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**Erreh peepil whey nuh ha dem own  
language nummuh duh hahf a peepil**

Any people that do not have their own language  
are only half a people

**Afro-Seminole Creole Revitalization Project**

**2021-2022**

*Dear Everybody, how hunnuh duh do?*

*In the next few days you'll get the first "formal" Seminole lesson as an e-mail attachment to print out. Then, we will go over it in a Zoom session, adding a bit more, and making it possible for you to ask questions. These will be monthly, after each one of which you will receive the next lesson to print out, which will be the next session's topic(s). When you receive each one, go through it and pick out all of the ASC words with their meanings to save in a separate file (it's easy to alphabetize them); it will be the beginning of your own dictionary.*

*Here is a place to start: just continue to speak English, **BUT** substitute **NUH** for "don't" and **FUH** for "to" (before verbs). For example, instead of saying "I don't want to go," say "I nuh want fuh go;" instead of saying "don't sit there," say "nuh sit there." It's not yet Seminole, but it's a way to begin, and as time goes by, more grammar substitutes will be introduced.*

*The ASCRP Team.*

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 1

In the last mailout, you were asked to substitute NUH and FUH for “don’t” and “to” in your *English*. It will come easily as you keep doing it, and these words are basic to speaking ASC. Gradually, new ASC substitutes will replace their English equivalents.

This first exercise only has to do with vocabulary; the grammar of ASC is quite a bit different from that of English, and will be dealt with in each lesson too, bit by bit, as you acquire the Ancestors’ Creole. One difficult aspect in lessons such as these, is pronunciation; the spellings used throughout are at best only approximate. Listen to the cadence in the speech of the elders, it carries over into their English too. Seek their input at every turn.

#### ***What are Creole languages?***

ASC is a *CREOLE* language. Creole languages are the result of circumstances in the past that brought many people speaking many different languages together, and who needed desperately to communicate with each other. Such a situation could be the result of massive population upheaval due to natural causes, or people from many different places being brought together in e.g. a military or refugee situation or, as in the case of ASC, many people being brought together from widely different places in order to be sold as a source of labor.

This is what happened on both the west coast and the east coast of Africa. Men, women and children along the west coast were captured and shipped to the new colonies in the Americas to be sold as an enslaved workforce. The Europeans had a policy—not an entirely successful one—to separate from each other those people who spoke the same language, for obvious reasons. Chained and forced into cramped cells for months before being packed into ships for the trans-Atlantic voyage, terrified and frantic, desperate for answers, but unable to communicate, their one unique human property kicked in: language. We are the only species on the planet that has the genetic programming to form language.

Under normal circumstances, we don’t need to fall back on that DNA ability, because when we are born, there is already a language being spoken around us, which we hear and imitate and learn. But

if the circumstances are such that there is *no* stable, accessible language available to learn in that natural way, then we must rely on what is in our brain. It isn't a specific language in itself, but a kind of framework or blueprint that has to be fleshed out. It has no words, for example. Those must come from an existing language.

In the different colonial settings, the different colonists' languages (they were English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch) were the ones that the captives heard. Their words got repeated over and over again and didn't vary (the "root" words), but the *prefixes and the suffixes* did—all the time. The root words were quickly recognized and picked up, but not their always-changing beginnings and endings.

English (along with French and Spanish and Zulu and Navaho and thousands of other languages), shows the relationship between the words in a sentence by switching out the different *prefixes* and *suffixes*. Consider the various removable ones that can be tacked onto "prove":

he	Prove- <u>s</u> , prove- <u>th</u> , <u>dis</u> -prove- <u>s</u>
thou	Prove- <u>st</u>
I am	Prov- <u>ing</u>
I have	Prove- <u>d</u>
it is	Prov- <u>able</u> , <u>un</u> -prov- <u>able</u>

and there's even

the	Proo- <u>f</u>
-----	----------------

Each one has a different grammatical purpose—to make the past tense, to make a noun, an adjective, an opposite, and so on. But while there are several different beginnings or endings that have to change to suit the grammar and the meaning, the "root" word (here **prove**) itself doesn't change.

The adults herded together during slavery time quickly worked out a compromise amongst themselves consisting of the creole grammar with English (or French, Portuguese, Dutch, etc.) words. For them it was not their native language; they still spoke those. But, forced together with a partner coming from a different African language-group, both had to continue speaking their "compromise" means of communication. They had no choice. A consensus stabilized to an extent as accepted patterns became established, though it was no doubt spoken with many different "accents" because of the speakers' first languages, and was much influenced too by those same languages, but children being born

into this situation learnt what they were hearing as their *native* mother tongue, and naturally—though not consciously—they developed it and expanded it and refined it into a full language. What they were hearing from their parents whose own stock of English words was learnt from their owners and (even moreso) their overseers, but which they then spoke without their various prefixes and suffixes; they were being put together into sentences in which the grammatical relationships were handled in a different way, and the children compounded the process.

Creoles are the most streamlined, efficient type of language, because there is little in their grammar that's unnecessary. Do we really need to make a difference between "has" and "have" in English? Do we really need the plural -s in "three dogs" when the "three" already shows that it's plural? Does "too loudly" really tell us more than "too loud"?

What you lose on the roundabout, you gain on the swing. All languages need rules (grammar), but if the bits that carry the grammar aren't there in the prefixes and the suffixes, then the rules must be handled another way, and that is where *Creole* languages are exceptional; they use almost no endings, and instead show grammatical relationships with separate words. ASC has kept only two or three from English, which we'll deal with later.

The first two examples of ASC grammar to illustrate this are the words **DEM** and **BIN**:

For example, in English, the suffix to make plurals is -s: MY DOG, MY DOGS. In ASC, the plural is shown by the word **DEM**, which comes, separately, *after* the word: ME DOG, ME DOG **DEM**.

In the same way, instead of the ending -ed to show action in the past, as in English, ASC puts **BIN** *before* the word:

English: I WALK**ED**

ASC: AH **BIN** WALK

### ***Negatives***

In English, to make a verb negative, ***not (n't)*** is placed *after* DO (or CAN, MUST, SHOULD, etc.), the so-called auxiliaries or 'helper' verbs—***don't, can't, mustn't, shouldn't***.

In ASC, the word **NUH** is placed *before* the verb or the auxiliary:

AH **NUH** WALK

AH **NUH BIN** WALK

A few verbs have their own negative forms (discussed in Session 5).

Also, just as in Spanish, informal English and very many other languages, ASC makes the *object* of a negative sentence negative too:

**Skip nuh ha nuh money** “Skip doesn’t have any money”

**Skip nuh see nuburry** “Skip didn’t see anybody”

Compare informal English “*I don’t have nothing, I didn’t see nobody,*” Spanish “*no tengo nada,*” “*no vi a nadie*” or French “*je n’ai rien.*”

### ***Spelling***

ASC has only ever been a spoken language, so there’s no set way to spell it. Since everyone reads and writes English, then English-type spellings can work for ASC, more or less. You will see a lot of H’s, either to show a long sound, to show that a final-E is sounded, or that you don’t pronounce the R. You’ll often see the same word inconsistently spelt in different ways (**whey**, **way**, **wey**, etc.). Ideally, a set way of spelling should be devised. Being consistent will be a problem.

Some examples: **hahf** “half” doesn’t sound like “haff” but instead the ‘ah’ rhymes with the ‘a’ in “father” or “psalm;” the British ‘aah’ sound in such words as ‘can’t,’ ‘pass,’ ‘last’ and so on has been retained in many ASC words, where they differ from the general American English pronunciation, e.g. **mawssuh** ‘master,’ **lahs** ‘last,’ and so on. It is also the sound of ‘a’ in **dahdy** ‘daddy,’ which rhymes with “car-key,” and not “caddy.” **Hunnuh** “you” is pronounced like “herner” without the R’s.

### ***Vocabulary***

Here are some words for you to memorize. A full vocabulary is at the end of the sessions.

AH	“I”
BATTLE	“batter” (in recipes)
BITTLE	“food”
BIN	past tense marker
BREDDUH	“brother”

CANNA	“kind of”
CYAH	“accompany”
CHOO-WAY	“spill,” “waste”
DEM	“they, their, them, those; plural-marker”
EDDUH	“other”
ERREH	“any”
FUH	‘to,’ also “must”
HACE UP	“lift up”
HUNNUH	“you” (both singular and plural)
ME	“me; my”
NUMMUH	“only”
PEEPIL	“people”
PINGY	“cooking pot”
POKE	“pork;” “small bag”
SOTE	“salt”
SOATLE	“until”
SOTY	“to salt (a meal, recipe)”
WHEY	“that,” “who,” “which” (more about this word later)
WISSEH	“where”
YEDDY	“hear”
YOU, YUH	“you”

Here is a recipe: you don't have to understand it all yet, but

- (1) go through it and pick out all the **DEM**'s, and decide whether each one means “they,” “their,” “them” or “those” or is a plural-marker. Notice the use of “nuh” and “fuh,” which you have been practicing. What do you think **UM** means?
- (2) List the words you don't understand.

### ***Akara***

Akara duh one dem canna bittle wheh dem fuss-fudduh (de ancestor dem) bin kerr wit dem de time dem come duh Merica. Eeder hunnuh go duh Sout America, eeder Jamaica, eeder Haiti, innywhey Black peepil dem dey, hunnuh en fine de akara. Fuh sho, de Seminole too binnuh meck um, but e tanka dem mussa done fuhgit bout um some time een de pass. Dem call um *beanch akara* een Africa, kezz e meck fum blackeye pea, whuh dem duh call *beanch* yanduh. Edduh name gen duh *fryfry*.



Ef hunnuh wan' fuh meck um, hunnuh en haffuh teck:-

*One lilly poke a blackeye pea*, de fresh one ef yuh kin fine um, nuh de dry one dem.

*Sote en peppuh*

*One onion*

*One hallapenyuh* ef hunnuh like hunnuh bittle fuh bun hunnuh mout en boonie.

Soak de pea dem good obernignt soatle all dem kin come aloose, den, day clean, hunnuh mus wrench dem aroun een de worruh fuh shuck off de kin teh nuttn nuh leff cusin fuh de nekkid pea; duh sussoh pea fuh leff nuh mo, nerreh one lick a kin.

When hunnuh ha hunnuh bowl a pea, wrench dem gen en streen dem clean en puty.

Now hunnuh haffuh pit dem een hunnuh metatti (eeduh hunnuh blender ef hunnuh ha one a dem) en a lil worruh long wit de sote en de peppuh and mash dem good, teh e come smood sanka pancake battle only lillbit mo tickuh. Leff um tuh one side.

Now duh fuh mash up de onion (en de hallapenya ef hunnuh want um) een de metatty tell e haffway fine en haffway cose. Mix de onion en de akara battle all two tugeeduh. E pose fuh tick pon de poon whey hunnuh hole um up en e nubbuh drap off a rum.

Teck hunnuh pingy en bile one two cup a ile een um, den when e good en hot, drap een one poon a de battle. E fuh begin float roun en git brown onneet um, so hunnuh en haffuh tun um ober een de ile. Hunnuh kin put tree-fo poon a battle een dey one time. When dem done fry good, dem culluh en fabuh fry fish. Teck um out de ile, dreen um, en eat um wice e hot! E n'en lass teh de nex day. E sweet wit salsa picante.

One nudduh ting wheh hunnuh kin do wit de battle, duh fuh wrop um een cone-shuck dem, en cook um same way lucka tamal. Duh Africa e call *olleleh*.

### ***HISTORY AND CULTURE***

There are actually millions of people that speak Creoles very much like Afro-Seminole. Here is an example—in ASC here in Texas and Mexico, “*Her mother heard that they don’t know where you were*” is

*IM MAMA YEDDY SEH DEM NUH KNOW WISSEH HUNNUH BIN DEY.*

Across the Atlantic in West Africa, the same sentence is

*IM MAMA YERRY SAY DEM NUH KNOW U-SAI UNA BIN DEY.*

Down in Jamaica, they’d say

*IM MAMA YERRY SAY DEM NUH KNOW WEH-PART UNU BEN DEY,*

and in Suriname in South America, it would be

*EM MAMA YERREH TAKI DEM NO SABI O-SEY UNU BEN DEY.*

Also, there will be several traditional Afro-Seminole recipes, to provide aspects of the culture as well as the language. There was *akara* in this session, and we'll prepare *konki* (cunky) in the next one. If you have any of your own recipes for these Seminole dishes, send them along. One book of Black Seminole recipes is Moral & Siller (2000).

The Black Seminoles didn't only come West; some went to Red Bay on Andros Island in the Bahamas (Howard 2002) and some to Guanabacoa in Cuba, relocating there from the St. Augustine area after the British took over Florida for a brief one year period in 1763 (Dixon 2020: 13).



Afro-Seminoles in the Bahamas



The locations of ASC's sister Creole languages

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 2

You should have memorized the first list of words, and the first bits of grammar. If there is *anything* that's not clear, please e-mail me and/or bring it up at our next Zoom session. The best way to learn, of course, is to do it together with an on-the-spot partner, but Zooming is the next best thing. The ASC word for "zoom," by the way, is **zoon—de fly dem studdy duh zoon roun me po hoss haid.**

***Substitute:***

By now you should be used to substituting ***nuh*** for "don't" and ***fuh*** for "to" (before verbs) in your English. Now start substituting ***en*** for "will," so that instead of saying "I will go," say "I ***en*** go."

***GRAMMAR: Different ways to translate "be".***

("BE" here covers all of the different forms of that verb: *be, being, am, art, is, are, was, wert* and *were*). This one verb does a *whole* lot of work in English:

It joins nouns: John ***is*** a teacher

It goes in front of adjectives: John ***is*** happy

It goes before verbs: John ***is*** singing

It locates: John ***is*** in the kitchen

ASC grammar handles *BE* very differently.

To join nouns, ASC has **duh**:

John **duh** teachuh

It doesn't go before adjective at all:

John happy

Before verbs, it is also **duh**:

John **duh** teach

To locate something, it is **dey**:

John **dey** een de cookhouse

**Dey** locates, but it also means “exist.” If you know Spanish, think of the difference between *ser* and *estar*. In ASC you’d translate “God exists” as **God dey**. If you were greeted with “**how hunnuh fambly?**” you can answer “**Dem dey**,” i.e. “they’re there, (nothing’s changed, everything’s cool).”

Just as for nearly all verbs, you make the negative by putting **nuh** before it:

John <u><b>nuh duh</b></u> teachuh	“John isn’t a teacher”
John <u><b>nuh</b></u> happy	“John isn’t happy”
John <u><b>nuh duh</b></u> teach	“John isn’t teaching”
John <u><b>nuh dey</b></u> een de cookhouse	“John isn’t in the kitchen”

### ***A bit more grammar***

Remember that Creole grammar (mostly) replaces word-endings with separate words, or even with nothing. The apostrophe-s in English to show possession (“John’s house”) disappears altogether, for example : ASC **John house, who house? Duh John dahdy house.**

### **VOCABULARY**

AIL	“be unwell, be bothered by something”
AKS	“ask”
BEFO	“before; in front of”
BITTLE	“food” (also <i>nyah-nyam</i> )
CHUCH	“church”
DA or DARRA	“that”
DISHYUH	“this”
ENTY?	“isn’t it?” (a question word to tag onto the end of a sentence)
FEDDUH	“feather”
GEDDUH	“gather, collect”
GYAL	“girl”
ME	“me, my,” sometimes also “I” before <b>nuh</b> .
MECK	“make”
MECK-SO, WAH MECK	“why”
NYUS FUH	“used to”
OBUH	“over”
PUDY	“pretty”
PUPPYSHOW	“showing-out behavior, showing off” (meck puppyshow)
NUFF	“a lot of” (it doesn’t mean ‘enough’)
SHONUFF	“very, sure enough”
SKEEDUH	“mosquito”

SQUOY, SKWOY	“square”
SUPSHUS	“tasty”
SWEET	“tasty” (not necessarily sugary)
SWINDGE	“burn, singe”
TAHWUH	“greedy” (tah-wuh)
WE	“we, us, our”
WORRUH	“water”
WUH	“what”

**Using the words and grammar you memorized from Session 1, and words from today’s list, how would you say:**

“Where is John?”

“Where was John?”

“Only three people are listening”

“Don’t spill that water!”

“He’s greedy, isn’t he”

“What is it?”

“John took Sally to church”

“Sally is pretty”

John’s brother”

“Y’all ask Sally to burn the feathers off this hen”

“My brother’s Volvo is red”

“A lot of mosquitos are flying over our food”

Why are you showing off in front of the girls?

How are y’all doing?

**Also using all of the available words, make up some of your own sentences.**

## TEXT

Here’s another text, the second recipe, which I will go through word by word in the Zoom session; it’s how to prepare *konki* (and fixing some too is your homework!). See how much you can understand of it, and put some questions together to ask about it. There are some words that we haven’t had yet—list them.

Remember **en** makes the future tense, “will” (and **n'en**, from **nuh en**, is “won’t”). Note that the word for ‘and’ is also **en**.

### **RECIPE**

#### ***Konki***

Disshuh duh de way fuh meck one de mos’ supshus kina sweet bittle whey de Shiminoli peepil bin nyuse fuh cook. Same lucka de akara, dis come out a Africa too.

Hunnuh en ha fuh medger erritin wit cyan, de kine whey de condense milk come een. Peach-quat too big ef hunnuh nuh plan fuh feed de whole a Brackett. Neddum cyan whey peepil dem bin nyuce fuh medger ting duh beeuh-cyan.

Yuh en need:



2 cyan *cone flah* (nuh de cose kine, lucka feely!)  
 1/2 cyan *reglie (areeny) flah*  
 1 cyan *ponkin* whey hunnuh bin gratuh rum good  
 1 cyan *swee'putettuh* whey hunnuh bin gratuh rum good  
 Hummum *burruh* hunnuh wan’ but e ha fuh good’n soff fus  
 1 cyan *cow milk*  
 1 hen *aig* whey hunnuh done nack up good  
 1 cyan *brown sugar*  
*Raisin* dem or some kine chap-up fruit  
 1 poon a *nuttn-aig*  
*Soty* um tuh how hunnuh like um

Pit erriting cyusin’ fuh de aig en de milk en de burruh een hunnuh mixin pot en crabble dem all tuggedduh good fashin.

Den hunnuh en tro een de yedduh-ress long wit um en mix erriting tuggedduh good tell e tan lacka brade dough tan befo hunnuh bake um; e pose fuh drap off de poon when hunnuh hole um obuh de bowl. Ef e too tick, tro een lee mo milk.

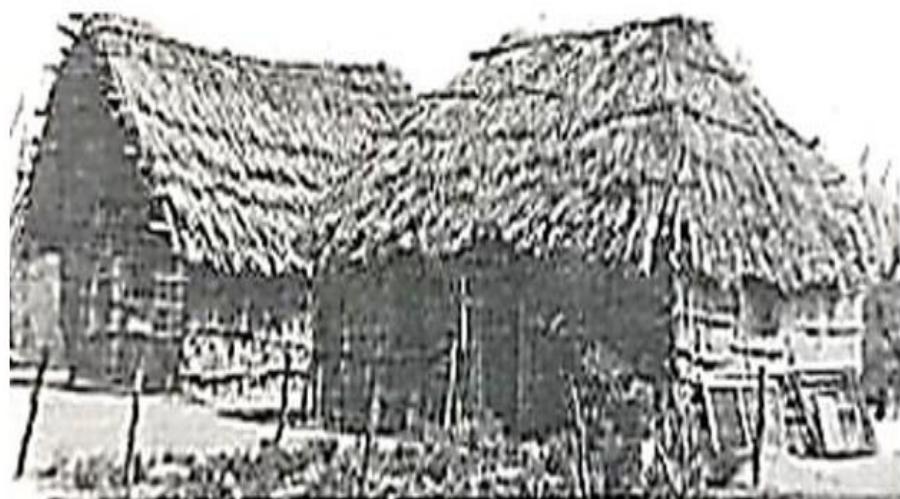
Wrop um een cone shuck same lucka stammle en pit dem 'pon some kina rack obuh one kittle way de worruh duh bile. Leff um pontop a dey fuh one hour. De ole-time way binnuh fuh wrop um een banana leaf or coonteh leaf, so ef hunnuh ha some a dem, e good too.

Ah nuh ha fuh tell hunnuh seh hunnuh nuh fuh eat de shuck dem!



### ***HISTORY***

Dem uly Shiminoli peepil bin bill dem house dem long Las Moras crick obuh tuh de Fote, time dem bin sahb ez scout fuh de Ranger dem jurin de las' part a de nineteen century. De kine a house wey hunnuh duh see yuh, call eeduh *huckle* house or *chink house*; de Istichatteh dem bin bil um befo de buckra dem come yuh. Fuh bil um, hunnuh ha fuh pit fo pose een de groun fuh meck a squoy, den hunnuh fuh pit nuff mo lee pose en branch twicks dem fuh hole up de wall. Fuh meck de fo wall, duh fuh patch tabby all oburrum, en fuh fix de roof, hunnuh ha fuh kibber um wit long grass fuh meck e nuh leh nuh rain git tru. Ef hunnuh know wisseh fuh look, hunnuh en fine one-two lee trace a dem ole huckle house till yet, ya'n dey. De Panish wud duh *jacal*. *Tabby* duh de Siminole own wud fuh *adobe*.



**Ole time huckle house dem**

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 3

By now, you should have an idea of how ASC works. The trick is *NOT* to think of it as a kind of English, but as a different language that has (mostly) English words. You have been substituting ASC words into your English (*nuh, fuh* and *en*), and that is a good way to start. You can try now to leave off the *-s* and the *-ed* endings, and to use present tenses as if they were past tenses.

For example, don't say he or she *runs*, but only he or she *run*. You may do that already in your own informal speech. Don't say he or she *walked* there yesterday, but instead he or she *walk* there yesterday. Of course, you must keep this way of fixing your English (as part of these lessons) separate from how you speak to everyone else. It's very easy to slip into doing this all the time, but it's important to keep the two quite separate.

**It has to be stressed once more:** ASC has *rules*. It has grammar. It is easy to speak it incorrectly, just as you can speak "book English" incorrectly. This is important to remember, because since the beginning, Seminole kids have been criticized in class for not speaking English properly. But that was because they were not speaking English at home, they were speaking another language that had English words but wasn't English.

However, because ASC and English are so close in their vocabularies, it is normal to throw in the English word if you don't know the Seminole one—with new words like "sushi" or "astroturf" you pretty much *have to*. Speakers of *all* the different Creole languages do it all the time.

We're moving slowly towards ASC here, and there will be a lot of repetition. Find someone to chat with in it, in e-mails if necessary. Try writing short pieces in ASC and send them to the group to look at and comment on.

**Let's look some more at verbs (*leh we look pon de va'b dem some mo*)**

ASC verbs don't have endings, as you know. So you will say *Ah wan' de book* ("I want the book(s)") as well as *e wan' de book* ("he/she/it wants the book(s)").

Remember that **e** means ‘she’ and ‘it’, as well as ‘he.’ Remember too, that there is no -s plural in ASC. Both **book** and **book dem** mean “books.”

It’s the same with the past tense: **Drap** by itself for example means “dropped,” not “**drop**.” So **e drap de pan** means “he/she/it dropped the plate(s).” There are several verbs in English that do this already: *today I cut, yesterday I cut, today I put, yesterday I put, today I hit*, and so on. Some more verbs in English that are the same in the present and the past are *beat, bet, burst, cast, cost, fit, forecast, hurt, let, quit, set, shed, shut, slit, wet*.

So how would you make it in the *present* tense—he drops the plate(s)? If it’s something that is happening in the moment – the plates *are falling* from his hands, ASC handles it differently. It uses the word **duh**: **E duh drap de pan** “he is dropping the plate(s) (right now).”

You also use **duh** if something happens on a regular basis, but not necessarily at this very moment:

**E duh drap de pan** would mean either “he’s dropping the plate(s) (right now),” or “he drops the plate(s)” on a regular basis.

**LET’S GET VERBS OUT OF THE WAY (leh we churray dem-deh chuppit va’b!), and deal with their auxiliaries (page 7):**

Hunnuh already know **BIN** and **DUH**.

**Ah drap am** and **Ah bin drap am** “I dropped him/her/it”

**Ah duh drap am** “I’m dropping/usually drop him/her/it.”

Here’s a couple more:

**DONE**

Creole gave this word to the whole of the South, even to buckra-talk. It means that something is *over*. A lot of hunnuh already use it in your everyday English.

**We done cook de cone** “We’ve (finished) cook(ing) the corn.”

You can also say

**De cone done cook**

And even **de cone cook done**.

**NYUS FUH**

We had **nyus fuh** in the previous lesson. It just means “used to.”

**Ah nyus fuh talk Siminole** “I used to speak Seminole.”

**Ah nyus fuh duh talk Siminole** “I used to be speaking Seminole.”

**STUDDY DUH**

**Studdy duh** in ASC, means that you keep on doing something.

**Dembo studdy duh jabbuh 'pon me** “Dembo is constantly nagging at me.”

(**Pon** means *at, on, about . . .* it shows up a lot in ASC).

**DEY 'PON (DUH)**

This sounds more like “**deppun (duh)**” and it means to be engaged in something:

**Mi bredduh deh pon duh hulluh pon e chirren dem** “My brother is busy shouting at his kids.”

**Gi me peace, nuh, hunnuh deh pon fool** “Give me a break, you’re acting the fool.”

The “**nuh**” here is a word that means something like “won’t you?” You can tag it on to all kinds of questions. Another one is “**aintee?/entee?**” (or just “**ent?**”) if you’re expecting a reply.

