INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

73-26,935

WILLIAMS, Darnell, 1944-
AN INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE GULLAH SURVIVALS IN THE SPEECH AND CULTURAL PATTERNS OF BLACK MISSISSIPPIANS.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1973
Folklore

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

AN INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE GULLAH SURVIVALS IN THE SPEECH AND CULTURAL PATTERNS OF BLACK MISSISSIPPIANS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Darnell Williams, B.S., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1973

Approved by

Adviser
Department of English
Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express heartfelt gratitude to the many professors and friends who helped me throughout my doctoral study. Most especially do I thank my reading committee who consulted untiringly with me throughout the preparation of this dissertation: Dr. Donald R. Bateman, my adviser and general supervisor; Dr. Hortense E. Thornton, consultant in Black Literature; Dr. Patrick B. Mullen, consultant in folklore and field collecting techniques.

I am extremely grateful to the many warm Black Mississippians who opened their homes to me while I was collecting data. I am also thankful to the teachers who participated in the Linguistic Institutes of 1971-72 at Jackson State College for their advice and contributions. Without the participation and contribution of these Mississippians, this investigation would have been impossible.

To the Ginn families of Tylertown, Jackson and Magnolia, Mississippi, who made me a member of their family and introduced me to the life style of Black Mississippians, I dedicate this study.

VITA

May 22, 1944	Born - Carthage, Texas
1966	B.S., Bishop College, Dallas, Texas
1966-67	Teacher, Gary Public Schools, Gary, Indiana
1967	TESOL Certificate, Summer Institute, New York University
1968	Teaching Assistant, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Instructor, Higher Education Opportunity Program, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1969	TESOL Specialist Certification, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Visiting Instructor in Adult Basic Education Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Instructor, Department of English, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1970	Visiting Instructor, Adult Basic Education Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
1971-72	Visiting Professor, Linguistics Institute, Jackson State College, Jackson, Mississippi; Doctoral Student, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1972-73	Doctoral Fellow, Southern Fellowships Fund, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Fields of Study

Major Field: English Education

Studies in Dialectology. Professors George Landon, Dennis R. Preston, Donald R. Bateman, Shiela Goff

Studies in Afro-American Literature and Folklore. Professors Hortense E. Thornton, Patrick B. Mullen

Studies in Education. Professors Donald R. Bateman, Gregory Thomas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		ii
VITA		iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS		vi
Chapter		
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	24
III.	LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PATTERNS OF GULLAH AND BLACK MISSISSIPPIAN	54
IV.	DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	110
V.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY		126

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS*

Figure		Page
1.	Stovepipes Leading from a Two-room Shack in the Delta	8
2.	Tom Dumas Playing the Fiddle in the Front Room of His Home	13
3.	Blacks Picking Cotton in the Delta	15
4.	Young Boys Playing Checkers	56
5.	A Black Family at a 'Sociation	91
6.	A Typical Kitchen	95
7.	Loading Cotton Bales on Trains	103
8.	A Delta an in Her Garden	105
9.	Loading Cotton on a Boat in Vicksburg	107

*The illustrations presented in this study are the courtesy of Professor William Ferris, Folklorist in the American Studies Division, Yale University.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

If you know well the beginning
The end will not trouble you much

An African Proverb

The beginning of the Black experience in America is popularly associated with the exchange of "twenty Negars" at Jamestown, Virginia for supplies needed by a renegade Dutch ship which put into port there in August of 1619. More careful scholarship gives recognition to the fact that Blacks serving with the Spanish Conquistadors antedated the first English settlement in America by more than a century. Benjamin Brawley, a noted Black historian, has presented evidence that Africans had visited America long before Columbus and left their cultural imprint on the native Indians. Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, in his famous work The Gifts of Black Folk, also presented similar evidence.

After the incident at Jamestown, which marks the beginning of Anglo-Afro relationships in America, the roots of the horrible institution of American slavery were planted. Deep in the degradation of slavery, with his back against the wall and every white man's hand

raised against him, the African-American began his struggle for survival. In his efforts to survive, he created a new world to replace the old from which he was violently wrenched. He had to create this new world in order to adjust to a life style and people that were forced upon him. The forcibly transported and transplanted African, besides everything else, was denied time and space. Therefore, the creation of this new world, the creation of a new time and space, the painful step-by-step piecing together of new patterns of seeing and being, the fashioning, with no guarantee of tomorrow, of a new synthesis, in part African, in part European, in part the unknown, are the unique experiences that encompass the history of the American Black man.

Out of this new world of the slave, out of his creative response to a total attempt of the white man to destroy and dehumanize him came some of the deepest vibrations from this side of the seas. These vibrations, expressed in folklore, song and dance, literature, expressed in spirtuality and soul, helped the Black man develop a unique language and culture alongside the white culture. It was out of this dehumanization, the system of brainwashing, the efforts of the white man to teach the slaves to hate each other and to stand in fear of every white man, that the Black man created his will to

survive. It must be understood, in order to understand the tragic conditions under which the slaves existed, that the white man employed every conceivable method to detach the Africans from concept of self and to completely destroy their perceptions and instincts. Lerone Bennett Jr. quotes in his essay, "The World of the Slave," from Alexis de Tocqueville which well summarizes this point: "The only means by which the ancients maintained slavery were fetters and death; the Americans of the South and the Union have discovered more intellectual securities for the duration of their power. They have employed their despotism and their violence against the human mind" (Ebony, Vol. 26, No. 4, p. 46).

It was in this atmosphere, and against this background that the world of the Black man evolved. It was a world of humiliation and harrowing injustice, a world of dirt and fatigue, and a world which placed a premium on creativity and the ethics of survival. This new world of the slave was dominated by spiritual forces as can be seen in their folksongs and folk narratives. This world was somewhere between Africa and a place which did not exist, which is to say, it was a world in transition, a world of changing forms and patterns, a world with no guideposts and a few firm spots on which to stand. W. E. B. Dubois called the people of this world "Africans disapora"--Africans without a country. It was a world

bounded by the fields and fences and the seasons of the year.

The dehumanization continued. As a mechanism of control, the slavemasters kept the slaves ignorant. So the average slave literally did not know where he was. Somewhere on the margins of his mind was a place called Africa, and he would have heard of a place called the North and another place called Canada. The precise location of these places and their relation to the spot he occupied were secrets the slavemasters closely guarded. As a consequence, the Black man lived in a world of repetition, a world of doing the same thing day in and day out. Few slaves knew the days of the week or the months of the year. Frederick Douglass, who slaved for eighteen years on a Maryland plantation said in his autobiography, The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, "I never met a slave who could tell me how old he was." The white man was successfully controlling the intellectual development of the Black man. He knew if he could control his mind that he could control his destiny, for the slave was being created into a machine. He was not allowed to think for himself. His every action was determined for him. He was mechanized.

