Parsons (1923) also reveals similarities between the Caribbean (particularly the Bahamas) and the Gullah area.

Religious connections between the Caribbean area and the Gullah/Geechee area are most easily understood in terms of syncretism. Syncretism, defined as the blending of differing systems of belief, is appropriate in terms of establishing a connection between religious belief and practice in these particular Diasporas. Gullah spiritual beliefs represent the syncretism of Christianity and African religion (Butler 1975; Creel 1988; Hart 1993; Pollitzer 1999). Gullah religion will be further discussed in subsequent chapters; however, it is important to reveal its similarities to syncretic religions of the Caribbean area, such as Voodoo of Haiti (also spelled Vodou and Vodun) and Santeria of Cuba (Jones- Jackson 1994).⁴ Voodoo represents a blending of the African beliefs systems, brought to Haiti by enslaved Africans, and the Roman Catholic beliefs of their captors. Santeria was created in Cuba by the earliest Yoruba slaves as it was blended with the Catholic belief system of the Spanish. African religions were amenable to this process of syncretism in several ways. The idea of one God (or higher power) was comparable to African belief systems (Jones- Jackson 1994). Also, the worship of saints in Catholicism had distinct parallels with Orisha worship in Yoruba culture. Spirit possession, documented within Gullah culture (“falling out” Twining 1977), Voodoo, and Santeria is yet another connection between the Gullah and Caribbean syncretic belief systems.

An entire volume could be written on the cultural connections between the Caribbean and the Gullah/Geechee area; however, the scholarly literature documenting such connections lacks synthesis, and should be of consideration in the future. What can be definitely established is the shared experiences of enslaved Africans (Mintz and Price 1992) both in the Caribbean and the Sea Islands. These groups shaped a creolized culture out of traits from Africa, interactions with Europeans, Indigenous peoples, and residents of the established slave populations they joined in the New World. Cultural connections, religious connections, and linguistic connections between the Caribbean and the Gullah/ Geechee community establish the need for increased research in the area referred to as “Africanisms.”

Africanisms⁵

Africanisms can be best understood as cultural elements (including linguistic elements) that signify an African origin. There are many such “Africanisms” within the various elements of Gullah culture, including songs, folklore, games, language, musical instruments, basketry, crafts, woodworking, initiation ceremonies, and herbal plant usage for healing purposes. Those who came from the Guinea Coast are credited with contributions in the areas of grammar, magic, secret societies, possession and trance, quilting, ceramics, and skilled metallurgy (Pollitzer 1999). The Central African captives brought many Bantu words and names, as well as values of kinship and their deep religious beliefs concerning death and the afterlife (Creel 1990; Pollitzer 1999). As Pollitzer illustrates through many years of study, “no one sea island can be connected to a specific region in Africa” (1999, 198). What can be alleged with relative certainty, however, is that Gullah culture is an amalgamation of many different cultural elements from West and Central Africa.

Etymology⁶ of “Gullah” and “Geechee”

There are two dominant hypothetical accounts on the etymology of the word “Gullah.” The exact origins, however, as well as the precise historical development of the language, remain unknown (Wood 1975). Most often mentioned within the literature is the belief that it is a shortened version of “Angola,” derived from the heavy importation of slaves from that region during South Carolina’s early colonial period (Jones- Jackson 1987; Creel 1988; Pollitzer 1999). Another possibility is a derivation of “Gola,” sometimes spelled Goulah, which refers to a large group of Africans from Liberia who were heavily imported into the Sea Islands at the height of rice and indigo cultivation (Wood 1975; Creel 1988). Less scholarly work has been conducted on the origin of “Geechee,” however a number of scholars suggest the term is derived from the Ogeechee River area of Georgia (Sengova 1994).

Transitions: From Slavery to Freedom

It was November of 1861 when the guns of “big shoot” rang out through Port Royal Sound. “Big Shoot,” the term used by Sea Islanders to designate the Civil War, brought change and, subsequently,

freedom to the Sea Islands. As Union armies invaded the areas inland of the island plantations, the white owners fled leaving everything just as it was in the hopes of soon returning. Those who had a chance informed the overseers of the situation, assuring them they would return; those without time left their slaves behind with no warning of what was to come. Upon contact with the slave populations, Union troops discovered they had not been informed of the War. The military enlisted the help of the federal government to take responsibility for these “contraband of war” (as they were at that time designated) who were running out of food and options (Rose 1964; Dabbs 1983;⁷ Pollitzer 1999).

Many members of President Lincoln’s cabinet became nervous about the situation in the Sea Islands. This was to be one of the largest cotton crops ever, and it had to be taken in. To accomplish the harvest, the US government had to formulate a plan for the supervision of the enslaved work force. Appropriate to the era, the intellectual elite of the North came to their aid. The project was a collaborative effort between philanthropists from New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, who came to be known as the “Port Royal Relief Committee.” With funding from the U.S. Treasury, the committee assembled a group of missionaries and sailed them off to the rescue of the desperate, abandoned islanders (Rose 1964).⁸

The volunteers enlisted to help with the federally sponsored Port Royal Experiment, as it has come to be known, were put in charge of one plantation each. They were presented with several duties: management of the slaves as they harvested the crops, distribution of relief supplies, teaching, preaching, and preparing them for citizenship (Dabbs 1983). The objective of the Port Royal Experiment was to uplift- - in every possible sense- - those released from slavery by the war (Dabbs 1983).

In 1862, President Lincoln gave the order that abandoned lands in and around St. Helena be set- aside for the freed population (30 miles inland from the sea). On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln’s official Emancipation Proclamation was read aloud to the former slaves of St. Helena Island. Soon after came the actual land sales to the freedmen.⁹ Much of the land was sold to missionaries or speculators, but some tracts were sold to the slaves who had worked that particular plantation. The land was partitioned off into plots ranging from ten to twenty acres and sold for \$1.25 an acre. Owning land was one of the greatest status symbols ever gained for the freedmen, and many who purchased it demanded that it be on the same land as their home plantation. Most often they even chose to keep the original name (Rose 1964). Other advantageous orders followed the land sales. Special Field Order 15 was issued by Union Army General William Tecumseh Sherman on January 15, 1865:

At Beaufort, Hilton Head, Savannah, Fernandina, St. Augustine, and Jacksonville, the blacks may remain in their chosen or accustomed vocations, but on the islands and in the settlements hereafter to be established, no white person whatever, unless military officers and soldiers, detailed for duty, will be permitted to reside; and the sole and exclusive management of affairs will be left to the freed people themselves, subject only to the United States military authority and the acts of Congress (adapted from Goodwine 1998b:165).

Further Change: From Self- Sufficiency to Resort Development

Between 1864 and the early 1950s Sea Islanders lived in relative isolation as self- sufficient farmers, while also utilizing nearby waterways to supplement their diet. In the 1950s, however, their isolation ended as connector bridges began being built to the various Sea Islands. This was the first step in the demise of Sea Island communities and the situation worsens with each coming year. One need look no further than Hilton Head Island, which only 50 years ago was home to an African- American farming community. Land is constantly taken out of production and converted to resort development for the industry of tourism. Present day Hilton Head is populated by affluent Euro Americans, residing in communities named after successful plantations of the slavery era. What were once self-

sufficient Gullah communities are now the sites of golf courses, resorts, gated retirement communities, and vacation rentals. The development of these communities has transformed the residents into an “endangered species.”¹⁰ Their lifeways and cultural traditions are disappearing at an alarming rate. Jobs are scarce and often limited to low wage jobs associated with the tourism industry, and the future projections of increased tourism and development offer no relief.

It is within this tumultuous context that the need arises for a synthetic overview of the existing literature concerning this living, breathing culture. In the coming years, involvement from policy makers, governmental bodies, and community organizations and activists will be crucial to either the destruction or preservation of this irreplaceable link to the African American past.

Chapter 2 Gullah Language

“The spoken word is the life and heart of Gullah culture” (Twining 1977, 80).

The dialect used by Sea Islanders of South Carolina and Georgia, often referred to as Sea Island Creole, was established as a legitimate language system by Lorenzo Dow Turner.¹¹ Turner was an African American scholar who conducted fifteen years of research among Sea Island residents with the objective of recording their language, folklore, and songs. The ultimate goal for Turner was to uncover the links between Gullah speech and the African languages they most closely resemble in the methods used to form words. In doing so he would also discredit much of the earlier work on Gullah language, such as A.E. Gonzales (1922), J. Bennett (1908), R. Smith (1926), and Guy B. Johnson (1930), who represented misinterpretations of Gullah speech in ways that are denigrating and racist. He established this in his publication *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (1949). The invaluable data contained within this study continue to be used as the primary reference guide for the linguistic study of Gullah language, and the exploration of the phonetic, syntactic, and morphological elements of Gullah that represent a definitive link to African language systems. It is important to note that Gullah language is distinct, and should not, therefore, be assigned to a general category of Black dialect (Jones- Jackson 1983).¹²

Turner’s contributions to the study of Gullah language are immeasurable. His research consisted of field research in both Africa and the Sea Islands, resulting in twenty- seven informants from various parts of Africa and more than fifty from various Gullah communities in South Carolina and Georgia. *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (1949) includes a phonetic alphabet, West African words found within Gullah speech from a variety of African language groups,¹³ syntactic features, morphological features, and Gullah texts transcribed in phonetic notation. All features within this collection illustrate the undeniable contributions of African languages to that which we refer to as Gullah.

The linguistic study of Gullah represents the largest component within both published and unpublished material concerning Gullah culture. The areas of investigation can be delineated into four distinct categories: linguistic origins and composition as a Creole language system, distinctive linguistic features of Gullah speech, dynamics of language usage and decreolization, and the role of language within Gullah culture. A complete understanding of the linguistic study of Gullah requires an advanced understanding of linguistic terminology. In light of the fact that many do not possess such knowledge, I have included, as endnotes, definitions of relevant terminology when necessary.

Linguistic Origins and Composition as a Creole Language System

The linguistic roots of the Gullah language system have been debated for over half a century. Lorenzo Dow Turner’s work suggests Gullah language resulted from a merging of English and West African languages of Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, and Twi (among others). Ian Hancock asserts a strong linguistic relationship between the Krio language of Sierra Leone and Gullah (1994), as well as highlighting the similarities between the Guinea Coast Creole English system and linguistic features of Gullah speech.

One example is the grammatical morphemes¹⁴ such as *bin*, *de*, *go*, and *don*. Cassidy (1994) suggests that Gullah language is rooted in the Caribbean, while Mufwene asserts a “continuity” model based on suggested connections between Gullah language and the Kwa, Kru, and Mende languages of West Africa (1994). Mende speakers were among the dominant group taken from Sierra Leone, due to their extensive knowledge of rice cultivation (Sengova 1994).¹⁵ The Mende language appears to be the largest contributor of words and expressions to Gullah language (Hair 1965; Hancock 1971). Within all the debates on the origins of Gullah language is the assumption that the similarities between West African language systems and Gullah represent a solid connection; thereby establishing the African substratum. Unfortunately, however, at this juncture there is no definitive data that are accepted by all scholars concerning the origins of Gullah language.

African Substratum of English

Words that found their way into the Gullah language from Africa are numerous, and often recognized in English also. In an attempt to assess the possible linguistic, and therefore cultural, borrowing that may have occurred between Gullah and Whites, Wade-Lewis (1988) suggests the English language may also contain evidence of an African substratum.

Ex: Animal names: zebra, gorilla
 Plant names and food items: goober, okra, yam, banana
 Musical terms: samba, mambo, banjo, bongo
 Religious terms: booger, mojo, voodoo, zombie
 Action verbs: boogie, dig, juke, tote

In her analysis of the phonological, syntactical, morphological and semantic aspects of Niger-Kordofanian languages¹⁶ in the New World, Wade-Lewis concludes that the Gullah people maintained linguistic continuity, as well as influencing the English language (1988).¹⁷

Creole Status of the Gullah Language System

When speaker of different languages come into contact with one another they must establish a strategy of communication. This often results in a pidgin¹⁸ language. Once the pidgin becomes the first language of a particular group, it becomes a Creole. What has been established without question is the status of Gullah as a legitimate Creole¹⁹ language system. Cunningham (1970)²⁰ was among the first to establish Gullah as a legitimate Creole through analysis of the syntactic system.²¹ She compared the lexical²² and grammatical²³ features of Gullah with established Creoles, such as that of Jamaica and Sierra Leone Krio. Both Cunningham (1970) and Hancock (1971) have illustrated similarities between Gullah and the Krio of Sierra Leone, referred to as “the West African cousin of Gullah” by Sengova (1994, 2000).

Evidence of the Creole status of Gullah can be seen in the existence of African- derived words used by Gullah speakers that are unintelligible to inland Blacks (Jones- Jackson 1983) (e.g. *dayclean* “dawn”, *det rain* “downpour”, *pinto* “coffin” as documented by Montgomery 1994b) as well as the existence of West African language patterns using a single pronoun to refer to all genders, [referred to within the literature as a “genderless pronominal system of pronoun use”] (Jones- Jackson 1978). Other unique facets of Gullah language include: the absence of past tense use of *-ed* morphemes [e.g. *The weather look bad.*], absence of the pronoun “it” and substitution of “we” for “us” [e.g. *He come this close to we.*], and the absence of possessive pronouns [e.g. *She can cook she own.*] (Jones- Jackson 1983).

Gullah and the Creole Continuum

The most prominent debate within studies of Gullah language is the status of Gullah, with reference to the Creole continuum. The concept was introduced in the 1970s and is best understood as “a continuous range of variation, found in particular in many Creole- speaking communities, between the basilect (the speech variety with the most Creole features), and the acrolect (the speech variety with the least Creole features, thus most similar to Standard language). Speech varieties that have an equal mixture of both are referred to as mesolect, thus being between the acrolect and the basilect.”²⁴

As a Creole language moves along the continuum between basilect and acrolect, it is presumed that the Creole is undergoing a process of “decreolization” (a process of assimilation from Creole to standard language). The damage done by such an ideology will become clear upon closer investigation of specific research.

Satina Anziano (1998) conducted an investigation to test the hypothesis of Gullah decreolization using data from the South Carolina Federal Writers Project. The subject, “Lilly Knox” was interviewed between 1936 and 1938 and is taken to represent a mesolect Gullah speaker. The speech of Lilly Knox, 36- year- old Gullah woman, is compared to more recent linguistic data collected from current Gullah speakers, Creole, and AAVE (African American Vernacular English) data, presenting copula²⁵ usage as the point of comparison. The data selected for study consisted of each instance of the forms of be: am, is, are, was, were, been. Statistical analysis was performed using the SAS (statistical analysis system) program. Comparisons with AAVE indicate a comparable trend toward decreasing copula usage in the present tense more than in the past, and the disfavoring of plural copula. The absence of copula usage within the transcripts of Lillie Knox suggests that it is earlier on the continuum of mesolect designation (lower mesolect speaker). Based on the results of the study, Anziano makes an argument for the value of material from the FWP for further linguistic analysis. Anziano further concludes that such results indicate Gullah is now entering the process of decreolization in much the same manner AAVE did at an earlier period in history.

In direct opposition, Tometro Hopkins (1992)²⁶ suggests that Gullah language is not following a developmental sequence of decreolization. This study focuses on the use of auxiliary verbs *da* and *bin*. Hopkins discusses the development of Gullah language within the context of competing past and present theoretical paradigms concerning the origins, dynamics, and future of Gullah language. Upon comparing Gullah with alternative Creole verbal systems, such as Guyanese Creole English, Hopkins suggests Gullah language is changing, but not in the direction of being replaced by Standard English. Through the conversations used to conduct linguistic analysis Hopkins conveys much about Gullah culture in the realm of social structure, religion, family, and changes brought by development. Much of the same argument appears in a more recent publication based on the same fieldwork data (Hopkins 1994).

In 1990 an alternative hypothesis was proposed. Katherine W. Mille, suggesting that the Creole Continuum (CC) positions Gullah language as moving toward English, proposes that the CC may be too simple and linear to adequately represent what is going on within the Gullah language. Furthermore, she suggests that the two languages are involved in a stable relationship which allows for some overlap between the two; highly dependent on social context. The overall project is to isolate, describe, and quantify those syntactic or morphological features that mark tense mood aspect (TMA) in the verb phrases of Gullah represented by Ambrose Gonzales²⁷ (even though his work is controversial and labeled racist and demeaning), and compare them with features serving the same function in recent samples of Gullah speech gathered by Jones- Jackson (1978) and Mufwene (n.d.). Tense, mood, and aspect in Gullah are generally distinctive and thus are easy to identify, study, and compare, which is why they are chosen as objects of study within this research.

In terms of the debate over the decreolization of Gullah, Mille breaks new ground. The results suggest no directional change in Gullah over time, no indication that Gullah is converging with English during the time line specified for this study (last 130 years), and therefore no real evidence that Gullah is undergoing decreolization. Mille suggests the results establish Gullah as a stable Creole language system (1990).

Mille is not alone in her belief that Gullah language is alive and well. Salikoko S. Mufwene, a scholar who writes extensively on Creole language systems, disputes the theory that Gullah language is dying out, further suggesting that Gullah has been under no more pressure to change than any other nonstandard variety of English in North America. He cites group identity, geographical and social

isolation, and the ability to code switch²⁸ successfully, as important factors that have aided in the preservation of Gullah language. In response to the idea that stigmatization will erode Gullah, Mufwene suggests that is only the case if the community's sense of identity has been eroded (Mufwene 1997).