**Darra gyal deh shonuff pudy, entee?**

**Nuh me bredduh, e nuh pudy, e wan' faybuh me muddenlo.**

“**Faybuh**” means “resemble.” Add it to your wordlist.

Make sure that you know the difference between e.g. “**e studdy duh do um**” and “**e deh pon duh do um:**”

**E studdy duh do um** “He/she/it is busy doing it constantly, but maybe not right now.”

**E deh pon duh do um.** “He/she/it is busy doing it right now.”

### **FUH**

It means “to” before a verb (**fuh chawm** “to chew,” **Ah ready fuh sleep** “I’m ready to sleep”).

It also means “must” (**we fuh seddown** “we must sit down,” **hunnuh fuh go** “you must go”).

### **COMBINING TENSE AND ASPECT AUXILIARIES**

‘Tense’ means *time*: past, present, future. These are **bin** (past) and **en** (future). **En** also has the less-common form **gwen**.

**Ah bin do um** “I did it.”

**Ah en do um** “I will do it.”

‘Aspect’ means *how*. These are **duh** (happening now or routinely) and **done** (finished happening).

**Ah duh do um** “I am doing it” (now, or routinely).

Ex: **Ah duh chry fuh do um, come hep me, nuh** “I am trying to do it, come and help me.”

**Ah duh go duh chuch ebbuh Sunday** “I go to church every Sunday.”

**Ah done do um** “I’ve finished doing it.”

These can be combined and used together:

**A bin duh do um** “I was doing it”

**Ah en duh do um** “I will be doing it.”

**Ah bin done do um** “I had done it” (once)

**Ah bin done duh do um** “I had been doing it (a lot)”

**Ah en done do um** “I will have done it”

**Ah en done duh do um** “I will have finished doing it.”

**HERE ARE ALL OF THE ABOVE SENTENCES WITH NEGATIVE NUH:**

**Repetition, repetition, repetition. Say these aloud, and test each other for what they mean**

***Ah nuh drap am*** “I didn’t drop it/him/her.”

***Ah nuh bin drap am*** “I didn’t drop it/him/her.”

***Ah nuh duh drap am*** “I’m not dropping/usually drop it/him/her.”

***Ah nuh nyus fuh talk Siminole*** “I didn’t use to speak Seminole.”

***Ah nuh nyus fuh duh talk Siminole*** “I didn’t use to be speaking Seminole.”

***Dembo nuh studdy duh jabbuh ‘pon me*** “Dembo is not constantly nagging at me.”

***Mi bredduh nuh deh pon duh hulluh pon e chirren dem*** “My brother is not involved in shouting at his kids.”

***Gi me peace, nuh, hunnuh nuh deh pon fool*** “Give me a break, don’t be acting the fool.”

***Darra gyal deh nuh pudy*** “That girl there isn’t pretty.”

***Nuh, me bredduh, e pudy, e nuh faybuh me muddenlo.*** “No, my brother, she is pretty, she doesn’t look like my mother-in-law” (?)

***E nuh studdy duh do um*** “He/she/it isn’t busy doing it all the time.”

***E nuh deh pon duh do um.*** “He/she/it is busy doing it right now.”

***Ah nuh ready fuh sleep*** “I’m not ready to sleep.”

***we nuh fuh seddown*** “we mustn’t sit down.”

***hunnuh nuh fuh go*** “you must not go.”

***Ah nuh bin do um*** “I didn’t do it.”

***Ah n’en do um*** “I won’t do it.”

***Ah nuh duh do um*** “I’m not doing it.”

***Ah nuh bin duh do um*** “I wasn’t doing it”

***Ah n’en duh do um*** “I won’t be doing it.”

**Ah n'en done do um** “I won’t have done it”

**Ah n'en done duh do um** “I won’t have finished doing it.”

### **NEGATIVE with DONE**

(Only) when **nuh** comes before **done**, they both join as **nubbuh**:

**Ah nubbuh do um** “I never did it.”

**!! /~~Ah nuh done do um~~/ is ungrammatical.**

**We nubbuh cook de cone done** “We haven’t (finished) cook(ing) the corn.”

**De cone nubbuh cook (BUT De cone nuh cook done)**

**Ah nuh bin done do um / Ah nubbuh bin do um** “I hadn’t done it”  
(once)

**Ah nuh bin done duh do um / Ah nubbuh bin duh do um** “I hadn’t been doing it (a lot)”

### **CULTURE**

The Black Seminoles differ from the Gullah-Geechee folk in some respects, because of parting company with them, moving down into Florida and then coming West. Black Seminoles have a much closer relationship with First Nations peoples than do the Gullah-Geechees, and also have a lot of Spanish-American influence. **Suffki** and **frybrade** for example, are Native American, and **puhsolee** is Spanish (Mexican). The **Seminole Stomp** is the First Nations’ own, but gospel singing isn’t.



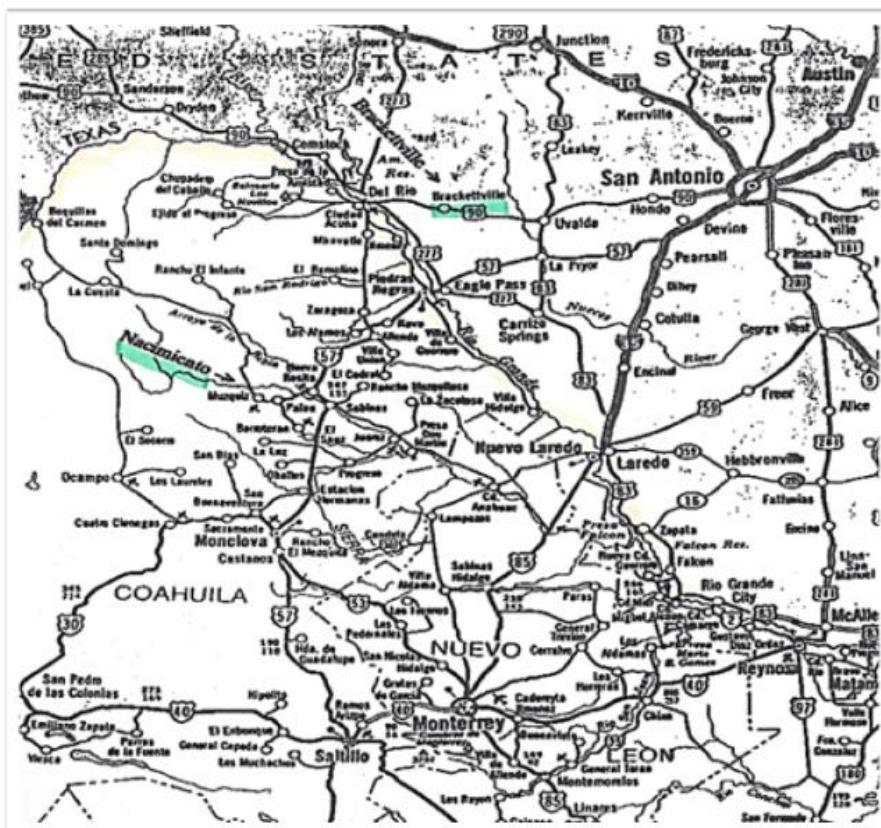
A **metattuh**

One thing that is both African and Native American, is a tree-stump mortar (an ‘**ood maatuh**’ in ASC). This picture is of the one that’s in the community center in Brackett. It was used to pound corn, nuts, rice and so on, for preparing meals. The pestle (the **maatuh tick**) here is two-sided, so that two people can pound it up and down together. The Caddo people in Texas used wooden mortars, but more common was (and is) a flat grindstone

(*metattuh, metattih*, in ASC, from the Nahuatl Indian word *metlatl*) or a stone mortar and pestle (a *molca-hettuh*). Sometimes these weren't separate bowls, but were holes hollowed out of large rocks.



A *molca-hettuh*, and the same hollowed out of a rock



The locations of Brackettville and El Nacimiento de los Negros

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 4

**GRAMMAR:** The words **WHEY** and **SEH**.

**WHEY** ('way') is where you would use 'that' or 'which' or 'who' in English sentences such as

'The fish that I cooked'

ASC **De fish whey Ah cook.**

'The book which I read yesterday was interesting'

ASC **De book whey Ah read yesdee intrestin.**

'That girl who lives in Brackettville'

ASC **Darra gyal whey lib een Brackett.**

Notice that in *all* of these sentences, the **whey** refers to whatever *noun* is in front of it (fish, book, girl).

**SEH** is a word that means 'that,' but it only comes after *verbs*, never nouns. Plus, these all express thoughts or attitudes, such as 'think,' 'know,' 'remember,' 'hear,' 'believe,' '(be) true,' and so on:

**Ah tink seh Siminole soun' nice**

'I think that ASC sounds nice.'

**Ah know seh bumbye dem en dey back home**

'I know they'll be home soon.'

**Ah bin yeddy seh dah buckra duh teef**

'I heard that that buckra is a thief.'

**Ah nuh bleeb seh sperrit deh**

'I don't believe that spirits exist.'

**E nuh true seh Ca'lina duh me chookluh**

'it's not true that Carolina is my sweetheart.'

A couple of notes: Whenever I type **seh** on my computer, it automatically 'corrects' **seh** to 'she.' Watch out for that. Secondly, the sentence **Ah bin yeddy seh dah buckra duh teef** can also mean 'I heard that that buckra is stealing.' You could clarify it by saying

*Ah bin yeddy seh dah buckra duh teef-man* or *dah buckra duh one teef.*

### GRAMMAR: Verbs (again)

In English, sentences such as “something for you to eat,” or “a song for them to sing,” which need a “to” before the verb, do not need it in ASC:

*Sometin fuh hunnuh eat* “Something for you to eat”  
*One song fuh hunnuh sing* “A song for you to sing”

It is also not necessary to use **fu**h after **wan'** (“want”):

**Ah wan' go** “I want to go”

(though **Ah wan' fu**h **go** is also possible).

### HISTORY

As described in the first session, the roots of ASC go way back in time, to the British Isles and the people that came from there by sea.

They came from all over Britain, and gave words from their own dialects to their shipboard speech. Some of those in ASC are **erre**h ‘any,’ **weekaday** ‘weekday,’ **leff** ‘leave,’ **broke** ‘break,’ **loss** ‘lose,’ **enty** ‘indeed,’ **swing** ‘burn off chicken feathers,’ **ooman** ‘woman,’ **yeddy** ‘hear,’ **longuh** ‘with’ all come from the southwest part of England, from which the ocean-going ships sailed. **Kibber** ‘cover,’ **dreen** ‘drain,’ **illy** ‘little’ come from the midlands counties. **Wrench** ‘rinse’ is a Yorkshire word. **Wurrum** ‘worm,’ **gratuh** ‘grate,’ **snoot** ‘snout’ and **bresh** ‘brush’ are northern and Scottish words. Add each new ASC word you see to your list.

Very many ASC words aren’t English words that have been changed, but are dialect words that you will still hear today in different parts of Britain; **gyal** is not “girl” pronounced badly; it’s how the English speakers themselves said it when the Africans first heard the word. Other ASC words that come from English *have* been changed, and this is discussed in Session Eight.

**TEXT****De two tittuh en de poon**

One day one ole granny bin dey whey e sen one e lee gyalchile fuh go duh de ribber fuh wash e dutty pan en poon. Time e come back de gyal realize seh e bin leff de poon behime but e bin too faid fuh say. Eebnin come en dem siddung duh table fuh eat. De ole granny done ready fuh saab up de rice but e cyaan fine e big poon, e nuh see um innywey. E say 'gyal, entee ah bin sen hunnuh fuh go wash we saabin poon? Wisseh e deh? You leff um duh de ribber? You bes go bring um back fo ah whup you *good* fashin!'



De gyal go back duh de ribber but e cyaan fine de poon. E tarrify fuh go home so e des duh siddung nex de ribber duh cry. Bumbye one ole ooman pass by en e see um duh cry. E ax um 'meck hunnuh duh cry, me daughtuh?' De gyal tell um seh e loss one poon whey e bin pose fuh wash en e faid fuh go home bitout um. De ole ooman tell um seh e kin hep um but fuss e fuh crab e dutty foot dem good en clean. De gyal gree.

When e done done fuh clean de ole ooman foot, de ole ooman tell um fuh gullung long de ribber some mo en e 'en meet up wit one nex ole ooman weh e kin hep um. Duh so e do.

When e meet de seckint ole ooman e tell um how de fus ole ooman bin tell um how e could a hep um fuh fine de poon en ef e please could hep um. De ole ooman tell um seh yes e could a hep um, but befo e hep um e fuh cratch de skeeter bite whey dey all ober e back. De gyal cratch um cratch um tell de ooman satisfy den de ooman tell um seh e fuh pass on down de ribber bank tell e meet up long one nex ole lady en darra dey ole lady gwen able hep um fuh sho.

Whin e meet de tud ole ooman e tell um how de seckint ole ooman bin tell um e cud a hep um fuh fine de poon fuh sho en ef e please could hep um. De ole ooman tell um seh yes e shonuff could a hep um, cusin e fus fuh clean off e nasty so laig en pit merisin pon um.

When de gyal bin done clean off all de nasty en de ole ooman satisfy, den de ole ooman ax um dis queshin: "Two aig deddeh, one a dem black, tudder one white. Whush one hunnuh 'en pick?" Di gyal tell um seh e wan' pick de white one. Den de ooman ax um gen seh "one grain a rice, eeder one cup a rice, which one hunnuh 'en pick?" De gyal tell um seh nummuh duh de one grain a rice e wan' pick.

Well awright. De ole lady gi um de aig en de one grain a rice en e tell um e fuh deppon e way. Dasso e do. Soon ez e git a piece fur distant de gyal buss opin de aig fuh see whuh dey eenside um. Dey so, e see one big big house full a all kine a ting, eebin de dyzack same poon whey e bin loss. E *too* glad. So den, e teck de one lone grain a rice en e bile um, en de whole pot come *full* a rice. E care de poon en de pot a rice back home en de ole granny des too please fuh git back e poon en one full pot a rice.

Now, dishuh gyal ha one tittuh whey see seh e tittuh now duh de granny favorite kaze a de rice en ting, en e git bex. E tell e seff seh *im* fuh do des whuh di udder one do, en ef e do dat, dem granny gwen like um sameway too. So when de time come fuh im go wash di plate en de poon duh de ribber, e leff de poon pon de ribber aidge fuh puppus, en when di granny ax um duh wuh meck e nuh care um back wit um, e des say "ah fergit." Same as befo de ole lady say "You bes go bring um back fo ah whup you boontas good!"

De gyal go en e tan up nex de ribber duh bawl en holler tell a ole ooman yeddy um en e come ax um whuh duh ail um. De gyal tell um seh im granny poon done loss en ef e go back bidout um e sholy 'en git a lickin. De ole ooman tell um seh e know wisseh de poon deh, but e fuh crab e dutty foot befo e tell um. De gyal kwinch up e face en tell de ole ooman seh e han dem *clean*, en e na'ab airy tention fuh tech numburry dutty tinky foot. De ooman seh berrewell den. Go on along, mebby sumaddy else 'en hep hunnuh, e n'en be *me*.

E go long some mo duh cry loud fuh leh eribody fuh yeddy um, tell e meet one nex ole lady whey ax um duh wuh meck e duh cry so. E gi um de same tory bout how im poon loss en ef e nuh fine um e granny 'en whup de black off a e boontas when e git back home. De ole ooman tell um seh e could a hep um but fus off e fuh cratch de skeeter bite whuh duh run pizen whuh dey all ober e back. Nudder time agen de gyal nuh gree fuh ease de ole ooman. E tell um e bin fuh *shame* fuh eebin *ax* um fuh pit e clean han puntop e ole cratchup body. E go long some mo.

Den e meet anudder ole ooman en e taat fuh bawl en cry tell de ooman ax um duh wuh meck. E gi um de same tory bout de poon, en de ole lady tell um seh e could a hep um but e fuh fus clean off e nasty so laig en pit merisin pon um. De gyal tell um seh e fuh shame fuh ax um for do dat when him des d' a lee gyal.

So den de ole ooman show um two aig, one a dem white en one a dem black. E ax de gyal wush one e want. De gyal say e wan' de black one kaze e bigger monuh de white one. Den de lady ax am ef e 'ud a take a cup a rice eeder des one grain a rice, en de greedy

big-y'eye gyal say duh de *cup* a rice e want, e n'en take no one lee grain a rice whuh couldn feed eebin a *anch*.

E take de aig en de cup a rice en e go. E nuh tell de ooman "tenky auntie," e dess gullong. Soon ez e git some distant e side fuh bile de rice kaze hungry binnuh ketch um. E bile de pot a rice but stidda e duh cook, de rice bin des bile en bile away tell nuttin bin leff dey. De pot empty. So now de gyal know seh suntin wrong, e bes git back home.

E still nuh ha de poon so fuh leh e granny proud furrum e seh "look yuh granny, a done bring hunnuh one big fine black aig!"

Tanka ('tan lack) de granny bin know bout de black aig, kaze e lock de do en de winduh dem fo e crack um open, en when e crack um open, all kine a sneak en spider en korpcion en ting come out, en chase de gyal en e granny roun de house en kill dem tuh det. Dat bin do fuh de gyal en e granny all two.



William ('Dub') and Ethel Warrior, now sadly departed, with their godchildren Malik and Chloë Hancock, 2006 and 2013

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 5

You now have just about all of the grammar to be able to understand and write ASC properly; from now on, it is mostly words, and texts to read and analyse; just a few more bits of grammar remain:

#### **VERBS (yet again!)**

The ending **-in'**

As well as putting **duh** in front of the verb, some speakers either put an **-in'** on the end of the verb as well, or use this **-in'** form altogether. This is interference from English grammar, but it was not uncommon in Brackett, where English is heard every day (it isn't in the Nacimiento community, but there, there's interference from Spanish). So you could hear any of these:

**Petey duh cratch e haid**

**Petey cratchin' e haid**

**Petey duh cratchin' e haid**

'Petey is scratching his head'

There is some indication that the verb with **-in'** alone shows 'habitual' action (but which is not necessarily happening now), and that **duh** + the verb with **-in'** refers to action going on at this very moment:

**Mayri goin' duh school** 'Mary is going to school' (these days, but is not going at this moment)

**Mayri duh' goin' duh school** 'Mary is going (*i.e.* is on her way) to school' (right now).'

There's not enough data on this difference to be sure, can the Elders clarify?

#### **WOULD, COULD and SHOULD**

Gullah, Jamaican and some other of ASC's sister creoles also have the verbs 'would,' **ud** in ASC and 'could,' **cud** in ASC (the more conservative ones, such as Krio or Sranan don't have these words). Both can be followed by 'have' (**ha** or **'a**):

***Mebbe Otis ud fix da toe-up injin ef hunnuh ax um nice***  
 'Maybe Otis would fix that broken engine if you asked him nicely'

***Ef hunnuh binnuh ten tuh rum befoe, e 'd 'a done fix awready***  
 'If you had been taking care of it before, it would have already been fixed'

***Bu' Ah still cud ax um***  
 'But I could still ask him' (notice the different placement of 'still' and 'ask')

***Hunnuh cud 'a ax um long befoe now***  
 'You could have asked him long before now'

Note that besides there being no 'will' or 'shall' in ASC, there is also no 'should.' Instead, you say ***ha fuh*** if it's something you *must* do,

***Yuh ha fuh git duh de ducktuh right now*** (this ***duh*** means 'to')  
 'You should get to the doctor right now'

But if you're just making a suggestion, you'd say it differently:

***Bes' yuh go see de ducktuh***  
 'It's best that you go and see the doctor'

At the beginning, the point was made that creole languages mostly use separate words to show grammatical relationships, instead of endings. But there are a few exceptions, such as the ***-in***, above. In ASC, there are also ***-uh***, ***-is*** and ***-n***

***-uh*** and ***-is*** are the English '*-er*' and '*-est*' that go on adjectives:

***big, bigguh, biggis*** "big, bigger, biggest"

"Than" is ***nuh***. Sometimes ***moe*** can go before the adjective too:

***Dish-yuh gumbuh bigguh nuh da' one whey dey pon de floe yanduh***

or

***Dish-yuh gumbuh moe bigguh nuh da' one whey dey pon de floe yanduh***

'This drum is bigger than that one that's over there on the floor'

***-n*** is the negative ending on ***ud*** and ***cud***:

*ud, ud'n* 'would, wouldn't'

*cud, cud'n* 'could, couldn't'

But note that *kin* 'can' has its own negative, *kyahn* 'can't'

***Da nasty Maymay kyahn hep eseoff fum duh lahf pon darra poe man***

'That nasty Maymay can't help herself from laughing at that poor man'

Note also *mus' don'* 'must not,' *hunnuh mus' don' go dey* 'you must not go there,' and *mussy* 'must be,' *mussy e bin fuh done leff already* 'it must be that she's already left.'

### **VARIABILITY**

This means that there are various different ways of saying the same thing. Nobody speaks exactly the same way all the time (do you say 'I don't have any' or 'I haven't got any' or 'I ain't got none' or do you use all of them at different times?). Examples of variability in ASC include choosing *duh* + VERB or VERB + *-in'* (above), *hunnuh* or *yuh* when speaking to one person, using older ("deeper") ASC pronunciations sometimes, such as *troway* or older *chooweh* 'spill, waste, throw away,' *Seminole* or *Shiminoleh*, *darra* or *dat* 'that,' *en* or *gwen* 'will.' You can say *duh wisseh e dey* or *wisseh e dey* or *wey e dey* 'where is it' and so on.

**The “deeper” you speak ASC, the easier it is to keep it separate from English.**

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

***Da*** and ***en*** (above) are examples of common abbreviations. ***Duh*** is abbreviated to ***d'*** before or after words starting or ending with a vowel (***wuh d'ail yuh? Hunnuh'd***). ***Si am*** ('saw it') is always ***shem*** (but in Gullah, it's 'shum') and ***gi um*** ('gave it') is always ***gem***. A ***Jooh*** is a Jamaican, part of the ancestor population of the Seminoles. And of course ***Brackitt*** is Brackettville Texas!!

### AFRICAN WORDS IN ASC

There are several words in ASC that come from African languages, but not as many as are found in Gullah-Geechee, suggesting that the Seminoles separated from them and went into Spanish Florida before a major influx of Africans arrived in the eighteenth century. Nor do those in ASC have the various African sounds recorded in Gullah by Lorenzo Dow Turner (1949). Many of the *non*-shared words in Gullah are traceable to languages spoken in the Sierra Leone-Liberia area, such as Mende and Vai.

Over half of those found in ASC share look-alikes with languages in the Congo-Angola region—mainly from KiKongo but also from KiMbundu:

<b><i>Biddy</i></b>	'small chicken'
<b><i>Dembo</i></b>	'a male name'
<b><i>Gembuh</i></b>	'species of bat'
<b><i>Goomba</i></b>	'kind of drum'
<b><i>Kuti</i></b>	'runt (pig)'
<b><i>Ooluh</i></b>	'bedbug'
<b><i>Pinduh</i></b>	'peanut'
<b><i>Pingi</i></b>	'cooking pot'
<b><i>Sassuh</i></b>	'to carve wooden spoons, etc.'
<b><i>Tawwuh</i></b>	'greedy'
<b><i>Teemuh</i></b>	'to dig or hollow out'
<b><i>Tooey</i></b>	'excrement'
<b><i>Tote</i></b>	'carry' (also possibly English)
<b><i>Tuttuh</i><sup>1</sup></b>	'father' (also possibly Spanish)
<b><i>Tuttuh</i><sup>2</sup></b>	'commotion, fuss'
<b><i>Yahn</i></b>	'to tell lies' (also possibly English)
<b><i>Zoondu</i></b>	'a hammer'

From the Guinea Coast languages come

<b><i>Bim</i></b>	'sound of hitting' (Ah bux um <i>bim!</i> ) Temne
<b><i>Boontas</i></b>	'buttocks' (Mandinka)
<b><i>Bubbuh</i></b>	'little boy; brother' (Vai)
<b><i>Bubu</i></b>	'insect' (Mende and Vai)
<b><i>Buckra</i></b>	'white person, non-Seminole' (Igbo and others)
<b><i>Chikkuh-bode</i></b>	'bounce-board' (Mandinka + English)
<b><i>Chookluh</i></b>	'sweetheart' (possibly Fula)
<b><i>Cuffy</i></b>	'a male name' (Twi)
<b><i>Dutteh</i></b>	'dirty' (Twi, but also possibly English)

<b>Feely</b>	‘cornmeal’ (Mende)
<b>Hunnuh</b>	‘you’ (cf. Limba <i>yina</i> , but also other languages)
<b>Jabbuh</b>	‘talk incessantly’ (Mende but also possibly English)
<b>Joog</b>	‘stab’ (Wolof)
<b>Konki</b>	‘a tamal’ (Twi)
<b>Kojo</b>	‘a male name’ (Twi)
<b>Kye!</b>	‘exclamation’ (Wolof)
<b>Mojo</b>	bits and pieces, items for magic’ (possibly Fula)
<b>Nannuh</b>	‘term of address to a woman’ (Temne, also English)
<b>Ninny</b>	‘breasts’ (Mende)
<b>Pome</b>	‘expressing great distance’ ( <i>e dey fah-way pome!</i> ) Temne
<b>Puhn, poon</b>	‘cornmeal pudding’ (Temne)
<b>Swongguh</b>	‘boastful’ (Mende)
<b>Tabby</b>	‘adobe’ (Wolof)
<b>Tittuh</b>	‘little girl; sister’ (Vai)
<b>Waw-mout</b>	‘a big mouth’ (Mende + English)

### *RECIPE*

#### *Swee'Putettuh Greens*

Ah know seh hunnuh duh sholy lub greens. Tidday, hunnuh prably kin go duh de sto fuh buy tunnip, eeduh collud, eeduh mustud greens, but hummuch a hunnuh teeday membuh seh dem ole time peepil binnuh fix de swee'putettuh greens long wit dem turruh kine a greens kaze dem sweet fuh nyam too!