The living conditions of the slave were equally as horrifying as the brainwashing. According to Bennett:

> The physical infrastructure of this new world was Slave Row, the proto-type of all the Harlems of America. From every standpoint, Slave Row was a singularly unattractive place, consisting of a simple or double row of cabins and shacks located at some remove from the planter's house. The cabins were usually one room shacks made of logs, without floors or windows. Slave commentators said the windows were altogether unnecessary since the cracks between the wall admitted sufficient light as well as rain, wind and dust. Whole families and unattached individuals were housed within the walls of the one-room cabins. Everything happened in that one room--birth, sickness, death and everything. . . .[1]

Frederick Douglass gave a similar account in his autobiography, The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, "A Child's Reasoning":

> There is no kind of work which really requires a better supply of food to prevent physical exhaustion than the field work of a slave. The yearly allowance of clothing was not more ample than the supply of food. It consists of two two-linen shirts, one pair of trousers of the same coarse material for summer, and a woolen pair of trousers and a woolen jacket for winter, with one pair of yarn stockings and a pair of shoes of the coarsest description. Children under ten years old had neither shoes, stockings, jacket, nor trousers. They had two coarse tow-linen shirts per year, and when these were worn out, they went naked till the next allowance day--and this was the condition of the little girls as well as of the boys.
>
> As to the beds, they had none. One coarse blanket was given them, and this only to the men and women. The children stuck themselves in holes and corners about the quarters, often

---

[1]Lerone Bennett Jr., "The World of the Slave: The Making of Black America," Ebony Magazine, Vol. 26, No. 4, (February, 1971), pp. 44-56.

> in the corners of huge chimneys, with their feet in the ashes to keep them warm. The want of beds, however, was not considered a great privation by the field hands. Time to sleep was of far greater importance. For when the days work was done most of them had their washing, mending and cooking to do, and having few or no facilities for doing such things, very many of their needed sleeping hours were consumed in necessary preparations for the labors of the coming day. The sleeping apartment, if they could have been properly called such, had little regard to comfort or decency. Old and young, male and female, married and single, dropped down upon the common clay floor, each covering up with his or her blanket, their only protection from cold or exposure.[2]

The world of the slave was indeed terrifying and dehumanizing, but it was in the depths of this world that the slave created a new community with its own values, traditions, codes of behavior, aesthetic forms and institutions. It was within this world that Black American language and culture had its beginning.

It appears from available research that slaves adopted white cultural patterns which were necessary for survival and institutions which complemented African customs. Slavery was not imposed upon a people without a history, without customs, without language; it was imposed on the African who had all of these things as well as a point of view. Researchers such as Lorenzo D. Turner, Melville Herskovits and Guy B. Johnson have

---

[2]Frederick Douglass, "A Child's Reasoning," in Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America, ed. by James A. Emanuel and Theodore L. Gross (1969), p. 18.

shown that African culture influenced the slave community and the later African-American community in many subtle ways. There is, for example, the whole hair-dressing complex, the habit, on one level of plaiting the hair in braided design. All one has to do is look around him, and he will see young Black men and women with their hair braided in elaborate designs as might be seen of young men and women of the same age anywhere in Africa. Nor should the whole area of motor responses be forgotten, the mode of holding children with legs straddling the mother's body. As a child, I remember seeing my cousin holding several of her children straddling her legs as well as her feet. Following the pattern of those around me, I sang my younger sister to sleep with her straddling my legs and her head just above my stomach. The song I sang was surely African in origin:

jump a shoo na Blon,*
jump a shoo na;
jump a shoo na Blon,
jump a shoo na.

Even today, one can hear mothers, brothers, sisters or fathers singing the young ones to sleep, using the same pattern as the one I used. Neither should it be forgotten that the pattern of punctuating conversation, and ceremonies with verbal responses such as "Amen!" "Yes

---

*Blon (Blondell, my sister).

Figure 1.--Stovepipes leading from a two-room shack in the Delta.

brother!" are motor responses that have been handed down to the American culture by the African slaves. It would seem that the currently fashionable verbal response, "Right On!" has a provenance and a meaning that extends beyond the Twentieth Century Continental America.

Thus, the language of the slave was a product of the same forces that shaped his culture. This language was just as rich and unique as the culture. What unaware white researchers called Negro dialect stemmed from creativity, not stupidity. Dr. Lorenzo Dow Turner, Melville Herskovits and Guy B. Johnson, three early and noteworthy scholars on the development of the African-American in the United States, have detailed in their research the process by which the language developed. Though they differed as to the significance of European influence on the language, each agreed that the language was rich, poetic and fertile in allusion and metaphor. Dr. Turner, who was particularly concerned with the influence of African retentions in the Gullah dialect, has shown in his famous work Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect that many African words and names not only remained in the language of the early African-Americans, but passed on into common usage among whites. Some of the more familiar ones are coffee, gumbo and tote. Recent research indicates that O.K., the most

American of words, is probably of African origin.[3]

Beyond the creative blending of different strains of African and European influences, one must stress the overall power of the word in the slave community. Through my research, I have found that the slave held in high esteem the magical power of words. One has only to familiarize himself with the folk tales, narratives and songs of the slaves. Language gave him delight and pleasure. The slave was essentially a poet and his language was poetic. If one can understand this fact then it comes as no surprise that rapping is an old and honorable art in the African and African American communities. Claude Brown in his essay "The Language of Soul," discusses the art of rapping quite extensively.[4]

For a student of Black American language and culture, it is essential to be aware of the constant infusion of African influences into the slave community. Men from Africa were brought into America until the nineteenth century. They came from many parts of West Africa. The tables taken from the research of Professor Elizabeth Donnan document this quite convincingly:

---

[3]Ebony, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1971), p. 49.

[4]Claude Brown, "The Language of Soul," in From a Black Perspective, ed. Douglas A. Hughes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), pp. 1-8.

