

# **The Gullah People: Their Culture and How It Contributed to the Civil Rights Movement**

*Lea Blumenfeld*

*Fulton French Academy and Lincoln Elementary Technology Academy  
Intermediate Campus*

## **Contents**

**Overview**

**Rationale**

**Objectives**

**Strategies**

**Classroom Activities**

**Annotated Adult Reference Bibliography/Resources**

**Annotated Student Bibliography**

## **Overview**

The purpose of this unit is to explore the topic, “The Gullah People, Their Culture and How It Contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.” An overriding theme will be the cultural geography and African heritage of the people, showing how both their heritage and habitat helped to determine their social practices. This curriculum will be presented as an interdisciplinary unit in the library classroom with the social studies, language arts, mathematics, art, and music classes involved. Our children in the Pittsburgh Public Schools are familiar with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, but they have little or no knowledge of the other people who were the impetus and the driving force for the modern Civil Rights Movement. This unit will help to fill in the gaps for them. My target audience will be mostly grades five and eight.

## **Rationale**

In the Pittsburgh public schools American history is taught in the fifth and eighth grades. The vast majority of our children, however, are not aware of a distinct ethnic group within the borders of the United States, much less of that group’s historical and cultural significance. They also do not know about the historical connection between that ethnic group, the Gullah/Geechee, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Their knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement

leaders is largely limited to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. This unit will help to enlighten the children and will expose them to the contributions of Myles Horton, Septima Clark, Esau Jenkins, Alice Wine, and Guy Carawan as well as to the arts, literature, and enduring spirit of the people.

The Gullah/Geechee people have inhabited the Sea Islands off the coast of southern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida and the coastal area of the mainland reaching inland about one hundred miles. There are differences of opinion about the origin of the word Gullah. Some people think that it is derived from Angola, the country in West Africa (Creel 15). Others believe, as did Dr. Lorenzo Dow Turner, African-American linguist who studied many African languages as well as First Nations and European languages, that the word comes from Gola, an ethnic group located on the Sierra Leone/Liberian border (Branch 8). Likewise, there are differences of opinion about the word Geechee. Some people believe that it is derived from the Ogeechee River in Georgia (American Heritage Dictionary). Others think that it is derived from the Kissi or Kisi (pronounced gee-zee), an ethnic group in the border area near Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia (Branch 8 and Wikipedia).

Although the importation of Africans was outlawed by the South Carolina legislature in 1787 and by Congress in 1808, the practice continued in South Carolina until some time between 1808 and 1860 (Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture). It is estimated that of the Africans brought to North America during the days of the Atlantic slave trade, forty to sixty percent entered through Low Country ports. Among the many Africans who entered through the port of Sullivan's Island just outside of Charleston was Ajar, the great-great-grandfather of Malcolm X. He was sold in 1815 in Charleston (Fordham in *Charleston Black Heritage* 6-7).

The Georgia Colony was founded in 1733, but it did not legalize African slavery until the middle of the eighteenth century. From 1750 to 1858 Georgians engaged in a busy slave trading industry. The Georgia Constitution outlawed the importation directly from Africa in 1798, but the coastline was favorable to smuggling, so the practice continued until 1858. The ship *Wanderer* was the last known to bring Africans to Georgia (Work Projects Administration xvii-xviii).

The first European planters who attempted to grow rice in the Southeast failed due to lack of knowledge and experience. They purposely imported Africans from the rice-growing regions of Africa. It was their knowledge, technology, and experience that ensured the success of the industry. The indigo and cotton crops also required the importation of more skilled African people. This resulted in a majority Black population in South Carolina for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (*Charleston Black Heritage* 5). In Georgia in addition to the

rice culture, sugar cane and cotton crops made importing Africans seem desirable to Caucasian plantation owners (Work Projects Administration xvii).

During the summer months the plantation owners would retreat inland to avoid the mosquitoes, malaria, and yellow fever. This practice left the enslaved African people tending the crops with very few Europeans supervising them. Thus, African culture was able to endure and thrive. Nowhere else in the United States has African culture been retained to the extent it has among the Gullah/Geechee people. Most notable of these African retentions was the Gullah/Geechee language. "Gullah is the only lasting English-based Creole language in North America. Yet its grammar is African. . ." (Tibbetts 6). Today's Gullah/Geechee people are the direct descendants of those transplanted Africans. In North and South Carolina the people are referred to as Gullah, while in Georgia and Florida they are referred to as Geechee.

African belief systems greatly influenced the lives of the Gullah/Geechee. Although followers of traditional African religion believe in life after death, ". . . this belief does not constitute a hope for a future and better life. To live here and now is the most important concern of African religious activities and beliefs. There is little, if any, concern with the distinctly spiritual welfare of man apart from his physical life" (Mbiti 4-5). The Gullah people used both African beliefs and Christianity in dealing with their oppressors during enslavement. "The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity" (Creel 325). They may have been in a condition of physical involuntary bondage, but their minds were autonomous, their purpose was clear, and their hearts were proud.