How hunnuh en puppay dem? Ully een de eeuh hunnuh fuh go duh de mahkit fuh buy nuff swee' putettuh. De natchal root. Yams en do too, dem duh sell um fuh peepil fuh buy fuh eat de way dem deh, sameway lucka ash putettuh. Den hunnuh en kyah dem go back home but hunnuh nuh gwen eat um, hunnuh fuh pit um een de groun fuh leh

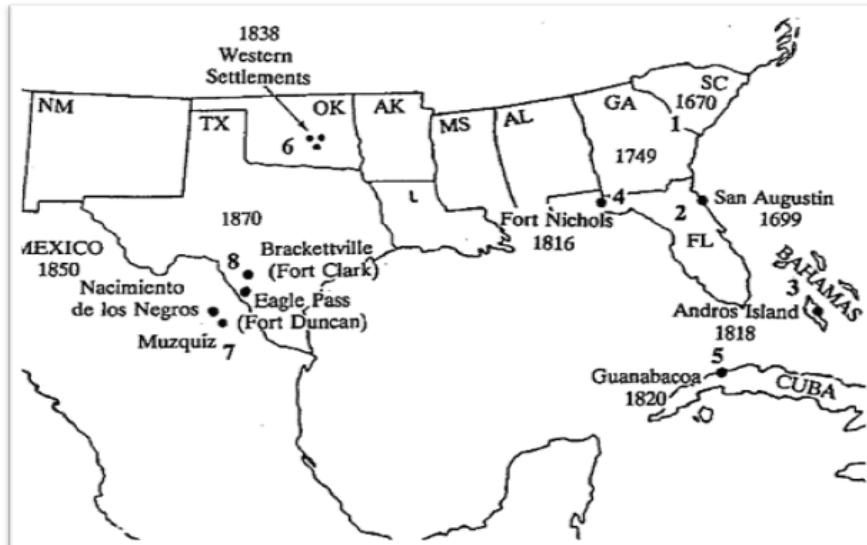
dem grow. Pit nuffuh dutty pontop a dem, gi dem worruh ebbuh day, leh dem grow befo hunnuh begin fuh pull off de leaf.

By de summah time nuff leaf en done come up outta de groun en pred cross de lan, en now hunnuh ha fuh pick um geddah rum een one baskit. E bes fuh leh hunnuh wait lil bit fuh de leaf dem fuh daak, de mo e daak di mo e good fuh how hunnuh fit en trong.

Den, whey de vine dem duh trech cross de ut, duh fuh pick de bes leaf dem (nuh de one whey nyoud en green, teck de one whey mo daakuh). Rinch dem good, pull off de stalk dem en chuway um, leff de leaf paat. Gedduh one fis' a leaf, hole um tight en teck one shaap knife en begin fuh gratuh off de aidge a de leaf fum yuh han inta one bowl a worruh. De piece a leaf whey hunnuh bin done crape off nuh fuh too lilly, but eeduh so, e nuh fuh too big.

Time hunnuh ha de chap-up leaf een one bowl, pit um een one nedduh pot long wit lilly worruh en lily sote en peppuh en pit um pon de fiah leh e cook a while.

Hunnuh “teeday kina peepil” kin like dem udduh ting fuh pit dey, lacka soy sauce an ting, en ef hunnuh wan’ tun tuh buckra, duh hunnuh bidness. De Seminole way nummuh duh fuh pit lilly poke en peppuh en sote dey wit de greens, leh dem bile en cook. Hunnuh yeddy me good nuh – hunnuh nuh fuh eat de *ash* putettuh greens dem; dem en meck hunnuh *sick!*



Dates of Black Seminole movements across the South

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 6

#### GRAMMAR: Review: All the different **duh's**

There are three different **duh's** in ASC. Don't confuse them just because they sound the same; think of English 'to,' 'two' and 'too' (you can't hear the spelling!) but you never mix them up.

#### **Duh** No. 1

This is the word that you put before a verb to show that it's going on now, or goes on from time to time, or can be something you're going to do:

**Ah duh weh me yalluh cyap** can mean

1. "I'm wearing my yellow cap" (right now)
2. "I usually wear my yellow cap" (from time to time)
3. "I'm going to wear my yellow cap"

Remember, if you just said **ah weh me yalluh cyap**, it would mean I *wore* it.

Before a word that starts with a vowel, **duh** gets shortened to **d'**:

**Wuh d' ail hunnuh?** "what's up with you?"

Combined with **en** (future) and **bin** (past), it loses the **d-**:

**Winny ennuh** (= **en** + **duh**) **tup yuh** "Winny's going to be staying here"

**Joe binnuh** (= **bin** + **duh**) **trabble** "Joe was travelling."

#### **Duh** No. 2

This **duh** means **BE** (is, am, are, was, were, &c.):

**Him duh me fren** "he's my friend"

**Him binnuh me fren** "he was my friend"

**Wuh duh him?** "what is it?"

**Duh** by itself means *he/she/it/there is*, or *they/there are*:

**Nummuh duh tree wheel pon me kyah** “there are only three wheels on my car”

**Duh Willie whey do um** “(It was) Willie who did it”

**NOTE:** The future of *BE* is different: it is **en be**, and it is also **be** after **done**:

**Ah en be hunnuh bes fren, Shugah** “I’ll be your best friend, Sugar”

**Skip done be one difren man** “Skip had become a different man”

And remember, you can put **duh** in front of some question words:

**Duh wisseh e dey?** “where is it?”

**Duh wuh-time hunnuh wan’ leff?** “what time do y’all want to leave?”

**Duh who-dat bin pile me name?** ‘Who trashed me?’

**Duh** No. 3

Means ‘to’ or ‘at’:

**Come siddung duh me pon dishyuh binch** “come and sit by me on this bench”

**Dem bin trabble duh Zonuh las’ week** “they travelled to Ozona last week”

**Sairy dey duh di maakit duh buy bittle** “Sarah is at the market buying food”

(Compare this last one with **Sairy dey duh di maakit fuh buy bittle** “Sarah is at the market to buy food”).

**Come**

Besides its regular meaning, **come** can also be used to show aggressiveness on the part of who it relates to. **Hunnuh duh ‘tanup dey come aks me duh warr’ Ah deppon een me own yaad yusso** ‘You [have the nerve to] stand there asking *me* what I’m doing in *my own* yard here!?’ I can be used with itself too: **meck hunnuh bin come come ya des fuh bodduh me?** ‘why did you come up on me

just to bother me?' It also means *become*: **de rice come ready fuh eat**, and (as in English), 'when the time came': **come eebnin** 'by evening time.'

**RECIPE**  
**Suffki en Tolie**

Nubuddy nuh dey whey nuh know bout suffki; e kin eat inny time, e good fuh hunnuh bruckwus, en Chrismas bitout um nuh duh prappah Chrismas. Ob'een Wewoka, hunnuh en fine seh e eebin sell een de groshry sto; Siminole foke kin set dem pingy puntup de stove long wit saabin 'poon, fuh gi who some ebbuh wan' come by fuh set en tell howdy. Some de peepil wan' call um de Seminole "national dish!"



Suffki duh one de kan' ob uh bittle whey come fum de *Injin* paat uh we histry. *Suffki* duh Creek wud; dem call um *osafkeh*, en darra bittle done pred all obuh de Sout so nuh duh we nuh mo whey d'eat um. De Cherokee en de Kwasattek en de Chikasaw en de Choctaw, dem all d'eat um too.



Two Seminole women making *sofke*, a drink made from ground corn.

Fuh meck um, hunnuh fuh teck nuff uh de white kine uh crack co'n, en soak um good obanight een hunnuh pingy soatle de nex day done clean. Mus pit lilly lye een dah worruh fuh meck e tan sourish lillbit. Tidday hunnuh kin go buy de lye fum de sto ("caustic soda" duh de same ting); but befo, stidduh dat, de ole timuh dem bin soak ashish fum de fiah en nyuse da worruh dey. Tikyah hunnuh nuh chuwey da stobote lye pon hunnuh kin; e en bun hunnuh good en leff some powful wep dey.

Nex ting fuh do duh fuh dreen off da worruh en wrench um good en pit some moe clean worruh dey, en bile um fo bout ten good minute obuh fiah. Uttuh e done cool, dreen off de worruh en pit de co'n een one maatuh en grine um good soatle e done mos' tun tuh coosh. Coasish one, mine, doe some peepil duh tawuh fuh de smood kine, en some yedduh peepil 'gin duh fix um moe loosuh yit, en duh teck um lukkuh drink.

Teck darra mash en wam um up en tro black peppuh en uh tip uh sote dey ef hunnuh nuh wan' fuh eat um sweet; ef hunnuh want um sweet, tro lill sinnimint en sugar pon top um, or try um long wit surrup. Da sweet kine tan same luck whuh dem call *tolie*, cep fuh dat, hunnuh fuh taat wit de feely en nuh wit de crack co'n.

## TEXT

### *All a we en dead one day*

Goot eebnin, goot eebnin, how hunnuh, how hunnuh duh do? Ah hope seh hunnuh duh do fine. Ah duh do awright . . . Now ah des' come yuh dis eebnin fuh see how hunnuh duh do en fuh pay me respecks tuh de dead.

Darra duh me frien Silas Hall, en e dead, yeah, e dead, you know e bin fuh dead. Now nuh lahf, nuh lahf, hunnuh en die too, hunnuh en dead one o' dese days. See de man right deh? E duh dead; ef you nuh believe me go obuh deh en joog um, e n'en tannup, e n'en hulluh, e n'en say nuttin.

Hunnuh gwen dead too!

Sistuh Phyllis, duh one ting ah wan' fuh know; duh wisseh you bin git da ole deep baid out deh fum? D'ole baid so deep e jeh' like uh man fuh leddown een e grabe, e ha fuh tan' up fuh tun obuh een um!

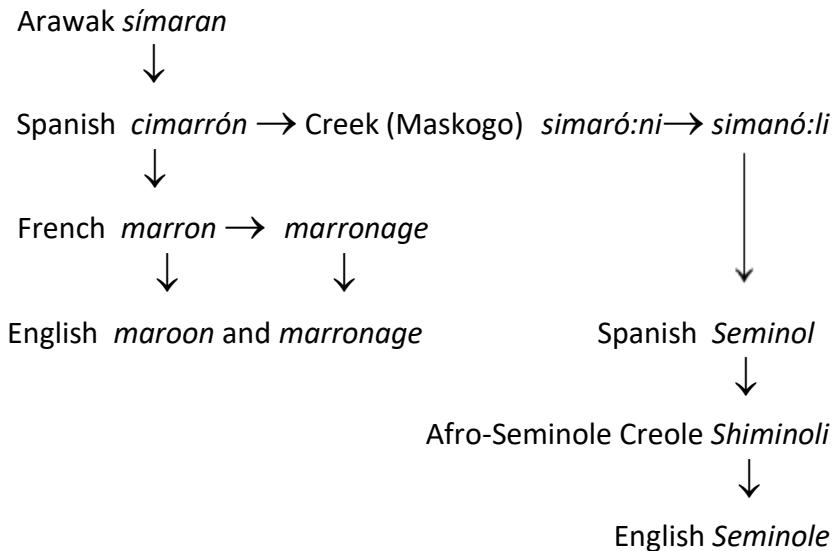
**TEXT*****De jallas king***

One ole king bin yeddy seh dem bin fuh pit one mo nyunger king een e place, en e biggin fuh sorry bout um. E wan' fuh keep e trone, so e call e sojuh dem fuh go kill all de peepil een de nation, fuh nuh leh nubbawdy nuh dey fuh show de nyew king how fuh do e wuck. So de sojuh dem teck dem gun en dem go kill all de peepil. Nubbawdy nuh bin leff fuh show de nyung king how fuh do e job. Atuh dat de fus' king sen fuh de odduh one seh him fuh come duh him house eebnin time, en e fuh bring one fat bohog long wit um. Time de nyung king yeddy dis e sen answer back suh steaduh him fuh go to de fus' king house, him fuh come duh him house, en e en gi um de bohog fuh present.

**HISTORY*****The Word Seminole***

Although the popular association of the word is with the First Nations population in Florida, it was *first* used to refer to the African escapees into that region, and was *only later* applied by the Creeks to the Indian fugitives. In his 1858 book *The Exiles of Florida*, Joshua Giddings described “[t]he constant escape of slaves [who] were by the Creek Indians called ‘Seminole,’ which in their dialect signifies ‘runaways’ . . . and though now it has come to be applied to a certain tribe of Indians, yet it was originally used in reference to these Exiles long before the Seminole Indians had separated from the Creeks.”

Today, Seminoles of Native ancestry apply the word to themselves, and refer to people of African descent as *Estelasti*, a word recognized but not used by Black Seminoles. The word itself is of ultimate Amerindian origin, and has generally been supposed to derive from a Native American word *cima* meaning “a type of wild grass,” but more recently another etymology in the Arawak word *símaran* meaning “bow and arrow” has been proposed by José Arrom (1986). The Indians themselves pronounced *cimarrón* as *cimalon* or *cimanol*, transposing the “m” and the “l,” hence the name *Seminole*—pronounced [sími'no:l] by most people today, but in the more conservative creole of the oldest speakers, pronounced [sími'no:lɪ].



### FIRST NATION (American Indian) WORDS IN ASC

These are mainly from Mascogo (Creek), or from Nahuatl via Spanish—in which case, they count as adoptions from Spanish rather than directly from Nahuatl. It has been said that there are words from Biloxi (**Bilooksi** in ASC) but none have so far been identified. Apart from the names *Seminole* and *Mascogo* (Creek *maskoki*) the best-known Native American words are *suffki*, from Creek *osafke*, then *stamal* ‘ground corn,’ from Nahuatl *nixtamal*, though possibly via Spanish. ASC **coonteh** is a plant from which a kind of flour is made, in Creek *kuntē* ‘arrowroot.’ **Ussy** is **bluck jrink** ‘black drink,’ described below, from Creek *vsse* ‘(a certain) drink.’ Other ‘people’ words in ASC from Creek are *Istichatti* ‘native American’ and *Istilachi* ‘African American.’

In Brackett in 1976 there were people who remembered words and phrases but were not able to say from which languages, other than ‘Indian,’ they came from. They included *kwah* and *kwahee* (greetings), *keh-waa-nih-ki-no-ke-pako-ko* (‘what have you done today?’), *ko-ka-yenah* (‘I worked today’) and *to-no-ko-ke-tekattoh* (meaning unknown).

Remember that in Creek spelling, the letter **v** sounds like the ‘uh’ in ‘cup.’ Sources on the Native American languages relative to ASC and listed in the bibliography (page 111), and include Arrom,

1986, Dorsey, & Swanton, 1912, Haas, 1940, Harper, 2010, Innes & Tilkens, 2004, Loughbridge, 1937, Loughbridge & Hodge, *ca.* 1850, Martin & Mauldin, 2000, Robertson & Winslett, 1963 and, Robertson, W.S. & David Winslett, 1972.

## CULTURE

### *Bluck Jrink*

The Black Seminoles had a ceremonial drink inherited from the Creeks, although it was (and is) found amongst several other First Nations besides, both in the American southeast and in northern Mexico. It is called *bluck jrink* or *assy* in ASC, 'assy' being the first part of Osceola's name, which means 'drink singer;' singing was part of the Creeks' *assy* ceremony, which was only performed by men.



A yaupon tree and its berries

It is prepared by gathering and roasting the red berries of the Yaupon tree, a kind of holly, and boiling them down in water which becomes thicker and dark brown and somewhat bitter. Other ingredients such as the sap of pokeweed are added to make the drinker vomit—probably because *assy*'s extremely high caffeine content would otherwise be harmful if it stayed in the body. But you can buy "yaupon tea" in health food stores. A recipe for pokeweed is on page 67.



Folks in Del Rio in 1934

L-R: Mr. Todd, Mary Warrior, Mr. Todd's sister Josie, Mrs. Cubert Young, John Ward's daughter Elsie Taylor, Johanna July (a horse breaker) and Mrs. Patton, a teacher; sitting are Mrs. McKee, Addie Remo and another Mrs. Patton (?), also a teacher. Photo courtesy of Dr. Sarah Johnson.

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 7

#### WORDS FROM SPANISH (some are ultimately from Amerindian languages)

Because ASC has been spoken in a Spanish language environment since its separation from Gullah-Geechee—in Florida, Mexico and Texas—it is not surprising that a considerable number of words from that language have become a part of it. It's an open-ended list, because, as with English words, new words from Spanish can be picked up at any time. Seminoles in Mexico all speak Spanish, though in Texas the pronunciation of Spanish words in ASC does not as a rule match closely that of native Spanish speakers, and there are instances of shifts of meaning, thus ASC *treego* means “rice,” but “wheat” in Spanish.

<b><i>Banjuh</i></b>	‘wash’ (Sp. <i>baño</i> )
<b><i>Beeoleen</i></b>	‘violin’ (Sp. <i>violín</i> )
<b><i>Calpinteruh</i></b>	‘woodpecker’ (Sp. <i>picamaderos</i> ; a <i>carpintero</i> is a specific species)
<b><i>Choreesuh</i></b>	‘sausage type’ (Sp. <i>chorizo</i> )
<b><i>Cuhmeenus</i></b>	‘cumin’ (Sp. <i>comino</i> )
<b><i>Areeny</i></b>	‘wheat flour’ (Sp. <i>harina</i> )
<b><i>Hallapenya</i></b>	‘pepper species’ (Sp. <i>jalapeño</i> )
<b><i>Kwuhuh</i></b>	‘to solidify cheese, in cheese-making’ (Sp. <i>cuajada</i> ‘the separation of curds from whey’)
<b><i>Manuity</i></b>	‘manure’ (probably English, but cf. Spanish <i>mantillo</i> ‘dung’)
<b><i>Muhrany</i></b>	‘reddish-complexioned’ (Sp. <i>moreno</i> )
<b><i>Manooduh</i></b>	‘cooked tripe’ (Sp. <i>menudo</i> )
<b><i>Mutatteh</i></b>	‘grindstone’ (Sp. <i>metate</i> )
<b><i>Mawseeuyuh</i></b>	‘blood and cereal pudding’ (Sp. <i>morcilla</i> ‘black pudding’)
<b><i>Shiminoli</i></b>	‘Seminole’ (Sp. <i>cimarrón</i> )
<b><i>Stummal</i></b>	‘tamal’ (Sp. <i>tamal</i> from Nahuatl)
<b><i>Puhsoly</i></b>	‘a corn and meat stew’ (Sp. <i>pozole</i> )
<b><i>Poleyo</i></b>	‘a (mint?) drink’ (cf. Spanish <i>poleo</i> ‘mint shrub species, pennyroyal’)
<b><i>Puhnaariyuh</i></b>	‘medicinal drink’ (said to be Spanish, but unidentified in that language)

**Soakateh** ‘mud’ (said to be Spanish, but unidentified in that language)

## RECIPE

### *Tettuh pu'n*

Fuh de tettuh pu'n, hunnuh 'n haffuh teck:

*Swee'putettuh, eeduh yams,  
bout tree poun. Kin um en  
gratuh rum good.  
Hin aig, two a dem  
Comino, des' one lilly poon  
Bynilluh, one lilly poon  
Sote, one lilly poon  
Burruh, quat' cup  
Brown sugar or molass quat' cup  
Shoatnin hahf cup*



Erritin fuh go een hunnuh pingi, all nack up tuggedduh.

Git de oavin good'n hot, 350 degreee.

Wice e duh hot, teck one bakin pan en greazy um good all inside, den po de battle all inside dey but nuh kibbu rum. Pit um een de oavin fuh bout hahf a ouah, tess um wit knife de way hunnuh know how fuh do, en ef e done ready, teck out de pan, leh e cool en shay um long wit hunnuh frien dem.

## TEXT

### ***HOW SKIP DONE LOS' 'E SOUL TUH DE DEBBIL CAZE A ONE OOMAN***

Fum de fus' time dat de 'ooman name Fibba bin come fuh lib een de house whuh dey cross de skreet kittacawnda tuh 'e own, Skip bin des duh hanker aatuh rum baaad. Hunnuh know how 'e stan wen a nyoung man duh lib da' bachelor life en 'e duh feel 'e sap duh rise, well duh da feelin dey whuh duh moob Skip, ontil 'e cyan do nuttn mo' 'kyusin fuh tink bout Fibba. Night en day, nummuuh duh Fibba whey deppon 'e mine. All day, 'e des duh seddown 'long 'e winda duh spy 'pon de house cross de way, een de hope fuh see Fibba come outn 'e do' so 'e could ketch a lee look at um.

Fuh de whole night dusso 'e duh do, so till 'e plum wo' out, but eebn doe a bade bin deddeh fuh 'e leddown, still 'e couldn scacey ketch no sleep. 'E min' bin jes' duh fassn 'pon Fibba.

De nex mornin, 'e git outta 'e bade en go seddown 'gen duh de winda fuh try ketch a look 'pon de 'ooman.

Hunnuh haffuh aks, duh wuh meck Skip nuh go him one fuh talk tuh Fibba? Well, dishyuh Fibba bin get 'im own man, a cyarpinter whuh name Huckless, some kin' ob a big *oagly* dude weh nuh faid a no one, weh could look anyburry straight een de yie en trettn um fuh 'e eebm *look* 'pon Fibba outa de co'ner a him yie.

Dissiyuh Huckless duh one giant, en duh 'e bad repitation whuh meck Skip skade fuh call um out. Fibba bin tell all 'e frien' dem seh "eebn do' me man duh one nasty man, ah know wa' side a me brade git de butter. Enty duh Huck whey buil' de house whey ah lib?"Ah nuh wan' fuh tell hunnuh seh Fibba nuh eber notus seh-seh Skip want um, en ah nuh wan' fuh say 'e wudn go cross de road tuh Skip house ef 'e bin eber git de chance; but 'e nuh able fuhggit seh 'e man too jallous, s'mburry whuh wudn wait two secon' befoe 'e 'ud teck out 'e cyarpintuh tool dem fuh hu't inny-one wheh daze look 'pon 'im ooman. 'E eebn tell Fibba 'e seff seh 'e wuda kill um ef 'e ebber tink bout 'e gwen cross ober de treet. Disshyuh Huckless nuh lub noburry een de roun worl 'cyusin fuh Fibba, en 'e nuh lub fuh do nuttn 'tall 'gin 'sep fuh buil' house.

Well den, Skip nudduh coward, but same time so 'e nuh chupit needer. 'Pon dis paticla day weh 'e binnuh seddown tuh 'e winda duh peek tru de curtain, 'e see Fibba befoe 'e house duh mine 'e lee gyaadn. 'E look *too* fine een 'e tight dress wen 'e ben ober fuh ten' tuh 'e flower, ontill Skip kudn look 'pon um no mo bidout 'e los 'e mine. Whuh fuh do? 'E studdy duh watch lucka dis ontel 'e des haffuh holler "Wow! Ah ready fuh sell me *soul* tuh de debble ef 'e kud gimme eebm a half-hour me en Fibba des we two togedder!"No soon 'e done say dis 'e yddy *KAPANG!!* en de flo bruck open en smoke bin dey ebbuhway, en Skip 'tan dey shock tuh det. As 'e tun 'e hade suh, who dat 'e see but Sadant! Duh de debble 'eseff whuh duh 'tanup befo rum een 'e room.

Skip holler "duh whuh hunnuh duh do een me house yuh so? Do gullung fum yuh, ah nuh wan' nuttn fuh do long hunnuh, me duh one clean *Christian* man!" Sadant tell um sey "duh joke hunnuh duh joke, enneh? Ah n'en des' yddy hunnuh duh bague me fuh

change hunnuh soul fuh ah gi' hunnuh lee time fuh spen long Fibba?"

Skip skade fuh true. E mos paralick fum skaid kezz e done begin fuh see whuh kine a trouble 'e deppon en 'e tell de debble 'gin seh "Hunnuh duh one lyin liar! Ah nebba say nuttn lucka dat!" But de debble des look 'pon po Skip en 'e gie um answer seh "Leh me tell hunnuh one natchal ting: Ah *nebber* duh lie."

Skip den tell um "But nummuh duh *play* whuh ah binnuh *play*" en de debble tell um 'gin seh "En le' me tell hunnuh one mo ting agin: me, ah nebber duh *play* needer!!"

Den Skip begin fuh cry. "Me mammaw bin raise me good, 'e teach me fuh respec God, but see de trouble weh duh ail me now!"

De debble des look 'pon Skip. 'E tell um sey "Ah done ketch *nuffa* people same way lucka hunnuh; hunnuh yuman bein', hunnuh *weak!*" Den 'e suck 'e teet en 'e say "Ah done too weary fuh wase time long wit hunnuh; des go on en gi' me hunnuh soul right now."