Slaves Imported Into Virginia 1710-1769

Source of origin given as "Africa"	20,564
Gambia (including Senegal and Goree)	3,652
"Guinea" (From sources indicated as Gold Coast, Cabocorso Castle, Bande, Bance Island, and Windward Coast)	6,777
Calabar (Old Calabar, New Calabar, and Bonny)	9,224
Angola	3,860
Madagascar	1,011
Slaves Brought direct from Africa	45,088
Slaves imported from West Indies	7,046
Slaves from other North American Ports	370
Total	52,504

Slaves Imported Into South Carolina, 1752-1802

Source of origin given as "Africa"	4,146
From the Gambia to Sierra Leone	12,441
Liberia and the Ivory Coast (i.e., Rice and Grain Coasts)	3,851
"Guinea Coast" (Cold Coast to Calabar)	18,240
Angola	11,485
Congo	10,924
Mozambique	243
East Africa	230
Slaves brought direct from Africa	65,446
Slaves imported from the West Indies	2,303
Total	67,769[5]

To a person who is not familiar with West African cultures, it might seem possible to explain Gullah customs entirely in terms of European influence. However, if we can rely upon the research of Professor Donnan, Lorenzo Turner, Melville Herskovits, William Stewart, Beryl Bailey

---

[5]These tables by Elizabeth Donnan first appeared in the study "Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America" (Carnegie Institution Publication No. 409), Washington, The Carnegie Institution of America, 1930-1935. However, the tables used in my study were taken from The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 11, No. 1 (January, 1936), used in the article "The Significance of West African For Negro Research."

and other scholars in the fields of linguistics and dialectology, it is impossible to minimize the significance of African cultures upon New World Blacks' language and culture. The resemblances that are to be found might well be rejected as too general and too indefinite to prove diffusion from Africa to the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, if taken by themselves. However, I contend that there is sufficient historical record of contact with Africa through the importation of African slaves into this region, so that any doubts as to whether there was contact can be dispelled.

William R. Bascom in his article "Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes" states:

> The result of the contact of Negroes with the whites, both in slavery and in the period of freedom, seem to have been in those cases where there was a difference or a conflict between African and European customs, the African customs for the most part disappeared. But those institutions which were present in similar forms in both Africa and Europe, while manifesting a great many specifically European details, have retained an African stamp and have had a place in Gullah life the importance of which cannot be explained in terms of European forms alone.[6]

---

[6]"Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes" by William R. Bascom first appeared in American Anthropologist, Vol. 43, 1941, a publication of the American Anthropological Association. The information from Mr. Bascom's article in my research was taken from a reprint by the Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series in Black Studies. BC-17 Prod. No. 67402.

Figure 2.--Tom Dumas playing the fiddle in the front room of his home.

Though Bascom, in his analysis, seems to be hesitant to give the full range of African influence upon Gullah language and culture, he does agree that the influence is there and cannot be overlooked. Evidence that African cultures influenced the culture of African Americans is everpresent even today. For instance, one can find in the British Museum a drum collected from Blacks in Virginia during the latter portion of the eighteenth century that is similar in detail to those used today by the Ashanti and Fanti of the Gold Coast. Dr. William Ferris, a folklorist formerly of Jackson State College, Mississippi now with the American Studies Department of Yale University, has recorded several folksongs of Black Mississippians who used instruments similar to those found in Africa.

Not only are African survivals found in the folksongs and lore of the Black American community, but are found also in other cultural patterns. One excellent example is the institution of cooperative work among the Gullahs and the cotton pickers of Texas, Mississippi and Alabama. In West Africa, cooperative work is a widespread and important institution, which among the Yoruba, for example, takes two forms. There is first of all the aro which is a simple labor exchange between two or three farmers who have small families and are too poor to pay workers. Such men work a certain amount of time

Figure 3.--Blacks picking cotton in the Delta. Cooperative work patterns are always a part of cotton-picking.

on the farm of one, and then the same amount on the farm of the second and third.[5]

The other form of cooperative work is the more spectacular social event, owe, in which a man calls upon his friends, relatives or society members to help him with the work he is required to do for his father-in-law: hoe the fields, thatch the house, build the walls, or whatever may be required. On such occasions, a large number of men work together while the host directs the activities. Meanwhile the wife, who has called her friends and society members together to help her, prepares a large feast for the men. In this case, there is no attempt to keep track of the amount of work accomplished or time spent, as done for aro.[7]

In Dahomey, besides the cooperative work done by members of the same guild, there is the dokpwe which is the equivalent of the Yoruba owe. The dokpwe differs from the owe in that the host hires a drummer to set the pace for the men working in the field, so that all the workers keep step and finish their rows at the same

---

[6]This information was ascertained from scheduled and informal interviews with Professor O. R. Dathorne, my colleague and friend, who is a member of The English and Black Studies Departments at The Ohio State University. Professor Dathorne is a noted scholar and authority in African and Carribean literatures and cultures.

[7]Ibid., from interview with Professor Dathorne.

time. The Yoruba work in a line, so that each man hoes his own row, but they do not often work in unison.[8] This Dahomean form of cooperative work, complete with working in unison to a drummer, is a pattern which has been retained among African Americans in the United States. I first came into contact with this survival when I heard a tape recording of Alan Lomax's collection of the songs of field workers in Northern Mississippi.[8] The drummer followed the same pattern as the drummer in the Dahomean dokpwe. On that same tape there is a recording of prisoners on a chain gang. As they worked, they sang in unison, following the caller-response pattern, so that their hammers would hit the spikes of the railroad ties at the same time.

As a child in Texas, I remember hoeing, pulling, chopping and picking cotton by rows and in unison. Essentially, the pattern followed the owe of the Yoruba and the dokpwe of the Dahomey. Though there were no drummers, we sang songs in the caller-response formulae.

---

[8] Ibid., from interview with Professor Dathorne.

[9] The information used here was taken from a tape recording of Mr. Lomax's Albums by Dr. Patrick B. Mullen, a folklorist at The Ohio State University. The original recording is Roots of the Blues by Alan Lomax, Atlantic Label L.P. 1348. Oree by Lonnie Young, Ed Young and Lonnie Young Jr. The field work by Mr. Lomax was done in Northern Mississippi.

On any country road in East Texas, especially the farm-to-market roads, one could drive by and hear the chants; see the hands of the countless number of Blacks going simultaneously from the cotton boll to the sack; see the hoes following the same pattern in another patch a short distance down the road; and, still in another patch, see the Blacks pulling cotton in the same mechanized pattern.

In my home town, Carthage, Texas, when a Black was fortunate enough to have retained his land from the white swindlers in search of oil and gas, the cooperative pattern of owe was followed practically without noticeable change. Those Black men who raised crops for profits (few did because of the threat of violence from the white farmers) would invite all of the surrounding neighbors to pitch-in to help with the harvesting. On Saturdays, there would be so many people at his place that it would seem like a "great 'ssociation" or revival meeting. As with the Dahomean wives, while the men and children old enough to work went to the fields, the wives of these Black men prepared huge feasts. The smell of cracklin' bread, fried chicken, baked sweet potatoes, green beans and white potatoes filled with salt jowl filled the air. At twelve noon, all would leave the fields heading for the house, singing, chanting and laughing just as they were doing while at work.

During the feasting, the adults usually ate in the kitchen while we, the children, ate on the ground under several trees.