The early African inhabitants of the Sea Islands and coastal mainland dealt with their situation of enslavement by a variety of tactics depending on their current circumstance. There are records of uprisings. In 1720 six enslaved Africans were convicted of killing a European man and a European woman. Three of them escaped (Creel 114). In 1730 a well-armed enslaved person attempted insurrection. The 1739 Stono Rebellion involving approximately one hundred enslaved people led by Angolan Cato in Stono, South Carolina had long-lasting detrimental effects. It resulted in the passage of the Negro Act, severely restricting activity and movement (McKissack 22-24).. "Additionally, indiscriminate, sporadic, knee-jerk acts of violence against the general black population were designed to instill fear and cowering among those bold enough to even contemplate a means of freedom" (Creel 115). Denmark Vesey was a literate, wealthy freedman living in Charleston who tried to purchase his wife and children. Their master refused to sell them. He was a founding member of the Hampstead A.M.E. Church in Charleston. When authorities closed the church in

1821, Vesey began to plot a rebellion that involved nine thousand people. The targeted date was July 1822. Authorities captured Denmark Vesey and some of his co-conspirators on the twenty-second of June 1822. The resulting backlash was the outlawing of the A.M.E. Church, the incarceration of black sailors while their ships were in port, and a law preventing free Blacks from returning to South Carolina (McKissack 71-82). Many African-born and American-born enslaved chose escape as a means of resistance. Some ran alone; others ran in groups. The latter “. . . typified the collective resistance spirit and kinship attachment present among rural and urban Africans and African-Americans” (Creel 117).

In later years the people of the Sea Islands made a profound and extensive impact on the Civil Rights Movement. This affected not only people of the Islands, but also the people in the entire South. The Highlander School, located in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, was the only place in the South where African Americans and European Americans could eat and sleep under the same roof. At this school, adults came together to plan voter registration and education drives. The Gullah people, with the assistance of people who came to the islands having been trained at The Highlander School, set up citizenship schools to teach people to read and write. They also coached them in the difficult material required of African Americans in order to pass the voter’s registration tests in the Southern states.

Some background information on The Highlander School is in order. Dr. Lilian Johnson, a professor at the University of Tennessee, remodeled a farmhouse at Monteagle, Tennessee in one of the most impoverished counties in the United States. She met young Myles Horton, who had grown up in Savannah, Tennessee, had been graduated from college, and was as idealistic and concerned about brotherhood as she. In 1932 Dr. Johnson offered Myles the farmhouse and grounds on the Cumberland Plateau for a year to put a program in place. At the end of the year, if the program was ongoing, Myles could have the building and the grounds. He established a school to improve the lives of people in the area. It provided workshops for community activists working for economic and social justice. Highlander was involved in building the progressive labor movement from 1932 to the mid-1940s. It was based on Christian principles. What set it apart from any other school was that it was integrated. Black and white ate, worked, and slept under the same roof while they were engaged in residential adult workshops. For those times, especially in the South, that was a very radical institution. This was in keeping with Dr. Johnson’s vision (Clark 122-127, [highlandercenter.org](http://highlandercenter.org)).

The Highlander Folk School expanded and reached out to other communities in the South. Septima Clark of Charleston had lost her long-standing public school teaching job because she would not deny her membership in the NAACP.

She was made director of workshops at Highlander. Ms Clark had met Esau Jenkins of Johns Island and encouraged him to go to Highlander Folk School for a residential workshop. Jenkins had completed only the fourth grade when he had to drop out of school to work. However, after he was married, he went to a minister's house at night for furthering his education, then to night school in Charleston. To support his family he planted cotton and then grew vegetables. When he saw that most of the storeowners who purchased his vegetables in the city were Greek, he decided to learn the Greek language. Jenkins studied Greek for a year and a half. This enabled him to increase his profits. He also purchased buses and first transported children to school and then longshoremen and tobacco workers between St. Johns Island and Charleston. Mr. Jenkins would help people on his bus whenever they had some down time, waiting for passengers or arriving early. One day Alice Wine told Jenkins that she wanted to become registered to vote. She hadn't much formal schooling and couldn't read the South Carolina Constitution or the South Carolina voting laws. Esau spent extra time helping her. She passed the voters registration test. She actually had memorized the Constitution section that was required. After she passed the test, she wasn't satisfied to rest on her laurels. She asked to be taught to read and write.

Esau realized that Johns Island needed a school to combat adult literacy. He asked Highlander to help obtain a building for a school. Many residents didn't even know their children's birth dates because they couldn't read. Highlander Folk School lent money to the Islanders to purchase a discarded school building and found a woman, Bernice Robinson, to teach. She protested at first because she lacked a college degree. However, Septima Clark specifically wanted someone who had not been schooled in educational theory. She thought it was more important that the instructor be one of the people, someone the people would accept, and one who wouldn't be encumbered by educational protocol.

Highlander was now involved in extension work. The first students in the adult literacy class on Johns Island stated what they wanted to learn. Included in their requests were how to write their names, how to read the election laws to qualify for voter registration, how to fill out order forms for mail ordering, and how to fill in money order forms. Septima Clark composed workbooks teaching the adults about social security laws, tax laws, and laws about the functions and requirements of school boards. (Clark 135-150). At the conclusion of the first two adult literacy sessions, all of the pupils passed and obtained their registration certificates. The first session was two months long with night classes twice a week. The second session was three months long with twice-weekly night classes. When the school began in 1957, only two hundred people on Johns Island were registered to vote. By 1962 more than eight hundred Islanders were registered (Clark 153-155).