Skip ready fuh die fuh 'e dat giddish. 'E binnuh 'tanup een de cawnda duh shake lucka leaf, caze Sadant bin lif' up a cyatta-nine-tail whip weh 'e crack smaatly, *wap!* En ah wan' fuh le' hunnuh know, disshyuh whip, dem nuh make out a string, dem bin make um out a sneak! En de nine sneak dem bina twis en tun ready fuh bite po Skip.

Da' duh de time wen Skip 'cide fuh leh de debble do anytin whuh 'e wan'. 'E tell um say "Okay Sadant, ah 'en gi' hunnuh me soul, 'cep how ah 'en know seh hunnuh gwen keep hunnuh own part a de bargain?" Scacely 'e say dat, 'e yeddy *konkonkong* 'pon de doe. Sadant say "Go look who dat duh 'tan up duh hunnuh doe."

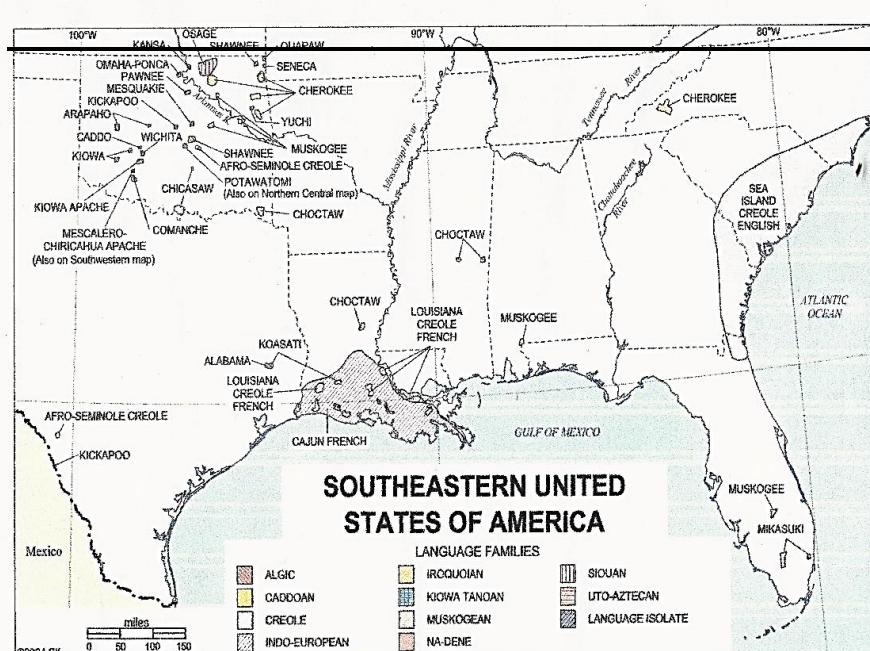
Duh Fibba! De gyal look 'pon Skip, 'e smile one sweet smile 'pon um, 'e meck 'e body so, en 'e aks um seh "Brer Skip, hunnuh kin do me one ting? Hunnuh cud come ober duh me own house, fuh leh we spen' lee time togedder des we two?"

No sooner de gyal lef, Sadant look 'pon Skip en tell um fuh 'e haffuh liddown cross 'e cheer fuh le' 'e flog um. As Skip meck so, de debble tell um "Once ah 'en done flog hunnuh t'ree time, da tud time, hunnuh soul 'en blonk tuh me, en hunnuh gwine git erriting whuh hunnuh want, 'cludin da fine Sis Fibba ober yonder."

Now Skip duh one happy man. 'E tell de debble seh  
"Hunnuh nuh yeddy wen 'e bin aks me fuh go duh 'e house, fuh leh  
we spen' a half-hour togedder? Meck hunnuh duh wase time??  
Flog me nuh, me nuh wan' fuh wase time 'pon talk!"

De debble say "Alright. But wen ah duh flog hunnuh, *hunnuh nuh fuh call out nerreh holy name*; do dat, en erriting gwen stop en be same lucka how 'e bin dey befo." Skip say yeh, 'e gree to dat. Den Sadant hice up 'e whip, en gi' Skip one *heby* lash. Aie! 'E feel tuh Skip luck erreh snake bina bite um all tuh once. "E holler "Ow! Sunnamabitch! Sadant lash um 'gin good fashin, an Skip holler "Damn!!" But de tud lash whey Sadant bin lash um, Skip kudn hep 'e sef en 'e holler "Jesus, Mary en Joseph!!"

All tuh once Sadant done gone. Skip 'tan up, 'e look all around um, en 'e see seh di flo nuh broke, nuh smoke nuh bin dey ebbawhey, 'e stan lucka de debble nuh eebm bin deddeh. Since da time, Skip done be one difren man. 'E nuh wan' fuh talk tuh nombarry no mo, 'e bin des duh trapes up en down de 'treet lucka ghos. But eebm errabody f'aid fuh dey close turrum, de gyal Fibba bin still want um, caze a de fix whey de debble bin fix um. 'E tell one a 'e frien dem seh one day wen Hukless nuh bin dey een town, 'e call Skip fuh come spen' lee time turrum, but Skip bin done turn tuh sometin lucka dead pussin, 'e nuh say one word, 'e nuh do nuttn. En from da day deh, erriting done done twix Fibba en Skip.



## Locations of the various southern First Nations peoples

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 8

#### SOUND CHANGES

You will notice that a lot of words in ASC have a B sound where in English it is a V (**bleeb** ‘believe,’ **grabe** ‘grave’ **nubbuh** ‘never’ and so on). This reflects the (mostly West) African languages of the ancestors, who were still learning Creole—few of which include the V sound, and B came closest. Think about the thousands of French words that have become part of English, but they don’t keep the original French R sound because English doesn’t have it; the English R sound substitutes instead.

Some African languages (such as Temne) only allow words to contain a certain number of syllables, which may be reflected in ASC’s syllable loss in such words as **’pose** ‘suppose,’ **gin** ‘again,’ **tettuh** ‘potato,’ **bleeze** ‘obliged’ and so on.

Another characteristic of ASC is that it loses an S from the original English words that begin with ST- or SK- or SP- (“stand,” ‘scrape,’ ‘spoon’ for example—ASC **tan**, **crape**, **poon**). This is also because such combinations of sounds are barely found in African languages. A similar situation is found in Spanish, which has the rule that two sounds together cannot occur in the same syllable. To handle that, it divides them into two syllables, by putting an E- in front: *escuela* ‘school,’ *España* ‘Spain,’ etc., and Spanish speakers will do this when speaking English too: “Espanish,” “espoon,” “estand.” Because speakers are aware of this feature in ASC, they sometimes “overcorrect” and put an initial S- on the word that never had it: **squeshun** ‘question,’ **spensil** ‘pencil,’ **strance** ‘trance.’

As pointed out earlier on page 25, many of the ASC words that don’t match the pronunciation of their “book English” equivalents are in fact regional British dialect words, unchanged.

**RECIPE**  
**Frybrade**

Disshuh duh sometin else gen whey de Istichatti gi we. Fuh fix um, hunnuh en need:

*White areeny flouah, fo cup*  
*Sote, two lilly poon*  
*Sugar, one reglah poon*  
*Beckin powdah, one reglah poon*  
*Shoatnin, one reglah poon*  
*Worruh, two cup*  
*Ile, two cup*



Po de ile een hunnuh pan, bout deep ez tree inch. Set um pon de fiah fuh hot.

Wice e duh hot, crabble up de flouah en de sote en de sugar en de beckin powdah togedduh, den whin dem done mix good fashin, steer een de shoatnin en de worruh en mash ebbing soatle e done tun duh dough. De dough fuh sahf, hunnuh fuh able queeze one chonk uh rum wit hunnuh two han' tell e come flat en roun—bout two tree inch cross de top en hahf uh inch tick. Dem duh hunnuh lee brade dough dem, dem wan' fabuh ro biscuit. Leff dem duh one side.

Tess de ile fuh see ef e done git good'n hot dishya way: chuway one lilly piece de dough eentuh rum. En ef e begin fry one time, de ile ready. G'on en pit one hunnuh lee brade een de ile, e fuh begin fuh tun brown en rise up een de ile. Time e rise up pon top de ile, tunobuh rum and fry e udduh side soatle e brown too. Teck um out de pan en set um pontop nyuse-paper fuh leh de estry ile dreen out uh rum. Pit de nex lee shape uh brade dough eentuh de ile, en do de same ting gen. Some peepil lack fuh pit milk mona worrah een dem dough.

## TEXT

***WHEN HUNNUH YIE SEE SUMP'M HUNNUH FUH SHET HUNNUH  
MOUT: DE TALKIN' SKIFFY (VERSION 1)***

One fambly bin dey whey ha' one gyal chile whey name Nancy. Dem nyuse fuh call um Nannuh. De gyal bin des too pud; hunnuh bin fuh see de heer pon e hade, long en black, en e teet dem white luckah snow en e nose small en pinty! De whole a im face bin fine to *dat*.

All de man dem een da place bin hoan fuh married darra gyal fuh true: hunter, lyer, butcherman, doctor, bidnesman, all kine a man bin want hab um.

One a dem man, de bidnesman, bin able fuh coat di gyal en married um en dasso e do. Dem all two bin lib togedder fuh long.

Now, een dishyuh town whey dem lib, one nex lil boy bin lib dey too. Nyoung boy whey still binnuh go school. Dishyuh bubbuh bin fine same lack Nancy fine. But eebin de gyal hab eriting wuh e need, erreh time e see dis fine nyoung boy duh swonguh pon de skreet e lub um en e wan' fuh dey nex turrum.

Des so ah bin tell hunnuh, Nancy man duh bidnesman, en kaze a dat e done use fuh trabble fa way fuh e wuck en leff e wife lone duh house. De boy know dis en e nyuse fuh teck e chance fuh sneak ober tuh Nancy house fuh spen time turrum. Dem all two begin fuh *study* kerryon togedder inny chance dem get.

De hunter man en de butcher binnuh frien da time befo Nancy cide e nuh want eeder one a dem. Dem still duh frien en when de hunter man see seh de nyoung boy binnuh spen time tuh de bidnesman wife e jallous, en e tell de butcher en dem each-anurruh meck plan how fuh deal wit um. So de butcher man go tuh de bidnesman house when e bin dey home fuh sell um some meat. While dem binnuh tanup tuh de doe duh talk, de butcher mention seh e could see de boy duh go bizit e wife any time when de man nuh dey dey. De man ax um "fuh true?"

E tell um "yes, duh true."

De man say "ef ah know seh duh true fuh true, ah en gi hunnuh five hunda dollah, but ef duh lie, ah en *daid* hunnuh."

De butcher man say sho duh true, e n'en need fuh daid um.

One day de bidnesman say e haffuh leff fuh go do e bidness duh some fa way town, en e aks Nancy fuh put lee nyah-nyam togedduh fuh e care wit um. Nancy go take one fish, e pack de hade en de tail fuh e man but e keep de middle paat tuh one side. Im

man say "you bleeze fuh care me go tuh de station fuh sen me pon de road" so dem leff togedder en when dem reach dey, den de man tell e ooman goodbye. E make lack e go een de station but e des go out anodder doe wisseh de butcher man binnuh wait furrum wit e cah. E cah'm back tuh de house quick en de man go een en hide up under de roof. Nancy nuh bin go home direc' kezzwhy e bin wan' stop tuh e chookleh house fus fuh tell um seh im man done leff en e fuh come turrum dat eebnin.

Da eebin de boy banyuh good en e go ober tuh Nancy house. Nancy leh e come eenside en e shet de doe behine um. Den e go tuh e man closet en teck out one e man bes shut, e ga'm tuh de boy fuh e wear. Den e play one record pon de victrola en e fix um one drink a polioti, e opin up one peach quat furrum, e gi um tettuh-poon en tolle, en e cook de fish furrum whey e bin leff tuh one side. Den dem go en lay down pon de bade duh chooneh.

Eenjurin de whole time dishyuh binnuh go awn, de man des bin dey upstaze duh yeddy de whole ting. E bex. Nancy en de boy do dem bidness, de man see de whole ting. E haaky whey Nancy tell de boy seh "duh de way how you kin lub me good, duh kezz a dat ah lub you. Me own man nuh able fuh satisfy me."

De boy 'taat fuh tire, Nancy tell um fuh drink mo gin fuh gi um mo trenk fuh do de bidness, e eebin tell um seh e en gi um hunda dolla fuh keep on duh chooneh wit um one time mo. De boy say "all right."

Den de boy say e haffuh leebe befoe dem lock de doe duh e own house, eeder dem en leff um outside. E teck off de man shut en gi Nancy, en Nancy chook um onneet de baid. All dis time, de man dey up dey, e nabber yeddy sissah nasteh ting een e life.

De boy go banyuh gen, pit on e close, Nannah ga'm de hunda dolla en tell um seh e en cah'm go paat-way home.

De time de gyal nuh bin dey dey de man come down fum whey e binnuh hide, e go out a de house. Nancy come home, e go leddown pon e baid en drap tuh sleep. Come two o'clock, e yeddy s'mbawdy duh nack pon de doe.

"Who-da'?"

"Duh me."

"Who-da' duh me?"

"Gyal hunnuh nuh know hunnuh man own woice? Duh me. Ah done come back home."

Nancy aks um "wha' happen?"

Im man tell um seh de train whey e bin fuh teck bin done leff bitout um, so e bin haffuh come back home. E tell Nannuh fuh go cook sump'm fuh e eat kezz e belly duh huller.

Time e done eat e fill, e tell de gyal seh, count uh e kin dey away summuch, dem nabber ha nuff time fuh eachanoder, so do, leh dem ketch lil bidness now. But Nancy done fuh tire, e nuh ha nuh trenk fuh do nutt'n no mo. E tell um "me belly duh hut me, ah nuh able."

E man bex. "Eh-eh gyal, wha' d'ail you? you nuh ha nuh feelin fuh me, dis fo mont' whey we nuh teck keer a bidness you wan' deny me now? Mussy you duh hide sump'm."

Nancy feel seh e boun fuh do sump'm so e begin fuh teck aff e close. As e tan up dey staat nekkity befoe e man, de man pint pon e skiffy, e say "Nancy, you know seh da ting kin *talk*." E cack one e yaze en fawm seh e kin yeddy whey de skiffy kin talk turrum. E tell e wife:

"Nannuh, dis ting duh complain bout you, seh you bin try fuh ceeb me. You tink seh duh lie? E tell me seh dis eebnin one bubbuh bin come yah . . . wha? Wha' time de boy bin leff? . . . by lebb'm o'clock? Oh? De boy say e bin fuh leff kezz dem muss lock de doe pon um duh e own house? . . . en wha' de boy do when e bin dey yah? E drink polioti? E play me record dem? E eat one quat a peach? E gi um tettuh-poon, e gi um tolie? Oh? En Nancy bin gi um one a me shut fuh weer? . . . oh, hunnuh duh tell me seh de shut dey onneet de baid? Le' ah see. Hm! Look, duh dey e dey! Gyal, dishuh ting sho duh complain bout you. Yeddy? E wan' tell me mo: Oh, me ooman gi im hunda dalla? Wha' meck!? E bin wan' gi um all canabba ting fuh meck e glad, kezz me, ah nuh able satisfy um? Choh!"

De man gidup, e tun e back pon de gyal en e go tuh de nex room. E done fuh bex.

Now Nancy bex pon e skiffy kezz e tink seh duh e skiffy whey done pit um een disshuh chrubble. So e go een de washroom en teck one tick en e begin fuh flamm de ting good fashin, e wale pon um en e tell um seh "You! You skiffy, yeddy me good; *when hunnuh yie see sump'm, hunnuh fuh shet hunnuh mout!* E bin des wan' fuh daid. But e nuh daid, en so e go leddown tuh e man fuh chry fuh fren um up.

De nex day, de man go bout e bidniss same lucka ebry day, e tan lack e done forget bout um. But Nannuh still nuh satisfy. E go fine one cunja man en e tell um all wha' happen. De cunja man tell um seh "s'mbawdy bin tell on hunnuh, e nuh bin duh hunnuh 'ting' whey tell hunnuh man dat."

De gyal say "Hm." E say "Cunja man, ah wan' hunnuh fuh fix da' pussin, en befo e daid ah wan' fuh know who dat e be."

De cunja man say all right. Soon de fix ketch de butcher, en befo e daid e confess, seh "yes, duh bin me whey tell e man bout de chooklah." Den e daid.

Een dem time befo, ef duh cunja meck pussin daid dem nubbuu binnuh bury darra pussin close tuh peepil house, dem muss cah'm go een de bush fuh bair' um.

All right. Some time pass, en one day de hunter man bin deppon duh hunt een de bresh. Nuh forget seh duh im whey bin tell de butcher bout de nyong boy een de fuss place.

Wice e bin dey een de bresh e yeddy s'mbawdy duh call um, seh "Howdy, me good frien'."

E tun en look behine but e nuh see nutt'n cusin fuh one haid bone pon one stomp. E say "Duh who da' duh talk to me?"

De haid bone tell um seh "duh me."

De hunter man aks um "wha' hunnuh duh do yah so?" en de haid bone gi um answer, seh "duh me mout' wha' bring me come yuh. Ah wan' tell hunnuh *when hunnuh yie see sump'm, hunnuh fuh shet hunnuh mout!*"

Den de hunter man scaid. E taat fuh run, e run soatle e reach de chief a de town. E tell um seh "Chief, hunnuh n'en bleebe wha' ah bin dess see." E say "Chief, ah see one haid bone whuh kin talk!!"

De Chief suck e teet. E say "Hunnuh nuh see seh ah busy? Meck hunnuh kin come yuh duh talk chupit talk bout haid bone whey kin talk? Go 'long fum yuh, leff me do!" But de hunter keep on duh bodder de Chief bout how e bin see one haid bone whey kin talk, en how e bin yeddy um duh talk en tell um howdy, so till de Chief say "All right. Ah en gi hunnuh two sojer fuh hep hunnuh care da haid bone come back wit hunnuh. But ef nummuu duh nonsen' whuh hunnuh duh tell me, ah en kill hunnuh!"

De hunter tell um seh "Chief, gi me *ten sojer!*"

Dem go back tuh wishpat de haid bone dey. E graff um, e tell um "Bredder Haid Bone, we done come fuh tell you howdy."

De haid bone nuh say *nutt'n*.

De hunter man skiddish. E queeze de haid bone haad en aks um gen seh "Head Bone, *howdy!*" Nerreh wud.

Now e face kibbuu wit sweat. E tell de sojer dem seh "Ah sway dis gwen talk. Le' we cah'm go back tuh de Chief house." Dem all go.

Dem reach tuh de Chief en dem show um de haid bone. De Chief say "dissuh duh de haid bone whuh pose fuh talk?" De hunter say "Yes Sah."

Chief say "Berrewell le' ah yeddy um duh talk. Ah en gi hunnuh fo hour fuh meck e talk. Ef e nuh talk by dat, ah en daid hunnuh."

De hunter scaid tuh det. E kiss pon de haid bone; e lub up pon de haid bone. E baig de haid bone, de haid bone still nuh say one nattle wud.

De Chief come back e aks um "You done meck e talk?" De man say "No Sah." De Chief tell de hunter seh e en gi um nummuh two mo hour, dasall, en e tell e sojer dem ef di hunter nuh bin foce um fuh talk by dat, dem fuh git ready fuh shoot um.

De fus hour pass, de man begin fuh cry. E sen fuh e wife, de ooman come but e kud'n hep um tall.

Den de time come en dem shoot de hunter man. En des' de man die, erribawdy yerry de haid bone begin fuh talk. E say *when hunnuh yie see sump'm, hunnuh fuh shet hunnuh mout!*"

Da duh me tory, wisseh duh hunnuh own?

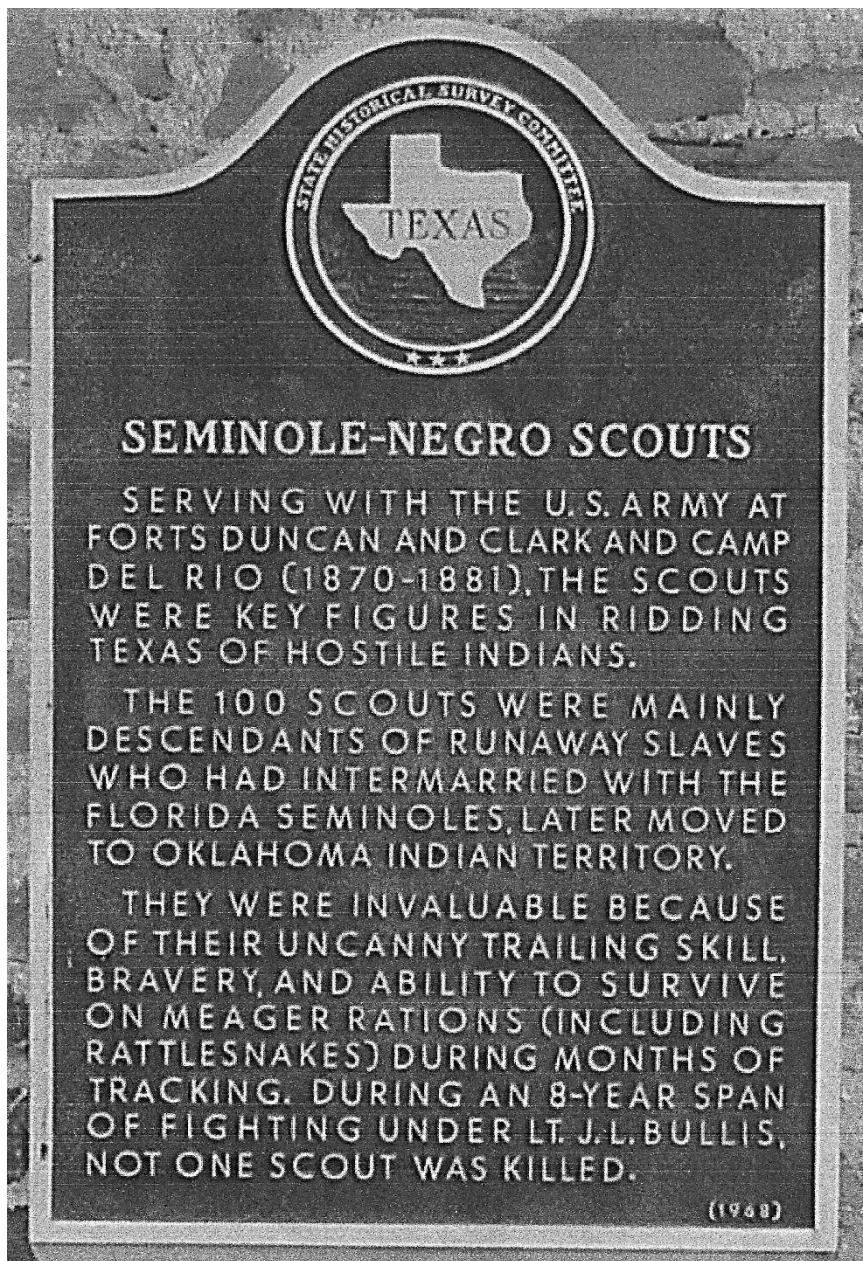
#### **SEMINOLE HISTORY FALSELY REPRESENTED AT FORT CLARK**

A document and pictorial display entitled "Area attractions," in the lobby of the Fort Clark Springs Hotel (which used to be Fort Clark itself), and which is also displayed publicly in the town of Brackettville, contains the following information for visitors which both distorts and trivializes the Seminole contribution to Texan history:

**SEMINOLE SCOUTS:** Serving during the frontier era, the scouts were the descendants of slaves stolen from Southern plantations by Florida Seminoles. The U.S. Government hired 150 as scouts for the Army to trail hostile Indians of the Southwest. A group settled in Brackettville around Fort Clark, and their descendants remain as area farmers and ranchers. The old cemetery is on a country road about three miles south of town.

While it is true that the ancestors of the Seminoles were stolen by white people from Africa, they were of course not stolen by Indians from the plantations but escaped voluntarily to join them in

Florida, themselves becoming Seminoles, a word simply meaning "fugitives." As stated above, the name Seminole was in fact applied to Africans many years before it was applied to the Indian escapees. The fact that they created their own maroon (*i.e.* non-slave) society is what makes the Seminoles unique among African American populations in the United States, and what qualified them to participate in the 1992 Smithsonian Institution's Maroon Festival on the Mall in Washington DC. Nor did their ancestors simply "settle in Brackettville around Fort Clark" but were specifically invited to serve as scouts for the Army out of Eagle Pass and Brackettville by the U.S. Government.



## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 9

#### RECIPE

##### Hugweed

Hugweed duh one dem plant whey hunnuh ha fuh *strick* tikyah bout, kezz e juice en bun hunnuh han ef hunnuh tetch um wice hunnuh deppon duh gedduh rum. Hunnuh mus'don' try fuh tase de ro one dem en fuh sho nuh tech hunnuh yie or hunnuh mout, elso hunnuh'n each en cratch en jowmp en hulluh.

Nummuh duh de nyoung leaf dem fuh pull. Den, pit um een hunnuh kittle en bile um good. De pizen paat en leff outa rum but eebinso some peepil still en dey whey dem cyaan eat um sakuh de leric.



How e tan whin e done cook

Soon ez e done bile teck um out de worruh en tro um een yuh frypan wit nuff burruh, en fry um good fuh dess two-tree minute no mo. Loose um up wit worruh en pit sote dey en lill flabrin sukkhuh gyalic or peppuh. Hunnuh kin fix sallary same way so. Dis kan' greens wan' fabuh tunnup greens lillbit.