Doris Ginn, a dear friend and a linguist at Jackson State College, Mississippi, told me of a similar experience she had involving cooperative work on a farm in Tylertown, Mississippi. Her experience differed from mine in that everyone ate outside on long tables, the children being at one table and the adults at another.

William R. Bascom, an anthropologist, wrote the following account of cooperative work among Gullah Blacks:

> On Sapeloe Island in Georgia informants remember large groups, apparently between 30 and 50 persons hoeing side by side in the fields. This in itself is significant, since, during the period of slavery, work was assigned by the task in the region so that each slave worked out a separate area by himself. Furthermore, after freedom when a man got behind in his work, he would call on his neighbors or his society for help; and even today, on Sapeloe, people will still "jump right into the field and help you out." In the old days the man would give a big dinner on a long table under a tree, but nowadays people are invited into the house. In hoeing, each person takes his own row, and while the host did not hire a drum for use in the fields, the people frequently sang church songs and worked in unison finishing their rows at the same time. When they worked without singing, couples talked and fell behind so that they did not all finish together. As in Africa, working together is said to make work more pleasant and make it go

> faster; as one informant put it, "you're really cuttin' grass then."[10]

Though each of the accounts of cooperative work differed slightly, they were similar enough to conclude that the system of cooperative work among African-American Blacks is definitely of West African origin.

There is no doubt that African language and cultural patterns have survived among Sea Island Blacks of South Carolina and Georgia. It is the expressed belief of this writer that if these patterns have survived among the Sea Island Blacks because of isolation and inferior education, then they should have survived in other areas of the South among Blacks who experienced the same isolation and inferior education.

Justification for the Study

It is generally accepted by creolists, dialectologists and sociolinguists (Beryl Bailey, William Stewart, William Labov, Dennis Preston, Juanita Williamson, Geneva Smitherman, to name a few) that the language and culture of Gullah Blacks are the roots of Black language and culture in the United States of America. Though there is an extensive amount of recent literature treating regional and social dialects of American English, the

---

[10]William R. Bascom, "Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes," The Bobs-Merrill Reprint Series in Black Studies, (BC-17, Prod. No. 67402). Reprinted from American Anthropologist, Vol. 43, 1941.

dialect of Black Americans included, none of this literature has concerned itself with Gullah linguistic survivals in the speech of Black Americans who are descendents of those Blacks who migrated from the Gullah speaking region of Coastal Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

Dialect geographers, such as Bagby Atwood and Raven I. McDavid, have established in their research that, after slavery, many Blacks migrated from the Gullah regions throughout the South in search of their loved ones, children, jobs and new places to settle. These migrating Blacks took with them their unique language and cultural patterns. Because of extremely limited contact with the better educated whites of the regions, they maintained the language and cultural patterns of their native Gullah speaking regions.

Though this investigation will be limited primarily to the investigation of Gullah survivals in the language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians, some attention will be given to the development of Gullah as a bonafide language system in itself. In order to establish the uniqueness of the language, it will be necessary to treat its contributors, the African and British dialects of the ante-bellum era.

Purpose of This Study

According to Lerone Bennett, Jr., in his series for Ebony Magazine, "The Making of Black America," 1970, many of the Blacks followed the same migratory route of the poor whites, who left South Carolina and Georgia in search of a better life. As with the whites, the Blacks, on their way into Tennessee, Kentucky, and the lower region of Mississippi. It is the purpose of this research to investigate the Gullah survivals, both culturally and linguistically, among the descendents of these early Mississippians.

There are three basic assumptions upon which this investigation will be conducted:

1. That because of isolation and little or no formal education, Gullah features have survived among Mississippi Blacks.
2. That a greater frequency of Gullah survivals will be found among the poorer Blacks in the Mississippi Delta and in the rural areas of Southeastern Mississippi than in other parts of Mississippi.
3. That there will be more Gullah survivals present in the cultural pattern than in the language.

Summary

Chapter I presented a brief history of the Black man in America, encompassing his unique experience in a foreign land as well as the subsequent New World he created. Also, the significance of West African and Gullah languages and cultural patterns to this study was treated in this section of the study. Chapter II will present the review of related literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review begins with a general account of the origin and nature of the Black dialect in America. The second part of this review pertains to the development and persistence of a dialect.

American Black English Dialect

Black English is one euphemism used in referring to the English dialect spoken by many blacks whose ancestors as well as themselves have been denied full participation in the experiences, both social and economic, of this country and who have lived in a comparably separate society within their American homeland.

> The American Negro is a native speaker of American English, normally of at least five generations of residence in North America; little survives of his ancestral culture, though undoubtedly more than American Caucasoids are willing to admit.[1]

Black English dialect may be designated a social dialect because it is restricted to representatives of

---

[1]Raven I. McDavid, "Dialect Differences and Social Differences in an Urban Society," in The English Language in the School Program, ed. Robert F. Hogan (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966), p. 191.

a particular ethnic group. Social dialects are a by-product of what has been termed "differential acculturation"--differences in the ability and time required for representatives of various ethnic and social groups to live together as individuals without stereotyped identification of the social or class group (McDavid, 1966, p. 190).

Linguists who work with nonstandard Black English recognize that it is a separate language system closely related to standard English and other surrounding white dialects but differing in choices of redundant elements, use of different extensions, and restrictions of certain formal rules. Black English is rule-governed and has equivalent ways of expressing logic (Labov, 1969, pp. 56-58). Many Blacks speak English dialects totally indistinguishable from other residents of the same region and social class; others have speech which can only be identified as "Black" by a few minor pronunciation features (Fasold and Wolfram, 1970, p. 41).

Distinctive Features of Black English Dialect

Black English is known by many names, a few of which are "Black dialect," "nonstandard English," "American Black English," "dialect," "Negro dialect," "nonstandard Negro." The syntactic characteristics of Black dialect

as described by Bailey (1969) may be outlined as follows:

A VERBS

1. Time information is not obligatory in the verb if it is expressed elsewhere in the sentence or indicated by context:

   "He be there soon."

2. The auxiliary verb "be" is virtually non-existent in the language of some members of this speech community; when used "be" tends to appear in frozen forms or not to be inflected in the same way as the dominant culture does.

   a. It may be omitted before noun phrases in equative sentences:

      "she my sister."

   b. It may be omitted before adjectives or past participles in predicative sentences:

      "My book red; my book lost."

   c. It may be omitted before adverbs or adverb phrases in locative sentences:

      "I here teacher."

   d. It may be omitted in durative sentences:

      "She running away."

   e. When auxiliary "be" is not omitted, it may assume one and only one of its many

standard shapes: "be" itself is used to express the "habitual" in contrast with total omission:

"He in the room"

"Most of the time he be in the room."