The real threat to Gullah language survival, Mufwene asserts, is the overall reduction of speakers due to development and land loss. As newcomers enter the coastal communities of Georgia and South Carolina the limited economic opportunities within the tourism industry drive the youth to larger cities. It is in such places that the real pressure of assimilation threatens to alter Gullah language. This is in direct contrast to the notion that increased tourism will bring about increased interactions between Gullah speakers and Standard English speakers. To support his hypothesis, Mufwene reminds us that those who settle and vacation in these areas spend the majority of their time at the beaches, and not in contact with the local Gullah community. Therefore, this research suggests there is no evidence of an immediate threat of language loss or decreolization directly resulting from increased development and tourism within Sea Island communities. It is, however, the economic constraints of tourism and development that lead to overall loss of Gullah speakers in these areas.

Gullah Linguistics: Various Points of Interest

There are a variety of studies concerning Gullah language that do not intersect neatly with any mentioned thus far. Linda D. Mack (1984)²⁹ conducted a comparative analysis of linguistic stress patterns, which attempted to compare the phonological contrast system of Gullah with that of English; more specifically, on an acoustical/temporal analysis of the linguistic stress patterns of Gullah and English speakers. Linguistic stress refers to enhancing some elements of speech so that they become more prominent and noticeable. Subjects who participated in the linguistic study were divided into three categories: Gullah speakers, English speaking Black adults, and Code switchers. Speaking fundamental frequency (SFF) was used as the test variable. The study results indicate that English and Gullah differ most in the area of duration, with fundamental frequency also being a good indicator for linguistic stress patterns, with Gullah speakers exhibiting a lower speaking fundamental frequency than English speakers. Mack's work also includes (in Appendix) a Gullah Feature Index, General American English Index, and a Guide to Code Switching Proficiency (1984).

Language does not operate in a vacuum. It is influenced by many factors within a community of speakers. In 1976, Patricia C. Nichols conducted research within Georgetown, South Carolina, to assess the ways in which age, sex, and mobility affect linguistic change. The data consist of twelve recorded adult conversations and the subsequent analysis of grammatical features undergoing change, such as preposition and pronoun usage. Factors suggested as having an impact are job aspirations that require Standard English speaking ability, varying degrees of connection to island life, and age. This study proposes that Gullah language is undergoing change toward Standard English within the specified speech community, citing various factors of direct impact.

Language as Culture

Language and culture go hand in hand. There are countless cultural elements within Gullah culture that exhibit the importance of language to cultural preservation. Within religious ceremony, sometimes what is said is not as important as how it is said. In a sermon recorded in 1980 on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, Patricia Jones-Jackson illustrates the importance of linguistic features within the process of "evocation of the spirit" (115)³⁰ during a Gullah church service. Throughout the sermon, the minister sprinkles bits of Creole syntax with Standard English. This strategy reinforces to the congregation, both educated and uneducated, that he is indeed part of their shared speech community. The following excerpt illustrates the use of Creole within the sermon:

Going over the Sea of Temptation
Brother I don't know
But I begin to think

In this Christian life
Sometime you gone be toss*
By the wind of life.

All the power in he hand*
Got power for we*
When we get hungry
He's able to feed us (Jones- Jackson 1994).
**denotes examples of Creole syntax use*

Gullah Language and Education

Several studies have been conducted concerning the status of Gullah language and possible implications for the education of Gullah children.³¹ Virginia D. Benmaman (1975) conducted research among fourth and fifth grade Gullah children on Johns and James Island, South Carolina, to assess their level of linguistic acculturation. Her findings indicated that children prefer materials written in Standard English to material written in their own language. Students responded to seeing the Gullah language in written form with discomfort and ridicule, with many referring to it as “bad language.” Upon administering comprehension tests in both, research results produced no significant differences between scores for either Standard English or passages written in Gullah. Benmaman suggests that Gullah children (of the 1970s) had a conditioned preference for Standard English, due to a lack of respect shown by teachers and school staff regarding the legitimacy of the Gullah language system. She also suggests there has been a strong attempt to reject and eradicate Gullah speech throughout schools in Sea Island areas.

More recently there was a similar study conducted by Bernateen W. Cunningham (1989) Attitudes of School Personnel in Charleston, South Carolina Toward the Gullah Dialect. The research was aimed at assessing the attitudes of speech- language pathologists and teachers in the public school systems of Johns and James Island toward children whose language is Gullah. Questionnaires were administered³² and the results were statistically interpreted. Overwhelmingly, the data suggest that school personnel respond negatively to children's use of Gullah language, prompting Cunningham to suggest there is a definite need for educational and cultural training of teachers working with Gullah-speaking children (1989), in an attempt to foster recognition of the unique linguistic features of this viable language.

Contemporary Gullah research corroborates the need for culturally sensitive teacher training. Within Melissa Hargrove's work (2000)³³ informants and field collaborators discussed the persistent stereotype and stigma attached to Gullah language. The elder generations, many of which were “educated straight out of their culture” (Hargrove 2000), were punished for speaking Gullah as children and young adults. It was made clear that the only way to get a decent job or be respected was to rid yourself of that “bastard English, broken English...bad talk” (Hargrove 2000, 102). Marquetta L. Goodwine, founder of the Gullah/ Geechee Sea Island Coalition, supports this idea:

This condemnation and pity of Gullah- speaking Sea Islanders had an overwhelming and almost devastating impact. These people were taught that “ef oona tak likka disyah, den ting backwad” and if you wanted to “make something of yourself” then you needed to “correct” the way you spoke (meaning to take on Standard English) (Goodwine 1998d, 9).

Only presently are some communities and school systems coming together to encourage children to learn to “code switch” gracefully between Gullah and English, but it will be many years before the results of such shifts become evident and widespread.

Conclusion

One of the premiere linguistic specialists on Gullah language was Patricia Jones Jackson,³⁴ author of *When Roots Die: Endangered Traditions on the Sea Islands* (1987). After extensive years of research on Wadmalaw Island and within various Sea Island communities, she made a profound prediction: the language will remain intact as long as the communities remain intact. In making suggestions, nearly all scholars studying Gullah language realize the need for speakers of Gullah to be educated on the origins of their language. This would go a long way toward encouraging Sea Islanders to take pride in their African heritage. Educators in these areas must be made aware of this important task. It is estimated that the Gullah language is spoken by less than half a million descendants of Africans living in coastal South Carolina and Georgia (Mufwene 1997). Language preservation should be a top priority for all scholars involved with Gullah and Geechee communities, as well as for the growing number of activists leading grassroots movements within them.

Chapter 3 Religion and Ceremony

Religion and religious ceremony have been among the primary research interests within Gullah/Geechee studies, and with good reason. Religion has played a central role in community life, organization, leadership, and survival within the various Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia and continues to be the most powerful force in Gullah communities (Jones-Jackson 1994). Gullah religious belief and practice can be compared to the broader belief systems of African Americans as they pertain to the doctrine of Christianity and worship of God, however, a fair portion of Gullah religiosity remains grounded in African cosmology and worldview. There are many components to this body of research: spiritual beliefs and practices, music and song associated with religion, African cultural retention within Sea Island religiosity, and the role of the church within the community. What is striking about the research concerning religious aspects of Gullah life is how little some aspects have changed over time.

Folk Religion

What might it have been like to witness the evolution of religious ideology within these early slave communities spread along the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia? Much of the research conducted gives us a sketch into the lives of these earliest Africans, and chronicles the ways in which Gullah and Geechee religion came to be what we find today. Afloyd Butler represents this curiosity in his unpublished dissertation, *The Blacks Contribution of Elements of African Religion to Christianity in America: A Case Study of the Great Awakening in South Carolina* (1975).³⁵ Butler suggests the African American Christianity we witness presently is a direct result of strong African elements being kept alive within an evolving religious system. Such elements were harbored within what is referred to as “the invisible institution” in which enslaved Africans conserved part of their religious heritage by syncretizing certain elements within a Christian framework (Butler 1975; Raboteau 1978). Such characteristics include shouting, dancing, spirit possession, and foot stomping, which can be witnessed in many of the present day church services of Sea Islands communities.

The most comprehensive and highly recognized study of religion in the Sea Islands was conducted by Margaret Washington Creel, resulting in *A Peculiar People: Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs* (1988). The historical time line of this investigation begins in West Africa with the possible antecedents of Sea Island religion. Creel investigates the various elements of Gullah spiritual life, including social cohesion, group identity, cultural resistance, and adaptability. Using missionary reports, diaries, church minutes, and recorded Gullah spirituals from the St. Helena Island community, Creel established a rough sketch of the origins of slave religion during their earliest years of bondage. Gullah religious beliefs represent a syncretic creation (often referred to as a folk religion) made from the blending of African spirituality and worldview with the Christian acculturation and indoctrination experienced in the New World (Creel 1988).

Church and Community

The importance of the church within Gullah and Geechee community life cannot be over emphasized. The church as community center began with the concept of the Praise House, of which there are several still standing within various Sea Island communities. Praise Houses were located on each plantation and served as a religious meetinghouse for that particular plantation's enslaved population. As time progressed, these small one- room dwellings became the locus of social planning and action, motivation, and community cohesion (Lawton 1939).³⁶ The Praise House became the official site for legal and social matters, as well as conflict resolution (Guthrie 1977), therefore becoming the judicial, religious, and social center of the community. Patricia Guthrie conducted research within the St. Helena Island community and concluded that Praise Houses were still being used, on occasion, for similar purposes. She suggests that children were only granted membership to particular community Praise Houses once they had completed the social process of "catching sense" (1977).³⁷ No other scholar has identified this particular concept.³⁸ It is accurate, however, that the social system of St. Helena Island (as well as other Sea Island communities) is structured by membership in particular Churches and previous plantation boundaries (Guthrie 1996).

Religion as Music and Song

At the heart of Gullah religious beliefs and practices are the songs. The importance of song within these communities began before their arrival in the New World. Enslaved Africans brought with them an African tradition of "call and response" worship, song, and religious dance (Hart 1993), which accounts for the noticeable African rhythms of Sea Island spirituals (Thrower 1953).³⁹ As they were introduced to Christian hymns through their interactions with plantation owners and missionaries, the early Sea Island populations created the "Negro spiritual," best understood as an adaptation of traditional Christian hymns. Many of the beliefs of Christianity were incorporated into the Gullah spiritual worldview.⁴⁰ These songs became a form of self and group expression, as a way to communicate the oppressions and hardships of slavery, as well as a mental release (Thrower 1953). They also represented the spiritual devotion of slave communities to their new spiritual guide, in such songs as Gwine t'res from all my labuh and Somebody een yuh, it mus' be jedus.⁴¹

Religious songs are still an important component of Sea Island worship, but are commonly referred to as "Gullah spirituals."⁴² These songs represent the Negro spiritual of the slavery era as it has adapted and evolved over time. Gullah spirituals are normally sung in unison and without music, accompanied by rhythmic foot stomping, clapping, and tambourine strikes (Hart 1993).⁴³ Gullah spirituals are unique in that the scales are much more pentatonic than Euro American hymns. They also differ from traditional Negro spirituals in their lack of musical accompaniment. Even with the noticeable changes between the spirituals of enslaved peoples and present day Gullah and Geechee people, the spiritual and its performance represent cultural ties to African tradition and African tribal rituals (Hart 1993).

Extensive research has been devoted to the legacy of the Negro spiritual and its place in twenty first century Sea Island society. Thomas Hawley, Jr. conducted six years of research on Johns Island in the company of an elderly singing group, the "Senior Lites." Members of this group are carrying on an oral tradition that was passed to them from ancestors who were alive during the period of slavery or shortly after (Hawley 1993), but it is in danger of loss. Informants reveal that clapping and shouting are being replaced by drumming, organs are replacing a cappella singing, and meetinghouses are losing their distinct role as spiritual and community centers. What is preserved within this research is important information concerning who passed these spirituals on to those within this singing group, what role the spirituals play in their religious lives, and perceived threats to this religious tradition. Specific factors analyzed within this dissertation include: role of lead singer, type of spiritual, tempo, duration, type of hand clapping, tonal center, number of pitches used, embellishments, word content, name and age of singers, and religious affiliation. Transcribed interviews with all the singers are included in the Appendix, as well as the lyrics and musical scores to two recorded performances of the "Senior Lites."

No discussion of the importance of song within Gullah culture is complete without Guy and Candie Carawan's *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island, South Carolina- Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs*, first published in 1966 (1989). This book is the product of a project initiated by the Highlander Institute, which includes songs and stories of relevance to the residents of Johns Island during the early 1960s. The collection was gathered over a four-year period in which the married Carawan team lived within the River Road Gullah community. The latest edition (1989) includes an introduction by Charles Joyner aimed at the abrupt changes in this area between the first publishing (1966) and 1989. Just as with other Sea Islands, development and tourism have certainly taken their toll on this Gullah community.

Ain't you got a right to the tree of life? contains the lyrics of many important Gullah songs, including *We shall overcome*, *Shoo Turkey Shoo*,⁴⁴ *Jack and Mary and the Devil*, *Ask the Watchman How Long*, *Keep your eyes on the prize*, and others. Within this book the songs and stories tell of an island that has endured many hardships. It also contributes to our knowledge of Gullah storytelling, Gullah religion, migration to New York, race relations on the island, and the organization of the first citizenship education school by Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins (1966, 1989). The residents of Johns Island made notable contributions to the Civil Rights movement with their strategies for training teachers and organizing at the grassroots level. The words and songs within this collection record an important part of Gullah history straight from the mouths of those who lived it.⁴⁵

Much of the research conducted concerning songs of Gullah culture has been an attempt at "salvage" collection. Among the earliest collections was *Slave Songs of the United States* collected and compiled by William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. The compilation of 136 slave songs, collected on St. Helena Island (among other locations throughout the U.S.) was released in 1867, and reprinted in 1965. From the collection of songs we can reinforce our current assumptions about the unique linguistic patterns of Gullah speech. Allen et al. make note of the omission of auxiliary verbs, the lack of distinction of gender, case, number, tense, or voice, as well as the use of past tense verbs in the present auxiliary (1965). Among the songs collected are rowing songs, spiritual songs, songs associated with the "shout" and songs which represent the daily routines and hardships of Sea Islanders during the 1860s. This collection, when viewed for its historical significance, illustrates the strength and perseverance of song in the lives of the Gullah. Songs have given them hope and happiness, while preserving their rich heritage in word and melody.

Just as continuity is reflected in Gullah songs, we can also see the effects of time and change. George L. Starks⁴⁶ offers a glimpse into the world of music within the context of Gullah culture as he examines the role of music within community life. His research was conducted on James, Johns, Yorges, Edisto, St. Helena, and Daufuskie Island between 1972 and 1973. Starks suggests that the religious services he witnessed are not much different than those conducted in these same areas some 90 years ago (1973), with particular songs to accompany certain activities and particularly religious and holiday events. Stark's work is evidence of the integral role of dancing, hand clapping, and movement in the delivery of music and song both historically and within the recent history of Sea Island religious activity. Also, some baptisms are still conducted at the river. Stark's findings propose that Gullah songs, as well as music, represent both continuity and change, and the traditional importance of music lives on in the Sea Islands.

Traditions of Religious Practice: "Ring Shout" and "Call and Response"

There are two traditional practices associated with Sea Island religious services that inadvertently appear in any detailed study: the "ring shout" and "call and response." The ring shout has a long history within Gullah culture. This shuffling, circular dance is accompanied by chanting and hand clapping, and has been associated with the singing of Negro spirituals and Gullah spirituals since slavery (Allen et al. 1965). During Praise House meetings, each new verse of a spiritual was introduced by the song leader to which the chorus responded (call and response), just as it is done in present day churches. The Minister interacts with the audience in a way that illustrates the symbiotic relationship

between minister and congregation. The transcript of a sermon from Wadmalaw Island, June 1980 illustrates the minister's calculated use of language in an attempt to elicit response and involvement from his congregation (Jones- Jackson 1994). By sprinkling Creole syntax throughout the sermon, the minister touches both the educated and uneducated parishioners, establishing that he is part of their speech community. This not only creates personal bonds between the two, but also preserves the long held tradition of "call and response" within religious practice of Sea Island communities.

Role of Church in Community Life

The importance of religion in the lives of Gullah and Geechee people allocates extensive power to the church within the activities of the community. Recent research conducted within the St. Helena Island community illustrates the past and present role of the church within community life (Watkins 1993).⁴⁷ Until quite recently the residents of St. Helena Island depended on their religious leaders to maintain social order through a system referred to as "just law." The system originated from the Praise House religious courts used to mediate and settle disputes in a process referred to as "Ward Deacon Process" (Watkins 1993). Minor infractions, such as domestic disturbances and theft, were handled through church law as recently as the mid 1980s. For example, if a community member was accused of getting drunk and creating a disturbance he or she would appear before the church council, thus making him responsible to both his church community and the wider social community. When the church leaders felt he had received the necessary counseling from the Bible, he would be forgiven and allowed to rejoin the church community for services (prior to that decision the person was forced to sit on the back row of the church as a tactic of ostracism). Many residents of St. Helena Island suggested this type of system worked because islanders are very community oriented and very spiritual; the system incorporated two very important cultural aspects into a strategy for social control. Older members of the community suggest the old way was better than "white mans law" (referred to as unjust law), because it promoted social cohesion and minimized criminal activity while being linked to the important concepts of extended family and religion (Watkins 1993).

The maintenance of social control by church leaders has long been a practice of Sea Island communities (Johnson 1996). Research conducted in 1950 in Shrimp Creek Georgia (15 miles south of Savannah) provided similar findings. Deacons of Shrimp Creek were reportedly responsible for handling marital and social conflicts (Ottenberg 1991). Church leaders were chosen by the congregations to serve for life, thereby creating bonds that would last and creating alliances across social boundaries.