#### TEXT

##### **WATSONEBBER HUNNUH YIE SEE, HUNNUH FUH KEEP HUNNUH MOUT SHET!** (VERSION 2)

Dishyah duh 'tory bout one man whuh bin ha one chile. E binnuh gyal chile whuh name Nancy. Duh one pudy gyal; hunnuh dess haffuh look a de heer 'pon e haid—long en cully en black. En e mout bin red lucka berry en e teet white lucka snow. E nose bin ha lee pint puntup um, fuh meck e whole face stan *too fine*.

Ebbuh one de man een de whole town bin des duh hanker attarum; two een paticla duh one hunter en one butcher. Den agen a lier en a doctor en a bidness-man bin deddeh munx de sett a dem too.

Awright.

Outa all dem man whey binnuh try fuh cote de gyal, nummuuh duh de bidness-man whuh bin win e haat, en whey marryum. Fuh de fus', dem bin happy tergedder but attawhile erritin don biggin fuh change.

Awright.

Een dishyah town whuh uh duh tell hunnuh bout, one lilly boy bin dey whey bin still duh go school. Him bin good lookin too. En eebin-do Nancy bin hab erritin whuh e man gi um whuh e need fuh keep e satisfy, duh one sunt'n whey e man *nebbuh* scacely gi um, so when e see dis schoolboy e biggin fuh lub um.

Nancy husban duh bidness-man en on dat count e use fuh leff e home fuh go fah-way en leff e ooman behime. Nownagin e eeb'n duh go duh Europe. Duh kaze a dat e don' ebber ha de time fuh dey wit e wife. Dasso e meck it easy fuh Nancy en de schoolboy fuh teck cay uh dem sneaky backdo bidness wice e nuh dey een town. Awright.

It des so happen dat de hunter en de butcher binnuh good fren tergedder befoe de gyal tell dem say e nuh bin want dem eeder one, en when dem see seh duh de lilly school-boy whuh bin get de goods, dem get too jallous. So dem plan fuh tell de husban bout whuh e wife deppan. De butcher wait tell de man come home fum e trabbles den e go tuh e house lukkuh fuh say e wan' sell um some meat. Att' e done sell um de meat e biggin fuh run e mout bout de school-boy. E tell um say ebby time e go way, de lee boy kin come ober tuh e house en teck keer a e wife en mess wit e tings. E say duh true 'tory, him seff binnuh see um wit e own yie.

De po husban ax um "Fuh true?"

E tell um seh "Sho' nuff duh true."

Den de husban say "Ef ah fine out seh duh true, ah gwine gi hunnuh fi'hunna dollah, but ef hunnuh duh lie, ah gwine *shoot* you."

De butcher swayda God seh duh true. Awright. When de time reach, de husban set him trap. E tell e wife seh "Tomorra, ah haffuh go duh Europe. Do, pack all me tings en fix me sunt'n fuh eat kaze ah cain' haadly swaller da buckra bittle whuh dem duh gi we 'pon de boat."

De wife Nancy go duh de market en e buy one big fish en e cya' rum back home. Some a dat e fry en some a dat e dry out fuh

later-own. E cook up greens en gravy, nuff fuh de man. But e leff de bes paat uh de fish tuh one side, duh keep um fo' e school-boy.

E collec all e husban tings tergedder en pack um een e bag, en de nex day de man say e done ready fuh go, e haffuh go tuh Europe, en e wan' le' e wife cya' rum tuh de ay-pote. De wife nuh bin know seh e binnuh tricky um so e go wit um tuh de ay-pote en dem teck two-tree drink, en den dem tell dem goodbyes. Nancy teck a taxi fuh go home, but e nuh go straight home, e go tuh e chooklah house fuh tell um say him man done leff town en e fuh come turrum een de eebnin fuh some fun. Att' de gyal taxi drike off de husban call fuh one taxi too. Him reach back tuh de house befoe di ooman en e teck de time fuh go upstaze fuh hide eseiff.

Awright.

Da' eebnin, School-boy dress up clean, ready fuh whuh e fuh do. E reach de house en Nancy opin de do, ax am fuh step eenside. E tell um fuh seddown, e pit lilly cool jazz 'pon de record-player den e go tuh e man closet en teck out one e man bes' robe, gi di school-boy fuh weer.

Den e teck de fish whey e bin hide en fix one plate uh fine fish en pepper styew fuh de boy, en e teck e husban' liquor en e po a good shot fuh de young boy. Att' e done eat en drink en listen tuh de music, dem cide fuh liddung 'pon de baid.

All dis whole time, de husban bin duh hide upstaze; fum whey e dey, e kin yeddy erriting en see ebby natal ting whuh duh go awn. E yeddy e wife say: "Dass whuh meck ah lub hunnuh; hunnuh see dishyah man whuh duh keep me, dis me husban? E hab a heap a money en e duh gi me erriting whuh ah want, but e cyaan' satisfy me een de lovin' department."

De husban still deppan duh harky t' erriting whuh duh go awn.

De ooman tell e chooklah "Hunnuh haffuh try fuh teck keer uh bidness, dishyah liquor gwine hep hunnuh en ef hunnuh want mo, ah gwine gi hunnuh mo. En when you done done, ah gwine gi hunnuh a hunnuh dollah, but hunnuh ain' fuh go dess yit, hunnuh fuh intaduce me tuh Brer Johnson one mo time."

De boy tell e chooklah awright, e gwine try fuh gedder e trenk en dem do de ting one nedder time agin.

De boy finish e styew, den dem alltwo go back tuh de paaluh en listen tuh some mo music. When e git tuh bout ha' pas' ten de boy say "Less we meck ase yah caze ah faid seh dem gwine lock de do 'pon me ef ah late." So dem go back een de room fuh meck baby yit agin; dem lock de do en git to it. Den e teck off de robe whuh e duh weer en de gyal teck um en tro um onda de baid . . . en de

whole livelong time, e husban bin deddeh upstaze duh watch dem en duh listen tuh dem ebry wud.

When dem at las' finish with dem bidness de gyal teck a clean towel tuh de bafroom fuh leh de boy teck e baf. Den e pit on e own close en kibber eseoff wit scent-worruh en taccum powder. Nancy tell um se lemme carry hunnuh tuh de cawnder, en yah go hunnuh 100 dollah. En e carry de boy bout half way.

Wice dem bin out a de house de man come down fum whey e binnuh hide. E op'i' de do en go outside en go yah-en-dey duh meck like e dey 'pon e way back home.

De gyal done reach home gin, en bidout e know seh e husban bin dey up dey, e go leddown go sleep, nuttn nuh duh bodderum.

By bout one uh two duh mo'nin e yeddy s'mbawdy duh knack 'pon de do.

"Who dat?"

"Duh me."

"Duh me who?"

Duh e husban. De husban ax um "Gyal, hunnuh nuh know me wice no mo?" E say "Lawd! Whuh happen?"

E say "De boat bin leff me behime."

"Yuh say de boat leff hunnuh?"

"Yeah, e bin suppose fuh come one o'clock en ah bin heng around dey tell atter one but e ain' come. E mussa bin done leff awready."

E go inside de house en e tell e wife seh "Do, fix me lilly bittle fuh eat, ah *too* hongry."

De ooman teck de bittle en wam um up en de man eat tell e mos bus, en den dem alltwo go leddung 'pon de baid. Wice dem duh leddung dey tuhgedder e tun tuh e wife en e tell um seh "Ooman, ah feel bad. All de time weh ah haffuh go trabble yah-en-dey duh go tuh Europe en ting, ah nuh get nuff time fuh see bout we bidness when ah does dey home. E bin dess too long sence we ha de chance fuh do inny lovin; less we git to it right now."

But Nancy say "Nah, ah ain' able, ah tire en me belly duh hut me."

De man answer back seh "Whuh kina talk dat? Hunnuh nuh duh feel sorry fuh yuh husban, when e nuh bin git di chance fuh leddung wit e wife fuh dis pass five munt? En hunnuh come tell me seh hunnuh too tire fuh see bout yuh man? Git yu rahss obuh yah."

So de gyal taat fuh teckoff e cloes but e do um slow, e teck e time.

Awright.

E husban duh look 'pontop um en e say "Gyal, hunnuh know seh da ting kin *talk*." E pint e finger 'pon e wife cootchie. E say "Nancy, ah tell yuh seh da ting dey kin *talk*." E lean e haid tuh one side en cack e yace like e duh listen tuh whuh de ooman skiffy duh tell um. E say "Ha! Listen nuh—yuh ting duh tell 'tory 'pon hunnuh . . . eh? Hunnuh tink seh ah duh lie?? Ah sway, hunnuh cootchie duh tell *all* yuh bidness . . . wa' duh him? One lee boy bin come yah teeday? Whuh time e leff? E leff roun levin oclock? Eh-eh! En de boy say e wan' go home befoe dem shet um out tuh him house? En whuh de boy do den? E meckase finish de bittle whey hunnuh gi um, e meckase finish de liquor whey hunnuh gi um, ah-hah . . . yuh say Nancy bin gi um one a me nyew robe fuh weer? Yuh say Nancy bin shub me robe onder de baid? Lemme see . . . Oh! Grashis me, see what ah dess fine dey. E sho stan lucka me own. Ah duh tell hunnuh gyal, yuh skiffy kin tell *all* yuh bidness. Hunnuh sho dey een one set a chrubble now; yuh nuh see?"

Den e ax e wife skiffy gen say "Tell me, Cootchie, what mo yuh know? . . . Oh? Me wife gi um a hunnuh dollah fuh e tas'? E say eebin doe ah blan gi um erriting whuh e need fuh lib nice, e still nuh satisfy caze ah ain nebber home fuh do whuh husban dem pose fuh do? Nancy! Yuh skiffy done pote hunnuh good en a bex, a too bex en a done *tire* wit dis." E giddup en leff de room, e nuh look 'pontop e wife, e nuh say one wud turrum. E go duh e own room, en put one record 'pon de record player en e siddung duh listen turrum.

De ooman get bex, e beleeb seh him cootchie done git um eenta a whole set a chrubble. E mine gi um fuh ponish um, so e go een de bafroom en e teck one big 'tick en e biggin fuh flag e cootchie wit um. All wice e duh flag um, e duh tell um seh '*Cootchie, whassomebber hunnuh yie see, hunnuh fuh keep hunnuh mout shet!*' Nancy bin like tuh die fum de beatin but e ain' die. Stidda dat e go en e liddung tuh him man.

Day clean, de man git up en go bout e bidness een de town sukka e kin do ebber day. All whuh happen bin still dey 'pon de ooman mine. E cide fuh go fine one conjuh-man fuh ax him advice. E tell de conjuh-man erriting whuh happen, en de conjuh-man mess wit e root en ting en den e tell de ooman seh "Hunnuh duh one foolish ooman. Nuh duh yuh skiffy whey bin tell yuh bidness, duh bin one *sombawdy* tell um. Sombawdy binnuh 'pote you tuh yuh husban."

De gyal say "Yuh sho? Ah sway tuh Gawd ah wan' hunnuh fuh *fix* da' pussin, en befoe e die, a haffuh know whuh duh e name."

Den de conjuh-man do all e fixin en e lay one hebbey fix fuh kill who dat bin tell de husban bout whuh e wife binna do.

Pudy soon de butcher man drap down daid, but befoe e die e tell erriting.

Dis duh him las wud: "Duh counter me mout ah duh leff dishyah worl."

Een dem days eff duh *fix* whey pussin die from, dem nuh binna bare sombawdy een de town, dem bin haffuh bare um faaway een de bresh. Dem haffuh cya' de body eenta de distant bresh. Dass whey dem bin bare de butcher body.

Awright. Tings duh gullong, dat fuss bidness dey outa de way.

Time duh pass, time duh pass . . . en dis hunter, de one whey binnuh de butcher frien en whey e bin tell de butcher bout de school-boy een de fuss place, him blan go huntin mose ebber day. One day, e bin dey een de bresh en e yeddy sombawdy duh call um, seh "Howdy, good frien!"

E tun fuh see who dat duh talk turrum, e nuh see nubbawdy, cusin fuh one haidbone 'pon de groun. E faid. E say "Eh! Who dat bin tell me howdy?"

De haidbone tell um seh "Duh me."

De man say "Whuh hunnuh duh do yah?"

De haidbone gi um answer seh "Me frien, duh me *mout* bring me yah so. *Whassomebber hunnuh yie see, hunnuh fuh keep hunnuh mout shet!*"

De hunter get too scade. E biggin run, e run kaze e nubber see nuttn sukka dat een e whole life. Once e reach de town e go tuh de Chief en e tell um "Chief, ah see one daidman haidbone teeday whuh kin *talk!*"

De chief laugh hearty 'pon um, e say "Whuh kina talk dat; hunnuh crazy? Yuh nuh see seh a dey yah *busy* duh do me wuck en hunnuh haffuh come yah fuh bodder me bout haidbone whuh duh talk!"

Gullung fum yah, lemme lone *do!*"

Still de hunter wan' fuh meck e case. E tell um gen seh "But Chief, ah bin *see* um fuh true. Whuh meck ah ain' nebber come yah befoe fuh tell yuh dis, all de godsen years whey ah binnuh hunt? Ah tell yuh Chief, a bin see dat haidbone wit alltwo me own yie. Ah bin yeddy whuh e say wit alltwo me own yaze. Dat haidbone kin *talk!!*"

De chief say "Fuh True? Awright, ah gwine gi hunnuh two sojer fuh go wit hunnuh duh wisseh de haidbone dey, cusin hunnuh too skade fuh go dey lone en bring um back wit hunnuh fuh lemme see um. Ef e duh talk fuh true, dass good, but ef e ain' kin talk, ah gwine *kill* hunnuh fuh yuh duh wase me time."

Den de hunter tell am seh "Chief, mo better hunnuh kin gi me *ten* sojer fuh go wit me."

Di hunter en de sojer dem go back duh de same paat whey e bin fuss meet de haidbone whey tell um howdy. When e fine um, e tell um "Good frien, we done come yah fuh tell hunnuh howdy." De haidbone nuh say nuttn.

"Oh no!" De hunter pick up de haidbone, e shake um en he say "*Dis* gwine *talk* ef duh de las'!!

Less we cya' um duh de chief."

Dem cya' um back tuh de chief, en de chief ax um seh "Disshyuh duh de haidbone whuh duh talk?" De man say "Yessuh, duh him."

De chief ax um gen seh "Dishyah duh talk? Meck e talk nuh. Ah gwine gi hunnuh fo hour fuh meck e talk en ef e nuh talk, ah gwine *kill* hunnuh."

Lemme tell all a hunnuh, ef hunnuh coulda see dat man! E binnuh sweat sukka hawg. E grip de haidbone, e holler 'pon de haidbone, e sheck de haidbone, e baig um "Ah duh baig hunnuh good frien, talk fuh we *do*!"

But de haidbone nuh say one natal wud. De chief tell de hunter e gwine gi um two mo hour, but e tell e sojer dem "Hunnuh git ready fuh shoot dis man." De haidbone mout still shet tight.

Nudduh but one hour leff, en de man biggin fuh cry en ax fuh e wife en e mama. E *study* duh baig de haidbone—nuttn.

At las de time run out en de sojer shoot um en kill um, en as e binnuh draw e las libbin breff e yddy de haidbone say *Whassomebber hunnuh yie see, hunnuh fuh keep hunnuh mout shet!*"

'Tory come en 'tory go, e leff 'pon hunnuh fuh tell de nex one.



**Miss Charles Wilson**

## Seminole Creole Revitalization Project

### SESSION 10

#### REMEDIES, CUSTOMS

##### *Bluck peppuh*

Black pepper is used mixed with brandy as a remedy for a sore throat.

##### *Hoe-houn'*

A weak infusion of horehound is also used to ease a sore throat, while a strong infusion is used to induce a miscarriage.

##### *Sote*

Salt was never put on food that was eaten before battle.

##### *Draw sick*

This was to use a cow's horn with the end cut off, the wide end placed against the body and the opening sucked on, to draw sickness from a person.

#### **A COMPARISON BETWEEN ASC AND KRIOL**

ASC and Gullah-Geechee share their origin, but do ASC/Gullah-Geechee and *Krio*? *Krio* is the Creole language of Sierra Leone and, as the figures show (ahead on page 73), Gullah got its "shape" only after the cultivation of rice became a major industry during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, and Africans from Sierra Leone's Rice Coast began to arrive in great numbers. Did they bring *Krio* with them, as they brought Mende and Vai and other languages? Or is *Krio* so much like ASC because there were probably Gullah-Geechee speakers among the one thousand Africans that went to live in the new colony in Sierra Leone in 1792? No doubt, the answer is a bit of each. Nevertheless, the two languages are surprisingly similar, after so long a separation (page 10).

The following demonstrates this. It is the beginning of a story by the Sierra Leonean author Velma Caulker Mitchell, translated here first of all into ASC. It is followed by the original *Krio* version, spelt

impressionistically, *i.e.*, using English-based spelling. While a good many Krio speakers write their language in this way, an official orthography has been in use for over fifty years, and formal documents (the Bible, the Krio dictionary, etc.) are written in it. This system brings Krio's spelling in line with those of other Sierra Leonean languages, and makes it clear that the impressionistic or 'eye dialect' representation falls far short of giving the true pronunciation of either language.

### **ASC**

Sori leddown een e bade time e come home fum wuck one Chusday eebnin. E body bin *shonuff* tiah. Da' tickla day, e binnuh wuck *duddat*; fum seven 'uh mo'nin so tel hahf pahs fo een de ahtuhnoon, e binnuh crab peepil flo, wash pan dem en dus' paaluh. "Boy wuck nubbuh easy," e tell eseiff. E leddown pun e matress duh smoke one sigrette. Saff breeze binnuh blow troo de room. Nuh bin but one cheeah dey eensie' dey, en one table whey ha lilly ile lamp puntop um. All Sori bittle bin dey puntop a de table long de yedduh res': two tin a sa'dine, fo tin a milk, one loaf a brade en one pan a rice.

"One day, whin Ah git nuff money, Ah sway duh Gawd Ah en moob way fum yuh, Ah'n try fin' a lee house fuh me en Salwa fuh whin we marrid." E begin fuh membuh im 'wife.' Him en Salwa binnuh chookluh fuh five ear en e bin still hab powful lub furrum. Duh kaze a money nuh mo e nuh marrid um so tel yet.

Sence de time whey Sori bin sabby um fus-off, Salwa binnuh wuck een de ma'ket, de Kissy Road Ma'ket, duh sell palm wine. Out a all de ooman dem whey Sori bin git-roun een e life, duh Salwa whey study duh meck e wan' loss e mine. Nuh kezz e mo pudy nuh inny dem udduh gyal, duh kezz him duh gyal whey 'mannasabble,' dasso Sori duh crite um tuh e frien dem. En fuh true, Salwa duh one able gyal fuh inny man.

"Lawd Ah wish e coulda bin dey yah now . . . wice de rain duh fallin lacka so." Hebby rain binnuh fall outside e do, da fine July rain.

"Ef e bin dey yah long wit me now, whey da cool breeze duh blow, *mm-mm-mm*; duh wa' meck de gyal ha fuh go up de country fuh go see 'im Ma? E leff Sunday nuh mo but e tan lack e bin duh las' ear whin e go." Hunnuh don' surprise whey e frien dem duh meck e fool:

"How one mo'tal man able lub inny ooman succa how hunnuh duh lub da gyal?" duh de way how dem binnuh jook um. "Look hummuh ooman dey ratch yah duh dishyuh town fuh hab, but hunnuh nuh d'eebin *try* dey. Enty hunnuh know seh hunnuh Muslim man nuh duh marrid nuh muh des one ooman!"

Sori tun own e radio. E bin teck all e cyash fuh buy one lee transistuh las' mont'. As e tun um own, e yeddy one pudy song name *Bella Dama* whuh duh play. E shet e yie dem en e mine begin fuh roll on. Sleep bin des taat fuh ketch um whin e yeddy *tip-tip-tip* pun e do.

"Who-dat duh nack pon me do, come yuh duh 'stub me des' whin Ah done mos driff off fuh sleep so tel day clean!?" E go open de do.

Who-dat e see dey but 'im berry own Salwa.

### **KRIO, Impressionistic spelling**

Sori ledown nah 'im baid whey e come-out woke one Tyusday ev'en. Im body bin tiah bad. Da' day dey e bin 'deed done woke plenty; from seven nah mo'nin tey 'aff-pas fo nah aftuhnoon e bin deh crab flo, was' plate, en sweep pahluh. "Boy woke nobbuhs easy o," e say to e seff. E ledown nah 'im matrass deh smoke cig'rette, fine breeze bin dey blow nah de room. One cheeuhs nomo' bin dey eensi'e, wit one table whey bin get lilly pan-lamp puntop um. Puntop de table, all Sori 'im eat; two tin sardine, fo tin milk, one moul' brade en one plate ress bin dey.

"One day whey Ah get coppoh, Ah sweh Ah go move nah yah, go fen one fine small 'ose foh me en Salwa whey we marrade." E begin foh 'membuh 'im 'wef'.

E en Salwa bin done dey foh five 'ear en e bin still leck um bad. Nah foh sake a coppoh nomo' meck e noh bin done marrade um yate. From whey dem two begin, Sori noh evuh 'membuh foh falluh udduh ooman. Salwa nah bin fine black tittie, 'aff Mandinga, 'aff Timini.

From de tem whey Sori sabby um, e dey woke nah ma'ket, Kissy Road Ma'ket, dey sell pa'm'ine. 'Pun all de ooman dem whey Sori bin done evuh get nah 'im life, nah Salwa meck e wan' crase. Notto because nomo' de gyal bin fine pass anybody, but because 'nah pikin whey get good trick,' as Sori kin tell 'im paddie dem. En foh true, Salwa nah bin betteh-betteh tittie foh any man. "Aya, Ah wish e bin dey yah now . . . leckeh whey rain dey cam so now." Rain bin dey cam nah do good-good one—dem sweet July rain. Ef e bin dey yah now so, leck whey fine breeze dey blow . . . whey tin' meck de pikin bin get foh go upline dis mont', foh go see 'im mama? Nah Sunday e go, but e 'tan leck nah las' 'ear. Noh wondah Sori "im paddie dem kin laugh um:

"Ow mo'tal man go leck ooman so?!" dem kin 'umbug um.

"Look 'owmus' ooman dem dey nah dis to'n foh get, but you noh dey enjoy dem. Enty you know seh Marabu noh dey marrade one ooman nomo'?"

Sori tu'n 'im reddio. E bin take all 'im coppoh buy lilly transistoh las' mont. As e tu'n um e yerry one fine record, *Bella Dama*, dey play. E set 'im yie en begin foh 'membuh fah.

Sleep bin deh caitch um, whey e yerry somebody deh nack nah do saffle-one. E go opin de do. "Who-dat da' one dey now . . . jis when Ah wan' ball tey mo'nin!"

Who-dat e see, but 'im yown yown Salwa.

### **KRIO, Official orthography**

*Sori lidɔm na in bed we i kɔmɔt wok wan Tyusde ivin. In bɔdi bin taya bad . . . da de de i bin did dɔn wok plenti; frɔm sɛvin na mɔnин te af-pas-fo na aftanun i bin de krɔb flo, was plet, kuk ɛn swip pala.*

"Bɔy wok nɔba izi o", i se to in sef. I lidɔm na in matras de smok sigret, fayn bris bin de blo na di rum. Wan chia nɔmɔ bin de insay, wit wan tebul we bin get lili panlamp pantap am. Pantap di tebul, ɔl Sori in yit: tu tin sadin, fo tin milk, wan mol bred ɛn wan plet res ɛn fis, bin de.

"Wan de we a get kɔpɔ, a swe a go muf naya, go fɛn wan fayn smɔl os fɔ mi ɛn Salwa we wi mared." I bigin fɔ mɛmba in 'wɛf'.

I ɛn Salwa bin dɔn de fɔ fayv iya ɛn i bin stil lɛk am bad. Na fɔseka kɔpɔ nɔmɔ mek i nɔ bin dɔn mared am et. Frɔm we dɛn tu bigin, Sori nɔ ɛva mɛmba fɔ fala ɔda uman. Salwa na bin fayn blak titi, af Madingga, af Timini.

Frɔn di tɛm we Sori sabi am, i de wok na makit, Kisi Rod Makit, de sel pamayn. Pan ɔl di uman dɛn we Sori bin dɔn ɛva get na in layf, na Salwa mek i wan kres. Nɔto bikɔs nɔmɔ di gyal bin fayn pas ɛnibɔdi, bɔt bikɔs 'na pikin we get gud trik', as Sori kin tel in padi dɛn. En fɔ tru, Salwa na bin bɛtɛ-bɛtɛ titi fɔ ɛni man.

"Aya, a wish i bin de ya naw . . . lɛk we ren de kam so." Ren bin de kam nado gud-gud wan—dɛn swit Julay ren. Ef i bin de ya naw so, lɛk' we fayn bris de blo . . . wetin mek di pikin bin ge fɔ go ɔplayn dis mɔnt, fɔ go fɛn in mama? Na Sɔnde i go, bɔt i tan lek' na las iya."Nɔ wɔnda Sori in padi dɛn kin laf am:

"Aw mɔtal man go lɛk uman so?!", dɛn kin ambɔg am. "Luk ɔmɔs uman dɛn de na dis tɔng fɔ get, bɔt yu nɔ de ɛnɔy dɛn. Enti yu no se Marabu nɔ de mared wan uman nɔmɔ?"