3. Inflectional markers signaling person and number used in the language of standard speakers tend to be absent from verbs:

a. Black dialect does not use the -s suffix to mark present tense with third person singular subjects:

"he play."

b. The -ed past tense marker is absent in some verb bases:

"He play yesterday."

B. THE NOMINAL

1. Black dialect is persimonious. If the possessor precedes the possessed, a possessive marker is not required. Position serves to indicate possession:

"John old man house."

2. If the cardinal number is present in the noun phrase the noun need not carry a plural marker:

"some book" "them boy"

3. Two sequential types are formed differently:

   a. Existential sentences: The existential "there" is replaced by "it":

      "It is five of us in the room."

   b. Topic comment sentences:

      "My brother he go to college."

Bailey admonished her readers to remember that the syntactic structures used by children who use black dialect were indicative of the different order in the black dialect's world of experience. Therefore surface reorganization of a child's language would not affect the underlying structure of his language on the world of experience bound up in his language.

Williams (1969) listed the most prevalent distinctive features of American Black English dialect into three categories: grammatical features, intersection of grammar and pronunciation, and consonant clusters affected by reduction, with typical examples.

Grammatical Features

1. Copula absence . . . . . He slick.
   They eating lunch.
2. Habitual 'be' . . . . . He usually be acting up.
3. "Will" or "would" plus "be" . In a couple of weeks it be six months.

4. 'Been' or 'done' plus past form of the verb . . . I been had it there for days.
5. Use of 'ain't' . . . . . He ain't never go nowhere.
6. Multiple negation . . . . .Nobody didn't like her.
7. Negativized auxiliary at the beginning of a sentence. . Can't none of them hit.
8. Pronomial apposition . . John he don't never come around.
9. Embedded question inverstion . . The kids want to know can I come out.

Intersection of Grammar and Pronunciation

10. Absence of -ed past tense marker . . Yesterday he jump on my bike and rode away.
11. Absence of -s present tense marker . . He go to Morgan High School.
12. Absence of -s possessive . . . He was riding in the man car.
13. Absence of -s plural . . . You call fifty cent worth every time.

Consonant Clusters Affected by Reduction

1. nd (sound=soun)
2. ft (left=lef)
3. st (test=tes)

4. sk (mask=mas)

5. sp (wasp=was)

6. nt (count=coun)

7. ld (cold=col)

Origin of Black English Dialect

Before 1940 American dialectologists generally attributed British dialects spoken by whites on southern planations as the source of Black English dialect. Two books: Herskovit's The Myth of the Negro Past (1941) and Turner's Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (1959) traced Black English dialect to African origins. Herskovits postulated that the Black people in the United States came from regions of Africa where related languages were spoken and that upon coming in contact with New World dialects they created pidgin languages which became creole languages when they were used by succeeding generations. A pidgin language is a language evolved to meet a communication emergency. It is a mixed language with a simplified version of the grammar of one language combined with the vocabulary of the second language (Malmstrom, 1969). Stewart (1967) proposed that the pidginized English used by Blacks in America was a lingua franca (any hybrid language used for communication between different peoples) used in the trade centers on the West African Coast.

Turner found thousands of African words in Gullah, the only creole language still in existence today. It is spoken by inhabitants of the Carolina Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina. Some linguists hypothesize that Black English dialect is derived from Gullah: the Gullah syntax provides the grammatical basis while traditional English grammatical markers are grafted onto them. Stewart (1967) stated that after the Civil War Black dialect began to lose its creole characteristics and adopted more features of local white dialects.

Long (1969) has found further proof of an African origin for Black dialect in his analysis of Joel Chandler Harris' Stories of Uncle Remus. Long has drawn linguistic parallels between the Niger-Congo language family and the mid-Georgia Black dialect portrayed in the Uncle Remus stories. Parallels in phonology, delection of prefixes, and in the tense system were found. One distinctive characteristic shared by mid-Georgia dialect and the Niger-Congo languages is the absence of the interdental consonant in any position. "Dey," "de," "dere," "needer," and "bofe" are the regular pronunciation of "they," "the," "there," "neither" and "both."

The grammatically distinct tenses recorded for some members of the Niger-Congo family when reproduced in black mid-Georgia dialect for the verb "go" would produce:

Present	He go
Near past	He gone
Remote past	He been gone
Future	He going to go
Aspect of progress	He going
Aspect of completion	He done gone
Past aspect of repetition	He been going

Long stated that these different aspects of tense have been heard in current mid-Georgia dialect.

Today Black English dialect has many regional varieties or subdialects. Nevertheless Stewart maintains that:

> . . . the speech of 'Negroes' of a comparable age and socioeconomic level in so many parts of the United States shows rather clearly that 'Negro' dialect from South to North, from East to West, from farm to city, and from storefront church to playground, is all part of a single sociolinguistic complex, with a single historical origin. . . .[2]

It has been recognized that up until a very short time ago, the speech of American Negroes was considered inferior to that of American Whites. White people (and Blacks also) were brainwashed into rationalizing that "big

---

[2]William A. Stewart, "Negro Dialect in the Teaching of Reading," in Teaching Black Children to Read, ed. by Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), p. 200.

lips" and "lazy tongues" caused the foreignness of their speaking, making it not only non-standard, but improper as well. J. L. Dillard cites a public description of a language program for inner-city Negroes: "The English used by most socioeconomically disadvantaged Negroes in the United States severely limits their opportunities."[3] This statement is typical of the attitude felt at the time. Yet suddenly, linguists began to review the "problem" of Black speech and began to take on some newer and broader opinions about the topic. Researchers such as William A. Stewart, William Labov, D. L. Dillard, and Jean Malmstrom have contributed a great deal to the study of Black syntax and dialect. But there were many obstacles and misconceptions that had to be overcome at the onset.

For example, William Labov, unlike many linguists, treats Black speech in a more objective tone. In order to realize objectivity in his research, he does not go into it with preconceived attitudes about the informants and their language. When he conducted an investigation of Black speech in Washington, D.C. (1969) his findings were criticized because of the unstructured method of

---

[3]J. L. Dillard, "How To Tell the Bandits from the Good Guys or, What Dialect to Teach," in The Florida FL Reporter Special Anthology Issue: Linguistic-Cultural Differences and American Education, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1969), p. 84.

research. Nonetheless, Labov stuck with his theory of going into the natural habitat of the informants and collecting language and cultural data in this natural setting.