Seekin' the Lord: African American Conversion Ritual

The process referred to as "seekin' the lord" has been widely documented in countless studies of Gullah religious practice (Starks 1973; Creel 1988; Pollitzer 1999). This process is one in which a person undergoes a particular ritualistic process in order to be "ushered into the inner circle of the socioreligious worldview of their community" (A. Johnson 1996, 16). The period of time between a professed desire to become Christian and acceptance by the elders was called "seekin" because the seeker was looking for Jesus (Pollitzer 1999). The process became a rite of passage within the Praise Houses of Sea Island slave communities, symbolizing public affirmation of their acceptance of the Lord into their hearts and lives. During the seekin' process it is customary to fast, as well as to wait for a vision from God (A. Johnson 1996). The act of seekin' provided a moral compass by which members of a community were held mutually accountable to one another to live by the laws of God. The folk religious practice of seekin' was the physical manifestation of this spiritual quest. The seeker would go into the woods and wait for a vision, which he or she would then relate to an elder. Next the person would be accepted by the Praise House members and readied for baptism (Pollitzer 1999).

Conclusion

The abundance of research conducted within various Sea Islands concerning Gullah religion is beyond the scope of a mere chapter. What is recognizable from this brief overview is the importance of religion within the lives of the Sea Islanders, as well as the abundance of religious practices, beliefs,

and rituals signifying continuity with an African past. As long as such connections exist, Gullah culture will signify the important role of religion and spirituality from slavery to the present, as well as the adaptive nature of those early African communities who blended African beliefs with Christianity into the syncretic religion being practiced today.

Chapter 4 Verbal Arts and Folklore

Traditional folklore, rooted as it is in the real hungers, needs, and struggles of man, is a means of preserving the community's memorable experiences; of protesting-- humorously, bitterly, or militantly-- the hard life imposed by nature or by the inhumanity of some men towards other men; of making educational comments about manners and morals, the trivial and the transcendental in man's groping for a life of meaning and dignity (Joyner 1971, 2).

For more than one hundred years, African American folklore has been an object of scholarly study. Folklore refers to the traditional beliefs, myths, tales, and practices of a people transmitted orally from generation to generation. Historically, folklore has been collected from missionaries, academics, ministers, and abolitionists, resulting in large collections from various African American populations throughout North America. Gullah folklore, best described as folk knowledge, offers insight into many historical aspects of Gullah life (e.g. tales as education, love, origin myths, tales as hidden messages, socialization, religion (Pollitzer 1999)). Current and future research aimed at folklore collection and documentation of tales still being told offer intriguing possibilities for the study of cultural continuity and change in the Sea Island area.

Slave Narratives of the Federal Writers' Project

The majority of scholarly literature pertaining to folklore simply records the tales, songs, and language with no elaboration of the social context within which the folklore was collected. Hundreds of slave narratives were collected in the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers' Project⁴⁸ of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>.

The narratives document hundreds of interviews conducted in South Carolina and Georgia of particular relevance to any study of Gullah culture. Much of what was recorded among the Geechee of Georgia appears in the publication, *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies Among the Georgia Coastal Negroes* (1940). *Drums and Shadows* is an attempt "to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin" (1940). Residents of various communities were interviewed by agents of the WPA, including Old Fort, Tin City, Yamacraw, Frogtown and Currytown, Springfield, Brownville, Tatemville, White Bluff, Pin Point, Sandfly, Grimball's Point, Wilmington Island, Sunbury, Harris Neck, Pine Barren near Eulonia, Possum Point, Darien, Sapelo Island, St. Simons Island, and St. Mary's. The collection of folklore and stories are transcribed in Gullah, as much as possible, in order to preserve the rich linguistic heritage. The topics of folklore within this collection include conjure, work, daily routines, religion, traditional arts and crafts, superstition, music, recipes, food ways, death and burial customs, songs, baptisms, graves, fishing, subsistence, architecture, agriculture, industrialization, memories of plantation life, and family stories passed down through the years. The original material is archived at the Library of Congress.

This type of collection represents the overall worldview of the Geechee people inhabiting these islands at a particular moment in time. The Appendix is essential reading, as it draws correlations between this and other research in ways that establish concrete connections between Sea Island culture and various cultures throughout the African Diaspora, as well as West African culture. Close to 150 informants were interviewed for the *Drums and Shadows* project. The collection also contains excellent photographs of many informants, as well as tools, musical instruments, carvings, and baskets (1940).

Folklore Experts: Charles Joyner and Mary Arnold Twining

Among the most prominent scholars who have conducted folklore studies in South Carolina and Georgia are Charles Joyner and Mary Twining. Joyner's dissertation *Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck: Antebellum Black Culture in the South Carolina Lowcountry* (1977) is concerned with Afro-American folklife on the rice plantations of Waccamaw Neck during the final decades of slavery. Joyner extends the usability of the term "folklife" to include all aspects of life among the African Americans of the slave community under study. Joyner's work is painstakingly compartmentalized into six chapters: historical overview of the Lowcountry and the Gullah people, work patterns during slavery, use of "off time," Gullah linguistics, animal and human trickster tales, and material culture.

Joyner gathered data from published and unpublished sources: family papers, plantation records, wills, estate inventories, vestry records of the church, minutes of the planters' agricultural society, memoirs, planters writings, writings from visitors, newspapers, and genealogies from the Waccamaw Neck planter class. He also made comparisons between the planter class data and the historical data concerning slavery in the Americas, in order to get a balanced look at life in the Lower Waccamaw Neck region of South Carolina. Folktales selected for study illustrate connections with the African heritage of Gullah people. Within his dissertation there is also a wealth of information concerning life during slavery, including data on food allowances, clothing, architecture, and African influenced crafts. The dissertation was later published as *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (1984).

Mary Twining also conducted research concerning Sea Island folklore and folklife in the communities of Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Yonges, and Edisto Islands in South Carolina, as well as St. Simon Island, Georgia. Her dissertation, *An Examination of African Retentions In the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands* (1977), sought to point out the distinctive African survivals in the Sea Islands region. Twining realized the value of folklore, suggesting, "folk stories demonstrate the values in the community" (117). Within the various Sea Island communities the values were numerous. She presented the Sea Islands as "a homogeneous, traditional community that provides a living laboratory for folklorists and other students of human cultural behavior" (1977, 3). The extensive folklore collection of Twining's work is broad in scope, including specific folktales, games and plays, songs, interviews, recorded stories, animal stories, biographical sketches of informants, religious services and prayers, and riddles collected from Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Yonges, and Edisto Islands in South Carolina and St. Simon Island in Georgia.

Twining recorded not only the written forms of folklore and folklife, but also included the expressive behavior of verbal arts, such as storytelling, oral religious lore, and singing songs, as well as the movement and dance associated with important folklife ceremonies. Twining discusses the role of folk craft within everyday life (e.g. baskets, quilts, nets, brooms) as well as the social implications of Gullah songs and stories: "hope for a better world, better treatment and better times pervade the songs and prayers" (Twining 1977, 85). A persistent theme of flying home (or escaping home) to Africa appears in songs and stories. Within the animal stories, Twining recognizes the rage, hostility, and frustration earlier generations of Gullah were faced with in their dealings with Euro Americans. Folklore is not simply the tales of a backward people; it is a powerful representation of history as viewed through the holders of indigenous folk knowledge.

What is easily recognizable through Twining's representation of Gullah folklore and folklife are the connections to a West African heritage. African societal features appear in such activities as games and music, as well as community relationships and child rearing. While playing games and other activities, older children help care for the younger generation of children, much the way their African ancestors did. Members of Gullah communities cast nets the same way West Africans do, and many of the food preparation customs have been passed from generation to generation. Twining's dissertation contains numerous recorded songs, prayers, and games from various Sea Island communities; among them are

Sally Waters (or Walker), Mary Mack, Boba- needle, Whoa, mule, can't get the saddle on, to mention a few.

Adding to our knowledge of the persistence of Africanisms in the Sea Islands, Twining, along with Keith E. Baird, co- edited *Sea Island Roots: African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia* (1991). The volume contains articles concerning the many African cultural retentions present within Gullah culture. Within that volume Twining discusses the art and tradition of “basket names.” The article “Names and Naming in the Sea Islands” was first presented as a paper at the Ninth Annual Symposium on Language and Culture in South Carolina at the University of South Carolina, April 1985. It also appears in a more recent edited volume, *The Crucible of Carolina: Essays in the Development of Gullah Language and Culture* (1994) edited by Michael Montgomery.⁴⁹

Basket Names Within Sea Island Culture

It was Lorenzo D. Turner (1949) who first uncovered the African retention we refer to as basket names. The names of Sea Islanders gathered by Turner have been established as originating in countries from Senegal to Angola, while also indicating the early Gullah communities contained speakers of many different languages. Basket names are associated with people; however, it is also important to seek place names which offer evidence of African linguistic retentions. For example, Turner included names for coastal rivers and islands in South Carolina which are presently recognized as place names:

Okatee ⁵⁰	okati (Umbunda, Angola)	Middle, interior
Peedee ⁵¹	mpidi (Kongo, Angola)	a species of viper
Wassaw ⁵²	wasaw (Twi, Gold Coast)	name of district, tribe, dialect

(Above adapted from Turner 1949, 307)

The aforementioned paper by Twining (*Names and Naming In the Sea Islands*) sought to investigate the persistence of this practice some forty years after Turner recorded the practice of basket names. The findings suggest that such practices still exist (names gathered from Johns Island) and the names are (1) related to specific characteristics of the bearer, or (2) related to some incident or situation in which the named individual was involved. The article contains many examples of names obtained during research within the Johns Island region.

The traditional use of basket names has important social functions within Gullah communities. For example, names form interrelationships between family and community, as well as within the larger network of kinship. Basket names also represent an inner core of cultural integrity, which has shown itself to be remarkably resistant to outside influences (Twining and Baird 1991). It is clear that many of the African cultural retentions have served a function over the decades of their existence, whether it be community cohesion, subtle resistance, or the transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

Folklore as Resistance: Trickster Tales

In a recent dissertation by Mella Davis, *African Trickster Tales in Diaspora: Resistance in the Creole-Speaking South Carolina Sea Islands and Guadeloupe* (1998), the continuation of African oral tradition within Sea Island communities is investigated. Davis examines the “trickster tale” and the hidden political discourse within it, criticizing earlier studies of African trickster tales for the apparent lack of depth concerning sociocultural meaning.⁵³ Davis illustrates how stories must be supported by community structure; “without a living, speaking, relating body of people, the stories cannot thrive” (16). Davis conducted a portion of her research as an official affiliate of the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, which allowed her greater access to the community’s elderly. She was also able to interview several children who had been involved with a program sponsored by the Penn Center, which encouraged young children to record the folktales of their grandparents. Many still remembered them.

Fieldwork was conducted on various Sea Islands by interviewing professional and native storytellers and community leaders. Davis conducted field research on St. Helena, Wassaw, Daufuskie, and Johns Island of South Carolina, as well as Sapelo Island, GA and within the Dale community of South Carolina from May to July of 1994.⁵⁴ The community of elders in Dale (10 to 15 miles Inland) shares an identity and spends time together, fostering the preservation of storytelling, trickster tales, and religious stories. The broader analysis of this dissertation compares trickster tales and folktales gathered from the Sea Islands to those of Guadeloupe. Davis suggests that the endurance of such tales as Br'er Rabbit, The Signifying Monkey, and John have persisted because they offered coping mechanisms for African American communities faced with similar circumstances, such as the Sea Islands and Guadeloupe.

Along with trickster tales, there were other mechanisms of resistance practiced within Gullah communities. Janie Hunter, a well known Gullah storyteller, informed Davis that Gullah language allowed slaves to conceal their private lives, thereby undermining the control of Euro Americans (1998, 71). Hunter referred to this language strategy as “cat language,” meaning to run the words together so Euro Americans couldn’t understand them. Many scholars have suggested this strategy is also rooted in African oral tradition. Unfortunately, as Davis reports, extreme population loss within Sea Island communities has contributed to a loss of oral history, folktales, and storytelling.

In order to legitimize the study of folklore, Davis suggests the brilliance of Zora Neale Hurston as the point of departure for investigating African American folklore: enabling storytelling to be presented as both performance and a tool of communication within the community. Hurston, an official collector for the Federal Writers’ Project in Georgia, presented African American culture as performance in everyday life, not merely as stories told for entertainment.⁵⁵

Early Folklore Collections: Synthesis and Critique

Many contemporary scholars of Gullah cite Elsie Clews Parsons for her collection, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands* (1923), which illuminates the similarities between West African folk tales and customs and those documented in Sea Island folklore. Parson’s work is important in that she divulges her difficulties in obtaining cooperation due to the barriers between white researcher and African American informants. Within this collection we find over two hundred folktales collected during the month of February, 1919, from Gullah residents originating from Dataw, Edisto, Lady’s, Parris, Coosaw, Hilton Head, Daufuskie, and St. Helena Island. Her data were obtained from ninety such informants. There are also riddles, proverbs, songs, and games included. Parsons pays only brief attention to folk beliefs in the concluding chapter “Folk Ways and Notions.” Here she touches on Gullah ideas about births and babies, initiation to the church, dating and marriage, economy, weather signs and star-lore, dreams, sickness, black magic and curing, and death, burial, and mourning (1923).

It is important to note, however, that others criticize her work as limited and narrow. Twining (1977) and Hargrove (2000) suggest that Parson’s work is limited by the lack of details concerning the social position of her informants (e.g. occupation, age, marital status, residence, etc.), and lack of elaboration concerning the methodology of her data collection. She also fails to include the context of how the stories were collected and gives no substantive data concerning her interaction with informants (e.g. where the interviews took place, how much time was spent with informants, interactions aside from interviews, etc.). Also criticized by contemporary scholars is *The Black Border: Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, compiled by Ambrose Gonzales (1922). An excerpt from his introduction, concerning the language of the Gullah, serves well to illustrate the underlying theme of most early folklore collections concerning Gullah communities:

Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier Colonists, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and, enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses and thick lips as so workable a form of speech that it was gradually adopted by the

other slaves and became in time the accepted Negro speech of the lower districts of South Carolina and Georgia (10).

Gonzales uses a wide range of insulting and derogatory words to describe the subjects of his collection, thereby devaluing the rich cultural heritage he sought to collect, record, and publish.

William Bascom: Dean of Folklore

Folktales are of tremendous importance to the study of Gullah culture. They offer particular insight into slavery, language, worldview, morals, religion, health and medicine, tradition and customs, and social practice. Folklore has been gathered throughout the Sea Islands of Georgia and Florida. One of the most respected early collectors of folklore within the Sea Islands was William Bascom, referred to as the “dean of folklore” by William Pollitzer (1999, 161). Bascom conducted fieldwork on St. Helena, Hilton Head, Daufuskie, Tybee, Sapelo, St. Simons, Wilmington, Skidaway, Ossabaw, and St. Catherine Island, interviewing 114 informants during the summer of 1939. His findings were summarized in a paper, “Gullah Folk Beliefs Concerning Childbirth” read at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society at Andover Massachusetts on December 29, 1941. The article appears in Twining and Baird’s volume *Sea Island Roots: African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia* (1991). Much of what Bascom collected is still cited by contemporary folklorists.

Informants revealed several beliefs to Bascom concerning how and when a child is born and what that signifies about the child and the future. For example, a child born in a caul⁵⁶ signifies luck and wisdom. Such a child will be gifted with the ability to see “ghosses” and “ha’nts” (Bascom 1991). When such a child is born, the caul is dried and used to drive away ghosts. Another belief concerns breech babies, referred to as a “foot foremost child.” A child born in this way is destined to be lucky, and will desire to travel. The shape of an infant’s head is also significant in Gullah folklore. According to Bascom’s field data a child born with a “square head” means the child is smart, while a “short, flat head” signifies a hard worker. It is also thought to bring good luck when a child is born with lots of hair on its head.

Folk beliefs were also collected concerning the widespread practice of midwifery (often referred to as Granny women). Midwives or Grannys were very important people within Sea Island communities. Several residents of St. Helena Island, whose interviews are discussed in Hargrove (2000), recounted the births of their children as being delivered by these “granny women” (Hargrove 2000). Midwives are believed to be able to tell the sex of an unborn child. Bascom’s informants suggested that if a midwife were still able to bear children herself she would sometimes take on the pains of childbirth from the woman she was attending (1941). There are also recollections, within the broader collections of folklore, of the act of putting an axe or knife underneath the mattress to cut the pains of childbirth (Parsons 1923). Bascom also collected information about herbal remedies used to cut the pain of childbirth, suggesting tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) as one of the most widely used. Within the collection there are tales of the processing of the umbilical chord, suggesting it was wrapped in newspaper, with the afterbirth, and burned or buried (Bascom 1941). We also learn that weaning was accomplished by rubbing turpentine or pepper on the breast.

Animal Stories

Animal stories have been a part of Gullah storytelling for as long as anyone can remember (Carawan 1989). Janie Hunter, one of the best known “keepers of the culture,” reminds us that animal stories were more than just entertainment for children. They were filled with wit and logic meant to teach children important life lessons:

When we was small, we didn’t ‘low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories” (Carawan 1989, 96).

Tales such as “The Rabbit and the Partridge”⁵⁷ instill skepticism and caution in children, as well as being quite entertaining.

It is important that folklore not be cast as a remnant of the past. Jones- Jackson recorded a session of storytelling on Wadmalaw Island which illustrates the social aspects of storytelling (1987). The story “Mock Plea of Brother Rabbit” requires the audience to take an active role in the story, voicing the whimpers and whining of Ber Rabbit. The interaction between storyteller and audience makes it much more fun and entertaining, while the story itself illustrates how the Rabbit outsmarts the farmer. These same types of interactions have been taking place for hundreds of years in the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina. Storytelling remains an important part of Sea Island life, serving as a means of passing family and community histories down to future generations of Gullah and Geechee descendants (Bah, personal communication, 2001), as well as creating and maintaining cultural cohesion.