Sori tɔn in redyo. I bin tek ɔl in kɔpɔ bay di lili tranzisto las mɔnt. As i tɔn am i yeri wan fayn rekɔd, *Bela Dama*, de ple. I set in yay ɛn bigin fɔ mɛmba fa. Slip bin de kech am, we i yeri sɔmbɔdi de nak na do saful-wan. I go opin di do. "Udat da'an de naw . . . jis wɛn a wan bɔl te mɔnин!"

Udat i si de bɔt in yon yon Salwa.

**RECIPE*****Battle Brade***

Hunn'en need:

1 beeuhcyan  
wam worruh  
2-en-a-tip lill  
poon a *ees*,  
eeduh 1 pack  
fum de sto  
2 poon a *shotnin*  
2 lill poon a *sote*  
2 poon a *sugar*  
2 en a hahf beeuhcyan a 'reeny *flauwah*



Leh de *ees* git intuh de worruh good, den tro een de *sugar* en one beeuhcyan a de flouah.

Nack um up good fuh two-tree minute en e smood, den duh fuh tro een de lawden de yedduh ress a de flouah en mix erritin all togedduh gen wit hunnuh han een dey.

Kibbuh rum wit some kanna cloff en leff um tuh one side soatle de battle done raise—hahf a ouah or so.

Teck hunnuh brade pan en greezy um good pon de eenside; dus' um all obuh wit flouah. Now hun'haffuh crape een de battle. Pit um een de pan soatle e mos full um, but tikya e nuh reach de top. Kibbuh rum wit de cloff en leff um tuh one side gin fuh tutty minute mo.

Aatuh dat, pit de pan een de oavin whey hunnuh bin set tuh 375 degree en check dey tel e done brown en ef yuh nack um e en soun holluh—da en teck bout 45 minute fuh dat.

**RECIPE*****Poke weed***

Graff one clutch a poke weed— de green nyong paat, mine, nuh de ole mo daakuh paat—rinch um aff en cubbuu rum een a kittle a worrah. Bile um quick soatle de worrah bile, en whin e done bile, quick teck um out de worrah en streen um off.

Pit lill grease een yuh frysahn en leh e melt. Whin e done melt, tro een de poke weed en mix um roun fuh two tree minute nummo. Ef hunnuh bin sabe de juice off a hunnuh meat, en hunnuh bin pit um tuh one side, teck darra juice en pit um dey long wit de greens fuh de supshun, en leff de lid pontop de pot. Leh e cook dey slow fuh bout a quaatuh ouah, den duffuh teck aff de lid en steeah rum roun en leh e cook dey summo tell de worra done guddung lillibit, en by den, e shouda done ready fuh tase! Me, Ah lack fuh pit a good plash a hot soce pon me greens dem.

**RECIPE*****Flue brade***

Dis one call flue brade kezz e faybuu de flue pontop hunnuh oavin.

Yuh gwan need

3 beeuhcyan a *flauwah*  
 1 beeyuyhcyan a *milk*  
 1 poon a *beckin sody*  
 5 poon a *shotnin*  
 De yalluh fum 3 *aig*  
 Haff lill poon a *sote*

Teck one bowl en tro een de flauwah, de sody de shotnin en de aig all tree. Nack um up good togedduh.

Po een de milk en de sote en crabble erriting togedduh soatle e nuh duh tick duh de side a de bowl.



Teck a cloff fuh kibbu rum en leff um duh one side fuh bout a hour.  
Wen de dough done git mo bigguh tun um out pon de bode en roll  
um flat, soatle e tan bout hahf a inch tick.

Fuh meck de shape a de brade tanka flue, hunn' en need a broom  
handle fuh wrop um roun.

Cut de dough inuh squoy shape dem, bout tree inch cross en fo inch  
long.

Greezy up de broom handle en wrop one or two oh tree a de dough  
squoy roun um tel de dough meet up wit e seff en hunnuh kin jine  
um togedduh so de dough wrop all roun de pole.

A nedduh way duh fuh cut de dough een hahf inch trip dem en roll  
um roun de pole.

Hunnuh en ha fuh hole um obuh fiah fuh bout ten fifteen minute  
en tun um, tun um, tel e brown all roun en e done bake good.

Slide um off de broom handle en e ready fuh eat. Ef hunnuh like  
um sweet, chuwey lill shugar pontop um, en pit lee tase a bynilla  
een de battle fus.

### AFRICAN CALQUES

“Calques” are word-for-word translations of idioms (not words) from other languages into your own. Because of the African element in their formation, there are plenty of these in the creoles, including ASC. Examples are

**Big yie**, ‘greedy, covetous,’ literally ‘big eyes,’ cf. Igbo *anya ụku* ‘big’ + ‘eyes.’ **Git hunnuh big yie way fum me bittle, hunnuh n'en git none.** (Krio, Jamaican *big yai*, Sranan *bigi ai*)

**Cut yie**, ‘glance of distain,’ literally ‘cut eye.’ Cf. Twi *bu anyi-kye* ‘cut’ + ‘eye’ + ‘shut.’ **E try fuh talk tuh rum but de gyal des cut e yie pon po Joe.** (Krio, etc., *köt yai*)

**Day-clean**, ‘dawn, daybreak,’ literally ‘day’ + ‘clean.’ Cf. Wolof *bär bu set* ‘day has cleaned.’ **Dem paaty bin las' soatle day clean.** (Krio, etc. *de-klin*).

**Do-mout**, literally ‘door mouth,’ meaning ‘doorway,’ cf. Yoruba *ilorun ẹnu* ‘door’ + ‘mouth.’ **Duh Salwah wey bin tannup een Sori doe mout.** (Krio *do-mot*, Sranan *doro-mofo*).

**Moon** ‘monthly period,’ literally ‘moon.’ Cf. Grebo *hɔbo ni mo ne* ‘I see my moon.’ **Eh-eh! Sally miss e moon dis mont’ Wisseh de hoe-**

**houn' dey?** (Krio *si mun*, Haitian Creole French *we lalin* < 'voir la lune').

**Wah meck?** 'why,' literally 'what' + 'makes.' Cf. Igbo *gene mere*, 'what' + 'makes.' **Duh wah meck hunnuh cyaan shet hunnuh mout fuh five minute?** (Jamaican *wa mek*).

**Wisseeh** literally 'which side' and **wich-paat** 'which part, both meaning 'where,' cf. Igbo *ołee εbe* 'which' + 'place.' **Wisseeh yuh bin pit me shoes?** (Krio *us sai*, Sranan *o sey*, Jamaican *wich paat*).

**Yie-worruh** 'tears,' literally 'eye water,' cf. Mandinka *nye yi* 'eye' + 'water.' **Sairy yie-worruh bin run e mascara.** (Krio *yai-wata*, Sranan *watra-ai*).



We done reach tuh de een a we session dem, en hunnuh mussy able now fuh talk Siminole real pudi.

Hummuch a hunnuh en dey een Brackett fuh Siminole Day een Setembuh? One ting wey we wan' do, we wan' set up de week *befo* fuh be some canna wuckshop fuh we fuh go obuh all a dem yuh session en fuh leh we chry out all wuh we binnuh lan fuh de pass eeuuh uh mo.

Ef hunnuh feel fuh go, hunnuh en haffuh git a room desso een Fote Cluck Spring, en dem sho duh git teck up *faaaahs*. Meck hace, nuh.

## SOME MORE DETAILED BACKGROUND

### *The Beginnings of Guinea Coast Creole English*

Afro-Seminole Creole is only one of a large group of related languages spoken today in Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean, all of which descend in part from a common earlier ancestor which we may call Guinea Coast Creole English. This is no longer spoken itself, nor do we have records of it, but on the basis of its modern descendants, and the historical facts we have gathered, to some extent we are able to reconstruct the circumstances of its origins, and even to know what it might have sounded like.

There are records from 1553 onwards of groups of British sailors going to live on the West African coast more or less permanently. Some of these were criminals, some political exiles, and others were simply attracted by local African life and preferred to stay rather than return to Europe. Whatever the reasons, these sailors were all men, and nearly all between the ages of 15 and 30. They are referred to in modern writings as *lançados*, a Portuguese word meaning men who “threw themselves” from the ships—Portuguese because the first *lançados*, and indeed the first Europeans, to settle in West Africa were Portuguese. The *lançados* we are concerned with in this case came from all parts of Britain and spoke a great many different dialects of English (standard English was still emerging and no one spoke that); there were no radios or newspapers; literacy and schooling were privileges of the wealthy, and contacts with speakers of other dialects were few. Those joining a ship in port for the first time would have presented some problems of communication to their new shipmates.

In the course of time, the sailors developed amongst themselves a kind of English they could all understand. They did this by keeping those words and constructions they had in common, and discarding whatever extreme dialect forms might have hampered communication. This process, called leveling, is something like creolization, except that because of the kinds of speech involved, which were all dialects of the same language instead of totally different languages, the “common denominator” level they reached was far less different from the grammars of their different English dialects than it would have been in a truly multilingual situation.

This leveled English was even more distinctive because it was used on board ship, and as a result had a strong nautical flavour. Each sailor speaking this Ship English could of course also speak his natural home dialect, though if he did, it might have been

difficult for his fellow crewmen to understand him properly. When these sailors settled down on the Guinea Coast of West Africa, they married African wives and established Lançado-African households. After a couple of generations their Afro-European children—called “mulattos” in the early literature—had grown up, and their language and new society had become well established. We can hypothesize a pre-creolization stage during which a local, highly-attenuated, variety of English, which we can call West African Coast English (WACE), emerged, not restructured or pidginized, but unlike anything spoken in Britain. The sailors continued to modify their Ship English as it fed into Coast English, contributing words from their home dialects because they were now no longer at sea, and adjusting it to the speech of their wives, who probably spoke Serer, or Wolof, or Mandinka, or Dyola, or Susu, or Bullom, or Temne and so on, and who were also learning to speak like their men. They kept the vocabulary of the men’s speech even though the Africans greatly outnumbered the Europeans, mainly because English was useful all along the Guinea Coast from settlement to settlement, while the African languages were spoken over fairly small areas and made trading difficult outside of the home area. The men continued to engage in the coasting trade they had left behind them in British waters, now trading instead along the Upper Guinea coast. There was also a Portuguese creole spoken along the same coast, and it is still spoken today in parts of West Africa. Even Africans from elsewhere who came to live and work in the Afro-European communities (people called *grumettos* or *grumetes* or *laptots*) learned to speak Coast English, and since, in many cases, it was the grumettos rather than the Europeans who kept the slaves imprisoned in the coastal barracoons and factories before transportation, it was a restructured, modified version of it which they also learnt to speak. It was essential that they knew at least some WACE, because whenever possible, slaves who spoke the same language were kept apart from each other. The WACE vocabulary that they were hearing each day from their grumetto overseers was all they had in common. The Africans used that vocabulary in order to communicate with each other, not so that they could speak to their captors. In such a contact situation, the fixed basic words are remembered, but not the grammatical endings and other changes (‘eat,’ ‘eats,’ ‘eating,’ ‘ate’). As described in the first Session, what stays the same, is used; what doesn’t, is discarded. Since the endings contain the grammar, and are not kept, then grammatical relationships between the words must be handled differently, and this is where creole grammar takes over.

Before that happens, the compromise that's nobody's native language is called a *pidgin*; most of them disappear once their usefulness is done, but if those using it remain together, and cannot be reunited with other speakers of their own language, then the pidgin must continue to serve its purpose, and become better equipped, linguistically, to serve as the sole, everyday language. Thus, it makes more sense to speak of a pidgin's *stabilizing* rather than of its necessarily *nativizing*.

In the early years of the slave trade, slaves were kept waiting on the coast for a year or even longer before shipment across the Atlantic, and then that voyage could last for several weeks. This gave the earliest arrivals plenty of time to acquire a good knowledge of Creole, and even when the volume and efficiency of the slave trade increased, so that the newly-arrived slaves would not have had time to learn it, they still learnt some from the slaves they were put to work with once they reached the Americas. Since they also worked with indentured Whites, especially in Barbados and North America, bondservants who were usually Scottish or Irish and who spoke their own regional kinds of British English, and since metropolitanization was already having an effect on the Creole taken across the Atlantic, it is probably safe to say that AAVE (African American Vernacular English, "Black English"), which that speech has become today, never did have a wholly creole origin. Because of the geographical isolation of the Sea Islands, and the comparative absence of Whites there, and because of the continual (and illegal) arrival of Creole-speaking West Indian slaves into the area until scarcely more than a century ago, and the fact that slaves arriving on the Atlantic seaboard were not all sent to other parts of the United States, Gullah does not have the same history which has produced AAVE elsewhere in the country.

### ***The Beginnings of Gullah***

The British took most of their slaves to Barbados, which they settled in 1627, before distributing them to their other colonies. By 1795, well over half of the *ca.* 2,000 Africans in South Carolina, which was founded in 1670, were from Barbados, though after 1698 they were being brought in more and more from Africa directly. South Carolina originally covered a huge area, which even included much of what is today Florida. Georgia was then Creek Indian country, and was considered to be free territory. When it became a colony by charter in 1732, it immediately tried to prohibit slavery, but because of pressure from South Carolina that attempt was unsuccessful.

### *Sources of the African Maroons*

*The sable slave from Georgia's utmost bounds,  
 Escapes for life into the Great Wahoo;  
 Here he has left afar the savage hounds,  
 And human hunters that did late pursue;  
 There in the hommock darkly hid from view,  
 His wretched limbs are stretched awhile to rest;  
 Till some kind Seminole shall guide him thro',  
 To where by hound nor hunter more distrest,  
 He in a flow'ry home shall be the Red man's guest.*

Albery A. Whitman  
*Twasinta's Seminoles*, stanza V.

During the Atlantic slave trade, the British took most of their African captives to Barbados, which they settled in 1627, before distributing them to their other colonies. By 1795, well over half of the ca. 2,000 Africans in South Carolina, which was founded in 1670, were from Barbados, though after 1698 they were being brought in more and more from Africa directly. South Carolina originally covered a huge area, which even included much of what is today Florida. Georgia was then Creek Indian country, and was considered to be free territory. When it became a colony by charter in 1732, it immediately tried to prohibit slavery, but because of pressure from South Carolina their attempt was unsuccessful.

Up until 1749, Georgia had been getting its own slaves from Carolina, but after that date began to import them from elsewhere. Unlike Carolina, Georgia continued to bring slaves in from the West Indies, and until a halt was drawn to the importation of West Indian and African slaves in 1770, they were arriving from Jamaica, Antigua, Barbados, St. Croix, St. Kitts, St. Martin, St. Vincent, Montserrat, Nevis, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Grenada and Cuba, a pattern of settlement quite different from that in South Carolina.

Nevertheless, slaves continued to arrive directly from Africa in significant numbers, significantly from the Upper Guinea Coast. Between 1701 and 1808, imports from Africa into South Carolina were as follows: from Sierra Leone and The Gambia 76,000, from Ghana 28,000, from Liberia 19,000, from Benin 4,000 and from Biafra 23,000—and into Georgia (between 1766 and 1858) from Sierra Leone and The Gambia were shipped 12,000, from Liberia 2,200, from Ghana 3,800 and from the 'Central Coast' 5,800. Thus, for each colony the totals for Sierra Leone and The Gambia

exceeded the totals for all other regions combined. (Eltis & Richardson, 2010). These dates overlap the period of time in which Mufwene (1997: 11 and in *p.c.*) believes that Gullah emerged:

Between 1745 and 1760 the growth rates were reversed in favor of the European population. I think this shift makes the period between 1720 and 1750 the critical stage in the emergence of Gullah as a distinct African American variety.

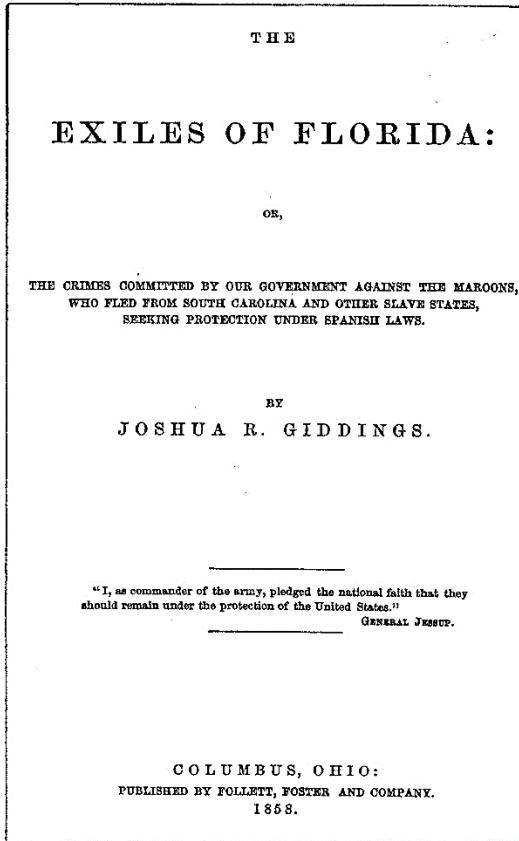
Opala (1986) makes the same case for the same period, showing that the introduction of rice farming was the critical factor in the shaping of SIC. It meant that slaves from the Rice Coast of Africa—which extends from The Gambia to Liberia—were in special demand because of their agricultural skills. While it is clear that Gullah-Geechee, like the related Jamaican, Guyanese, Belizian and so on, is the product of multiple inputs and that the earliest were almost certainly from the Caribbean, its particular similarity to Krio, spoken in Sierra Leone, has been noted for a very long time (Turner). This has led to one suggestion that Krio is, in part, Gullah, brought to the Freetown Colony with the 1,190 Nova Scotian Settlers in 1792 (Huber, 1999).

There is no direct evidence that those Settlers spoke Gullah, though many of them came from Carolina; modern Krio does, however, contain features more easily attributable to African American English. A stronger case can be made for the transmission going the *other* way, *i.e.* Gullah having much of its linguistic input from Sierra Leone. Opala (*op. cit.*, 10-12) writes “in 1965 the British historian Paul Hair reviewed the linguistic data collected by Lorenzo Turner and found that a “remarkably large proportion” of the four thousand African loanwords in Gullah derives from languages of the “Sierra Leone region.” He pointed especially to Mende, spoken almost exclusively in Sierra Leone, and Vai, spoken in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia. Turner had identified African loans in three categories—personal names (*ca.* 3,500), words used in conversation (*ca.* 350), and terms found only in stories, songs and prayers (85). On the basis of the linguistic derivations advanced by Turner, Dr. Hair calculated that languages of the Sierra Leone region account for 25% of the personal names (Mende 13%, Vai 6%); 20% of the words used in Gullah conversation (Mende 9%, Vai 8%); and 100% of the terms used in stories, etc. (Mende 75%, Vai 25%). In numerical terms this means that on the basis of Turner’s data more than one thousand of the roughly four thousand African loans in Gullah are derived from languages spoken in Sierra Leone; and of the one thousand Sierra

Leonean loans, about eight hundred are either Mende or Vai. The "astonishing" figure of 100% for stories, songs, and prayers reflects the fact that *all* of the African (as opposed to creole) texts and phrases recovered by Turner were in Mende or Vai. He collected an entire song in Mende, some lyrics in Mende and Vai, and Mende sentences embedded in Gullah stories". Hair's own conclusion (1965: 81-82) was that

[f]rom these figures, it can hardly be doubted that Sierra Leone languages have made a major contribution to the Africanisms in the Gullah dialect. This is the more important to students of Sierra Leone, because we know of nowhere else in America where the influence of Sierra Leone languages can be traced to anything like this extent.

It is scarcely likely that words from those languages were brought *into* Sierra Leone from America.



The title page of Joshua Giddings' pioneering study of the flight of the Seminoles from the English into Spanish Florida. Note the reference to *Maroons*, a word no longer in common use in the United States.

Black and First Nations escapees from the English plantations in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Crown colonies of Carolina and Georgia were able to find refuge in Spanish Florida, where they were allowed to establish autonomous communities around St. Augustine and where they were known as *cimarrones*, a word meaning, roughly, 'fugitives'. Already by 1821 there were 34 Seminole settlements in northern Florida, three of which were African. According to Giddings (1858: 3), the word "Seminole" was first used to refer to the Black escapees into Florida, and was only later applied by the Creeks to the Indian fugitives.

In 1817 General Andrew Jackson and his army were sent to northern Florida to subdue the Seminoles and seize the land from Spain. They killed livestock, burned crops, and destroyed the Black forts along the Apalachicola and Suwannee Rivers. At that time, the Seminoles, numbering an estimated 7,000, were welcomed by the Spanish government since they served as a buffer between themselves and the English. A royal decree from Spain dated 10th October, 1699 promised protection

... a todos los desertores negros de los ingleses que huyeron a San Augustin y que se convirtieron al catolicismo" [i.e. "to all Negro deserters from the English who fled to St. Augustine and became Catholics"].

Porter (1971: 164) writes of the Spaniards who were caught in Georgia and imprisoned for enticing slaves to leave Carolina and go to Florida. Those maroons did not, however, always join up with the Indian fugitives, though some did, especially later when aggression from the north became more severe. The migration of Africans to the fort in Florida had stopped by the mid-1760s:

Spanish power in Florida, moribund for a score of years, had been extinguished . . . the British were at last in control and runaway Negroes from South Carolina and Georgia could no longer find refuge under the walls of St. Augustine (*op. cit.*, 171).

This did not mean an end to the settlement of Africans in Florida; it merely meant that the fugitives were establishing their own independent communities separate from both the First Nations peoples and the Spaniards:

As late as 1774, blacks were apparently not living among the Seminole Indians. As slaves continued to escape from the American colonies, settlements of blacks sprang up in Florida, but their relations with the Indians were not always good (Littlefield, 1977: 5).

This was going on even into the early 1820s. In a letter written at that time, Charles Pinckney (1757-1824) one of the drafters and signers of the Constitution of the United States (Powers, 1998), complained about the numbers of slaves escaping from South Carolina into Florida, which by then had become U.S. territory. Thus the Black maroons, or Afro- Seminoles, were seeking refuge in Florida between about 1690 and the 1820s; that they were mainly from Georgia during the earlier part of that nearly 140-year time-span, and that most Georgian slaves were West Indian rather than directly African, supports the argument for the Caribbean origin for Afro-Seminole Creole. One clue to the early makeup of the Afro-Seminole population is provided by the words *Joo* and *Joomaican*, who are remembered as having been present during the early period.

At the time that Florida became US territory, slavery was still legal, and raids to capture free Africans (as well as Indians) created considerable problems for Governor Jackson in his efforts to develop the new territory, including further bloody conflicts; in December, 1835 Major Francis Dade and his troops were ambushed by 300 Seminole warriors near Fort King (Ocala), starting the Second Seminole War, an episode leading to the mass removal of Seminoles to Indian Territory in what is today Oklahoma. By 1834, 3,824 Indians had been removed to the west. The war lasted until 1842, by which time 4,420 Seminoles had surrendered and been sent West.

From 1855 to 1858 Third Seminole War (also known as the Bowlegs' War) took place, when Billy Bowlegs and his family were captured and deported to Indian Territory. Only about 300 Seminoles—almost all of them Indians—remained in Florida, where they had been granted five million acres of land further south in the Everglades. The first Indian Seminoles from British territory were Oconee people from Milledgeville, Georgia, who moved into Florida in 1750, over half a century later than the first African escapees. These were joined by the Muskogee (*cf. Mascogo* as a Seminole ethnonym), and following them were the Apalchicola, Chiaha, Hitichi, Sawokli and Tamathli, all of whom lived in the Chattahoochee River area in western Georgia, and all of whom spoke dialects of Hitichi. In 1767 they were joined by the Maskogee-speaking Eufala from Alabama, and in 1788 other Maskogee-speaking groups also joined them. Following the Creek War in 1813-1814, the number of Indian Seminoles tripled because of new arrivals from Georgia and Alabama—the Yuchi from Georgia, the Alabama (from Alabama), the Yamassee and the

Apalachee. Today, the Indian Seminoles in Florida speak two quite distinct languages, both of them Mushkogean: Muskogee and Mikasuki. Groups of Black Seminoles left Florida for other places as well; some went to the Bahamas (Wood, 1980, Howard, 2002), some reportedly to Guanabacoa in Cuba, and others were invited to stay with the Cherokee. Still others decided to remain in Florida.

### *Oklahoma*

In 1849, some of the Oklahoma settlers applied to the Mexican government for permission to go and live there, possibly because they believed they would be more at home in a Hispanic environment and perhaps could speak Spanish, but particularly because almost as soon as they had arrived in Indian Territory, the US government declared them legally to be slaves, while slavery had already been abolished in Mexico some twenty years before. A group of about 500 Black and Indian Seminoles left Oklahoma in the late fall of 1849, crossing Texas where they were joined by two hundred Kickapoo Indians in the Brazos River Valley near Waco, and crossing into Coahuila, Mexico in July 1850. At first, the Black Seminoles settled in Moral, not far from the Texas border, while the Indian Seminoles settled separately at La Navaja and the Kickapoo at Guerro. Later they moved a hundred miles further into Mexico to Musquiz, soon after that moving a few miles away to El Nacimiento de los Negros, with a few families going

# Pigeon

## Injun as She is Spoke in Different Negro Settlements in the Creek Nation

"There are more different dialects spoken among the negroes of the Creek nation than one hears at a congress of nations," said an old settler to a Democrat man this morning.