In 1958 people from Wadmalaw Island also wanted help to obtain adult literacy classes on their island. When Edisto Island obtained their literacy classes, they also added sewing so that the women could make clothes for their families (Clark 160). The residents on Daufuskie wanted a road to the mainland in addition to learning how to register to vote. The road was needed to provide communication, bring medical care, and allow delivery of goods from the mainland to the Island's people. There were no telephone lines, only a two-way radio. Both medical care and delivery of goods required an extra fee for transporting people or things by boat to the island. Thus, another extension school was added to the Highlander network (Clark 163-166). Approximately five or six thousand African Americans were registered to vote in Charleston County in 1954. Ten years later fourteen thousand were registered! (Carawan 140-150, Clark 136-161).

Not satisfied with merely enfranchising African Americans to vote, Jenkins felt that they should be taught the meaning of the ballot. This included the number of Congressional districts there were in South Carolina, the number of Senators in the state, the number of State Representatives and Senators from the area, and who the state and national Representatives and Senators were. "I started what we called the 'second step' political education school . . ." (Jenkins in Carawan 151).

Jenkins was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County and then ran for the school trusteeship on Johns Island. He ran so that African Americans would see his name on the ballot. Out of the four persons running, he came in third, beating out a Caucasian candidate. That election about ninety-nine percent of eligible African Americans voted (Carawan 150-151).

Someone offered a bribe to Esau Jenkins to halt the voter registration project for the Gullah people and to encourage him to cooperate with the Caucasian people. Jenkins stood fast and demanded that the Gullah children on Johns Island have a high school and transportation to and from the school as did the Caucasian children. Prior to that the African American children had to walk eight to ten miles each day in inclement and fair weather obtain an education. They also had to wait when they arrived at the school building for the teachers to get there. Then the children had to go back outside to fetch wood for the fire to heat the school. The ratio of Gullah children to teachers was fifty to one from first through seventh grades. After successfully obtaining the high school for the Gullah children, the Johns Island people secured a consolidated elementary school for the Gullah children. Then there was a struggle to procure materials already in place in the Caucasian schools. When Jenkins refused to succumb to the bribe, one of his plantation customers dropped his delivery service (Carawan 152-154).

An added bonus for registering so many Gullah people to vote was that they now were able to vote for judges. In this way they could hold elected judges accountable for their actions. Prior to this, the Gullahs endured the most ridiculous miscarriage of judgments. Caucasians in the court system were awarded judgments beneficial to them no matter how grievous their errors.

Esau helped to organize the Progressive Club on Johns Island where voter registration was required for membership. The members pooled their money so that they could purchase a building and so that they would have a fund for bonds or fines imposed by the courts. After paying for the building, which they used for a store, members were paid dividends. Then they bought a larger building for the residents of Johns Island, James Island and Wadmalaw Island to utilize as a recreation center and as a meeting place for workshops (Carawan 154-159).

Here were the poorest people in less than optimum circumstances pooling their money and accomplishing for themselves what others had just by virtue of being Caucasian. They succeeded in establishing and operating successfully a big consumers' cooperative, a large recreation center serving three islands, and an adult education and voter registration center. They held talent shows and record hops at the building. Throughout all of his accomplishments, Esau Jenkins faced some negative reactions. Many Gullah people were afraid to stand beside him in his various struggles because of what the Caucasian people would think. They didn't want to rock the boat. They feared for their jobs. Others couldn't believe that poor, functionally illiterate African Americans could band together, stay together, and accomplish much.

As adult workshops at Highlander Folk School increased, citizenship schools sprang up throughout the South, enabling people to read, write, perform elementary math, and register to vote. "The Citizenship Schools played a critical role in building the base for the Civil rights Movement by helping those African Americans who were among the 2.5 million functional illiterates in eight Southern states . . ." (highlander center.org).

In 1959 the District Attorney General authorized a raid on Highlander Folk School. Septima Clark, by that time Director of Education was charged with possessing more than a quart of whiskey. Myles Horton was also charged with possession of liquor even though he was actually in Europe at that time! Others were charged although no liquor was found. The Tennessee General Assembly revoked the charter of Highlander Folk School. It was generally thought that the real issue was integration. The Tennessee State Supreme Court upheld the right of the lower court to close the school. The United States Supreme Court refused

to hear the case (Clark 224-227). The school lands and properties were confiscated.

While the school was dealing with legal problems caused by revocation of Highlander's charter, the school was relocated to Knoxville under a new charter. The Citizenship School Program was relocated to McIntosh, Georgia in 1961. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference took over operation of the program. The first teachers there were Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton from Petersburg, Virginia. Esau Jenkins' plan for first step and second step schooling was put into effect in these schools as well. Grass roots leaders were trained. Fanny Lou Hamer of Mississippi was one, and Hosea Williams was a supervisor. Andy Young remarked that the whole Civil Right Movement was based on the citizenship schools. By 1970 tens of thousands of teachers had been trained based on the Johns Island program (Carawan 203-205).

One feature of the citizenship schools was a singing program introduced on Johns Island by Guy Carawan, a musicologist and sociologist who spent several years on the Island. The program served two purposes: to preserve cultural heritage and to build collective consciousness. Once when he was singing "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," Alice Wine presented a different version to him, one that had been sung on Johns Island. "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" became an anthem of the Civil Rights Movement as Carawan sang it at gatherings throughout the South. "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" during the Food and Tobacco Workers strike in 1945. Myles Horton's wife Zilphia, known for her musical prowess, taught it to Pete Seeger, who in turn taught it to Guy Carawan. It became another Civil Rights anthem sung at countless demonstrations and gatherings (Carawan ix and 209). The Georgia Sea Island Singers, Geechees from St Simons Island, and the Moving Star Hall Singers, Gullahs from Johns Island, sang and shouted at a number of places throughout the South, inspiring and motivating Civil Rights workers (Johnson Reagon in Carawan 235-236).