William Stewart has also come out in the support of the Black dialect as being a bonafide language system. Unlike Labov, who looks at Black speech from a contemporary standpoint, Stewart justifies the language from an historical perspective. He purports that the Africans who fell victim to the Atlantic slave trade were forced to acquire English in order to communicate among themselves. This new language was necessary for survival. Because of their own language systems and the non-standard English which was their model, they acquired a pidginized English. According to Stewart, this pidgin English was established as the principal form of communication between Black slaves in the colonies. It was subsequently passed on as a creole language to succeeding generations of Black-Americans.[4]

Stewart also feels that linguists should make certain that their statements about Black-White differences are not divorced from an awareness of the historical, social and linguistic reasons why such differences may

---

[4]Florida Foreign Language Reporter, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1969), pp. 50-63, 166.

have come into existence and have been maintained. Stewart maintains that once educators come to realize that non-standard Black dialect represents a historical tradition, there will be less frustration in the failure to convert Black dialect speakers into standard English speakers overnight.

One further reason why both language teachers and dialectologists have failed to appreciate the extent to which non-standard Negro dialects may differ from non-standard white dialects may simply be that such differences now remain mostly in grammatical patterns rather than in vocabulary or phonology. And a comparison of the grammatical details suggests a very different kind of historical relationship than is evident from a comparison of words alone. Below is a comparison of a sentence in standard English with several other dialects:

a) standard English--We were eating--and drinking, too.
b) white non-standard basilect--We was eatin'--and drinkin', too.
c) Negro non-standard basilect--We was eatin'--an' we drinkin', too.
d) Gullah Basilect--We bin duy nyam--en'we duh drink, too.

By comparin the above forms of American Speech, Stewart shows that each is an independent system with Negro non-standard being closer to Gullah than to white non-standard. Stewart feels that with further study and research, the communication gap between Blacks and whites will be eradicated.

An Examination of Krapp's Postulations Concerning the English of the Negro

In 1924, during its first year of existence, American Mercury magazine published an article entitled, "The English of the Negro," by George Phillip Krapp, Professor of English at Columbia University, in which he declared that the language of Negroes in America "is finally and completely English," and "they have retained not a trace of any native African speech. Neither have they transferred anything of importance from their native tongues to the general language." With this article Professor Krapp, who was then editor of the Oxford English series and had produced such works as, The Authority of Law in Language (University of Cincinnati Press, 1908), and The Pronunciation of Stnadard English in America (Oxford University Press, 1919), began a controversy that continues to this day, concerning the existence of the Black dialect in American English and the true origin of its lexicon, phonology, and syntax. A synopsis of Professor Krapp's article and an examination of specific comments and certain arguments advanced against them reveals the nature and intensity of this controversy.

Professor Krapp begins his article with remarks concerning the historically unique situation of the Negro in America, because of his color, then cites his

adoption of the English language and the complete remission of his former linguistic traits, which made him totally acceptable in that one respect. "That this should have happened is not surprising," he writes, "for it is a linguistic axiom that when two groups of people with different languages come into contact, the one on a relatively high, the other on a relatively low cultural level, the latter adapts itself freely to the speech of the former, whereas the group on the higher cultural plane borrows little or nothing from that on the lower." He then points out that many English characteristics presently "assumed to be the peculiar property of the Negroes" are actually survivals of the Middle English used by slave overlords, and, due to their isolation from the central development of American society, the Negroes retained them. He states that special cases, such as the construction, I is, and use of the third person singular for all three persons, were once common in thirteenth century Northern England. Krapp notes that people often say "they can always tell a Negro by his voice, even on the telephone, or through ten feet of concrete. By evidence of experiment, however, this is found to be simply not true." Neither do all Negroes have rich, melodious voices, any more than all New Englanders have "a drawling, whining and nasal pronunciation." He

also notes that in Joel Chandler Harris' use of dialect in the Uncle Remus tales, it is impossible to distinguish Negro dialect from White unless one knows who is speaking. He then cites some of the rules given by Thomas Nelson Page for representing the speech of Eastern Virginia Negroes and provides a sample of Page's written form of Negro dialect: "Twuz cu-yus, he say, he wan(t) (to) go in (to) 'turr ah-my." But Krapp goes on to show that these rules and examples given by Page are mostly exaggerations of the speech patterns of one particular ethnic group, and distinctions such as "'twuz for it was might be heard in any rapid colloquial speech, white or black, cultivated or uncultivated, and ah-my for army would not seem strange anywhere in the South or in New England." He writes, "If one started without any anticipatory expectation, Negro English would seem like any other English. It would have its variations, but practically all of them would have their correspondences in white speech. For Negro English is not a peculiar species of English; it is only English spoken by Negroes."

Moving to the history of the development of Black dialect, Krapp says that "the assimilation of the language of the Negroes to the language of the whites did not take place all at once," and, in attempting to trace its history, he points out that "Negroes imported into

America came from many unrelated tribes, speaking languages so different that one tribe could not understand the language of another," and they were driven to use the simple English spoken by the white overlords in addressing themselves to their Black vassals. He then points out that clear traces of this "infantile English" are found surviving in the Gullah dialect spoken by Negroes along the South Carolina coast. "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English," he says, "with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English." He then goes on to say that, "Two hundred years ago all the Negroes in America must have spoken a language very similar to Gullah," and moves on to a discussion of the attempted characterizations of the Negro dialect in literature, as exemplified by Friday in Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, observing that some of the customary speech patterns which Defoe records in Friday's dialogue are found present in Gullah dialect. "Perhaps it is older than its specifically Negro uses, and perhaps the whole or the greater part of the Negro jargon is older than

the slave trade," he concludes. Krapp then cites several other early attempts to record Negro speech, in drama and other literary works; John Leacock's "Fall of British Tyranny," in 1776; Irving Cooper's "Pioneers," in 1823, and "Tales of a Traveler" in 1824; and Edgar Allan Poe's "Gold Bug," in 1839. In every case, Krapp observes that "The completeness and the success with which Negro English is employed in these works naturally varies with the inclination and the ability of the authors of them." Concerning the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe, he says, "The most famous Negro character in fiction was presented to the public when Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin appeared in 1852. But Uncle Tom expresses himself with very little dialectal color, hardly more than enough to enable the reader to place his speech on the level of colloquial English." Also, "the illusion even of Aunt Chloe's speech is very imperfect. Assisted by a bandana turban and charcoal it might pass, but as literary workmanship it is crude."

Remarking on the progressive changes in Negro speech from the Gullah, Krapp says that "By the middle of the Nineteenth Century this older Negro English had ceased to be possible as a generic representation of Negro speech . . . everyone recognized that Negro English was no longer a grotesque mutilation of the English language, but merely one of the colloquial forms of our many

visaged mother tongue." In conclusion, he cites the progress the Negro has made "up from the barbarous and infantile English dialect first presented to them by their masters to fellowship in the genuine English language." Krapp says they are to be commended, "for they might very well have remained content to speak a special tongue"; instead, "their acquisition of mature English proves that they have been eager to assimilate a higher culture when the way has been open." He says the white man also deserves credit for this achievement, for, due to his growth, race relations "have become more kindly and humane," and while progress has been slow, "the Negro's achievement of the English language encourages hope for the future."