Conclusion

It would be possible to devote an entire book to the study of Gullah and Geechee folklore; the present goal is to offer insight into the range of folklore collected within the Sea Islands with particular attention paid to material frequently cited and recognized by other Gullah scholars. Works chosen for inclusion are presented in a respectful manner, which values folklore as more than ideas of simple folk. Folklore is more than storytelling, although the art of storytelling⁵⁸ continues to be an important skill within Gullah communities. Even religious sermons can be viewed within the context of verbal art (Jones- Jackson 1994) and the power of speech within religious ritual. Folklore, and the broader value of verbal art, is one of our best clues for study and increased understanding of the past, particularly in areas where much cultural information was contained in an oral tradition, as was the case in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia.

Chapter 5 Land, Slavery, Autonomy, and Conflict

“For Gullahs, the land is an extension of themselves” (Goodwine 1998c, 184).

Throughout the history of Gullah and Geechee people, land has played a central role in their everyday lives. All aspects of Gullah and Geechee culture are tied to the land, and it serves as a psychological reminder of their connection with the ancestors and their communal plantation life (Bah, personal communication 2001). In their uses of medicinal plants and herbal remedies, their knowledge of the natural environment is essential. Religious sermons of the past and present emphasize strong cultural ties to the land. The land has supplied these populations with nourishment for their bodies, as well as self- sufficiency, since the days of emancipation; and land ownership after emancipation induced autonomy and pride. The use of land and their ties to it, unfortunately, have been forced to change over the years; however, where possible the Gullah and Geechee people of South Carolina and Georgia remain tied to their land in many ways.

Plantation Agriculture

In order to put land into context one must first consider why South Carolina and Georgia were chosen as sites for plantation agriculture. In the beginning, slavery was transplanted to Charles Town from Barbados and Jamaica in the Caribbean. As agricultural land became scarce on the Caribbean islands, the English planter class found Charles Town, South Carolina, to be an optimal spot for continued sugar cultivation. Within a very short time it occurred to them that the land of the Lowcountry was better suited for another kind of crop cultivation: rice. Coastal areas of the Lowcountry are geographically marked by fresh- water rivers that experience the rise and fall of fresh water tides, making such locations self- irrigating, and therefore ideal for rice cultivation.

A shift from sugar to rice cultivation required several things: first, the planters knew very little about rice cultivation, therefore it was essential to begin hand-selecting Africans who had prior experience and knowledge of rice cultivation. Second, rice cultivation requires work in swampy areas, which were abundant throughout the area, but such areas are conducive to malaria (Cassidy 1994). These two factors had great implications for those who we now recognize as Gullah and Geechee⁵⁹ people. Planters began selecting Africans from specific areas, such as present day Liberia and Sierra Leone for their extensive knowledge and biological immunity to malaria (Wood 1975; Holloway 1990; Cassidy 1994).

The relationship between slavery and rice cultivation has been addressed by a variety of scholars (Salter 1968;⁶⁰ Wood 1975; Littlefield 1981; Goodwine 1999.) However, the most recent contribution, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Carney 2001) expands the discussion in ways not previously possible. This study reveals the ways in which indigenous knowledge of rice cultivation and agricultural innovation was brought to the Sea Islands in the minds of enslaved Africans. Furthermore, Carney's in-depth methodology of cross-comparative research between the Sea Islands and West Africa traces the diffusion of water control, winnowing practices, rice milling techniques, cooking techniques, and seed selection to the plantations of South Carolina and Georgia (2001). On the eve of the American Revolution, South Carolina rice plantations were producing sixty million pounds of rice annually for the global market (Carney 2001). This study reveals how African knowledge of rice cultivation established the basis for the Carolina economy (140).

Along with their expertise in rice cultivation, enslaved Africans brought other advantageous technologies.⁶¹ Fanner baskets, for example, played an integral role in the continuation of basketry, due to its utilitarian purpose (Chase 1971). Once the rice was loosened from the husks it was put in these fanner baskets, from which the rice was tossed into the air, falling back to the basket while the chaff blew away. The process of "fanning the rice" was continued until the rice was perfectly clean. Prior to Carney's *Black Rice* (2001) many scholars suggested enslaved Africans "learned" the technique of fanning rice (Chase 1971). However, in light of her data, the knowledge of all things having to do with rice cultivation and processing can be established as indigenous knowledge brought from Africa and handed down from generation to generation (Carney 2001). Carney supports Dale Rosengarten's assertion of a cultural connection between South Carolina "fanner" baskets, and Senegambian winnowing baskets (Rosengarten 1994; Carney 2001).

Rice, Cotton, and Indigo: Building Blocks of the South Carolina Economy

The historical relationship between agriculture and economics in the Sea Islands rests on the backs of enslaved Africans (Pollitzer 1999). By taking full advantage of free labor, Sea Island planters were among the richest in North America. Rice cultivation began as soon as the first English colonies were settled, and by 1700 there was more rice being produced than there were ships to transport it (Pollitzer 1999). The need for labor fueled the Transatlantic Slave Trade, while the slave trade fueled the various plantation economies. By 1860, South Carolina was home to as many as 257 rice plantations, which produced nearly 80,000 tons of rice per year. Of the fourteen planters in the country that owned 500 or more slaves, nine were rice planters (Joyner 1984).

Indigo was the next economic fire to be fueled by slave labor, beginning in the latter half of the eighteenth century. It all started with a teenage girl in Antigua. Eliza Lucas, the daughter of a Lieutenant-Colonel stationed in Antigua, began experimenting with seeds on her father's plantation. Cultivating quality indigo was her top priority, and through trial and error she succeeded in cultivating a flourishing seed crop by 1744 (Pollitzer 1999). She shared the seeds with Carolina planters through established trade routes, and by 1747 enough indigo was being produced in Carolina to export to

England (ibid). Indigo flourished as one of the major staples for around thirty years. As the value began to decline in the early 1800s,⁶² Sea Island cotton moved in to take its place alongside rice as the major export crop of the Sea Island region (ibid).

The precise time at which cotton came to the Sea Islands is up for debate; however the first successful crop was reported on Hilton Head Island in 1790 (Seabrook 1844). Within a decade cotton cultivation had replaced indigo as the region's premiere staple crop (Johnson 1930). Sea Island cotton reached the height of production in 1819, with exports reaching nearly nine million pounds (Rosengarten 1986). Cotton continued to be grown in the Sea Islands until the early 1900s, when it was badly damaged due to boll weevil infestation, but never at the capacity seen in the 1800s. The combination of rice, cotton, and indigo fed the need for African labor throughout the Sea Islands during 190 years of legal slavery.

The Task System: Unique Characteristics of Sea Island Slavery

Sea Island plantations operated on a task system, vastly different from the gang system widely used throughout the South. The task system is based on an allotted amount of work for each field hand, usually broken down into acreage to be worked per day (Joyner 1977; Pollitzer 1999). As pointed out by G.G. Johnson (1930), from research done on St. Helena Island, the "task" came to signify a quarter of an acre, laid out 105 by 105 feet. A typical allotment for a plowman "was usually four tasks, or an acre a day" (83). Also unique to Sea Island slavery was the opportunity for marriage, health provisions, and even literacy on some plantations (McGuire 1985). The unique nature of the task system, which offered "off time" also fostered the retention of African cultural patterns (Joyner 1977). The current discussion of the task system should not be taken to indicate slavery was more humane in these areas; simply there were opportunities available for Sea Island slaves not typically offered to others in bondage. An excerpt from the South Carolina Federal Writers' Project (1936- 1938) illustrates the daily routine of slaves working under the task system: (Volume XIV South Carolina Narratives p. 271- 276/ Library of Congress)

Ebery slabe hab tas' (task) to do. Sometime one task (quarter acre), sometime two tas' and sometime t'ree. You haf for wuk 'til tas' t'ru (through). W'en cotton done mek, you hab odder tas'. Haffa cut cord ob mash (marsh) grass maybe. Tas' ob mash been eight feet long and four feet high. Den sometime you haffa roll cord ob mud in cowpen. 'Ooman haffa rake leaf from wood into cowpen (this was used for fertilizer). W'en you knock off wuk, you kin wuk on your land. Maybe you might hab two or t'ree tas' ob land 'round your cabin what Maussa gib you for plant. You kin hab chicken, maybe hawg. You kin sell aig (egg) and chicken to store and Maussa will buy your hawg. In dat way slabe kin hab money for buy t'ing lak fish and w'atebber he want. We don't git much fish in slabery 'cause we nebber hab boat. But sometime you kin t'row out net en ketch shrimp. You kin also ketch 'possum and raccoon wid your dawg (Project #- 1655, Sam Polite, age 93, Born on Fripp Plantation, St. Helena Island, Beaufort County).

Land Acquisition and Self- Sufficiency in Isolation

The Civil War, and subsequent emancipation of enslaved Africans, created a class of landed freedmen in the Sea Islands of South Carolina. Special Field Order 15, issued by Sherman in 1864, set aside all abandoned land from Charleston to Florida for the exclusive use and ownership of the freedmen and women of island communities. The Federal Government participated in cooperative land buys in order to sell land to Sea Islanders. It was the only place in the country where the offer of "forty acres and a mule" became partially recognized. The acres were sold at \$1.25 per acre. This obligation was often fulfilled by two to three day's work per week for three years as a sharecropper or tenant farmer (Day 1982).⁶³ This action, referred to as "a multifaceted experiment in democracy" (McGuire 1985, 2)⁶⁴ encouraged self- sufficiency and created autonomous, self- governing, communities in such places as St. Helena Island and Hilton Head. Overwhelmingly, freedmen chose to remain on their "home

place,” the plantation they had worked as slaves (Normand 1994). In the minds of freedmen and women the ownership of this land was directly tied to their liberty and freedom.⁶⁵

By 1870, Census data suggests the majority of St. Helena residents owned parcels of land, thus making it possible to avoid the hardships of sharecropping and tenant farming (Normand 1994).⁶⁶ Within Beaufort County, which offered freed slaves the greatest opportunities for land acquisition, 98% of heads of household were Black, while at least 70% owned their own farms (ibid). At the time of Salter’s dissertation work (late 1950s) Hilton Head Island was reported as having 350 small Negro land holdings, between 2 and 50 acres (Salter 1968).

From the beginning of land ownership the use and allocation of this valuable resource has been mediated by the family unit (Moerman 1974), which has remained the most important social unit of Gullah and Geechee culture. Typically, extended families are spread across a family social unit, referred to as a compound. Sea Islanders conceptualize land very differently than most; it is viewed “not as a commodity that is sold, but a right that is transferred to kin as needed” (Day 1982, 16). Land is not sold, but is passed on to all children through a previously unwritten contract known as “heir’s land” (Day 1982; Jones- Jackson 1987). Under “heir’s land,” or “heir’s property” land was rarely sold. The entire parcel is owned “in common” by all the family members, therefore no one person has sole rights over it. Only when relatives did not have sufficient land to pass to all children was this rule amended, and the charge to extended family was \$1.00, simply to fulfill legal tenants of the state (Guthrie 1996). The problem with such a system, however, is the ways in which real estate developers have capitalized on the absence of a formal written will, in a practice referred to as “partitioning.” (“Legal Maneuvers Used to Strip Families of Land: Blacks especially vulnerable to procedure called partitioning,” Charleston Gazette, Sunday December 9, 2001 (<http://sundaygazette.com/section/news/us+&+world/200112095>)). Sea Islanders have recently begun amending this type of ownership in an attempt to hold on to ancestral property. Special courses are being offered by grassroots organizations and Sea Island churches, assisting Sea Islanders with writing wills in the proper fashion and offering to loan them money to pay property taxes (Hargrove 2000).

From Emancipation until quite recently Sea Island communities remained largely self-sufficient, utilizing their agricultural and fishing skills to meet their needs. Many islands remained isolated, with no connector bridges, until the middle of the twentieth century. Even electricity arrived late, coming to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s (Jones- Jackson 1987). This century of isolation, beginning with emancipation, brought about many changes in land use patterns. Sea Island freedmen who became landowners proceeded to cultivate the crop already in production, such as rice and cotton, until the boll weevil infestation of the 1920s. This event terminated cotton production for most farmers, aside from the few who converted to the short- staple variety (Salter 1968). Those who could no longer earn a living from cotton entered into truck farming, which remains a viable economic option for the present day farmers of several Sea Island communities, including Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, St. Helena, and Lady’s Island (Salter 1991). The leading value crops for truck farming continue to be tomato and cucumbers. St. Helena Island is dominated by tomato truck farming, and utilizes migrant farm labor from Mexico during harvest season (Hargrove 2000).

Agricultural Practices

Much of the early work conducted in the Sea Islands was concentrated on farming techniques and agricultural practices. T.J. Woofter conducted research on St. Helena Island as part of a cooperative project between the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. The project began in the late 1920s as an effort to investigate the unique African American culture on St. Helena Island (which we now refer to as Gullah). Woofter’s data are presented in *Black Yeomanry: Life on St. Helena Island* (1930). This book gives an in- depth look at the agricultural practices of St. Helena Island between 1850 and 1930, covering all aspects from composting to the construction of chicken houses. Guy B. Johnson’s *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*

(1930) and G. G. Johnson's *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (1930) represent the second and third components to this special study.

Forces of Change: Land Use and Land Loss

Other forces, aside from agriculture, have altered land use in more negative ways. Farmland is now the prime target of developers (Carawan 1989), and agricultural lands continue to be rapidly reduced by residential, commercial, and tourism development (Hargrove 2000), not to mention the land taken out of production on islands housing military bases. Statistics obtained from census data suggest an overwhelming amount of land being taken out of food production between 1987 and 1992. Farming acreage in Beaufort County dropped more than 17% between 1987 and 1992. Charleston County also shows a severe reduction in farmlands: nearly 23% during that same five-year period. That amounts to almost 20,000 acres being taken out of farming production within a five-year period. The question becomes, what is it being used for now?

Resort Development in the South Carolina Sea Islands

The present situation of Sea Island communities consists of dramatic changes. One need look no further than Hilton Head Island, which only 50 years ago was home to an African-American farming community. Connector bridges began being built to the islands during the 1950s and "everything change up now" (Ed Brown, resident of Wadmalaw Island, quoted in Jones-Jackson 1987). Land is constantly taken out of production and converted to resort development for the industry of tourism. Present day Hilton Head is populated wealthy Euro Americans, residing in communities named after successful plantations of the slavery era. The tremendous devastation to Sea Island communities will be further discussed in Chapter 9, "Development and Change: Gullah as an Endangered Species."

Chapter 6 Health and Medicine

Sea Islanders possess vast knowledge about the world around them, particularly as it pertains to maximizing health and wellness. Many folk remedies and beliefs concerning health and medicine suggest the earliest enslaved Africans brought diverse plant knowledge, which has been transplanted throughout the Gullah/ Geechee area (Pollitzer 1999). Several studies have been conducted which have added bits and pieces to our knowledge of Gullah folk medicine and perspectives on faith and healing (Joyner 1984; Bascom 1991; Pollitzer 1999⁶⁷). In a general sense, many Sea Islanders recognize herbal remedies as an option, but a precious few have been able to master this physical world. These knowledgeable few are recognized as "root doctors" and/ or "herbalists," who occupy an esteemed position within their communities.⁶⁸ Many Sea Islanders readily turn to home remedies as their first line of defense against illness and overall physical and mental maintenance; but some turn to the root specialists who dot the Gullah/ Geechee landscape.

In general, within the wide range of medicinal herbs used by Sea Islanders, there appear to be several that were versatile in their application. Life everlasting (*Gnaphalium polycephalum*) has been used for centuries to relieve cramps, cure a cold, combat diseases of the bowels and pulmonary system, and relieve foot pain (Pollitzer 1999). Dog fennel (*Anthemis cotula L*) and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) are suggested as satisfactory for treating colds, stuffy noses, headaches and nervous conditions (Jones-Jackson 1987). Bark from a red oak tree (*Quercus falcata*) was also useful when boiled and drank as a tea; it is said to combat rheumatism (Parsons 1923) as well as dysentery (Joyner 1999).

Gullah Herbal Remedies: Hoodoo Medicine

In the early 1970s, Faith Mitchell⁶⁹ began conducted research on traditional folk beliefs and medicine within the Sea Islands, with special emphasis placed on St. Helena Island. Her findings were later published as *Hoodoo Medicine: Sea Island Herbal Remedies* (1978). This collection is extraordinary in several ways. Most important, it contains a directory of all the medicinal roots, herbs, and plants used on the Sea Islands of South Carolina. Its uniqueness, however, is attributed to the more than fifty

detailed drawings included for each botanical of interest. In addition to being an excellent resource concerning plant use, Mitchell sets the historical stage by including a discussion of medicinal plant practices during slavery and the existence of plantation slaves who operated as somewhat “official” medical personnel. These doctors, or “doctresses”, were specialists in certain roots and herbs that grew in the Sea Islands; bearers of an oral tradition brought from Africa to America. The similarities of flora and fauna between West Africa and the Carolina coast allowed the plant knowledge to be transferred to their new environment.