Together the workshops, citizenship schools, cooperatives, and songs helped to empower millions of African Americans throughout the South and to dismantle pervasive discrimination and Jim Crow laws and practices which held back not only African Americans, but the United States as a whole. Thus, the Gullah/Geechee people, who were made fun of, looked down upon, disrespected, and denied equal access, displayed the pride, practicality, and community-mindedness of their ancestors in facing the burdens of deprivation, discrimination, racism, and classism dealt to them by their governments and by their fellow citizens.

To update the Gullah/Geechee story, in 2006 the National Heritage Areas Act was passed designating ten new national heritage sites, one of which was the

Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The Corridor is to recognize important contributions of the Gullah/Geechee people, assist in the preservation of folklore and folk crafts, and assist in identifying and preserving data and artifacts. A Commission was established by this same Act to develop and manage the Heritage Corridor.

## **Objectives**

The overall objective of the curriculum unit is for the classes to learn about the existence of, significance of, and present precarious condition of, the Gullah/Geechee people. This is in alignment with Citizenship Standard #1. Specific objectives follow.

Citizenship Standard #2 will be fulfilled by the classes' use of maps to identify the areas of Africa from which the Gullah/Geechee people were brought. Their locating the Sea Islands and coastal mainland areas where the Gullah/Geechee people live using lines of longitude and latitude will also satisfy Citizenship Standard #2. Calculating distances between West Africa and the Sea Islands as well as between the Islands and the mainland, and among the Islands is in keeping with Mathematics Standard #2.

Learning how discrimination and the resulting illiteracy adversely affected the Gullah/Geechee people aligns with Citizenship Standards #4 and #9. Creating a timeline of Gullah/Geechee history will fulfill Citizenship Standard #1.

Correctly employing information search strategies to locate information on the crops grown by the Gullah/Geechee will satisfy Information Literacy Standard #1 and Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standard #1.

Reading the first-hand accounts of the Gullah/Geechee who were part of the Citizenship Schools and the interviews with the Georgia residents who had been enslaved or whose parents and grandparents had been enslaved will help the pupils distinguish between primary and secondary resources that is a part of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standard #1.

The Standards utilized in this curriculum unit are listed in the Appendix.

## **Strategies**

To engage the interest of the pupils and to accommodate various learning styles, I shall present the material in several ways. Films will enable the classes to see the beauty of the Gullah Islands. They will also expose them to the sound of the

Gullah language. Compact discs will permit the children to hear the songs of the Gullah/Geechees: the work songs, game songs, and songs from the Civil Rights Movement. They will attend a performance of the African dance troupe to which I belong so that they can see Gullah/Geechee dance and see the songs choreographed. Large maps from the United States Department of the Interior will allow them to see where the Sea Islands are, how many they are, and the many waterways on and amongst the islands. Maps of the places in Africa from where the Gullah came as well as labels of the various African ethnic groups will help the students to see where the Gullah origins are. Illustrations in books as well as prints and photographs will show the works of Gullah artists and artisans. I'll show the students raw cotton from the Sea Islands. The art teacher and I shall collaborate on a project using indigo with the classes. For some research projects, the pupils will be arranged into cooperative learning groups. Within those groups they will utilize reference tools, both print and electronic. Topics such as root working and burial customs evoke much interest from the classes, so the groups can present information on them to the whole class. Working together to construct a timeline will help classes put historical events into perspective. Even children who are not inclined to read on their own tend to listen when I use storytelling from the Gullah/Geechee culture, so I shall do so. The students will compare these stories with others they know, and they will thus be engaged in one of the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. The other teachers working on this unit and I shall serve Gullah/Geechee cuisine to further engage the senses of the classes.

## **Classroom Activities**

The fifth and eighth grades both meet weekly for one period of library science. Presenting the unit in an interdisciplinary fashion will enable the classes to encounter the topic more than one period a week.

Showing the film, *Family across the Sea*, will introduce the pupils to the close connection between Africa and the Gullah/Geechee people. I shall show the entire movie to the eighth graders, but selected parts to the fifth graders.

I'll use the map of Africa with the labeled ethnic groups; the maps of the coastal mainland of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; and the maps of the Sea Islands to indicate where the Gullah/Geechee came from and where they were destined to land. These will be in conjunction with my brief oral presentation of the history of the Gullah/Geechee. The classes will calculate the distance traveled in the Middle Passage utilizing the map scale. To provide some inkling of the horrors of the Middle Passage I shall show the illustrations from

Tom Feelings' *The Middle Passage* and will read Julius Lester's *From Slave Ship to Freedom Road*.