"Take out along the Salt creek, west of Okmulgee, where the negroes have lived in close proximity to the Indians, they speak a lingo that is almost undistinguishable. It's a sort of pigeon Indian and the talk is fast.

"The negroes in the Pecan creek settlement have another brand of language, while the 'black and tans' along Snake creek speak an entirely different line of language.

"Negro dialect writers would get their money's worth by butting about in the land of the Creeks."

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Although it is no longer alive in Oklahoma, ASC was still spoken there in 1906—and in several dialects—as this item from the January 6<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Muskogee Democrat* indicates. It also suggests that the First Nations Seminoles may also have spoken the "undistinguishable pigeon" at that time.

instead to Matamoros. The Kickapoo moved to the nearby colony of El Nacimiento de los Indios, but almost all of the Indian Seminoles decided to return to Oklahoma (Opala, 1980).

Slave raids continued even in Nacimiento, however, led mainly by US Army Captain Warren Adams who was especially concerned with recapturing slaves who had escaped from Texas; some 3,000 were living as fugitives in the Sierra Madre mountains. While the effects of these raids hurt the Seminoles, much greater losses resulted from a smallpox epidemic brought back from an encounter with the Comanches in 1857, which left 74 people dead.

During their move West the Seminoles also encountered other Indian languages such as Cherokee and Biloxi; in Mexico and Texas they interacted with speakers of Kickapoo, Lipan and other languages; the word *ma:skô:ki* (Haas, 1940: 49, Loughridge, 1964) is the Creek self- designation; people of African descent are called *(s)tilûsti* in that language. The Mascogos or Black Seminoles today do not speak any Indian languages, although individuals knowing some words and expressions were alive into the 1970s and have been recorded (e.g. *kokka-yenna* “where are you going?” *kwa-he* “(I’m going) home”), but the fact that they were employed as interpreters for the U.S. Army a century before that is evidence enough that they were familiar with various Native American tongues.

### ***Mexico***

In Mexico, the Black Seminoles met another Creole-speaking group who were already there. These were the Black Creek who, like the Afro- Seminoles, were originally Africans who had become acculturated to the Indians they lived with without losing their Creole language. They were the Africans who lived with the Upper Creek in Georgia, and who had also been sent West to Indian territory. While the Afro-Seminoles, who lived with the Lower Creek and others in Florida, left Tampa Bay by boat for New Orleans and traveled to Indian Territory via the Mississippi River, the Black Creek reached Oklahoma overland. They were brought to Coahuila and left there by their Indian owners, who had been negotiating for land for them since 1834. In addition to these two groups, the community was also being joined by “state-raise” men and women escaping from slavery in Texas via an underground railroad leading south into Mexico. Such families as the Gordons and the Shields descend from these fugitives. Although members of the Brackettville and Nacimiento communities recognize their various origins and are pretty well aware of which family is Black Creek and

which is Seminole or one of the smaller contributing groups, the commonest designation used by everybody, especially with outsiders, is Seminole.



**Location of the Seminole Nation in Indian Territory**

### **Texas**

In 1870 following negotiations with Mexico, the American government sent US Cavalry Captain Franklin Perry to Nacimiento to recruit the Seminoles, because of their reputation as fighters and because of their familiarity with Native Americans, to come and help the US Army drive the Plains tribes out of West Texas so that settlement there would be less of a problem for the Whites. The Seminoles agreed, and garrisoned themselves under the leadership of General Bullis in Fort Duncan at Eagle Pass in Maverick County,

and Fort Clark at Brackettville in Kinney County, in south Texas. They were successful, and continued to serve the United States until they were discharged in 1914. For three more years they lived on their own reservation at Fort Clark, but this was taken from them, and since 1917 they have lived across the highway in Brackettville. Some returned to Nacimiento, and others have gone to live in the neighboring towns of Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Ozona and elsewhere. Some even live now in California, Missouri and New York, and still make trips from time to time to Brackettville at New Year, on Juneteenth and for Seminole Day in mid September.

The Seminoles were never informed of their rights as American Indians, and later attempts to be included on the Seminole Register and to obtain land of their own were ignored:

General Bullis was greatly honored, and his name and fame are held in reverence by the people of the Southwest frontier, but his scouts have been disbanded and their families have been moved off the Reservation at Fort Clark. They are not entitled to consideration as Indians, because they did not register under some provision of Congress, of which they knew nothing, and they get no consideration as negroes (Woodhull 1937: 127).

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007, a delegation from Oklahoma led by Representative Angela Molette (Tuscaloosa Ohoyo) officially confirmed the Black Seminoles as the United Warrior Band of the Seminole Nation (one of the so-called “Five Civilized Tribes”) in a ceremony in Brackettville, Texas at which Seminole Negro Indian Scout Association President the late William Warrior was sworn in as tribal chief.

### ***The Language***

The existence of the Seminoles’ language was kept from outsiders until 1976. Until then, the general assumption was that shared by Joe Dillard, whose *Black English* was for many years the standard work on African-American speech, and in which he reported that his field-trip to Brackettville “tended to confirm the notion that the dialect of the Black adults is essentially that of Black English everywhere in the United States” (1972: 182). And Kenneth Wiggins Porter, who had surely worked more closely with the people over a period of thirty or more years than any other outsider, expressed “embarrassment and surprise” at having worked with the Seminoles for so long without ever having learned of their language (personal communication, letter dated July 13<sup>th</sup> 1976). He had earlier called their speech “perfectly understandable

English" (Haynes, 1976: 3); thus two short stanzas in what he called "Seminole Speech" were published in the Texas press some years ago (Evans, 1990: 7) in an Amos 'n Andy-like English rather than in ASC, of which by his own admission he was unaware:

An' den, ah wuz a trablin'  
 Ouah faith an' prayuhs dey wuh too weak  
 Wid a hoss atween mah knees  
 To sabe the body whole.  
 Back to Nacimiento  
 Ol' Satan 'stroy de libin' man  
 To de springs and cypress trees!  
 But he could not tetch de soul!

In actual ASC, these verses would be

En den ah binnuh trabble  
 We fait' en preh dem bin dess too weak  
 Wit hoss dey, 'tween me knee  
 Fuh sabe de whole a we body  
 Back 'gen duh Nassum-yennuh  
 Ole Sadant 'stroy de natchul man,  
 Duh de crick en cyp'uss chree!  
 But e nubbuh tetch e soul!

In his unpublished book on the life of John Horse, Porter (1947) likewise includes several samples of what he considered to be Seminole speech, thus he has John Horse saying

"I spec's mebbe dey's Injuns likes 'em almos' as much as de w'ite folks! Suah seems lak dey's got mighty sca'ce, anyhow . . . seems lak dey day ain't no gophuhs lef' in dis whole country Ah k'n lay mah han's on! . . . dat boy heah again . . . de one wid de gophuhs.

"Less'n de head ob dis-yeah snake catches onto he tail befo' he cross de ribbuhs dis trick ain't gwine tuh wuhk! Lawdy lawdy! But dis am one smaht trick! To mahch we across behin' dat camp, across de ribbuhs, back aroun', an' obuh again! Smaht as dat fiah-trick yestiddy—and not such hahd wuhk! Wonduh who t'ought dem up? Abraham? Dat ole John Caesar? Mebbe Jumpuh? Osceola hissef? Whoebbuhs it wuh, he mighty smaht man—smaht lak Ah'd lak to be. Ah reckon dem w'ite folks'll stay in dey camp now—less'n dey 'cides go on back wheh dey come f'om an' wheh dey belongs! Lawdy lawdy! Wish't I had one ob dem fah-seein' things so Ah cud see de faces ob dem ossifuhs as we mahch past!"

This is remarkable, in light of the fact that Dr. Porter lived with the Seminoles, on and off, for over thirty years. Samples of Seminole Creole in Sivad (1993, *passim*) are likewise impressionistic and remote linguistically from actual Seminole speech, though based on this writer's published accounts of the language:

“Ah lib’ don’ deah til ah wuz nin’te’n, and ah don’ niva’ go bock  
nuh mo’. Too ho’d don’ deah.”

“Duh youngun’ dem nuh lika’ we way; dem nuh lika’ we  
duh talk lika’ dis.”

“Duh tarm we gib you a’ dese: you lay down arm and stop  
de war; you sojas go back an’ stay in der fo’ts; we Indyen cross  
ober duh Ouitaloochie [River]; an from dis time fort’ for ebber  
affer, we make de Grand Ribber duh line o’ boundary atween de  
two. We promise lib’ in peace and good tarm wi’ all white  
neighbor. Dat all got say.”

“An wuh fuh we submit? We not conquered! We whup  
you people one, two, tree time. We whup you, damn, we keel  
you well too. Mek so [why] e submit? We com’ heah gib’  
conditions, not askum.”

Lawdy Lawdy indeed...

# *Creole Gullah dialect spoken in Brackettville*

In Brackettville, Kinney County, many residents speak a language totally unintelligible to other Texans.

It is Gullah, a Creole dialect that traces its roots to West Africa in the 1600s. It is spoken in Brackettville by some of the 300 Afro-Seminole there. Gullah also is known in isolated areas of Georgia and South Carolina.

Creole is a dialect that develops between two groups with no common language. Dr. Ian Hancock, a linguist at the University of Texas in Austin, discovered the African dialect being spoken in Brackettville. African slaves developed Gullah from contacts with Europeans while waiting on the coast for shipment to the Western Hemisphere.

Ancestors of the Texas Afro-Seminole fled from their white owners in Georgia and took refuge among the Creek Indians in Florida. They inter-married, acquired Indian customs and identity but retained their own Creole dialect. Later they became known as "Seminoles" after a Spanish word for "runaway."

In 1870, about 500 of the Seminoles moved to Texas from Mexico and settled at Eagle Pass. Because they had a reputation as fighters, some were organized into a company of mounted scouts for the U.S. Army to help clear Texas of the Plains Indians. They were stationed at Brackettville's Fort Clark near the Rio Grande and many stayed on after the Indian wars ended.

The Afro-Seminole always have spoken English and Spanish. It was only recently, however, that Hancock discovered that Gullah is still used in conversations among older members of this close-knit people.



**talk of texas**

Jack Maguire

# Black Indians' language traced to African roots

Texas' "black Indians" have lived in the Southwest Texas town of Brackettville since the 1870s. Now, thanks to a University of Texas researcher, they have found a linguistic link to their African ancestors.

The people are the Afro-Seminole, the black half of a fugitive-slave and fugitive-Indian tribe formed in Florida in the 1700s — participants in an odyssey that began in Africa and took them to Georgia, Florida, Oklahoma and Mexico before settling in Texas.

The Seminoles in Texas are black by race, but Indian in culture, said the UT professor, Dr. Ian Hancock. Along with their special language, Hancock discovered a rich culture, preserved by the group's isolation.

The language is Gullah, what linguists call a "creole" — a new kind of speech born when two peoples without a common tongue invent a "pidgin" and then pass it on to their children as their native language. Gullah's roots go back to West Africa and to the English of the 1600s.

Hancock, a linguist and associate professor of English at UT, has been studying Gullah and its speakers in Texas for two years.

The Seminoles of Brackettville, a close-knit community of about 300 within the larger town of 1,500, have been "almost secretive" about the language passed down to them, Hancock said.

No one in Brackettville and none historians who has studied the Seminoles there knew they had their own language. And, cut off for more than 100 years from their relatives on the Atlantic seaboard, the Seminoles had no idea that their language was spoken anywhere else.

No idea, that is, until the day Hancock went to Brackettville after a linguistic clue he had heard in a historian's tape of a conversation with a member of the Seminole community.

Hancock asked around town about whether the Seminoles spoke any language other than English and Spanish. No one knew of any other language, but someone did direct him to a Seminole-owned bar, a gathering place for the Seminole community.

He walked in, ordered a beer, and asked the bartender if anyone in the neighborhood spoke another language besides English and Spanish. She said no, and others in the bar just shrugged off the question. He tried a couple of other questions with no more success, then sipped his beer in silence for a few minutes.

The next question he asked sounded something like, "Duh true seh hunnuh nuh know how fuh talk um?" He had asked, in Gullah, "Is it really true that nobody knows how to speak it?"

The bar patrons froze, and stared at him. "Say that again," the bartender said. When he did, she went to the phone and called someone.

A few minutes later, a middle-aged woman walked in. The woman, a schoolteacher, asked him to repeat his words one more time.

He did so, "and the woman looked at me so fiercely, I thought she was going to hit me at first," Hancock said. But then she answered his question with a stream of Gullah.

He understood completely, and replied. The woman laughed, and Hancock had his first friend in the Seminole community. He's been back many times since to talk to his friends about their culture and language.

The pidgin that preceded Gullah was born on the west coast of Africa with the slave trade, and came across the Atlantic as a creole. The only people besides the Seminoles who speak it today, Hancock said, are blacks who live on the sea islands next to Georgia and North Carolina.

# SECRET LANGUAGE OF TEXAS

IF YOU HAPPEN to drive through Brackettville, Texas, and you hear a language that sounds like the speech of space aliens don't be surprised -- it's only Gullah, a secret African language that has survived in Texas and in other areas of the United States.

Prof. Ian Hancock, of the University of Texas in Austin, is studying this phenomenon of an African Creole speech that has survived in isolated areas since the early days of slavery.

Hancock says that the Gullah, or mixture of African and English, that is spoken in Brackettville is the oldest and purest form of this secret language existing today.

"What they speak here is the earliest form of Gullah," Prof. Hancock told the Examiner. "It's very pure. The Gullah that is spoken on the East Coast, in Georgia and the Carolinas, has a lot more African in it."

"The people whose descendants live in Brackettville left the East Coast between 1699 and 1760, and fled from slavery down to Florida.

"The Spanish, who then owned that area, wanted to set up a buffer zone between the English colonies and New Spain. They figured a community of escaped African slaves would help them do that."

Hancock said that the escaped African slaves intermarried with Seminole and other Indians to form a distinct group that was neither Indian nor Black, and they retained their Gullah language through succeeding generations.

He also explained that Gullah originated on the African west coast.

Hancock — the first person to discover that Gullah is spoken in Texas — stumbled



• Professor Ian Hancock...  
the man who discovered  
Gullah in Texas

on the fact through a tape recording he heard from a

## Strange African tongue spoken in U.S. puzzles experts

university student who had been there studying American history.

Hancock doesn't know how many people speak Gullah in Brackettville. He estimates the number of speakers there to be about four hundred or so.

The news of my "discovery" was covered by the press in very different ways. This article, which appeared in one of the tabloids in 1980, refers to the language as a "strange African tongue."

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PP A1,6

# Ancestors of black Seminoles faced oppression, triumph

## Seminole meet to reaffirm heritage

■ 75 descendants of black Indians celebrate their 'full heritage' at reunion

By A. Phillips Brooks  
American-Statesman Capitol Staff

**BRACKETTIVILLE** About 75 people from across the country, including Austinite Brenda McGowan, traveled to this small desert town near the Texas-Mexico border to find a piece of their past — and stake a claim to their future.

"I wanted to know more about my family and my history, so I came here to meet people and talk," said McGowan, a descendant of black Seminoles who once patrolled the Texas frontier to clear the way for white settlers.

Though she was born in Brackettville, McGowan said she knew little of her ancestor Sampson July, a black Seminole Scout whose family migrated from Florida more than a century ago.

It was her first journey to the yearly homecoming to honor African Seminoles: black Indians whose forebears, Georgian and Carolinian blacks, fled to the Florida swamps in the 17th and 18th centuries to escape slavery. In Florida, they mixed with the Creek Indians, then fled Florida for Oklahoma, Texas and Mexico — always one step ahead of people who wanted to enslave them.

McGowan and other Seminoles from Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, California and Mexico said they came to Brackettville over the weekend to celebrate Seminole Day, and especially to remember.

"What we do is honor our dead," said William 'Dub' Warrior, a Seminole descendant from Del Rio. "We have this day set aside to honor our Seminole Scouts and to renew our history so we don't ever forget."

The Seminole Scouts were an elite band of Afro Indians whose reputation as fierce fighters prompted the U.S. government to ask them back across the Mexican border in 1870 to drive Plains Indians from southwestern Texas.

The Scouts, who numbered at least 50, were so proficient in scouting, fighting and living on the frontier that none was wounded in battles with the Plains Indians, historians say.

Those Scouts, in exchange for lands at Fort Clark in Brackettville, continued to serve in the military until 1914 when the U.S. government disbanded them and forced them off their reservation.

Warrior and others say they are trying to persuade the Pentagon and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to recognize the contributions Seminoles made to the military, and especially to Texas.

"This is a first step in reclaiming our heritage and our lands," he said.

On Saturday, Seminole descendants had a parade and a memorial ceremony at the Old Seminole School, also called the Negro School because it once was segregated. On Sunday, a ceremony was held on the burial grounds where Seminole Scouts and their descendants are buried. The school now serves as a museum full of artifacts and mementos of Seminole Scouts and their descendants.

Inside, there are etchings of Seminole Indian and African heroes — including Billy Bowlegs,

Wildcat and John Horse — that hang side by side with yellowed photographs of their descendants — the Seminole Scouts. The walls are a collage of Native American, African American and Mexican art. In one painting, the Liberty Bell hangs over the likeness of ~~Malinche~~ King Jr. In the background is a Seminole symbol.

"These things represent our full heritage," said Charles Emily Wilson, 84, a Seminole descendant who helped initiate the reunion in 1969. "Our people are red and black."

The Seminoles' odyssey began in the late 17th century, when blacks fleeing enslavement in the British colonies of Georgia and the Carolinas escaped to Spanish Florida, where slavery was illegal. There they lived among and intermarried with Creek Indians.

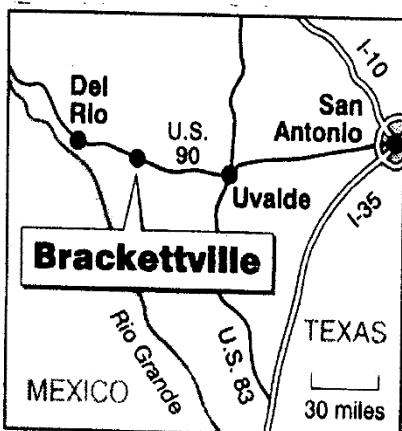
After Florida became part of the United States in the early 1800s, Georgia slave owners became infuriated that blacks could live as free people just beyond their borders.

That led to slave raids on Seminoles, which triggered wars between the U.S. military and Seminoles of all colors. Black and Indian Seminoles fought the U.S. military until 1837, when the Seminoles agreed to relocate west to Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

Though they considered themselves an independent nation, black and Indian Seminoles were located on the Creek reservation and were subject to Creek law. Refusing to submit to Creek rule, largely because Creeks held slaves, they again fled — this time to Nacimiento, Mexico. Later, the U.S. government asked them back to fight the Plains Indians. The Seminoles were garrisoned at Fort Clark and at Fort Duncan in Eagle Pass until they were disbanded.

By 1969, the Seminole history was almost lost until Wilson and others initiated the Seminole Scout Association and the annual reunion. Now Seminoles come across the country to bridge generations and share their heritage.

"My grandmother and her family was the last family to move from the reservation at Fort Clark," said Lone Roach Carper of Topeka, Kan. "It's our obligation to pass on this history."



Staff graphics

March 16-29, 1981 — Page 5

# Hancock reunites black Seminoles after 132 years

*Texas, Oklahoma communities will meet June 19 in Brackettville*

**T**WO COMMUNITIES OF BLACK SEMINOLES, separated 132 years ago after a series of slave raids on their settlements in Oklahoma, have been reunited, thanks to the efforts of a University associate professor of English.

Dr. Ian Hancock, who has studied the migration and divisions of the Seminoles for years, says the Wewoka band in Oklahoma and the Seminole community in the South Texas town of Brackettville have now re-established contact and plan a reunion in June.

The linguistics and English scholar has been in touch with the Texas Seminoles since 1976, but he only recently met the group living in Oklahoma. He introduced the two communities, who plan to meet in Brackettville June 19 (Juneteenth).

"Each group vaguely knew that there were other Seminoles — somewhere," Dr. Hancock said.

#### *Fugitive Or Runaway*

Seminole, Dr. Hancock pointed out, means fugitive or runaway, and the name was applied to a composite group of people made up of Creek Indians, Mikasuki Indian, Africans and others who escaped slavery in the British colonies and fled south into Florida.

The ancestors of the Oklahoma and Texas groups of black Seminoles settled among the Creek Indians of Florida and acquired Indian customs and identity, but retained their own creole language.

During the early 1800's the Seminoles became prey to raids by illegal slavers and eventually the majority of them moved west. They settled in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), but that was not far from the border with Arkansas, a slave state, and slave raids on their settlements continued.

Many of them moved to Texas in 1849, leaving the others in Oklahoma.

"There has been no contact between the groups since then," Dr. Hancock said.

Dr. Hancock found that the Seminoles in Texas and Oklahoma had the same surnames, culture, dress and physical characteristics, and that they spoke the same language.

On an earlier trip to Brackettville, Dr. Hancock discovered the town's group of black Seminoles spoke a creole language that linked them to their African ancestors 300 years ago.

Gullah, which contains elements of English and African languages but is distinct from each, also was spoken by the Wewoka band in Oklahoma, he discovered.

#### *Brought By African Slaves*

A creole language develops from contact between two groups with no common language. The ancestor of Gullah developed about 1600 between Europeans and Africans on the west coast of Africa, Dr. Hancock explained. Gullah was brought to the Western Hemisphere by African slaves.

Dr. Hancock hopes the reunion of the two groups will help bring attention to the Seminoles, a group of people he believes historically have got the short end of the stick.

"While settlers used the Seminoles as interpreters and to help rid West Texas of the Plains Indians, but when they had fulfilled their usefulness, they were dumped," said Dr. Hancock. "The Seminoles received nothing — no money, no land grants, nothing."

— NANCY NEFF



Aw shucks....