Mitchell (1978) suggests there are three distinct types of black folk medicine practice: there are those who practice healing techniques using barks, berries, herbs, leaves and roots to combat natural illness (cold, influenza, and malaria during the plantation era). Second, there are those who deal strictly with spiritual illness, traditionally believed to be punishment for sin, through offerings of verbal blessings or laying on of hands (1978). And third, Mitchell suggests, there are those who specialize in occult illness, believed to be caused by an individual being hexed by “hoodoo” or conjure, cast by supernatural methods. Sea Island people often wear amulets to protect against hoodoo (Mitchell 1978). It is important to clarify that hoodoo is different than “voodoo.” Voodoo is a blend of African mystic beliefs and Catholicism more common around New Orleans, whereas hoodoo is a common term used by antebellum blacks to describe methods of natural healing and magic (ibid).

Rootwork: Beliefs and Practices on St. Helena Island

Rootwork: Psychosocial Aspects of Malign Magical and Illness Beliefs in a South Carolina Sea Island Community (Heyer 1981)⁷⁰ is an investigation into the beliefs and practices of ‘rootwork’ within the community of St. Helena Island. Kathryn W. Heyer conducted one year of fieldwork on St. Helena Island between 1977 and 1978. Rootwork, as defined by Heyer, refers to a system of malign magical beliefs used to explain physical and psychological disturbances and to obtain relief by consulting a specialist or “rootworker” who removes the evil spell and thereby brings about a cure. The aim of the dissertation is to provide a detailed description of beliefs in rootwork, as well as the existence of related beliefs in spirits, hags⁷¹, and ghosts, in relation to other aspects of the social and personal lives of the believers.

Heyer’s work makes an important contribution to the existing knowledge of rootwork, herbal remedies, and folk medicine.⁷² Many scholars suggest such practices are doomed to disappear over time; however Heyer’s work documents recent practices in a viable Sea Island community. In an attempt to present an insider’s (emic) view of island life and thought concerning health and traditional practices, Heyer interviewed ninety- four residents of St. Helena Island. Information in the dissertation was taken from forty of those informants. She also recorded two life histories, one of which appears in the Appendix (Heyer 1981) and fifty- five hours of taped interviews. It is a detailed look at one particular woman’s life regarding the importance of rootwork and beliefs in malign magic.

Heyer documents the existence of four rootworkers in active practice on or near St. Helena Island, blatantly disputing the claim that rootwork is no longer a commonly held belief among the residents of St. Helena Island. One of the rootworkers was a Euro American man, who allegedly inherited his power from his grandmother. Heyer was able to apprentice with him, directly involved in the observation of practice in action. Within this study, Heyer documents the detailed accounts of rootwork being performed through recording fourteen actual case studies (1981).

Along with recording the practice of rootwork, Heyer contributes to our knowledge about the function of rootwork within this particular community, especially as it pertains to non- health related factors. Rootwork, as suggested by Heyer’s informants, is an attempt to explain or control events in which scientific explanations and/or manipulations are believed to be ineffective or powerless. Herbal healing is the first line strategy for coping with most illness, and remedies are passed through the generations through oral history. This belief system also serves as a method of social control, working to discourage anti- social and unacceptable behavior (Heyer 1981). This collection records wart

talkers: people who talk warts away, and fire-talkers who are able to heal burns. At present, Heyer's work is very important; it has the potential to improving physician's knowledge and understanding of rootwork and Gullah belief systems concerning health and medicine, thereby fostering a greater understanding and respect for Gullah knowledge and culture.

Health and Medicine: Adapting to Change

Heyer was not the first to conduct research on St. Helena Island with an interest in health and indigenous knowledge. During the early 1970s Daniel E. Moerman resided in the community and conducted extensive ethnographic interviews concerning medicinal plant use and indigenous systems of popular medicine.⁷³ The research Moerman gathered later produced his dissertation, *Extended Family and Popular Medicine on St. Helena Island, S.C: Adaptations to Marginality* (1974). What differentiates his research findings from Heyer's later work (1981) is interpretation of the data. Moerman proposes that folk medical practices and belief systems persisted as an adaptive response to inadequate access to health care within Beaufort County at the time of the study (fee-for-services system).

Along with being an excellent resource for the study of health and medicine, Moerman situates his research within a historical and social context, including the population statistics for St. Helena, 4,500 residents, at the time of study (1971). Among those interviewed was the famous, well-respected Dr. York Bailey (the first Black doctor on St. Helena Island). He also gathered extensive genealogies (850 entries entered into a cross-referenced file to facilitate kinship connections) and life histories, in addition to conducting extensive interviews concerning medicinal plant use. Data obtained from interviews is synthesized into what the author refers to as "The St. Helena Popular Pharmacopeia" (168-208); a detailed presentation of common name, genus and species, use, years of use, and indications for use. Appendix 1 and 2 contain two extensive life histories.

In the early 1970s many Sea Island communities, including St. Helena Island, were being economically and culturally marginalized due to a rapid switch from self-sufficiency to wage labor and a cash economy (Moerman 1974). Within the larger struggle to maintain control over their future, the residents of St. Helena were heavily reliant on one another, with Moerman's data on household composition illustrating the importance of family, extended family, and kinship within this dynamic Sea Island community. Within the context of health and medicine, Moerman includes a discussion of the social services offered, and accepted by, the residents of St. Helena. There is also an excellent discussion within the dissertation outlining the epidemiology of St. Helena Island from the early 1900s up to research period.

One of the major methodological problems with much of the existing data concerning Sea Island communities is misrepresentation. Fieldwork experiences are taken as representative of the whole of Gullah culture, although only witnessed for a small amount of time through the eyes and lives of a small percentage of the community (Moerman 1974). Moerman was not the first to suggest this methodological oversimplification, but he gives concrete reasons for his position. Citing the work by Guy Carawan, Moerman suggests *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life* is an inaccurate portrayal of the St. John community. This point cannot be over emphasized. Within many Sea Island communities, research of any kind is hard to negotiate (Heyer 1981; Hargrove 2000). Social scientists must work diligently in the future to combat the wrongs of the past in a collaborative and intellectually honest venture between researcher and knowledge holders. It is truly the only way we can continue to learn from the rich cultural heritage of Gullah/ Geechee people.

A Cautionary Note Concerning Future Research

Future research is essential in this area. Many scholars suggest the folk remedies and medicinal plant use patterns are in danger of loss due to encroachment, environmental devastation,⁷⁴ and culture change. Recent scholarly work, however, suggests these practices continue as a viable alternative to modern medicine for many ailments. What is not adequately elaborated, unfortunately, is the

personal and sacred nature of such beliefs from the perspective of Sea Island community members. Work pertaining to these folk traditions should be approached in collaboration with community leaders who have access to the elders and bearers of such knowledge. Moving toward a balance between indigenous and scholarly research will record these valued cultural treasures without furthering the rift between academics and Gullah people.

Chapter 7 Arts and Crafts: Syncretisms⁷⁵ and Innovations

There are several distinct research areas devoted to Gullah arts and crafts. The craft that has received the most scholarly attention is coiled sweetgrass basketry (Chase 1971; Derby 1980; Rosengarten 1986; Hargrove 2000). There is documentation of basket production by South Carolina slaves as early as 1690 (Vlach 1978). The tradition of sewing baskets was essential to the early years of plantation life due to the utilitarian nature of the craft (Chase 1971, Rosengarten⁷⁶ 1994). The agricultural technology of rice production in the Low Country was distinctly African (Rosengarten 1994), therefore the tools of the trade are similar. The “fanner” basket was of principal use during the processing of rice. Once the rice was loosened from the husks it was put in these fanner baskets, from which the rice was tossed into the air, falling back to the basket while the chaff blew away. The process of “fanning the rice” was continued until the rice was perfectly clean. This type of physical motion is a skill learned in Africa and passed on to subsequent generations (Chase 1971; Carney 2001). Baskets have been used for the same purpose in Africa for hundreds of years. Low Country baskets most resemble those of the Congo, Senegambia, and Angola (Twining 1977, Vlach 1978). Through the continuation of cultural arts, the enslaved of South Carolina found ways to preserve their African heritage.

Cultural Continuity: From Africa to the Sea Islands

Baskets are a traditional part of Gullah culture and signify a strong connection between West Africa and the Sea Islands of South Carolina.⁷⁷ Those who make baskets prefer to be called “sewers” because that is precisely how baskets are constructed (Rosengarten 1994). The enslaved Africans of South Carolina adapted their knowledge of the African environment to the Lowcountry environment, using black rush (*Juncus roemarianus*) and sweetgrass (*Muhlenbergia filipes* and *M. capillaris*) bound with strips of Palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*) (Rosengarten 1994). Modern day baskets differ only slightly from their ancestral counterparts. Most basket sewers now incorporate long leaf pine needles (*Pinus palustris*) for decoration, as well as to make up for the scarcity of sweetgrass resulting from increased development in the Sea Island areas (Marquetta L. Goodwine, personal communication, 2002).

Baskets were a necessity item during the plantation era. The principal use was for processing rice, but they were utilized for a variety of daily activities. Early visitors to South Carolina report seeing Gullah babies being carried in large fanner baskets (Rosengarten 1994). They were also used to take produce, flowers, and herbs to market in Charleston. As Sea Island communities moved from plantation agriculture to subsistence farming, after Emancipation and the Civil War, farmers used baskets to gather crops as well as to transport them to market. Upon recognizing the importance and utility of this African craft, the administrators and teachers at Penn Normal School added it to the curriculum. The baskets were used at Penn during everyday activities, as well as sold through mail orders and craft shops in Charleston, Philadelphia, and Boston (Rosengarten 1994). The excess cash allowed Penn School to assist local farm families in paying land taxes.

The sewers in Mt. Pleasant got their first taste of wholesale marketing in 1916 through Charles W. Legerton, a Charleston merchant and civic leader (Rosengarten 1986). Legerton bought set quantities of baskets from Sam Coakley, who acted as a liaison between Legerton and the sewers of Mt. Pleasant. Legerton sold the baskets through his bookstore on King Street, and later through the Sea Grass Basket Company, started between 1916 and 1917 (ibid). In 1920 the company name was changed to Seagrassco. Legerton capitalized on the industry using print media to advertise Mt. Pleasant baskets until the late 1930s, when basket sewers began directly marketing their wares to tourists on Highway

17. This move would forever change the course of the basket industry in Mt. Pleasant, where one can presently find many stands along the roadsides. Contemporary research, conducted by Melissa Hargrove, cites several Mt. Pleasant basket women who still remember their mothers and grandmothers sewing baskets for Mr. Legerton (2000).

Development and Change: From Utilitarian Craft to Folk Art

The sweetgrass basket tradition of the South Carolina Sea Islands has undergone rapid change due to increased tourism, increased development, and generational differences in ideology. The community that has become famous for the production of sweetgrass basketry is Mt. Pleasant,⁷⁸ located just across the Cooper River from Charleston, South Carolina. Presently there are multiple basket stands along the roadsides of Highway 17, many of which have been there for several generations. The tradition of setting up basket stands along the roadsides began in the 1940s (Rosengarten 1986), as a way to take advantage of the increased tourism traffic coming from Charleston. What began as a utilitarian craft has become folk art, thereby creating a specialized economy for those with the skill (Derby 1980).⁷⁹ The designation of the baskets as “folk art” has required basket makers to incorporate new styles (Vlach 1978; Rosengarten 1994), while also increasing the price collectors and tourists are willing to pay.

Ethnographic Accounts of Mt. Pleasant Basket Sewers

The basket sewers of Mt. Pleasant have been the focus of two extensive ethnographies, conducted twenty years apart, which reveal the adaptive nature of the sweetgrass basket industry. Doris Derby conducted fieldwork in Mt. Pleasant in 1977 and 1978,⁸⁰ resulting in her dissertation, *Black Women Basket Makers: A Study of Domestic Economy in Charleston County, South Carolina* (1980). The crux of her research was aimed at determining the effects of increased tourism on the economic viability of basket women in the Mt. Pleasant area. Derby concluded that basket sewing has endured many adaptations over time. Basketry served a utilitarian purpose during plantation slavery, it has functioned as an economic development strategy for Mt. Pleasant women since World War I, and it had (at the time of her research) responded well to the stimulus of the tourism industry in and around Charleston (1980). Derby concluded that the basket industry was adaptive, suggesting it would ultimately endure; however a subsequent study indicates the battle had just begun.

Nearly twenty years later, beginning in 1988, Melissa D. Hargrove began ongoing ethnographic research to investigate the affects of tourism and development on Mt. Pleasant basket weavers, resulting in her master’s thesis, *Marketing Gullah: Identity, Cultural Politics, and Tourism* (2000).⁸¹ Hargrove suggests the basket industry is being negatively impacted by development, which literally paves over or digs up the valuable resources necessary for sewing baskets (Hargrove 2000). Materials for basket weaving are no longer available, forcing many weavers to buy their sweetgrass from Florida. More importantly, Hargrove suggests the South Carolina tourism industry is appropriating the craft of sweetgrass baskets for use in tourism literature, as a strategy for increasing tourism revenue (Hargrove 2000). Many basket makers remain scattered along Highway 17 while others have lost their stands to strip malls and gas stations.⁸² With tourism in the area continuing to increase, Hargrove suggests officials of Charleston County should acknowledge their role in development agendas that further compromise the future of this legendary art form.

Gullah Artisans as Craftmen of the South

Sweetgrass basketry is not the only craft associated with Gullah culture. Leonard P. Stavisky (1958), through historical document research, revealed the enormous contributions early Gullah artisans made to the Charleston area. These types of contributions are often overlooked in the canonical literature concerning Gullah culture. It is estimated that as much as 80 to 90% of all crafts produced between 1800 and 1890 in and around Charleston were the craftsmanship of Gullah artisans (Stavisky 1958). Charleston became a training center for much of the South Atlantic region. Owners from all over sent their slaves to be trained in a variety of areas: ship carpentry, shoemaking, carpentry, sawing, farming, blacksmithing, wheat stocking, butchery, stone masonry, milling, ironworks, and coopering.

Stavisky suggests enslaved Africans were trained in these crafts as an attempt by slave owners to utilize their free labor in ways that would increase their productivity and marketability. Enslaved Africans who possessed certain skills could be hired out to neighboring plantations for wages. Also, skilled Gullah/ Geechee artisans were worth twice as much as field hands (Stavisky 1958).

These craftsmen and their contributions are also evident in rural areas. The sprawling plantation homes of the Charleston area were erected by slave labor, and trades learned as slaves were often passed down from generation to generation within slave families. Stavinsky reports children were apprenticed to the trades as early as four years old (1958). In these ways, as well as countless others, the Gullah artisans of the Charleston area greatly contributed to the overall economic might of the South. They should also be given due credit for the creation of an enduring legacy of Charleston's historic homes that continue to draw millions of tourists every year.

Quilting in the Sea Islands

Gullah quilting is yet another cultural trait that signifies connections between West Africa and the Sea Islands. Mary Twining (1991) suggests that quilting began out of economic necessity in the Sea Islands, and later came to signify an important role within the Gullah crafts tradition. Gullah quilts are recognized due to their distinct characteristic technique referred to as "strip formation." Rectangular bits of cloth, often scraps of fabric in an assortment of shapes, sizes, and colors, were pieced together to form the quilt top (Pollitzer 1999). They are sewn together in an uneven, curvilinear pattern easily distinguishable from European quilts. Quilt colors also hold special significance: red indicates danger, blue repels bad spirits, and white suggests innocence and purity (Twining 1991b).

Gullah quilts have come to signify important life events within the broader cultural framework.⁸³ Many can identify the patches on a quilt and determine the quilt's significance and meaning. Rites of passage such as marriage, births of children, young people leaving home to go to school, are often commemorated by the making or completion of a quilt which accompanies the departing family member to their new situation as a reminder of their ties back home (Twining 1991b). These family heirlooms are a valuable celebration of family history, as well as indicating the survival of African patterns (Pollitzer 1999). Gullah "strip quilts" bear striking resemblance to those of Ghana and Benin, where fabric is woven into long narrow strips, cut into usable lengths and sewn together at the edges (Vlach 1978).

Georgia Arts and Crafts

The majority of scholarly work on Gullah art and culture has been focused on South Carolina, however, there are cultural artifacts which can be directly linked to Gullah/Geechee people of Georgia⁸⁴ which symbolize their talents as crafters of beauty and art. Cultural material found in archaeological contexts along the Georgia coast include drums (made of hollowed logs with pegged heads) and carved wooden walking sticks depicting reptiles⁸⁵ (Vlach 1978). Finds such as this represent Gullah/ Geechee folk art of the Georgia coast, in such places as Yamacraw and Wilmington Island. Gullah/ Geechee artisans have exhibited boat building skills for centuries. The multiple-log canoe is believed to symbolize possible African antecedents of coastal life of West Africa (Vlach 1978). This suggestion is based on the fact that Gullah/ Geechee people remain skilled in navigating boats through shallow streams and marshes, casting nets for subsistence and economic support. In a myriad of ways the daily lives of Gullah/ Geechee people have been influenced by traditions deeply rooted in an African past. All crafts extensively covered within the literature, including sweetgrass baskets, boat building, drums, walking sticks, and quilts should be taken to represent a living symbol of cultural continuity and adaptability.

Chapter 8 Leadership Patterns, Organization, and Cooperation

Many scholars look upon the Sea Island communities as doomed to destruction, but they are far from it. They have lost countless acres of family land, suffered restricted access to traditional livelihoods, such as fishing and farming, and continue to struggle against the swelling tides of development and tourism; however, Gullah people have a strong constitution. Throughout their history Gullah/Geechee communities have proved time and time again that they are great organizers. From the Civil Rights Movement to modern day grassroots struggles, the Sea Islanders have reason to be proud of the accomplishments they have made and the contributions of their descendants.