I shall show pictures of Sullivan's Island where many slave ships landed. I'll share my experience on the Island where my dance troupe performed a ceremony honoring the memory of those who landed there. We formed a circle joining hands where we listened to a Yoruba prayer by one of our drummers, witnessed a libation ceremony, said aloud names of some of the ancestors who had died, and danced at the water's edge to the rhythms of the drums. It was incredibly moving and reminded me of my experience at Elmina Castle in Ghana where I was inside the room from which the captured Africans left to board ships never to see or return to their native land. I touched the same walls that the African ancestors did. I saw the passageway that they traveled out to the ships. Having personal experiences at both ends of the Diaspora will help me more vividly present the material. Being there is so much more enlightening than reading about it or even seeing photographs of it. I walked in their footsteps and felt very humbled and honored to do so.

Since the past tends to be a jumbled mass for young people, they will work with the social studies teacher and me to create a timeline of Gullah/Geechee history.

Within cooperative learning groups the classes will use the library and the computer lab to look up the crops that Gullah/Geechee people planted and harvested. They will learn about indigo, Sea Island cotton, rice, and sugar cane.

The eighth graders will read some of the interviews with the Geechees who had been enslaved or whose parents or grandparents had been enslaved. They can discern the close links with African culture from these readings.

Some of the textbook literature at both the fifth and eighth grade levels contains stories from the Civil Rights Movement. Although I was involved in the Movement, I had not realized how extensive the problem of illiteracy was and how greatly it had impeded progress. Exposing the classes to the reminiscences of Esau Jenkins and Septima Clark, among others, will serve to provide the children with first-hand accounts of dealing with this problem as well as with the overt racism.

The science teacher will present information on some of the herbs and roots found on the Sea Islands. The pupils can make charts showing the various uses of them. She and I will have the pupils read how the encroachment of industry has greatly impacted on the Gullah/Geechee people's ability to earn a living from

their environment, have access to their waterways for recreation, and have access to their cemeteries.

The art teacher will share works of Gullah/Geechee artists Jonathan Green, Diane Britton-Dunham, Arianne King Comer, Ernest Butts, Jr., and Cassandra Gilliam with the classes. She and I shall show examples of the basketry, the ironwork, and the houses. Together we can present an indigo-dying project. The music teacher and I shall collaborate on helping them learn some of the songs sung by the Gullah/Geechee people.

The students will listen to and read Gullah/Geechee folktales and modern literature. Conjuring tales hold particular interest for them. They will dramatize a story of their choosing.

Reading how the Gullah/Geechee people piloted the program of the Citizenship Schools that were used throughout the South will demonstrate to the pupils that a determined people acting cooperatively has overcome tremendous odds and accomplished great changes, having a rippling effect not just on their habitat, but in the South as a whole.

As a culminating event, the teachers involved in the unit will serve Gullah/Geechee cuisine. We shall exhibit the work of the classes, the artwork, the written projects, and the dramatized story.

**Mus tek cyear a de root fa heal de tree” “You need to take care of the root in order to heal the tree.”**

**A Gullah Proverb**

## **Annotated Adult Reference Bibliography/Resources**

### **Books**

Bennett, John. *Doctor to the Dead, Grotesque Legends and Folk Tales of Old Charleston* New York. Rinehart, 1946. Twenty-three folktales, most of which are too lengthy and involved to interest children. Often included in bibliographies.

Brown, Cynthia Stokes, editor. *Ready from within, Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement* Navarro. Wild Trees Press, 1986. Clark's reminiscences of her life with emphasis on the Movement.

Burn, Billie. *An Island Named Daufuskie* Spartanburg. The Reprint Company, 1991. Nineteen chapters and seventeen appendices. Extensive bibliography and index, although index is not sufficiently detailed. Illustrated with black and white photographs, prints, and maps. Covers history, topography, plantation life, culture, industry, family records, slave prices, Gullah vocabulary and stories. Author is former Daufuskie postmaster.

Carawan, Guy and Carawan, Candie. *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?, the People of Johns Island, South Carolina; Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs* Revised and expanded edition. Athens. The University of Georgia Press, 1966, 1989.

Carawan, Guy and Carawan Candie, compilers. *We Shall Overcome! Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement* Compiled for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. New York. Oak Publications, 1963. Contains forty-eight freedom songs, many accompanied by explanations of how and when they were adapted from spirituals, hymns, labor songs, rock and roll songs, and pop songs. A list of contributors and where they were as of the book's publication. Very informative and valuable, showing how the songs supported and consoled those on the front lines of the Movement.

Carter, Danella. *Down-Home Wholesome, 300 Low-Fat Recipes from a New Soul Kitchen* New York. A Dutton Book, 1995. Preface in which author tells of importance of food to enslaved people and introduction in which she tells of finding no books crediting African influence on Southern cooking. Includes suggested menus, glossary, selected bibliography, and index. Sixteen chapters, one of which is "Gullah: Sea Island Flavor."

Clark, Septima Poinsette with LeGette Blythe. *Echo in My Soul* New York. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1962. Fascinating autobiography tracing Clark's teaching and public service from 1916 to 1962.

Conroy, Pat. *The Water Is Wide* New York. Bantam Books, 1972, 2002. The *New York Times* best selling author writes of his experience teaching on Yamacraw Island and fighting the racist and classist system governing the teachers. The book was made into a film.

Creel, Margaret Washington. *"A Peculiar People," Slave Religion and Community-Culture among the Gullahs* New York. New York University Press, 1988. Divided into four sections: The African Background, Early Carolina's Religious Environment, 1670-1775, Christianity and Autonomy: A Struggle in Black and White, and The Socioreligious Community: An African-

Christian Synthesis. Very informative introduction and prologue, notes on each section.