Specific arguments against the findings and conclusions reported by Krapp have made his article one of the most often cited works treating Black speech. Melville Jean Herskovits, in his book, The Myth of the Negro Past (Beacon Press, Boston, 1958), quotes from his personal communications with Dr. Lorenzo Dow Turner of Fisk University, who was doing an analysis of the Gullah dialect, that Dr. Turner finds Krapp guilty of not "going to the trouble to acquaint himself with Gullah or with any of the African languages spoken in those sections of the West Coast from which the Negroes were brought to the United States as slaves." Herskovits, who, incidently,

was a professor of Anthropology at Columbia University during Krapp's tenure there, and whose article, "What Is a Race?" appeared in the same issue of American Mercury, includes the article by his noted colleague among "the many arbitrary statements concerning Negro speech based on no knowledge of even the published materials on African languages."[5] Initially, Professor Krapp states that "a few words, such as voodoo, hoodoo, and buckra, may have come into English from some original African dialect, but most of the words commonly supposed to be of Negro origin, e.g., tote, jazz, and mosey, are really derived from ancient English or other European sources. The native African dialects have been completely lost." Dr. Turner counters this statement by noting that "I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds, and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Secondly, while Krapp admits that "two hundred years ago all the Negroes in American must have spoken a language very similar to Gullah, "he also

---

[5]Melville J. Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 291.

[6]Ibid., p. 276.

writes that, "Generalizations are always dangerous, but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin." Turner refutes this by asserting that "There are many compound words one part of which is African and the other English. Sometimes whole African phrases appear in Gullah without change either of meaning or of pronunciation. Frequently African phrases have been translated into English."[7] Finally, to Krapp's argument that "in vocabulary, in syntax and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious," Herskovits observes that "the assurance with which those quite innocent of any knowledge of African speech habits tend to draw sweeping conclusions regarding the presence or absence of African words in this (Gullah) dialect, or in American Negro speech in general, parallels a similar tendency of the students treating other aspects of Negro culture."[8] He further states that "what any individual does in learning a new language is to mobilize his new vocabulary

---

[7] Ibid., p. 279.

[8] Ibid., p. 279.

resources in accordance with the speech patterns to which he has been conditioned." Dr. Turner elaborates on this point by noting that "the Gullah Negro when talking to strangers is likely to use speech that is for the most part English in vocabulary, but when he talks to his associates and to the members of his family, his speech is different. My first phonograph recordings of the speech of the Gullah Negroes contain fewer African words by far than those made when I was no longer a stranger to them."[9]

One important feature of Black speech was not mentioned at all in Professor Krapp's article--the tonal elements of West African speech. Dr. Turner writes, "Many of the African languages discussed in this study are tone languages, i.e., languages in which tone or pitch is employed to convey meaning and to show grammatical relationships . . . whereas the Gullah dialect does not have significant tone in the sense in which the West African tone languages do, it does have a characteristic intonation and rhythm."[10] Herskovits notes that one Negro who was distinguishing the tonal system of a West African language "states that he was greatly aided

---

[9] Ibid., p. 279.

[10] Lorenzo D. Turner, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 34.

in this task by reference to the cadences of Negro speech he knew from Harlem."[11]

Professor Krapp appears to have researched his topic from the point of view of an American with a superior English dialect, and in that sense, he obviously failed to do the "little deeper delving" which would have been necessary to account for the "strange and mysterious" characteristics he noted in the Gullah Dialect. While Krapp may have been considered an authority on the history and development of the English language in America, he proved himself totally ignorant of the origin of the Gullah Dialect, or even of his so-called Negro English--perhaps because he found this subject so "barbarous."

Dialects

Each language has numerous dialects any one of which could eventually become an independent language:

> A dialect is a variety of a language which differs from other varieties in certain features of pronounciation, vocabulary and grammar (used to mean both word construction morphology and syntax). It may reveal something about the social or regional background of its speakers and it will be generally understood by speakers of other dialects of the same language. . . .

---

[11]Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 291.

> When two speakers cannot understand each others dialect they speak different languages.[12]

The users of a common language system constitute the "speech community" of that language. In a very general sense all the users of the English language belong to a "speech community." More often the term "speech community" is associated with a group of people in constant communication with each other who basically share the same phonological, syntactical, and semantic system.

Dialects develop because language changes differently in various parts of the world, even though originally they came from the same parent language. American English and British English are dialects of the same language. Linguistic is governed by at least three dimensions: geography, social group, and social class. Three main dialect areas have been identified in the United States: Northern, Midland, and Southern, stretching from east to west across the continent. The three dialect areas are clearest on the Atlantic coast. The farther west one goes the more the dialect areas blend and fuse. Dialect blending is a constant process in the United States occurring wherever the streams of communication overflow earlier lines of dialect mapping.

---

[12]Roger W. Shuy, Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech. Final Report, U.S.O.E. Cooperative Research Project #6-1347 (Washington, D.C., 1967), p. 4.

No national standard dialect exists in the United States; instead there are several regional standards, and each is defined as the "variety used by those who hold positions of trust and respect and conduct the important affairs of a community." When a dialect is given special prestige it comes to be regarded as being "more correct, more adequate, or purer than less prestigious dialects," a position difficult to support because there is no reason to think that any dialect of a language has intrinsic merit over the others. Bloomfield designated social class as the "most striking line of cleavage in our speech." ("Our" refers to the United States.) Bloomfield continued:

> Children who are born into homes of privilege, in the way of wealth, tradition, or education, become native speakers of "standard" English. . . . Less fortunate children become native speakers of "nonstandard English." . . . Nonstandard speech shows greater variety than standard. Various groups of nonstandard speakers have their own speech forms. Especially do minor groups who are in any way cut off from the great mass, use clearly-marked varieties of speech.[13]

Additionally, because of the uniqueness and creativity inherent in language, no two individuals speak exactly the same dialect of a language. Each speaks his own idiolect: his existential speech pattern at any particular time in his life. Each speaker speaks as

---

[13]Leonard Bloomfield, Language (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968), pp. 48-50.

many dialects as there are groups among which he moves that have different modes of speech. Profession, sex, age, occasion, are several variables that influence speech usage. Martin Joos has referred to the variegated language styles used by an individual for different occasions as acrolect. He provides four scales or axes of variation:

Age	Style	Breadth	Responsibility
senile	frozen	genteel	best
nature	formal	puristic	better
teenage	consultative	standard	good
child	casual	provincial	fair
baby i	intimate	popular	bad

Joos points out that none of these scales operates independently of the others and that the position on the scale is due to the linear nature of the scales, not to relative value.