Guy and Candie Carawan's *Aint You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* (1989) chronicles the evolution of the citizenship schools on Johns Island and their role in the development of a citizenship and literacy movement. The contributions of Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins had an undeniable impact on the Civil Rights movement as well as Johns Island and surrounding Sea Island communities. Their efforts, in conjunction with the Highlander Folk School, raised literacy and increased the number of registered Black voters. Supported by cultural values and group cohesion the strides made on Johns Island were directly responsible for similar movements and achievements, such as the development of citizenship schools, on both Edisto and Wadmalaw Island (Carawan 1989).

Cooperative work has been a part of Gullah/ Geechee culture since its inception, and reminds us yet again of their African cultural retentions. During the 1930s William R. Bascom investigated the origin of cooperative Sea Island work patterns by conducting fieldwork in both the Sea Islands and West Africa.⁸⁶ Bascom found similarities between the Yoruba institution of cooperative work and that of Sea Island communities (1941). On Sapelo Island in Georgia, and Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, Bascom interviewed informants who recalled group work. The practice of working to a drumbeat in Africa was replaced with singing songs in unison in the Sea Islands (1941). Bascom points out that the practice of working together in Hilton Head was only preserved in memory, but informants suggested Sapelo Island was still a place where people would "jump right into the field and help you out" (Bascom 1941, 45). The proposed connection between Sea Island cooperative work and similar practices in West Africa is further corroborated by Dr. Alpha Bah, professor of African History at the College of Charleston: "The idea of cooperation to accomplish a piece of work, such as sewing seeds or harvesting, remains a common practice among most West Africans" (personal communication 2002). It is also common knowledge to any scholar who had conducted research within Sea Island communities.

In 1977, a dissertation was written by June Thomas which illustrates the strong ethic of organization and participation within Sea Island communities: *Blacks on the South Carolina Sea Islands: Planning for Tourism and Land Development*. This dissertation is a direct result of the author's involvement with the "Socio- Economic Impact Study: Resort Development and the Sea Islands," conducted by The Department of Urban and Metropolitan Studies, Michigan State University, in 1976. The study was aimed at assessing the effects of development on the local Black populations of the South Carolina Sea Islands, as well as making suggestions concerning future action and involvement concerning the proposed development of Kiawah Island.

Thomas, through her involvement with organizations and grassroots groups working against the development of Kiawah Island, came to realize that Sea Islanders have a history of community organization. Thomas studied past and ongoing organizations throughout the Sea Islands in order to propose an example for future action. Citing experiences from Johns Island (the organizational successes of Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins) as well as the Emergency Land Fund in Charleston (which is designed to assist locals with land tax in an effort to retain land rights), Thomas illustrates the historical precedence of community involvement and grassroots action within Sea Island communities.

To illustrate the effects of non-involvement and lack of planning, Thomas presents Hilton Head Island⁸⁷ as what is to come if Kiawah is rezoned and developed. At the time of Thomas' study, Black landowners in Hilton Head were few and far between. Informants recalled the days before development when they grew peas, beans, and cotton in the summer and made quilts and children's clothes in the winter, only minutes later to remind themselves that all that was gone. The only options for employment, at the time of this study as well as presently, are menial low wage jobs with the resort and hotel industry.

Thomas, in her final report made the following suggestions:

1. The development of a land issues center to educate Sea Islanders about land loss and titles.
2. The development of a business development center to identify people and resources as well as possible business areas.
3. Sea Islanders should maintain a high level of community involvement, by attending zoning hearings, running for office, and forming and supporting community organizations.

It is as if the residents of St. Helena Island read these suggestions and began acting upon them.

Policy Makers and Community Members Working Together

Recently community activists from St. Helena and Beaufort policy makers got together to initiate sound policies designed to halt future development of St. Helena Island. In 1997 the Beaufort County officials formulated what is referred to as the first draft of the Comprehensive plan, titled "Get a Grip on our Future." Among the many policy recommendations within this plan was the enhancement of "arts and humanities services for visitors in recognition of the importance of cultural heritage tourism to the County's economy" (BCCP⁸⁸ 1997:693). Also listed as an important factor was the hope that government officials, private sector businesses and the citizens could communicate with one another successfully and "speak with one voice" (547).

With Hilton Head Island serving as a reminder of what development can become, officials at all levels, joined by local activists, began cultivating development plans that would satisfy the residents of Sea Island communities while permitting controlled economic growth (Hargrove 2000).

In 1999, Beaufort City Council acted on aforementioned policy recommendations and adopted the Beaufort County Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (BCZDSO).⁸⁹ According to the Ordinance, St. Helena "contributes toward the creation of an image of the County that is essential to the sense of place that residents and visitors alike share about the community." In light of this aspect, the Ordinance designated St. Helena as a "Cultural Protection Overlay District" (CPOD) designed to ensure the future of its unique position. The overall purpose of the plan is the effective long-term protection of cultural resources found on St. Helena, while protecting the Gullah community from encroaching development and displacement of residents (Hargrove 2000). The policy is concerned with four distinct aspects of development viewed as detrimental to Gullah preservation: gated communities, resorts, golf courses, and franchise businesses (BCZDSO 1999: APP C- 2). The new policy guidelines assert that these types of development are "incompatible with cultural protection and are therefore prohibited" (BCZDSO 1999: APP C- 2).

The particular success of this policy must be attributed to the countless Sea Island residents who worked with policy officials and governmental agencies to bring about positive change. Chief among the activists involved with this effort was Marquetta L. Goodwine, founder of the Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition.⁹⁰ Members of the Coalition work diligently to raise awareness about the current problems facing Sea Island communities. Goodwine plays an active role in the development and implementation of community activities, fundraising efforts, and educational workshops given throughout South Carolina and Georgia concerning ways to preserve her rich cultural heritage. This type of grassroots organization is essential for the survival of Gullah communities.

Sea Island Organizations of Preservation⁹¹

Currently throughout the Sea Islands there are a number of grassroots organizations which reflect the leadership and organizational skills of Gullah/Geechee communities (Goodwine 1998c). Non-profit research organizations, such as Penn School and Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston, will also be discussed within this category due to the types of preservation efforts being instigated at these sites. The organizations include, but are not limited to, Penn Center, Inc., The Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition, St. Helena Island Corners Area Community Preservation Committee, Penn School for Preservation, South Carolina Coastal Community Development Corporation (SCCCDC), The Gullah Consortium, Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society, and St. Simons African-American Heritage Coalition. It is important to note there are a handful of tireless individuals who maintain membership and/or roles within more than one of the following organizations. Also, the possibilities for positive change rise as grassroots groups become interconnected by their mutual agendas of education about, and preservation of, Gullah/ Geechee culture.

The Penn School, now referred to as the Penn Center Inc., is a historic site on the National Register of Historic Places located on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. The Center began as Penn Normal School, the first trade and agricultural school for Sea Island freedmen in 1862. Through the years the Penn Center has worked toward educating others about the rich cultural heritage of the Sea Island Gullah, as well as developing programs to benefit Sea Island communities (e.g. Land Use and Development Fund and the Program for Academic and Cultural Enrichment) (Goodwine 1998c). Presently it serves as a conference center, museum (primarily focused on the days of Penn as Penn Normal School), photo and literary archive, and library. Penn Center has been the site of the “Heritage Days Celebration” for nineteen consecutive years.

The Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition was founded in 1996 by Marquette L. Goodwine as a grassroots umbrella group for the Sea Islands. The Coalition is comprised of individuals, institutions, and organizations dedicated to preserving Gullah history, culture, land, and language. The Coalition, based at Hunnuh Home on St. Helena Island, possesses the only known archive devoted to Gullah/Geechee culture. The facilities at Hunnuh Home (meaning our home and your home), serve as research cottages for those interested in conducting research within the Sea Islands. The Coalition also maintains an extensive website and list serve, keeping all members aware of the situation within the various Sea Island communities. Many researchers discussed in this synthesis have spent time at Hunnuh Home. Those interested in conducting research in the St. Helena Island/Greater Beaufort Area should contact the Coalition for assistance.

The St. Helena Island Corners Area Community Preservation Committee was commissioned by Beaufort County Council, as a citizens committee, to prepare the guidelines for the community preservation district (as recognized within the Beaufort County Zoning District Standards Ordinance (BCZDSO)). The Committee is chaired by Marquette L. Goodwine, whose formal title is Queen Quet: Chieftess of the Gullah/ Geechee Nation. Members of this Committee work together to present zoning plans for St. Helena Island aimed at preventing further encroachment from development.

In 1992 the Penn Center launched the ‘Sea Island Preservation Project’ which sought to bring together community leaders and business owners to create economic strategies that would benefit the Sea Islands without destroying the land, traditions, and culture of the Sea Island Gullah. The goal of the project was the creation of a community vision and the formulation of a strategic plan for St. Helena Island. This brought about the establishment of the “Penn School for Preservation” in 1993, in which 37 community leaders and public officials got together on weekends for six months to discuss such issues as zoning, economic development, growth management, and community economic development. Several of the students of Penn School for Preservation have put the program to work in ways which presently benefit Sea Island communities.

The South Carolina Coastal Community Development Corporation (SCCCDC) is an independent non-profit corporation, directed by Lady's Island native Liz Santagati. In 1997 the SCCCDC was awarded a \$1million grant to design and implement economic development activities for Lowcountry residents. This project also provided legal assistance and educational workshops to landowners in order to maintain family land ownership on St. Helena and surrounding islands. Most recent developments include a commercial kitchen/ food processing facility, creation of a small business incubator (designed to empower local residents through self- help business training), and an on-site marketing outlet for local food products and crafts. In 1997, Santagati was awarded the "Community Leadership Award" and recognized by the South Carolina Senate for a life of leadership, dedication, and hard work on behalf of her community.

The Gullah Consortium consists of a group of both Gullah and non- Gullah citizens from various professions, including (but not limited to) educators, activists, curators, government employees, and artists. The group was formed to insure that performances and/or programs relating to Gullah/ Geechee culture were being delivered in an accurate and respectful manner. Currently the group is developing a set of guidelines for performance and interpretation of Gullah culture. Steps like these will aid in the accuracy of information being disseminated about Gullah/ Geechee culture to interested outsiders.

Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, located at the College of Charleston operates as both an academic and community resource. Along with the task of collecting and preserving materials related to African American history and culture, Avery sponsors public programs aimed at educating both academics and non- academics about the rich cultural heritage of African Americans. The Center serves as a museum, reservoir of historical and material archives concerning African American history and culture (with an extensive collection devoted to Sea Island culture), an educational facility, and community outreach.

Sapelo Island, Georgia remains isolated from the mainland, yet they too are fighting the battle of development and land loss. In retaliation, the small Geechee community known as "Hog Hammock" organized the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society. Members of the society offer guided mule tours of the area and a local boarding facility for those who desire to stay a few days (Goodwine 1998c). One of the most active members of this community organization, Cornelia Bailey, recently released her memoir: *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man: A Saltwater Geechee Talks About Life on Sapelo Island* (2000).

The most recent addition to the list of organizations is the St. Simons African- American Heritage Coalition, which began in January of 2001. The Coalition, directed by native islander Amy Roberts, is comprised of community members determined not to become "another Daufuskie or Hilton Head" (e- mail communication, gullah- geechee@infobro.com, January 4, 2002). Their most recent campaign, "Don't ask- Won't sell," got the attention of the Atlanta Journal- Constitution for their exhibition of noteworthy community leadership and activism. The Coalition handed out signs to community members to place in their yards, as a testament of solidarity against the rising pressure of real estate developers on the island.

The grassroots mobilization that is taking place in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia is a testament to the strong community bonds of Gullah/ Geechee people. Residents of various island communities are beginning to realize the common thread uniting them is the battle against further cultural, social, economic, and environmental devastation (Hargrove, forthcoming). Marquetta L. Goodwine, native of St. Helena Island, elaborated as follows:

This type of organization is necessary in order for the Gullah community to have our own self- interest promoted as well as to have our culture preserved. We must tell our own stories and govern our own community as our foreparents did. We know that

'empty sak cyan stan upright lone.' Thus, the community must and is coming together to hold up all ends and to hold pun we culcha (Goodwine 1998c, 197).

Chapter 9 Gullah World View and Cultural Values

Gullah people are complex. They have many characteristics that illustrate the perseverance of African cultural traits⁹² which have shaped their worldview and value system. For much of history, Gullah life was lived and governed in accordance with nature, seasons, climate, and the tide, but all that seems to be changing (Twining and Baird 1991). What remain, as the most important aspects of Gullah life, are religion, kinship and family, (both extended and fictive kinship), community, and culture. There are bits and pieces of Gullah worldview scattered across the literature but there is no comprehensive study of the principles that structure Gullah life. There is a desperate need for an in- depth project concerning continuities and change within the Gullah worldview.

Family Systems

Discussion and documentation of family systems and structure are embedded in many studies of Gullah culture, often introduced to illustrate the strong African retentions concerning attitudes toward family and children (Twining and Baird 1991). The extended family is the most important social unit within Gullah culture. Many aspects of life are shared within the larger kinship network, including child rearing, monetary and food resources, labor, and decision- making. Gullah families who have not yet lost their land to development and tourism still live in compounds, within which many generations live in close proximity to one another (Jones- Jackson 1987, Hargrove 2000). This style of organization, as well as the importance of family and kinship in the mediation of all aspects of life, bears striking similarity to West and Central African traditions (Pollitzer 1999).

Studies of family systems are also scattered throughout much of the more recent Gullah research (Day 1986; Jones- Jackson 1987; Demerson 1991; Twining and Baird 1991; Guthrie 1996), but a particular dissertation offers native insight into the traditional family patterns of the Gullah. Franklin O. Smith conducted research among fourteen family units⁹³ on James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Yonges (St. Paul's), and Edisto Islands. Within this research we learn that elder Sea Islanders take an active role as disciplinarians and child rearing often follows the teachings of the Bible, "aimed at keeping them in the stepping of the Lord" (1973). Smith also introduces the concept of "two for one" discipline; a system that gives all community members the right to discipline a child for misbehaving. They are punished once by the person who catches them, and then again for shedding bad light on the family (1973). The results of Smith's research lend support to claims of African retentions concerning family structure and child rearing (i.e. West African family systems are based on the extended family, as well as the larger community, taking a mutually responsible role in child rearing (Pollitzer 1999)).

Relationships

Within the African traditional worldview, it is believed that each and every member of society has a place (Creel 1990). Friendship is an integral part of Gullah culture. Bascom describes the affection between Sea Island friends as "legendary" (1941, 47) suggesting this trait is rooted in Yoruba culture. The position of a man's best friend in Yoruba (*korikosum*) is crucial; he is the person to which all secrets are entrusted, and with whom all decisions discussed. There are also folktales which indicate a man's best friend is more trustworthy than even his mother (Bascom 1941).

One of the most important relationships, within a Gullah worldview, is that which exists between human beings and the natural environment (Beoku- Betts 1995). Sea Islanders view their natural surroundings with respect and a sense of interconnectedness. Their relationship with the environment has always emphasized harmony and social exchange that is non- exploitative (Beoku- Betts 1995). In most cases, their values put the well- being of the whole community before the selfish nature of individualism. Goodwine suggests the abandoning of such principles may be a paramount

reason for the problems of our world- “when we begin to look at how everything affects everything else within the universe as our ancestors did, then we will be able to truly begin to start to work toward correcting some of the negative trends that we are faced with” (Goodwine 1998, 11).

Gullah Foodways: Daily Pot of Rice

Josephine A. Beoku-Betts offers the most comprehensive study of Gullah foodways (1995). Gullah food culture is based on rice (Turner 1949; Jones-Jackson 1987; Creel 1990) and continues to be strongly influenced by techniques of food preparation originating in West Africa (Beoku-Betts 1995; Carney 2001). Historically, rice was the staple food of Sea Island communities, and continues to be a central part of main meals. It has also been proposed that the term “Geechee” originates within rice culture, and was used in a stereotypical sense to refer to individuals of African descent who spoke fast or funny and ate lots of rice (Hopkins 1992, 42).

One Sea Islander’s words serve to illustrate the importance of rice:

Rice is security. If you have some rice, you’ll never starve. It is a bellyful. You should never find a cupboard without it” (Beoku-Betts 1995).

Traditional foods include red rice, shrimp and rice, okra stew, and Hoppin’ John (rice cooked with peas and smoked meat).⁹⁴ Gullah food is commonly seasoned with onions, salt, pepper, and fresh or smoked meats (Beoku-Betts 1995). The significance of rice within Gullah culture can be attested to by the existence of folklore surrounding the growing, harvesting, preparation, and eating of rice.

Those who prepare Gullah meals have a strong preference for fresh foods (Beoku-Betts 1995). Produce that is not grown by the family can often be purchased at nearby roadside stands and produce marts. During my fieldwork on St. Helena Island one of my acquaintances would always drop by and leave tomatoes, watermelon, and cucumbers on my doorstep. On weekends, in an effort to earn extra cash, some residents of St. Helena Island cook traditional Gullah food and sell it from various locations to tourists and locals alike (Hargrove 2000).

Gullah Views of Life and Death⁹⁵

Within the Gullah worldview, life and death are viewed much differently than most would suspect. Life is meant to be lived, protected, and enriched to the fullest, but when death comes the fear experienced by many worldly beings is not part of the process. The Gullah view death as a journey into the spirit world, not as a break with life (Creel 1990), therefore the cemetery is not viewed as the final resting- place but as a door between two worlds. This explains many of the customs associated with death and funerals practiced within the Sea Islands. For example, if a mother dies and leaves behind a small child or a baby, it will be passed back and forth over the coffin to prevent “dead moder from hant de baby” (Creel 1990).