Dabbs, Edith M. *Face of an Island, Leigh Richmond Miner's Photographs of Saint Helena Island* New York. Grossman Publishers, 1970. A collection of large, clear, black and white photographs of people, buildings, artifacts, and scenery of St. Helena with informative captions. Useful foreword. Endpapers are plantation maps of St. Helena.

Daise, Ronald. *Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage* Orangeburg. Sandlapper Publishing, Inc., 1986. A photographic essay of St. Helena Island with recollections by the people themselves. Author is a native of St. Helena whose parents were graduates of the Penn School. Photographs from late 1800's and early 1900's.

Dash, Julie. *Daughters of the Dust* New York. Dutton, 1997. Expands the story from the award-winning film of the same title, following the characters to whom we were introduced in the film. Hagar's granddaughter leaves Harlem to do anthropological research among her own Gullah people on the Sea Islands. Fiction.

Green, Jonathan. *Gullah Images: The Art of Jonathan Green* Columbia. University of South Carolina Press, 1996. A collection of large color plates of Green's paintings. Biographical information on the Gullah artist. Index.

Herskovitz, Melville. *Myth of the Negro Past* Gloucester. Peter Smith, 1941, 1958. Nine chapters with useful notes on each chapter. A bibliography and a supplementary bibliography as well as a through index. A pioneering study by one of the leading scholars on Africanisms in North America.

Holland, Rupert Sargent, editor. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne Written from the Sea Islands of Suth Carolina 1862-1884* New York. Negro Universities Press, 1912, 1969. Foreword by Alice N. Lincoln. No index. Towne was a Pittsburgh native.

Holloway, Joseph E., editor. *Africanisms in American Culture* Bloomington and Indianapolis. Indiana University Press, 1990. Ten essays by Holloway, Asante, Mulira, Creel, Hall, Brandon, Thompson, Maulsby, Robinson, and Philips. Very informative introduction. Notes follow each essay. Identification of contributors. Thorough index. Illustrated with black and white photographs and line drawings.

Holloway, Joseph E. and Vass, Winifred K. *The African Heritage of American English* Bloomington and Indianapolis. Indiana University Press, 1993. A compilation of African retentions in American English divided into five sections. Includes place names, folklore, food culture, and religion. A biographical dedication to Lorenzo Dow Turner. Maps and tables. Well indexed.

Johnson, Guion Griffis. *A Social History of the Sea Islands, with Special Reference to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* Chapel Hill. University of North Carolina Press, 1930. Nine chapters devoting particular attention to the labor culture of cotton, rice, and indigo and the effects of the Civil War. Thorough index. Illustrated with black and white photographs.

Johnson, Guy Benton. *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina* Hatboro. Folklore Associates, Inc., 1930, 1968. Divided into three sections: Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore. Bibliography and index. Very informative foreword by Don Yoder, placing Johnson's assertion that Gullah derives more from English and overseers' baby talk than from African sources in juxtaposition with Turner and Herskovitz. Foreword excerpts Johnson's response to Herskovitz and Turner.

Jones, Bessie. *For the Ancestors: Autobiographical Memories* Collected and edited by John Stewart. Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1983. Told by the last active member of the original Georgia Sea Island Singers, Ms Jones recounts her life as a sharecropper, farmhand, migrant worker, domestic servant, railroad camp cook, and cannery worker. She won awards for educational programs and recordings.

Jones-Jackson, Patricia. *When Roots Die, Endangered Traditions on the Sea Islands* Athens. University of Georgia Press, 1987. Covers social history and organization, folk literature, texts, and language. Map showing South Carolina Sea Islands. Four appendices, extensive notes, selected bibliography. Thorough index. Foreword by Charles Joyner. Preface informative about author's research, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary research and of recognizing the dignity and knowledge of the people being studied. She worked with Faith Mitchell (See her entry in adult bibliography.) and traveled to the Sea Islands with Muriel Miller Branch (See her entry in student bibliography.). Touching memorial tribute to Jones-Jackson, who was killed doing National Geographic research on Johns Island.

Joyner, Charles. *Down by the Riverside, a South Carolina Slave Community* Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1984. A cultural history and study of slave existence that includes emotional impact of the institution. Examines the cultural

change that took place within the enslaved community. Notes on each section. Index.

Joyner, Charles. *Shared Traditions: Southern History and Folk Culture* Urbana. University of Illinois Press, 1999. Essays on the relation between history and culture in the South with a reflection on the future of folk culture. Emphasizes the distinctive Southern culture formed from African, First Nations, and European heritages. Extensive notes. Well indexed.

Joyner, Charles W. *Folk Song in South Carolina* Columbia. University of South Carolina Press, 1971. Five chapters on significance of folk music, ballads, religious songs, and seculars. Songs accompanied by information on where they were collected and by whom.

Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy* New York. Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1969. Divided into twenty chapters, book includes concept of time and its importance in understanding African religion and philosophy. Author is a minister, born and reared in Africa and approaches topic from an African viewpoint. He also points out errors of people who have approached the subject with lack of understanding. Preface, select bibliography, indices, and map showing ethnic groups.

Mitchell, Faith. *Hoo Doo Medicine: Gullah Herbal Remedies* Columbia. Summerhouse Press, 1999. Good history of the Islands followed by a directory of various herbs and roots with African American, European, and First Nations uses. Black and white line drawings of plants. She worked with Patricia Jones-Jackson. (See her entry in the bibliography.)