## ASC WORDLIST

### A

Aagie	Argue
Abbacatteh	Butterpear, avocado
Ahm	Arm
Ahnty	Aunt
Ah	Said three times at a burial
Ahty	Male given name (< Afr.)
Ahtuh	After
Ail	Bother; ail; upset. <i>Wuh d' ail yuh?</i>
All-time	Always; <i>all-time e duh aagify</i>
All-two	Both
Aloose	Loose
An, en, gwan, gwen	Will, shall (future marker)
Anch	Ant
Anyburry	Anybody
Arreeny flauwa	Wheat flour
Ashish	Ash
Apun	Apron
Ash tettuh, ash puhtettuh	Irish potato; white potato
Assit	Acid
Atoleh	tolie (see below)
Ax	Ask

### B

Baabuh	To carry on the back/shoulders ( <i>e baabuh rum cross de road</i> )
Back	Again, any more: <i>ah bin chry um one time but ah n'en chry um back</i>
Back'ood	Backwoods
Bactize	Baptize
Bahl, bile	Boil
Baid	Bed
Baig	Beg
Bakin	Bacon
Banawna	Banana
Battle	Batter
Battle-cake	A pancake; griddle cake

Beck	Bake
Been', Bein'	Being that, since ( <i>been' hunnuh dey yuh</i> 'since you're here')
Beeoleen	Violin, fiddle
Beer-cyan	Beer can (kitchen use)
Beeah-foot	Barefoot
Behime	Behind
Bex	Angry
Biddy	Tiny; <i>da duh one li'biddy chile</i>
Biddy-biddy	Chicken, very small species
Bidniss	Business
Big-eye	Greedy
Bilooxi	Biloxi (who married into the Seminoles)
Bim	Expressive of being sharply struck; <i>e slap um bim</i>
Bin	Was; were; did (past marker)
Binniguh	Vinegar
Bittle	Food
Blaahk, bluck	Black
Blaahk jrink	Herbal infusion drunk (until the early 19C) to purify the body before battle
Blaahk peppuh	Pepper, black. Used mixed with brandy for a sore throat remedy
Bleeze	Be obliged to; <i>a bleeze fuh go wit um</i>
Bline	Blind
Bline-eye	Blind
Bockit	Bucket
Boe	Boar; bore
Boe-hug	Boar
Booboo	Bug, any insect
Booodoom	Expressive of falling or sitting heavily; <i>e fuddown booodoom</i>
Boontas, boonie	Buttocks
Bout	About
Brade	Bread; tortilla
Brahkit	Brackettville
Brahndeh	Brandy (see peppuh)
Breck, bruck	Break
Bredduh	Brother
Breh'	Short for <i>bredduh</i>
Bresh	Brushland; scrubland
Bruck, breck	Break
Bruckwus	Breakfast
Bubbuh	Boy, small; little brother
Buck teet	Incisor (tooth)

Buckra (backro)	Non-Seminole person (black or white, but not Mexican)
Buffday	Birthday
Buh (but)	But
Bunyuh	Bathe; wash
Burruh	Butter
Bux	Clout; punch; box
Buyd, Bud, Bod	Bird
Buzzit	Buzzard, carrion-crow
Buzzum	Bosom; breast
By God powuh!	If God wills it!
Bynillah, byneehuh	Vanilla essence

## C

Caca	Defecate (noun and verb)
Cace	Scarce; case
Cage	Cage; Ribcage
Cah, cyah	Carry; take; accompany
Cah	Car
Cahn' (cyahn')	Cannot
Calpintero	Woodpecker
Calynuh	Carolina (m. & f. given name)
Cannubuh	Sort of (a); kind of (a)
Cast'ile	Castor oil
Cawdiant	Accordion
Cawnda	Corner
Cay	Care. <i>Me nuh cay bout um.</i>
Caze, kezz	Because
Caze-why	For the reason that; <i>e nuh come, caze-why e nuh bin feel fuh come</i>
Chap	Chop, hew
Chaw	Chew
Chawf	Chaff
Chawm	Chew
Cheehuh	Chair
Chess-not	Chestnut
Chicka-bode	Bounce-board, secured at one end, springy at the other, for amusement
Chile	Child: <i>duh huda' chile duh hunnuh?</i> See also <i>lap chile, floe chile, man chile</i>
Chillen (chirren)	Children
Chink-house	Seminole house of adobe and wattle
Chonk	Chunk, lump

Chook	Throw, toss
Chookluh	Sweetheart (male or female)
Chooneh	Have sexual intercourse
Choopit	Stupid
Chooweh	Throw; throw away; spill; abort
Choreesuh	Chorizo, a spicy sausage
Chree	Three; tree; third
Chuch	Church
Chuckla	Flipflop type slipper
Chry	Try
Chrue	True
Chune	Tune
Chupit	Stupid
Chuzdee	Tuesday
Cley	Clear; all the way
Coach	Scorch
Coase, cose	Coarse (texture)
Codjo	Male proper name (< Afr.)
Coffy (Cuffy)	Male proper name (< Afr.)
Cone	Corn
Cone-cake	Cornbread
Coob	Chicken coop
Coonteh	Palm, royal (Sp. <i>palma real</i> ), from which a flour is made.
Coosh	Cornmeal dough
Cootee	Pig, small; runt pig
Cootuh	Turtle
Cose	Coarse (texture)
Crap	Crops
Crape	Scrape
Creetuh	Creature; also, person
Crookitty	Crooked, bent
Cumeenus	Cummin seed
Cu'n	Cousin; term of address to a man
Cunjuh	Magic; a magic charm
Cunky	Tamal, tamales
'Cusin fuh	Except for; <i>dem all duh gwine,</i> <i>cusin fuh me</i>
Cut eye	Expression of anger made with eyes
Cyahb	Carve
Cyahf	Calf
Cyaam	Calm
Cyackly	To cackle, of a hen
Cyan-crow	Buzzard; also <i>John-crow</i>
Cyandle	Candle
Cyas	Cast, throw

**D**

Dad	Father
Dahdy	Father
Dahtuh	Daughter
Daid	Dead; die: <i>e en daid</i> "he will die"
Daid	Kill: "e waan daid me!"
Darruh	That: <i>darruh dey duh me own</i>
Dasso	That's what: <i>dasso e do</i>
Daze	Dare: <i>hunnuh n'en saze fuh do um</i>
Day-clean	Dawn; daybreak
Deat'	Death
Deat' rain	Rain which falls after someone dies, to wash away the spirit of the deceased
Deef	Deaf
Deef-yaze	Deaf
Deh (dey)	There
Dem	They; them; their; those
Dembo	Male given name (< Afr.)
Dem-deh	Those
Dem-yuh	These
Des'	Just; immediately that
Desso	Right there; over there
Dey	Exist; be (in a place)
Dey	Their (from Black English)
Dey pan	Be in the act of
Dey pan fool	Act the fool
Dindy	Male given name (< Afr.)
Disayuh	This (right here)
Dishyuh	This (right here)
Do	Do; please: <i>do nuh tetch um</i>
Doe	Door
Doe-sill	Threshold
Dominecka hen	A var. of small, speckled hen
Done	Had; already
Dot, dut	Dirt, earth
Dotteh, dutteh	Dirty
Drap	Drop
Draw sick	To use a cow's horn with the end cut off, the wide end placed against the body and the opening sucked on, to draw sickness from a person.
Dreen	Drain; pour off

Dronkuh	Drunkard
Dry	Emaciated, skinny
Dry-bone	Having skinny legs or arms or chest
Dry-long-so	Plain; ordinary
Duddat	To that extent; so much; <i>e bex duddat!</i>
Duh	Doing; be in the act of
Dunfa	Completely: <i>e dunfa daid</i> “he’s completely dead”
Dunkuh	Not to care: <i>e dunkuh wa e do</i>
Dyzack	Exact, exactly

**E**

Each	Itch; scratch
Each anurruh	Each other
Ebbuhway	Everywhere
Eebinso	Nevertheless; <i>ah nuh ha nuh money, eebinso ah waan’ go</i>
Eebnin	Evening
Eeduh	Either; neither: <i>Ah nuh wan’ disaya, eeduh da one dey</i>
Eeduh-so	Or else; <i>nuh walk dey, eeduh-so you en fall down</i>
Een	In
Eenjurin	During; while; <i>e drap sleep eenjurin me tory</i>
Ees	Yeast
Eesiddy, eestiddy	Yesterday
Ef	If
Eh-eh!	Exclamation of surprise
Else-so	Otherwise; or else; <i>nuh walk dey, else-so you en fall down</i>
En (gwen, gwan, gwine)	Will; shall
Ent?	Isn’t it?; indeed? <i>Ent you duh man?</i>
Enty?	Isn’t it?; indeed?
Erreh	Either: <i>me nuh like erreh one</i>
Estry	Extra
Ez	As; <i>e hit um haad ez e kin</i>

**F**

Fahs	Fast, at Christmas time
Fambly-way	Pregnancy

Fah-way	Far; far away
Fa-way pome	Very far away
Fawm	Form; to perform; to pretend
Fawm fool	Act the fool
Febbiwerry	February
Feely	Cornmeal, coarse and dry
Fench	Fence
Fice, foss	First
Fix	Bewitch(ed); put a spell on
Flabuh	Flavour
Flam	Slam, hit; <i>e flam um good</i>
Flatfome	Platform
Flawa, flouah	Flour
Floe	Floor
Floe chile	A baby old enough to be put on the ground
Flue brade	Bread type (soda-raised)
Foe	Four; for; before
Foe-fudduh	Forefathers
Foss, fice	First
Foss-daak	Dusk, twilight
Foss-time	Original, early, earliest
Fote	Fault
Fote	Fort: <i>Fote Claak</i> "Fort Clark"
Frybrade	Dough that is soda-risen and fried in balls or patties
Frypahn	Frying-pan
Fuddown, foddown	Fall, fall down
Fuh	To; for; should: <i>dis duh de wuck fuh e do</i>
Fuh	Word sometimes used to express future action
Fuh	How to: <i>me nuh know fuh swim</i>
Fuh chrue	Really
Fuh wuffuh	Why
Furruh	Father; God
Furruh-law	Father-in-law

## G

Gam	Give him; give her; give it; give then
Gedduh	Gather
Gembuh	Bat, fruit-bat
Giddish	Nervous, anxious
Gie	Give
Git	Get
Gitchuh	Arrive, get here: <i>ah des duh</i>

	<i>gitchuh</i>
Gombuh, gumbuh	Drum
G'on	Go on
Gonneh	Rat
Good fashin	Well: <i>e wale um good fashin</i>
Goutch	Gout
Grabe	Grave
Graby	Gravy
Graff	Grab hold of
Grahss	Grass
Gratuh	Grate, shred
Greezy	Greasy; also, to grease something
Gritch	Hominy grits
Groshry	Grocery, groceries
Gubmen	Government
Gwan, an	Will, shall (future marker)
Gwannin	Going
Gwen, en	Will, shall (future marker)
Gyahlic	Garlic
Gyap	<i>Yawn; e duh seddown ob' yanda duh gyap!</i>

**H**

Ha	Have
Haaky	Hear, listen: <i>hunnuh fuh haaky turrum!</i>
Hab	Have; have sex with
Haffuh	Have to; must
Hahnt	Ghost
Haid	Head
Hallapenya	Jalapeño pepper
Hambone	Hambone; a slapping song
Hantch	Haunches; <i>e seddown pon e hantch</i>
Happin	Happen
Hasty	Anxious; nervous
Heng	Hang
Henkichuh	A head-tie worn by women
Hice	Raise something, lift something
Him	Him; her; it. (emphatic) <i>Wuh duh him?</i> . See <i>um, rum</i> .
Hippen	Baby's diaper
Hoan	Long for: <i>E bin hoan fuh go home.</i>

Hoe-houn'	Horehound; a strong infusion used to induce miscarriage; infusion used to ease a sore throat
Hoodoo	Magic, spells
Hook-han	Link arms
Hongry	Hungry; hunger: <i>hongry duh daid me</i>
Hoppin' John	A dish of peas and rice (American, not originally Seminole)
Hosey	Hoarse: <i>him duh hosey-vice 'ooman</i>
Hoss	Horse
Hoss-reddish	Horseradish
How	How much (but see <i>tummuch</i> )
Huckle	Old-time adobe hut
Hucklisch	Hercules, a male name
Hug	Hog
Hug-grease	Hog-fat
Hugweed	A wild plant, "cow parsnip," <i>heracleum sphondylium</i> , eaten as greens
Hulluh	Shout
Hunnuh	You (sg. & plural); y'all; your
Hunnuh-own	Your; yours
Hut	Hot; to heat up: <i>hut de ile</i>

**I**

lbry	Ivory; the ivy plant
lle	Oil
Impittin	Impudent
Injun	Indian; Native American
Istichatti	Indian; Native American
Istilachi	Black person

**J**

Jabbuh	Nag, talk nonsense, talk incessantly
Jack-a-ma-Lantun	Halloween pumpkin
Jallus, jelly	Jealous
Jam up	Packed tight; <i>de place jam up</i>
Jaw-teet	Molars
Jeck	Reject; <i>de gyal bin jeck um kaze e oogly</i>
Jeedus Crice	Jesus Christ

Jedge	Judge
Jeh-lack	Just like
Jelly, jallus	Jealous
Jink obuh	turn cartwheels
Jinnierry	January
Jisso	Just like that; for no reason; <i>e do um jisso</i>
John-crow	Buzzard
Joo	Jamaican (among ancestors of the Seminoles)
Joog	Stab; prick; pierce
Jook	Tease, make fun of
Jookass	Jackass
Joomaican	Jamaican
Jowmp	jump

**K**

Ketch	Catch
Kezz, kaze	Because
Kezz-why	For the reason that
Kie!	Oh! Wow!
Kin	Can; be able to
Kin	Skin
Kitney	Kidneys
Kittakawnda	Diagonally opposite
Kittle	Kettle; cauldron
Kivvu, kibbuh	Cover
Konki	Tamales
Kush	Cornmeal dough
Kuttee	Little pig, runt
Kwaha	Solidify into a lump in the milk, in cheese-making. To cause this
Kwile	Quarrel
Kwinch	Squint, screw up one's eyes: <i>e kwinch e yie</i>
Kwush	Squash (vegetable)
Kyag	Keg; barrel
Kyarriseen	Kerosene

**L**

Ladduh	Ladder
Lan	Learn; teach; land
Lahf	Laugh
Laidge	Ledge
Laig	Leg
Lam	Hit, beat

Lap chile	A baby too small to creep or walk
Lash	Whip; flog
Lattice	Lettuce
Lawd	Lord; God
Lawd	Lard; dripping
Lawd a massy	Exclamation: Lord have mercy
Leak	Leak; lick; drool
Lean-fuh-down	To set, of the sun
Leddown	Lie down
Lee, leely	Little
Leff	Leave
Leepan	Apaches
Leh	Let; allow: <i>I'um go!</i>
Less	Less; unless
Lessen	Unless
Libbuh	Liver; deliver
Libe	Alive
Like-a-so	Like so; in this way; in that way
Like-so	Also; as well as; <i>John duh gwine, like-so Mary</i>
Lillibit	Little bit, a tiny bit
Lilly	Little
Lissut	Lizard
Liyer	Lawyer; liar
Lonesome	Lonely; lonliness
Long	Long; with: <i>dem go dey lohng dem chirren</i>
Long uh	Together with; in the company of
Long wid	Together with; in the company of
Loss	Lose
Low	Admit; say; opine; <i>e 'low say e en stay home tiday</i>
Lukkuh	Like; as

## M

Matches	A safety match; <i>gi' me one matches fuh light me pipe</i>
Mahmy	Mother
Mahn	Man; term of address; male of any species; see also 'ooman
Mahn chile	Male child; boy; son
Mahn cow	Bull
Mahn dog	Male dog
Mahtuh	Mortar for pounding, <i>e.g. corn</i>

Mahtuh (s)tick	Pestle
Mange	Mange; mane of a horse
Mannasable	Well-mannered
Manuity	Horse manure
Maraney	Reddish-complexioned Black person; a "red man"
Marrah	Bone marrow
Marrid	Marry; married
Mascogo	Seminole people and language, as referred to in Mexico
Mawfadite	Homosexual male
Mawnkey	Monkey
Mawsuh	Master
Me	I; me; my
Meat	Meat; flesh, both human and animal
Meck	Make; cause
Meck baby	Sexual intercourse, engage in
Meck out	To pretend; <i>e meck out say e duh we boss</i>
Meck-so (meck)	Why? <i>Meck hunnuh duh bex?</i>
Medjuh	Measure
Meet	Encounter: <i>him bin meet chrubble deh</i>
Membuh	Remember
Menooduh	Menudo (tripe)
Me-own	My; mine
Merresin	Medicine
Mettsidge	Message
Metuttih, metuttuh	Metate, for pulverizing foods
Middle-day	Midday
Middle-night	Midnight
Mischeebus	Mischiefous
Moe	More
Moe-soonuh	Sooner
Mojo	Item for doing magic; bits and pieces
Molass	Molasses
Nedduh	Another, other
Mole	Mold; fontanelle
Momps	Mumps
Moon	Woman's monthly period: <i>e deh pon e moon</i>
moon-bright	Moonlight
Mores	Most; <i>e bin teck de mores paat</i>
Mos'	Most; almost; nearly
Murruh	Mother
Murruh-law	Mother-in-law

Mumble-bee	Bumblebee
Muskeetuh, skeetuh	Mosquito
Muss	Must
Muss-don'	Must not; <i>you muss-don' talk!</i>
Mussuh	Must have
Mussy	Must be; <i>mussy e done dead</i>
<b>N</b>	
Nabbuh, navvuh	Never; didn't; negative of done
Nack	Knock
Nack-op	Beat (eggs, batter, &c.)
Nahsteh	Nasty; something unpleasant; unpleasant or rude behavior; <i>dem duh do nahsteh</i>
Nannuh	Term of address to older woman
Nannuh	Short form for Nancy
Nanny	Nanny; midwife
Naw	Neither; nor; <i>e naw me nuh duh gwine</i>
Neat	Underneath
Nebbuh	Never; didn't; negative of done.
Nedduh	Another
Needuh-so	Nor; not either; <i>me nuh duh gwine, needuh-so you</i>
Nen	Won't; will not
Nekkid	Only, sole, unmixed
Nekkity	Naked
Nerreh	Neither: <i>nerreh one inny good</i>
Nice	Near
Ninny	Breast, especially a young girl's
Nize	Noise
Nose-hole	Nostril
Noshrul	Nostril
Not	Nut
Not-negg	Nutmeg
Nubbuh, nebbuh	Never; didn't
Nuff, nuffuh	Plenty; plenty of
Nuh	Than: <i>you bigguh nuh me</i>
Nuh	And (but only to join personal pronouns): <i>me nuh him, we nuh hunnuh</i>
Nuh (nah, no)	Not; don't; doesn't
Nuh?	Isn't it? (at end of sentence)
Nummine	Never mind
Nummuh	Except that. <i>Nummuh e nen duh go</i>

Nuttin	Nothing
Nyanyam	Food
Nyew	New
Nyewnited State	United States
Nyung, young	Young
Nyus fuh	Used to

**O**

Oagly, oogly	Ugly
Oaven	Oven
Obuh	Over
Odduh	Other
Okra	Okra
Ole	Old
Ole-timuh	Old-fashioned elder person
Oncle	Uncle
One	One; a; an
One	Single; alone; <i>me one duh go</i>
One-anurruh	One another; each other
Onneet	Under; underneath
'ood	Wood
Oogly	Ugly
Ooluh	Bedbugs, head-lice
'ooman	Woman; female of any species: 'ooman cow. See <i>mahn</i>
'ooman chile	Girl child
Opin	Open
Owbree	Eyebrows
Own	Own; possessive marker

**P**

Paastuh	Pasture
Pack	Carry: <i>da chile too hebby fuh pack</i>
Panish	Spanish
Paralick	Paralysis
Parralick 'troke	Paralytic stroke
Pasolie	Hominy
Passle	Parcel; large amount
Payrens	Parents
Peach-qua't	Tin of canned-peaches (now empty) used as a vessel for liquids
Pee'-chree	Peach tree
Peepil	People

Penariah	Drink type (< Sp.?)
Pinda	Peanut (< Afr.); penis (slang)
Pingih	Cooking pot
Piss	Urine; urinate
Piss-pot	Chamber-pot
Pit	Put
Pizen	Poison
Plahnt	Plant
Poe	Poor; pour
Poke	Pork; a small bag or sack
Pokeweed	The poke salad plant, <i>phytolacca americana</i> .
Poleyo	Poisonous, but edible as greens after being rinsed several times.
Polioti	Drink made from (prob. the) pennyroyal plant
Pome	Drink type (same as last?)
Ponkin	See <i>fah-way</i>
Pooch out e mout	Pumpkin
Poon	Purse (the lips)
'Poon (spoon)	Pudding type
Poontang	Spoon
Pose, poce	Vagina (from Black English?)
Pudnuh	Suppose, supposed
Pudy	Partner; friend; companion
Pun	Pretty
Puntop	On; upon
Puppay	On; on top of
Puppuh	Prepare; also <i>pay</i> : <i>e nuh waan</i> <i>fuh puppay me de money</i>
Puppy-show	Papa, father
Pyo	Extravagant behaviour
	Pure; <i>e duh cry fum de pyo</i> <i>lonesome</i> .

**Q**

Quaha	Solidify cheese, in cheese-making
Quall	Quarrel; argue
Quash	Squash (vegetable)
Quile	Quarrel

**R**

Rahbit	Rabbit
Rahss	Backside
Range	Reins

Rigue	Rag
Rintch	Rinse, wash
Risin brade	Yeast-risen bread, fried
Risplain	Explain
Ro	Raw
Rockoon	Raccoon
Rum	Him; her; it (after some vowels)
Rustuh	Rooster
<b>S</b>	
Sabby	Know
Sadant	Satan
Sahb	Serve
Sahbin poon	Ladle
Sahf	Soft
Sallary	Celery
Same-fashin	In the same way
Same-luckuh	The same way as; like
Santapee	Centipede
Sass	Sauce
Sass	Impertinent, be impertinent
Sassuh	Whittle
Scade	Scared; afraid; fear
Seddown	Sit
Seddup	Sit up fasting at Christmas time
Seeb	Deceive
Seh	That (after say, think, &c.): <i>me yeddy seh e ahnty die eesiddy</i>
Sense	Since
Setch	Such
Settin up	A wake
Shay	Share
Shed	Shade
Shed chree	Shade-tree
Shem (shum)	See/saw him, her, it, them
Shet	Shut; close
Shiminolee	Old pronunciation of <i>Seminole</i>
Sho	Sure, very: 'e sho fat!'
Sho'nuff	Very, certainly
Shoes	Shoe
Shout	Sing hymns
Side	Side; place; beside; besides
Simanole	Seminole
Sinnamint	Cinnamon
Sisshuh	Such; such a
Skeeter	Mosquito
Skiffy	Vagina
Skreet	Street

Sno	Snore
So	Sore
Soatle	Until; to the extent that
Sote	Salt. This was never put on food that was eaten before battle.
Soty	Salty; to salt (food)
So-trote	Sore throat
Somebawdy	Somebody; someone; anyone
Soon	Soon; early; <i>soon duh mawnin</i>
Soopose, pose	Suppose
Spensul	Pencil
Sperrit	Spirit; ghost
Spile	Spoil
Spurruh	Spurs
Squail	Squirrel
Squeshun	Question
Squoy	Square
Staat neckity	Completely naked
Stan, tan	Be like, appear
Stannup	Stand
State-race	Non-Seminole; born in the USA
Stidduh	Instead of
Steeuh, stia	Stir
Stillyet	Still; yet; <i>e stillyet nuh come home</i>
Stobote	Bought, not home made
Stoe	Store, shop
Stomp	Stamp; a Seminole dance
Straance	Trance
Strick	Stricken; afflicted; <i>e strick wit de measles</i>
Studdeh, study	Ceaselessly. <i>E studdeh duh do um.</i>
Stummahl-brade	Bread type
Suck-teet	Sucking teeth; gesture of contempt
Suckuh	Such as; like; <i>e duh sing suckuh bud</i>
Sufferate	Separate
Suggle	Suck on, like a candy
Suffki	Cornmeal porridge
Suh	So
Summuch	So much; so many
Sump'm	Something
Sump-m-a-nurruh	Something or other
Sun-go-down	Sunset
Sun-hot	Sunshine

Suption	Flavour; taste; <i>dissiyuh soup</i> <i>nuh ha nuh suption</i>
Surrup	Syrup
Susso	Only, nothing but
Sweet	Tasty; agreeable (not necessarily sweet)
Swibble	Shrivel
Swindge	Burn feathers off a chicken before plucking it
Swongguh	Act proud, be boastful

**T**

Tabby	Adobe
Tabby-house	House with mud-daubed walls
Talluh	Tallow; suet
Tan, stan	Be like, appear
Tankuh	Thank you
Tawwuh	Greedy
Teck	Take
Teemuh	Dig
Teet	Tooth
Tell	Until; tell; to the extent that, so that: <i>De gyal bin suh oogly tell ah couldn look pun um</i>
Ten	Attend; <i>hunnuh fuh ten tuh de baby</i>
Tenduh	Tender; choice part of a cooked animal
Tenky	Thank you
Tenty	Occasional form of <i>enty</i> , q.v.
Tetch	Touch; attach
Tettuh, tattuh	Potato (see <i>ash tettuh</i> )
Tettuh-pu'n	Sweet potato pudding
Tickyuh	Take care; be careful
Tief	Steal; thief
Time	Time: <i>duh wuh time e dey?</i> "What time is it?"
Time	At the time that: <i>time e reach dey</i> 'by the time that he got there.'
Ting	Thing
Ting	Sting
Tip	Pinch (of an ingredient)
Tittuh	Girl, small; sister
To dat	To that extent; so; <i>e oogly to dat!</i>

Todes	Towards
Tolie	Sweet cornmeal mush with cinnamon
Too	Too, overly; also; very
Tooey	Excrement
Tote	Carry
'towry, stowry	Story
Tree	Tree
Tree	Three; third; <i>de tree place</i>
Trigo	Rice
'Trung	Strong
Tuckle	Turtle
Tuckrey	Turkey
Tud	Third
Tuh	To; at; next to; at the house of
Tummahl-brade	Bread type
Tummuch	Too much; very much; too many, very many
Tummucha	Too much, too many (plus noun)
Tunnup	Turnip
Tush, tuss	Tusks (of a javelina)
Tustanagga	Warrior leader; headman
Tusty	Thirsty; thirst: <i>tusty duh kill me</i>
Tuttuh	Father, daddy
Tuttuh	Commotion, yell, shout
Tuyn, tun, ton	Turn
Twennih	Twenty
Twicks	Between
Two	Two; second; <i>een de two place</i>

**U, V**

Ully	Early
Um	Him; her; it; them (see also <i>rum</i> )
Ut, utch	Turn out (a light): <i>ut de light</i>
Vice	Voice

**W**

Wake	Funeral wake
Wale	Spank
Wan' (want)	Want; want to; appear to ( <i>e wan' fabuh biscuit</i> 'it looks like a biscuit')
Watch	Watch, at New Year

Waw-mout'	Mouth, big: <i>shet yuh dahm waw-mout!</i>
Wawss	Wasp
We	We; us; our
We-own	Our; ours
Wep	Welt: <i>a en raise some wep pun yuh boontus chile!</i>
Weekaday	Weekday
Wey	Where
Wey	Way; away
Wey	Wear
Wey	Which; that; who; whom
Wey-ebbuh (wey-evvuh)	Wherever
Wesseh	Where
Which-way	Where
Who-da'	Who, whose
Who-da' own	Whose
Wice	While
Wickity	Wicked
Widduh	Widow
Winduh	Window
Wisseeh	Where
Woof	Wolf
Worruh	Water
Wossiname	Whatsisname
Wotmillion	Watermelon
Woyuh	Warrior, a family name
Wrop	Wrap
Wuck, wuyk, wock	Work
Wuffuh	What: <i>duh wuffuh you duh say?</i>
Wuffuh	What about: <i>wuffuh John?</i>
Wuffuh? Fuh wuffuh?	Why?
Wuh	What
Wuh-meck	Why
Wuh-time	When
Wurruh	What: <i>dat duh warruh? Warruh e wan'?</i>
Wurrum	Worm
Wuss-nubbuh	Whatever
Wussuh	Worse

## Y

Y'all	You
Yalluh	Yellow
Ya'n	Lie, tell stories
Yanduh	Yonder; over there
Yayam	Food; eat

Yeywax	Earwax
Yaze	Ear
Yedduh	Other
Yedduh-ress	Surplus; all the rest
Yeddy	Hear
Yie	Eye
Yie-worruh	Tears
Yubb	Herb
Yuh (yah)	Here
Yuhssso, yasso	Right here

Z

Zoon	Zoom; buzz; <i>de wawss diss binnuh zoon roun e haid duh chry fuh ting um</i>
Zundu	Hammer, to hammer; pound

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