It is also believed that when a person dies they may not be able to rest if they are leaving behind something they desire. This explains why Gullah gravesites are often filled with material objects. Among some of the most common items found on graves are food, water, pots, broken pitchers, tobacco, and seashells (Creel 1990). Seashells, placed upon the grave, are of particular importance because they symbolize a very important concept within the Gullah worldview. It is believed that placing seashells on the grave represents the sea.⁹⁶ Within the BaKongo belief system this symbolism suggests “the sea brought us, the sea shall take us back” (Creel 1990, 90). Broken mirrors are also symbolic; they reflect the light that represents the spirit, holding it at a safe distance from the living (Pollitzer 1999).

Gullah Women: Activists and “Keepers o de Culcha”

Gullah women are, most often, the keepers of tradition and cultural knowledge. They pass on stories, crafts, foodways, and values to their children. The women of the Sea Islands are self-reliant matriarchs, who value autonomy, family and community. They engage in fund raising and community

activities aimed at preserving their rich cultural heritage. Beoku-Betts (1995) suggests that the collective activities performed by women promote a sense of shared tradition and identity, while also reinforcing the values of community-centered networks.

The enslaved African females of Sea Island plantations did all the same types of work that was expected of the men (Schwalm 1997). On antebellum rice plantations, fieldwork was slave women's work. The preparation of the fields, the planting, cultivation, harvesting, and processing of rice, and the maintenance of the elaborate plantation irrigation systems occupied the daily lives of most plantation women (Schwalm 1997:19).

It was not only in the fields in which these women made their importance known. The freed women of the South Carolina Sea Islands were deeply involved in the final destruction of the system of slavery (Schwalm 1997). Their dedication and involvement pushed the Union to accept emancipation as a war goal. They also openly confronted the institutionalized forms of power: the state, the Union, and the White power structure. The period of Reconstruction was one of defiance for the freed women of the South Carolina Sea Islands (Schwalm 1997). These women actively protested any compromise concerning the autonomy of their freedom with regard to the agricultural system. Gullah women protested even the presence of White planters and, in some cases resorted to physical violence. Therefore, the history of these women gives us clues as to the strong and autonomous nature of Sea Island women.

The current struggle for autonomy and self-determination builds on a history of female activism and leadership with Sea Islands communities. Contemporary Sea Island women are the daughters of many strong female ancestors, who are revered for their participation in the Civil Rights Movement and other events credited with the subsequent restructuring of social freedom for the African Americans of the southern United States. It was on St. Helena Island that Dr. Martin Luther King came to retreat from the rest of the world in order to relax with his family. Within this community, Dr. King found much support from registered female voters; ready to take action against racism to promote social equality. In all capacities, women of the Sea Islands are the foundation upon which culture has been built and sustained. Perhaps they will provide the necessary momentum for cultural, linguistic, and environmental preservation.

Chapter 10 Development and Change: Gullah as an Endangered Species

"We have given up on trying to protect the shrimp and crab because we, the black native population of these islands, have become the new endangered species" (Emory Campbell 1984 in Rosengarten 1994).

The Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia are under siege. Those Gullah and Geechee communities that remain intact are constantly under threat of development and change inflicted by outside interests. The island environments are beautiful and serene and the pace of life is always a breath of fresh air for any visitor from the hectic outside world. Ironically the very things that attract outsiders are the first things to be destroyed by an influx of newcomers who decide to make this paradise home. Much of the existing literature makes reference to the devastating effects of development and tourism (Nichols 1976; Slaughter 1979; Derby 1980; Day 1986; Rosengarten 1986; Jones-Jackson 1987; Carawan 1989; Demerson 1991; Twining and Baird 1991; Baird and Twining 1994; Guthrie 1996; Goodwine 1998; Joyner 1999; Pollitzer 1999) as it has increased at varied rates throughout a number of Sea Island communities. The literature focused on this phenomenon is growing rapidly as more and more scholars become aware of the situation, but much needs to be done within applied social science to put knowledge to use toward Gullah preservation.

Shrimp Creek, Georgia

As early as 1959, social scientists were beginning to document the changes within Gullah society resulting from increased contact with outsiders, particularly Euro Americans. Simon Ottenberg conducted research in the Shrimp Creek community, Georgia, in the summer of 1950.⁹⁷ What Ottenberg witnessed was an isolated, religious, traditional fishing community being transformed into a suburban area (Ottenberg 1991). During the 1950s this community was the epitome of Gullah community life and culture. They were self sufficient fishermen and shrimpers who owned their land and had strong bonds created by kinship, friendship, and church participation. They maintained insurance clubs and savings clubs, while church served to regulate the activities and social control within the community. On Tuesdays and Fridays they would travel to Savannah to sell their seafood in the streets. They also supplied seafood to neighboring communities. During the early 1950s, however, White outsiders began large-scale commercial fishing establishments in direct competition with Shrimp Creek residents. Many were forced to take up manual labor jobs in Savannah, and those who could not find a job migrated to New York, Philadelphia and other northern areas (Ottenberg 1991).

Development brought changes that were devastating to the residents of Shrimp Creek. Prior to increased contact, the residents had relied on their own knowledge of medicinal remedies for health; however, increased contact brought about a greater reliance on the medical professionals of the Savannah urban area. Shrimp Creek, along with the sharp decline in their fishing industry, also experienced the consolidation of their school systems, directly resulting in increased competition within the educational system as children began viewing education as a means of social and economic advancement (Ottenberg 1991).

One of the most common problems associated with changes such as these is the schism they create between young and old. As the elder generation struggles to maintain their lifeways, the youth see the “old ways” as backward, causing mass retreat away from home toward the values of mass culture (Beoku-Betts 1995; Goodwine 1998d; Smith 1999; Hargrove 2000). I have documented this phenomenon within my own research in St. Helena, as well as Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. Overall, this creates profound and lasting effects on community cohesion and mobilization for positive change.

Edisto Island, South Carolina

Recent work conducted by Lauren E. Smith tells a similar story of the devastating consequences of development and encroachment. Smith conducted fieldwork within the Edisto Island community concerning performance events, such as preaching and storytelling, and the interaction between performer and audience. What she documents, however, is a community at risk of losing their cultural heritage (1999). Historically, Edisto was home to the Cusabo Indians (the Edistow tribe) until the plantation system took hold in 1724. The Civil War brought land ownership to Edisto Island’s Gullah slaves, just as it did throughout the Sea Islands, and they remained there as self sufficient farmers for generations. However, as of the late 1990s, Smith describes the current community of Gullah residents as “poor and afraid of losing their cultural lifeways” (1999). Smith goes on to suggest that the future of Edisto is unsure, due to the out migration of Gullah youth and the influx of drugs.

Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina: Women and Development

The economic picture for Mt. Pleasant is cut from the same mold as those discussed thus far. The women of this community, however, have carved out an economic niche for themselves by sewing sweetgrass baskets for the tourism market (Derby 1980; Day 1982; Rosengarten 1994; Hargrove 2000). Kay Young Day’s extensive research within the Mt. Pleasant community makes an important contribution to the literature concerning collective responses to development and change.⁹⁸ Many of the elderly women interviewed spoke of a time when they were economically independent. Some grew produce and sold it at roadside stands or in the Charleston market. But more recently population growths, in-migration of Whites, and changes in the service sector have negatively

affected the women of this community. In response to their economic marginalization women have created networks, through kinship and friendship, which give them greater control over their economic futures.

Day's work is focused on the ways in which women of the Mt. Pleasant community assist one another with child rearing, domestic tasks, and economic ventures, such as sweetgrass basketry. At the time of Day's research over 50% of the women of Mt. Pleasant produced baskets sold from makeshift wooden stands along highway 17 (Day 1982). By creating support networks for one another, these women have created an economic niche market aimed at tourists. This offers an alternative to the wage work brought about by development and tourism (Day 1986).

In addition to the basket industry, the women of Mt. Pleasant have another option. Day documented many cases of women migrating to New York City in search of employment (1982). New York City offers a broad range of job opportunities in the medical profession, most notably in hospitals. When a Mt. Pleasant woman establishes herself in New York, she will often recruit interested kin from home to move up North. This type of network, although it is essential to the economic future of these women, ultimately takes residents from their Sea Island communities. Recent research conducted in Mt. Pleasant suggests this may be one of the primary avenues by which family land is lost (Hargrove 2000). When residents are invested in their work and community in New York, it is hard to devote time, money, and energy to business back home. Developers have learned to take advantage of such predicaments, employing various strategies to acquire valuable family land. Therefore, the limited nature of wage work often associated with tourism and development, which is often cited as the primary reason for migrating to New York, has serious consequences for Native Sea Islanders.

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina: A "Culture of Servitude"⁹⁹

Hilton Head Island serves as a constant reminder of the possibilities of immense development. Lisa V. Faulkenberry, in her recent dissertation (1997) and co-published journal article (2000), urges us to consider the multiple realities of development. Faulkenberry conducted two years of research in Beaufort County, interviewing residents of St. Helena Island, Beaufort, Hilton Head Island, and Daufuskie Island. Within her research paradigm she includes local fishermen and shrimpers, both African American and White residents, business owners, government officials, and retirees,¹⁰⁰ in an attempt to explore the economic and social impacts of tourism on the residents of South Carolina Sea Islands (1997). The results offer new perspectives and create new agendas for the study of Gullah in the twenty first century.

Taking an in-depth look at development, governmental involvement in tourism decision making, land ownership and use, property tax increases, and new businesses and job opportunities, Faulkenberry concludes that tourism threatens to destroy the self-sustainability of Sea Islanders through a process referred to as the "culture of servitude" (1997). The jobs available to Sea Island residents create and perpetuate economic dependence and social inequality, and are limited to minimum wage service jobs such as housekeepers, golf caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses (Joyner 1999). These types of "servitude" sustain a power differential between locals (Gullah, African American) and tourists (Euro American). Furthermore, increased tourism brings increased taxes, higher crime rates, geographic displacement, and family deterioration (Faulkenberry 1997; Faulkenberry et al. 2000).

Changes such as these have taken their toll on the everyday lives of Gullah communities. Farming has disappeared in many areas and property taxes are constantly on the increase. More importantly, there is a distinct nostalgia to the way people speak about their island homes prior to tourism (Faulkenberry 1997). Their homes have lost the small town cohesion built over the past few hundred years and they have nothing to show for it. They are not involved in the decision-making processes that directly affect their communities. They have no opportunities for ownership of tourist businesses (Faulkenberry 1997), only menial positions working in them. The psychological ramifications directly

affect family life, while often leading to social disintegration. In addition, Gullah cultural practices and traditions are being altered by insiders, outsiders, and the state in an attempt to seduce the tourism dollar (Hargrove 2000).

Commoditization of Culture: Gullah Culture for Sale

The most recent work concerning development and change within the Sea Islands of South Carolina concerns the appropriation of Gullah identity within the tourism industries of Mt. Pleasant and St. Helena Island (Hargrove 2000).¹⁰¹ There are countless entrepreneurs coming to the Sea Islands to profit from the wholesale distribution of Gullah culture. Musical groups, restaurants, tours, and the tourism industry of South Carolina are marketing Gullah imagery and culture in an effort to capitalize on the increasing interest in this nostalgic lifeway (Hargrove 2000). Chief among the images being appropriated is the sweetgrass basket woman, who appears on everything. Postcards, calendars, travel guides, and a wide range of brochures are adorned with images of sweetgrass baskets, basket women, or both.¹⁰² This type of cultural commoditization, or piracy of identity, should not go unnoticed by the administrators of South Carolina as one of the key contributors to rising tourism within the State.

Daufuskie Island: Internal Effects of Development

Development and tourism have devastated countless Gullah communities, but we often overlook the effects that are not readily visible and quantifiable in scientific terms. We can assess economic loss, land loss, and even cultural loss and acculturation to an extent, but it is extremely hard to investigate the psychological ramifications of these sweeping changes. Such an attempt was made, however, by a psychology doctoral student Sabra C. Slaughter. In 1979, his dissertation “The Old Ones Dying and The Young Ones Leaving:” The Effects of Modernization on the Community of Daufuskie Island, South Carolina Slaughter gives us a glimpse of the negative effects of such processes with regard to Daufuskie Island community cohesion and autonomy. Slaughter’s interest in this community was sparked during the summers of 1973 and 1974 while working as a student volunteer and later a paid employee, in a program implemented by University of California at Santa Cruz. The aim of the program was to place students on Daufuskie to assist community members with transportation, public health, and educational needs (1979). She later returned as a researcher, collecting extensive oral history of some twenty- six residents of Daufuskie,¹⁰³ to assess the effects of modernization on this isolated, rural community.

Within the oral histories and interview data collected by Slaughter, a clear picture emerges of a community devastated by modernization and development. The educational system has been tremendously altered, resulting in bureaucratization and impersonalization, and loss of community control and decision making within the educational system (1979). Most of the decision making power, concerning educational policy, had been transferred to extracommunity government, leaving Daufuskie residents feeling hopelessly out of control of their lives and the lives of their children.

Aside from changes in the educational system, Slaughter goes on to reveal how a cultural tradition was erased in the development process. For many decades Daufuskie Island tourism included “picnic boat” tourism, comprised of local fishermen, shrimpers, and crabbers, transporting small groups of tourists to the island, as well as selling their goods to the tourists and Hilton Head residents. This was their livelihood, as well as a family tradition (1979); however, Hilton Head companies began offering boat tours to the island and displaced the enterprise. The end result was a loss of livelihood and loss of economic earnings. Changes such as these, as well as countless others, have the young residents leaving home in search of better economic opportunities, just as the old ones are dying out. Slaughter presents Daufuskie as a community in danger of loss of autonomy and social cohesion, as well as at risk of losing the very place they call home.

In retrospect, Slaughter’s work seems almost prophetic. Daufuskie Island has been all but seized. It is hardly recognizable as a once self- sufficient Gullah community, with only a handful of people left in the midst of the golf courses, villas and condos (Goodwine 1998a). Residents can no longer visit their

descendents buried in Gullah graveyards due to restricted areas set off by gates and guards (Goodwine 1998c). Daufuskie Islanders recently won a lawsuit granting access to previous family burial areas, which seemed like a long awaited success. However, since they are not permitted to drive up to the graveyard, they must resort to carrying bodies long distances in order to continue traditional cultural practices (Marquetta L. Goodwine, personal communication 2002). The small remaining Gullah community appears imprisoned on an edge of the island, wondering how long it will be before developers find a way to get their hands on the small area that remains.

Conclusion

The cases summarized here can be taken as representative of the larger community of Sea Islands. They are all at risk of being destroyed by development and tourism, if they have escaped the wrath thus far. We must begin to look at our work as an opportunity to investigate these issues, as well as become involved in the struggles to stop this “destructionment” (Goodwine’s perspective on the truth behind the development of the Sea Islands, 1998a). Governments, agencies, and activists must begin to work toward restricting access to development companies with grand plans of resorts and tourism taking the place of Gullah survival.

Conclusion

Social science is moving in the direction of action-oriented research. Research for the sake of research is no longer acceptable; therefore all future research within the Sea Islands should be approached with an agenda for contributing, in some way, to local communities.¹⁰⁴ We can no longer stand outside and observe communities with the intention of publication or prestige. It is imperative that research be conducted to preserve the oral histories, folktales, traditional herbal remedies, religious practices, and lifeways being destroyed by the current attack of development, but it must be managed in a collective effort with community leaders, activists, and organizations. We have much to learn from the real warriors, those who deal with these problems on a daily basis. They hold the keys to the future of Gullah as a viable lifeway and cultural tradition.

No amount of literary creativity could summarize suggestions for future Gullah research more eloquently than Charles Joyner does in his most recent publication:

The old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first (Joyner 1999, 281).

With this in mind, scholars can contribute to a more equitable and collaborative effort with the remaining Sea Island communities of South Carolina and Georgia. They are, after all, the true “keepers o de culcha.”

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Endnotes

¹ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document suggests including Amelia Island, Florida in the Gullah/ Geechee culture area based on a recent book, *American Beach*; written by Russ Rymer and published in 1998. This book should be read and taken into consideration in future projects concerning Gullah/ Geechee people.

² One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document suggested including Wadmalaw Island to the list of viable Gullah communities in South Carolina.

³ Linguistic connections between Gullah and the Caribbean abound within the literature. For further clarification, see *The Crucible of Carolina: Essays in the Development of Gullah Language and Culture*, edited by Michael Montgomery. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994.

⁴ Jones- Jackson also discusses connections between Gullah religious ceremony, Jamaican pocomania and Brazilian macumba (1994).

⁵ Lorenzo Dow Turner introduced term.

⁶ Etymology is defined as “The origin and historical development of a linguistic form as shown by determining its basic elements, earliest known use, and changes in form and meaning, tracing its transmission from one language to another, identifying its cognates in other languages, and reconstructing its ancestral form where possible” <http://www.dictionary.com>.

⁷ *Sea Island Diary: A History of St. Helena Island* (1983) represents a historical account of the Penn School and St. Helena Island, compiled primarily from diaries, letters, Penn School archives, and historic records.

⁸ *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment (1964)* is an historic account of the design and implementation of the Port Royal Experiment within the Sea Islands of South Carolina.

⁹ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested the land sales were to satisfy tax South Carolina owed to the Union.

¹⁰ Emory Campbell, director of the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, referred to Sea Islanders as the real endangered species of the region.

¹¹ Lorenzo Dow Turner was the first to conduct a scientific investigation of Gullah language, often referred to as Sea Island Creole. Turner interviewed 21 Gullah speakers during his 1932 fieldwork. Twelve were residents of South Carolina Sea Islands (Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and St. Helena) while nine were from Georgia (St. Simons, Sapelo, Harris Neck, and Brewer's Neck).

¹² Patricia Jones- Jackson conducted three years of fieldwork on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, in an attempt to determine the status of Gullah language. Her informants consisted of twenty- four native resident speakers.