Monroe, Mary Alice. *Skyward* Waterville. Thorndike Press, 2003. Novel set in coastal South Carolina where a nurse becomes nanny to a diabetic child. An elderly Gullah man teaches the family caring, patience, and attentiveness as he cares for raptors.

Robinson, Sallie Ann with Gregor Wrenn Smith. *Gullah Home Cooking the Daufuskie Way: Smokin' Joe Butter Beans, Ol' 'fuskie Fired Crab Rice, Sticky-bush Blackberry Dumpling, & Other Sea Island Favorites* Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Work Projects Administration, Georgia Writers' Project, Savannah Unit. *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes* Athens. University of Georgia Press, 1940. Foreword by Guy B. Johnson (See entry in the bibliography.) Informative introduction providing some historical background. A collection of field reports amongst the Geechee, showing customs

and beliefs linked to Africa. Interviews with Geechees from nineteen islands and two Savanna neighborhoods. Some of the interviewees had been enslaved, while others were the children or grandchildren of enslaved people. Appendix gives African parallels. Illustrated with black and white photographs.

## Pamphlets

“South Carolina’s Lowcountry—A Port of Entry for Enslaved Africans” by Damon Fordham in Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture at the College of Charleston. *Charleston Black Heritage Visitors Guide* Charleston. Atlantic Publication Group LLC, 2006.

## Periodicals

“African Slave Trade, the Cruellest Commerce” by Colin Palmer in *National Geographic* Volume 182, Number 3, September 1992.

## Video Recordings and Films

Bundschuh, Werner, writer. *Yonder Come Day* Del Mar. McGraw Hill Films, 1975. Director and producer Milton Fruchtman. 16mm film and video recording. Documents the efforts of Bessie Jones, last active member of the original Georgia Sea Island Singers, to pass on the songs, games, and traditions of the Gullah past to new generations. Born in 1902, Ms Jones learned many of the songs from her grandfather, who had been brought from Africa and died at 105. 38 minutes.

Dash, Julie, writer and director. *Daughters of the Dust* New York. American Playhouse Theatrical Films, a Geechee Girls Production: Kino on Video, 1992. Cinematographer Arthur Jafa. A breathtakingly beautiful film of a multigenerational Gullah family most of whose members are about to leave their Sea Island home to live on the mainland at the turn of the century. There is conflict between those members who want to retain the old ways and those who want to move on. Fiction. Many authentic elements of Gullah culture. Only character who speaks with credible Gullah accent is the matriarch.

*Family across the Sea* South Carolina ETV Network, distributed by California Newsreel, San Francisco, 1990. Director Tim Carrier. Narrated by librarian and author Augusta Baker, film documents the travels of Gullah South Carolinians to Sierra Leone. Includes scenes from past and present, interviews with historians including Lorenzo Dow Turner, examples of Africanisms retained in language, music, and folk crafts. 56 minutes.

## Annotated Student Bibliography

### Books

Banks, Sara Harrell. *A Net to Catch Time* New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. A picture book depicting a day in the life of a Gullah family. A Gullah calendar gives Gullah terminology for times of day according to nature and activities. Very useful glossary and author's note. Illustrated by Scott Cook.

Beltam, Sandra. *Beauty, Her Basket* New York. Greenwillow, 2004. Illustrated by Cozbi Cabrera. Story of a little girl who learns about the sea grass baskets and the ancestors while visiting her Sea Islands grandmother.

Branch, Muriel Miller. *The Water Brought Us, the Story of the Gullah-Speaking People* New York. Cobblehill Books/Dutton, 1995. Eight chapters on the Sea Islanders' history, culture, impact of wealthy developers, and the future of the Gullah people. Extensive bibliography, index. Mistakenly attributes Laura Towne's birthplace to Philadelphia. Illustrated with photographs by Gabriel Kuperminc and old prints.

English, Karen. *Neeny Coming, Neeny Going* Bridge Water Paperback, 1996. A picture book about two cousins, one of whom left Daufuskie Island to live on the mainland. When Neeny returns for vacation, her cousin is disappointed to discover that she has changed. Illustrated by Synthia Saint James.

Feelings, Tom. *The Middle Passage, White Ships, Black Cargo* New York. Dial Books, 1995. A collection of textless pen and ink and tempera drawings dramatically depicting the Middle Passage. Autobiographical foreword by Feelings explaining his journey to, and difficulty with, producing this monograph and its lasting effect on him. Introduction by Dr. John Henrik Clarke. Bibliography and footnotes. Map of the African Diaspora in the Americas.

Hamilton, Virginia. *Her Stories, African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales* New York. Scholastic, 1995. A collection of sixteen tellable folktales and three autobiographical recollections of elderly women. Includes Gullah stories. Helpful notes follow each tale. Useful Sources section at back of book. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon.

Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly, American Black Folktales* New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. Twenty-four tellable folktales divided into three sections. Two Gullah stories included. Useful notes follow each story. Extensive bibliography. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon.

Hamilton, Virginia. *A Ring of Tricksters, Animal Tales from America, the West Indies, and Africa* New York. Scholastic, 1997. A collection of folktales with notes accompanying each story. Includes a Gullah tale. Lacks specific sources. Illustrated by Barry Moser.

Hamilton, Virginia. *When Birds Could Talk & Bats Could Sing: the Adventures of Bruh Sparrow, Sis Wren, and Their Friends* New York. Scholastic, 1996. Eight folktales written in cante fable fashion. Helpful afterword. Illustrated by Barry Moser.

Hooks, William H. *The Ballad of Belle Dorcas* New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1990. A Gullah folktale of a young free woman who seeks help from a conjure woman to ensure that she and her beloved, who is enslaved, may remain together. Insightful author's note. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

Hooks, William H. *Freedom's Fruit* New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. A Gullah folktale of an enslaved conjure woman who utilizes her power to obtain freedom for her daughter and her daughter's boyfriend. Illustrated by James Ransome.

Jaquith, Priscilla. *Bo Rabbit Smart for True, Tall Tales from the Gullah* New York. Philomel Books, 1995. Six folktales based on Albert H. Stoddard's work. Good notes on parallel tales and other versions of the stories. Illustrated by Ed Young.

Krull, Kathleen. *Bridges to Change, How Kids Live on a South Carolina Sea Island* New York. Lodestar Books/Dutton, 1995. Depiction of contemporary children living on St. Helena Island. Illustrated with many colored photographs. Part of A World of My Own series. Index and bibliography. Photographs by David Hautzig.

Lester, Julius. *From Slave Ship to Freedom Road* New York. Dial Books, 1998. Lester's text written to accompany Rod Brown's paintings, which have been displayed as an exhibition entitled "From Slavery to Freedom" in museums and showings. Text includes three imagination exercises for Whites and Blacks. Note from author asking readers to imagine themselves in the paintings.

Raven, Margot Theis. *Circle Unbroken: the Story of a Basket and Its People* New York. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004. Illustrated by E. B. Lewis. A girl's grandmother tells her about her family history tracing back to Africa, how the sweetgrass basket tradition also traces back to Africa, and how the bridges between the Sea Islands and the mainland have endangered the old ways.

San Souci, Robert D. *Sukey and the Mermaid* New York. Four Winds Press, 1992. Story of a young girl who is treated harshly by her stepfather and finds solace and advice from a mermaid. Set in Sea Islands. Author's note very informative. One of few African American folktales involving a mermaid. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

Siegelson, Kim. *Dancing the Ring Shout* New York. Hyperion Books for Children, 2003. A young boy who is invited to dance in the circle for the first time cannot think of what to bring for accompanying the singing at the ring shout. Illustrated by Lisa Cohen.

Siegelson, Kim. *In the Time of the Drums* New York. Hyperion Books for Children, 1999. Story of an American-born boy and his African-born grandmother who leads the Ibo people landing at Teakettle Creek to insurrection. Based on Gullah folklore. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

Siegelson, Kim. *The Terrible, Wonderful Tellin' at Hog Hammock* New York. Harper and Row Publishers, 1996. Story of a young Gullah boy who is expected to uphold family tradition and participate in a storytelling contest. He fears he won't live up to memory of his grandfather. Illustrated by Eric Velasquez.

## Maps

AAA. Alabama, Georgia State Series.

AAA. Florida State Series.

AAA. North Carolina, South Carolina State Series.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service, Office of Coast Survey. United States Atlantic and Gulf Coasts including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

U. S. Department of Interior, U. S. Geological Survey. Beaufort Quadrangle.

U. S. Department of Interior, U. S. Geological Survey. Frogmore Quadrangle.

U. S. Department of Interior, U. S. Geological Survey. Jekyll Island Quadrangle.

U. S. Department of Interior, U. S. Geological Survey. St. George Southwest Quadrangle.

U. S. Department of Interior, U. S. Geological Survey. St. Phillips Island Quadrangle.

U. S. Department of Interior, U. S. Geological Survey. Sapelo Sound Quadrangle.

## **Appendix**

### **Content Standards**

#### Arts and Humanities

1. All students describe the meanings they find in various works from the visual and performing arts and literature on the basis of aesthetic understanding of the art form.
2. All students evaluate and respond critically to works from the visual and performing arts and literature of various individuals and cultures, showing that they understand important features of the works.
3. All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature to the historical and cultural context within which they were created.
4. All students produce, perform, or exhibit their work in the visual arts, music, dance, or theater, and describe the meanings their work has for them.

#### Citizenship

1. All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups, and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States, and other nations, and describe the patterns of historical development.
2. All students demonstrate understanding of themes and patterns of geography, know the location of major bodies of water, land masses, and nations, and describe the relationships between geography and historical, economic, and cultural development.

9. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States, and other nations.

#### Environment and Ecology

2. All students analyze the effects of social systems, behaviors, and technologies on ecological systems and environmental quality.

4. All students evaluate the implications of finite natural resources and the need for conservation, sustainable agricultural development, and stewardship of the environment.

5. All students demonstrate an understanding of the local, national, and international implications of environmental and ecological issues.

#### Information Literacy

1. The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.

2. The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.

3. The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.

5. The student who is an independent learner is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.

9. The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.

Copyright 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 ALA Editions, American Library Association

#### Mathematics

2. All students compute, measure, and estimate to solve theoretical and practical problems.

#### Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes, and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.

#### Science and Technology

1. All students explain how scientific principles of chemical, physical, and biological phenomena have developed and relate them to real-world situations.
4. All students explain the relationships among science, technology, and society.
7. All students evaluate advantages, disadvantages, and ethical implications associated with the impact of science and technology on current and future life.