¹³ West African groups represented in the linguistic connection between the Sea Islands and West Africa include the Bambara, Bini, Bobangi ,Djerma, Efik, Ewe, Fante, Fon, Fula, Ga, Gbari, Hausa, Ibo, Ibibio, Kikongo, Kimbundu, Kpelle, Mende, Malinke, Nupe, Susu, Songhai, Twi, Tshiluba, Umbundu, Vai, Wolof, and Yoruba (Turner 1949).

¹⁴ A morpheme is a grammatical unit that is irreducible into smaller units, being realized phonologically by a form that cannot be analyzed in smaller units without losing meaningfulness. Example: “unladylike” consists of three morphemes: ‘un’ (meaning not), ‘lady’ (acting as a female adult human), and ‘like’ (having the characteristics of). Another example, “dogs” has two morphemes: ‘dog’ (canine animal), and ‘s’ (meaning plural tense of a noun).

¹⁵ Sengova conducted linguistic research in Beaufort and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, during the Fall of 1987.

¹⁶ Linguistic group representing areas from which a majority of African slaves were taken into bondage.

¹⁷ Dissertation research involved no fieldwork, but offers an Appendix in which the various African language families and their geographic location are presented, as well as the linguistic origins of many words found within the Gullah language system.

¹⁸ Pidgin language is a simplified form of speech that is usually a mixture of two or more languages, with rudimentary grammar and vocabulary. Such languages are used for communication between groups speaking different languages, and are not spoken as a first or native language.

¹⁹ Creole, as used here, is defined as a language formed from contact between two other languages, which retains features of both.

²⁰ Cunningham conducted field research during April and May of 1969 on Johns, Edisto, and Yorges Islands, South Carolina. Primary informants consisted of four elderly native speakers, with little formal education, and three middle aged native informants (who assisted in translation, semantics, and syntactic constructions of Sea Island Creole). This dissertation is presented as the first to analyze the syntactic system of Sea Island Creole as a

language. Main idea is to legitimate the language of Sea Islanders as a Creole language through the analysis of the syntactic system (and the relationships between Sea Island Creole and other Creole languages).

²¹ Syntactic systems are arrangements of words in sentences in their necessary relations, according to the established usage rules of a particular language (e.g. In English the relationship between noun and adjective is as follows: The white horse ran; however, in Spanish the grammatical system dictates the adjective follow the noun: El caballo blanco.).

²² The adjective *lexical* is applied generally to the vocabulary of a language, especially to distinguish content words from function words.

²³ Grammatical system is defined as the formal definition of the syntactic structure of a language.

²⁴ William A. Stewart is credited with the development of basilect, acrolect, and mesolect terminology.

²⁵ Copula is defined as a verb that joins a subject to its complement. Example: The book is on the shelf. The farmers are plowing their fields.

²⁶ Hopkins conducted fieldwork on Edisto, Hilton Head, Daufuskie, Sapelo, Yonges, Johns, St. Helena, Sandy's, and St. Simon's Islands, as well as in Brunswick and Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina.

²⁷ Author of *The Black Border: Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast* (1922).

²⁸ In the case of Gullah/ Geechee, code switching refers an individual's ability to move comfortably back and forth between Standard English and Gullah language.

²⁹ Subjects for language analysis were selected from Daufuskie Island, James Island, and Orangeburg, South Carolina, as well as from Gainesville and Ocala, Florida.

³⁰ Evoking the spirit refers to the process of using words to create an energy, from which God is actually evoked and is thought to become embodied in members of the congregation (Jones- Jackson 1994, 116).

³¹ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document suggested the inclusion of a parallel study, conducted by Dr. Althea Sumpter of St. Helena Island. Within this work Sumpter "speaks of shame and ridicule heaped upon Sea Island young people as they were integrated into mainland schools" (Twining, personal communication, 2002).

³² All tests administered to various employees within the school system are included in the appendices of the thesis. Eighty- three questionnaires were returned and analyzed.

³³ Hargrove conducted fieldwork within the communities of Mt. Pleasant and St. Helena Island, South Carolina between 1998 and 2000. During each summer, Hargrove interviewed thirteen informants, all of which were incorporated into her master's thesis *Marketing Gullah: Identity, Cultural Politics, and Tourism* (2000).

³⁴ Jones- Jackson spent a total of nine years researching Gullah and Geechee culture, as well as conducting comparative research in Nigeria, West Africa.

³⁵ There was no human subjects research conducted for this study. Data were obtained through historical documentation and research within many libraries: Union Theological Seminary, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, University of Virginia Library, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, S.C. Historical Society, Furman Univ. Library, Missionary Library at Union Theological Seminary, New York Historical Society, and New York Public Library.

³⁶ Samuel Lawton conducted research on Laurel Springs plantation in Colleton County, Pocotaligo and Combehee plantations in Beaufort County, and St. Helena, Lady's, Port Royal, Parris, and Coosaw Islands for dissertation in religious education. His overall focus was to gain a broader understanding of their religious lives.

³⁷ Guthrie conducted ethnographic research on St. Helena Island from July 1975 to July 1976 for dissertation. The results were later published as a book, *Catching Sense: African American Community on a South Carolina Sea Island* (1996).

³⁸ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested that the idea of "catching sense" could be linked to the idea of "seeking."

³⁹ Sarah Selina Thrower conducted research concerning the musical features of spirituals within South Carolina (limited details concerning research); several musical scores are included in her thesis.

⁴⁰ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested the concept of "one God" was long held in African religious and spiritual beliefs, thereby making it a familiar concept to incorporate into the Gullah worldview.

⁴¹ Lyrics are recorded in Hart 1993.

⁴² In 1999, The State of South Carolina officially declared "Spiritual" the State Music (personal communication Marquetta L. Goodwine, http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/sc_symb.htm).

⁴³ Edward Brantley Hart conducted research on Johns Island, South Carolina. The dissertation is a "first hand account" of the performance practices of the Gullah spiritual as it was performed at a traditional Gullah prayer

meeting. There were fourteen women and two men in attendance at this particular meeting, with a mean age of 72 years old.

⁴⁴ *Shoo Turkey Shoo* is a song associated with children and play (Carawan 1966, 1989).

⁴⁵ This is an excellent collection in the fact that the informants are named and their pictures appear. This validates the research, as well as serving as an oral history collection for generations to come.

⁴⁶ Starks gives no explicit number of informants, but his work suggests there were multiple informants from the elder generation.

⁴⁷ June T. Watkins conducted research on St. Helena Island during July of 1991, in an attempt to assess strategies of social control. Informants consisted of community members, including local ministers and deacons, who had participated in the just law system (between fifteen and twenty informants were interviewed for this dissertation).

⁴⁸ Several reviewers of an early draft of this document have suggested the Federal Writers Project represents an inaccurate portrayal of Gullah/ Geechee people, due to the following: the recorders on the project were EuroAmerican, the African Americans interviewed related the types of information they believed these recorders wanted to hear, and the interviewees were careful not to go beyond their perceived social roles.

⁴⁹ Six of the ten essays presented in this collection were based on presentations at the Ninth Annual Language and Culture in South Carolina Symposium, held at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, 1985.

⁵⁰ Okatie is an area located near Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

⁵¹ South Carolina Rivers.

⁵² Georgia Sea Island.

⁵³ Davis suggests that the majority of scholarly work on African American folklore has been examined from the perspective of *folklore as entertainment*, thereby minimizing depth and content.

⁵⁴ Participant- observation was the methodology for research, as well as archival and library research.

⁵⁵ Zora Neale Hurston was an anthropologist who collected folklore for the WPA. After struggling against the grain as an African American female in academia, she wrote fiction stories about real places she had conducted research. Hurston was among the first, if not the first, to attribute depth and character to the cultures of these isolated locations up and down the Southeastern Coast of the United States. Her work is only currently being appreciated for its value and scholarship.

⁵⁶ A part of the amnion, one of the membranes enveloping the fetus, which sometimes is around the head of a child at its birth.

⁵⁷ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document suggested “The Rabbit and the Partridge” story also illustrates features of island life, such as polygamy, which was still being practiced when she lived on Johns Island between 1966 and 1971 (Mary Twining, personal communication 2001).

⁵⁸ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested that publications written by Gullah and Geechee scholars be taken more seriously, particularly within the study of folklore. Reviewer suggests a recent publication, *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man: a Saltwater Geechee Talks about Life on Sapelo Island* (2000), as just one example of the importance of storytelling within Sea Island life. This book “makes a serious case for the importance of folklore and especially storytelling among the Gullah speaking people of South Carolina and Georgia (Alpha Bah, personal communication, 2001).

⁵⁹ The Sea Islands of Georgia were also sites of rice cultivation, but never on the grand scale that took place in the South Carolina Sea Islands. For a detailed study of rice cultivation throughout the Sea Islands see Goodwine 1999.

⁶⁰ Paul Salter conducted fieldwork throughout the South Carolina Sea Islands, during which he interviewed county agents, farmers, laborers, elder citizens, state and county officials, real estate developers, and resort owners in order to investigate the changing economic patterns of the island areas. His dissertation also contributes data concerning climate, vegetation, growing seasons, weather, and soil types, as well as cotton and rice production techniques.

⁶¹ Carney establishes technology transfer (from West Africa to Sea Islands) of pestle and mortar use, tool types (such as the hoe), rice cooking techniques.

⁶² The loss of British price supports for indigo after the Revolution aided in the demise of indigo cultivation and export (Pollitzer 1999).

⁶³ Kay Young Day began conducting research within the Mt. Pleasant community of South Carolina in 1971. Her dissertation is primarily concerned with the role of kinship and community within the changing economy of this Sea Island area.

⁶⁴ The data for this dissertation were collected from archival materials, family papers, Beaufort County public records, and diaries and memoirs from the Penn School Papers. It also contains the names of prominent planters in the Low Country region, as well as plantation names and numbers of slaves for specific plantations.

⁶⁵ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document suggested Sea Islanders had additional reasons for choosing to stay on the home plantation: “where our families are is where we are connected in mind, body, and soul” (Marquetta L. Goodwine, personal communication 2002).

⁶⁶ Normand utilized historic records to assess the impact of land ownership on the St. Helena Parish and the subsequent development of an economically dependent, as well as politically organized and mobilized, class of freedmen.

⁶⁷ Pollitzer cites Julia F. Morton (*Folk Remedies of the Low Country*, Miami: E.A. Seemann Publishers, 1974) and Faith Mitchell (1978) as primary sources.

⁶⁸ Folk healers are highly revered in Gullah/ Geechee communities for their expertise and knowledge, including healing the physically sick, protecting the body from harm, and the ability to change bad habits and undesirable behavior (Smith 1973).

⁶⁹ Faith Mitchell is a medical anthropologist and conducted her research in South Carolina and Georgia during the early 1970s.

⁷⁰ Heyer gives extensive account of the difficulty she had in establishing rapport with the residents of St. Helena Island. She suggests Sea Islanders are untrusting of outsiders. She lived within the community for six months before she obtained her first interview.

⁷¹ Hag is believed to be someone close to dying, and is indicated by waking up with a feeling of pressure as if something is sitting on you (Heyer 1981).

⁷² One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested Heyer’s work is inaccurate, due to her status as an outsider. Sea Island people are particularly suspecting of researchers (Hargrove 2000), especially when discussing folk remedies and belief systems.

⁷³ Author spent one year as a resident of St. Helena Island. He makes a point to call attention to the difficulties of conducting research as a white researcher within the community and cites particular difficulty in dealing with the Penn Center.

⁷⁴ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested that governmental bodies charged with protecting the health and general welfare of Sea Island communities need to examine the damage done by golf courses, tennis courts, and marinas (as well as the chemicals used to clean them).

⁷⁵ Syncretism refers to a process by which a group merges the cultural elements of two distinct cultures into one. Here it is used to discuss the syncretic elements of Gullah arts and crafts, as a blending of elements from West African cultures and their lives in the Sea Islands.

⁷⁶ Dale Rosengarten participated in the Lowcountry Basket Project of the 1980s, interviewing thirty- four basket makers from South Carolina. The data from this project, along with a basket collection, was organized into a traveling art exhibit between 1988 and 1990, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibit catalog *Row Upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry* was first published by McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina (1986) as part of their program to document and promote Southern Folk Arts. The catalog contains historical and ethnographic data gathered during the initial project. Rosengarten has published extensively on Gullah basketry.

⁷⁷ For the most recent elaboration on the cultural connections between South Carolina and West Africa (with regard to basketry) see Carney 2001.

⁷⁸ The vast majority of fieldwork conducted on basketry has taken place in the community of Mt. Pleasant.

⁷⁹ Doris Derby conducted ethnographic fieldwork for fifteen months in Mt. Pleasant in 1977 and 1978. Her results appear in her dissertation *Black Women Basket Makers: A Study of Domestic Economy in Charleston County, South Carolina* (1980). She collected life histories and extensive interviews with four principal informants, as well as genealogies.

⁸⁰ Doris Derby lived in Charleston County for fifteen months, beginning in 1977. She collected data through participant observation, collection of life histories and genealogies, informal questioning, formal questionnaires, library and archival research. Derby also held a teaching position at the College of Charleston while conducting research for her dissertation. Three females and one male basket makers served as key informants.

⁸¹ Hargrove conducted extensive fieldwork in the Sea Island communities of Mt. Pleasant and St. Helena Island during the summer months of 1998 and 1999. She gathered data from thirteen informants (six of which were Mt. Pleasant basket weavers) during participant observation, interviews, and community involvement. She is currently conducting doctoral research based on similar issues of Gullah/ Geechee culture.

⁸² One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested that development is taking a toll on other traditional Charleston vendors as well. Reviewer states, “Fewer and fewer Gullah artisans and flower ladies can be found vending in Downtown Charleston because increasing commercialization of the area is driving them out. Also, the rent for spaces in the Charleston market continues to rise, making it unaffordable for many vendors.”

⁸³ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested that the colors and patterns of Gullah quilts have been embellished by academics. Reviewer suggests quilts represent the fabrics that were available at the time. While reviewer recognizes certain colors were used to symbolize specific occasions in the life cycle, she suggests the complexity attached to this utilitarian craft is highly exaggerated.

⁸⁴ See also *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes*, 1940.

⁸⁵ Archaeological materials gathered from Yamacraw and Wilmington Island (Vlach 1978).

⁸⁶ Bascom conducted fieldwork in Nigeria in 1937 and 1938 and in Georgia and South Carolina in 1939.

⁸⁷ Recent scholarly research conducted on Hilton Head Island (Faulkenberry et al. 2000) concerning the economic conditions of Sea Island residents, will be discussed in Chapter 10: Development and Change: Gullah as an Endangered Species.

⁸⁸ The abbreviation used to represent the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan of 1997.

⁸⁹ Recently, in a similar move, Charleston County began work on a parallel plan, The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), to aid in the implementation of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan.

⁹⁰ Marquetta L. Goodwine’s official title is Queen Quet: Chieftess of the Gullah/ Geechee Nation.

⁹¹ Information pertaining to Sea Island organizations is data obtained by Melissa D. Hargrove from various Sea Island informants. All data is part of her ongoing dissertation research concerning grassroots mobilization in the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands.

⁹² Cultural traits that illustrate a connection between the Sea Islands and West Africa are referred to as “Africanisms.”

⁹³ There were eighty- four informants involved in this study. The survey information appears in the Appendix.

⁹⁴ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document conveyed that the same combination is referred to as “okra soup” on Johns Island.

⁹⁵ One of the reviewers on an early draft of this document, who is also a Sea Island native, suggests that spiritual beliefs and practices (such as life and death) be recognized as sacred to Gullah/ Geechee people, therefore any and all future research within this area should be done under the direct guidance of community activists.

⁹⁶ One of the reviewers of an early draft of this document has suggested “the location of cemeteries at water’s edge enabled the spirits to ‘cross de wata’ easily; we were told this verbally by a Geechee man” (Alyssa Lee, personal communication 2001).

⁹⁷ Simon Ottenberg first published the findings of his research in *Phylon* 20 (1) in 1959. The article was slightly edited and included in the recent monograph *Sea Island Roots: African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia* (1991), edited by Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird.

⁹⁸ Day’s research resulted in a book chapter “Kinship in a Changing Economy: A View From the Sea Islands” (1982) and her anthropology dissertation *My Family Is Me: Women’s Kin Networks and Social Power in a Black Sea Island Community*, Rutgers University (1986). She resided in Mt. Pleasant for one and a half years and interviewed many community residents, ranging from children to community elders. She utilized a life history methodology, resulting in several life histories included in her dissertation.

⁹⁹ Faulkenberry introduces this term to the literature in an attempt to suggest the extremely limited nature of wage work available to Sea Islanders.

¹⁰⁰ Faulkenberry interviewed forty- five local residents.

¹⁰¹ Melissa Hargrove conducted extensive fieldwork within the communities of Mt. Pleasant and St. Helena Island over a three- year period. She interviewed thirteen native Gullah residents concerning the current predicament and ramifications of development and tourism. Her thesis, *Marketing Gullah: Identity, Cultural Politics, and Tourism* (2000) contributes to our knowledge of the ways in which identity is being used to promote tourism within the Sea Islands of South Carolina.

¹⁰² Most of the images used in this manner are allegedly taken without proper permission.

¹⁰³ Interview guide appears in full as Appendix B. The methodology employed by Slaughter provides an excellent tool for future research concerning community cohesion and native ideas about modernization and development. This dissertation also includes a chronological history of Daufuskie from colonial period to 1980; covering such topics as slavery, agriculture, economics, education, religious, and family systems.

¹⁰⁴ Goodwine 1998b offers “Guidelines for Conducting Research” within Gullah/Geechee communities.