Summary

While researching for scholarship relating to this investigation, I found that none had been done. All of the available research dealt with either Black English or Gullah. There is available research treating language acquisition and development but even this body of scholarship does not exactly pertain to this investigation. The only research that is remotely related is that of dialect study. These scholars have delved into the culture of the Black-American in order to understand

his language development. They work from the premise that language evolves out of the culture and before one can understand a particular group's language, he must know something about the culture.

The body of research treating the Black dialect focuses on the origin of Black speech and the differences between Black and white language patterns. The traditional theory of linguists and dialectologists (Raven I. McDavid, George P. Krapp, Guy B. Johnson) has been that the slaves, having been stripped of virtually all ties with their African culture, were forbidden to speak in their native tongues and thus compelled to learn the English of their overseers. Since these early white settlers came from various regions of England, their speech, and consequently that of the slaves, is traceable to British-based dialects. As the English language changed, the speech of white Southern aristocrats changed accordingly. However, since Blacks, and to some extent their lower-class white overseers, did not directly participate in the Southern elitist traditions, their language changed more slowly. Thus, Black speech and Southern white lower-class speech were nearly identical. With the migration from the rural South to the urban North (and the urban South), the lower-class rural Southern whites became assimilated and over a period of years, their speech lost most of its Southern regional characteristics. With

Blacks, however, this assimilation did not occur since Black people in large cities were forced to live in segregated communities. Therefore, according to the traditional theory, today's Northern urban Black speech is simply transplanted Southern Black (and lower-white) speech. This theory accounts for the consistency of Black dialect features among Northern and Southern Blacks.

A second theory on the origin of Black speech comes primarily from cultural anthropologists such as Melville Herskovits and recently from creole linguists such as Beryl Bailey and William Stewart. In 1941 Herskovits attempted to discredit the cultural obliteration theory by establishing the existence of African traditions in Black people's language and culture. Lorenzo Dow Turner in his book, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect, relying on his knowledge of African languages, demonstrated the similarity between certain lexical items in African dialects and Gullah speech.

Recently, creole linguists have focused on syntactical similarities between Black speech, Gullah, Louisiana Creole and the pidgin English of certain West African cultures. Gullah, Creole and West African pidgin English have African dialects in their prehistory. These Creole linguists (particularly William A. Stewart, Beryl Bailey, Jean Malstrom and J. L. Dillard) maintain that although one will find few residual Africanism in the

lexicon of Black-American speech, one will find many similarities in syntactical constructions. (This was a hypothesis that Herskovits had also suggested but which Turner's work failed to demonstrate since he concentrated on word for word correspondencies.) Thus a third possibility on the origin of Black-American speech is that slaves simply grafted items of English lexicon onto the grammatical system of their native dialects. Since the grammatical structure of a language is highly resistent to change while vocabulary is not, what one sees operating in today's Black speech--according to this theory--is the residue of a language system with an African-based syntax and an Anglo-based lexicon.

Pertaining to that body of research which deals with the differences between Black and white speech, the focal point is upon educational limitations of Black youths because of their language difference. One school of educational thought about Black dialect argues that the differences between Black speech and white middle-class speech are crucial differences that point to the limited verbal abilities of Black students. Since cognition involves language and since Black ghetto language does not have certain language concepts (according to Bereiter if not used in logical deductions) Black ghetto children

cannot formulate cognitive concepts.[14] Further, since there is a mismatch between Black speech and the speech of basic readers, Black speech impedes the process of learning to read.[15] Following this line of reasoning, some educators argue that Black students ought to be taught so-called standard English either before or simultaneous with the teaching of reading and cognitive skills.

The second body of literature dealing with the differences between Black and white speech theorizes that there are only limited and superficial differences between the two language systems. The linguists who are of this school of thought postulate that the language concepts of Black youth are simply different; that Black students can manipulate cognitive constructions in their own dialect (i.e., they can find language structures with which to manipulate "if-not" situations); and, they can be highly verbal in their own dialect. However, while the differences between Black and white English do not impede significant communication, the differences do carry social stigma and can impede the Black student's opportunities in the socio-economic world. Thus, the group of

---

[14]Carl Bereiter, Language Programs for the Disadvantaged (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of the Teachers of English, 1965).

[15]Joan and Stephen Baratz and Roger Shuy, Teaching Black Children to Read (Washington,D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistic, 1969).

scholars who support this theory contend that Black students should be allowed to retain their own dialect (which they'll need to function in their own communities), but at the same time, the students should be drilled in prestige dialect patterns as necessary strategic tools for socio-economic mobility.

Though the scholarship on the origin of Black speech does not pertain directly to this investigation, it does lend support to the major finding of this investigation: the language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians have their roots in the early pidgin Afro-English spoken by the slaves.

Chapter II presented the review of literature. Chapter III will present the background of the study as well as language and cultural samples supplied by Black Mississippian informants.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PATTERNS OF GULLAH AND BLACK MISSISSIPPIAN

Background of the Study

Many studies have been done on the culture and language of the Black man in America. As one goes to the library in search of materials on this subject, he will have no problems finding something which he can use. As one checks into the source of the research, however, he will find that nearly all of the researchers are white, from big white universities, and are supported by some foundation, center or institute. One will also find that most of the research deals with Gullah or Black English. This writer has found that these two areas are most popular because scholars such as Melville Herskovits, Lorenzo D. Turner, John Bennett and Guy B. Johnson left valuable resources for the study of Gullah and the speech of Black-Americans in general.

As this writer continued his search for research related to the survival of Gullah speech and cultural patterns among Black Mississippians, he soon learned that there was none. In order to continue the investigation,

I had to go into the counties, towns and rural hamlets of Mississippi to meet the people whom I was investigating head-on. This sort of field research was interesting and inspired a great excitement in me, for I knew that what I was doing was original.

When I collected the first data, I was fortunate to have the services of Dr. William Ferris.[1] Since he had already traveled throughout the entire state of Mississippi collecting different genres of folklore, he knew the areas of the state in which I should concentrate. His suggestion was that I should begin in the Mississippi Delta, since it has the highest density of Black people in the state. Also, the area is rich in folklore. Following Dr. Ferris' advice, I began in the Delta.

In order to understand the significance of the Mississippi Delta to this investigation, one must know some general facts about the region itself. The region is a rich plane in Northern Mississippi which extends from Memphis, Tennessee, to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and is defined by the Mississippi River on the west and the Yazoo River on the east. The region has an agricultural economy, with the Black population outnumbering whites

---

[1]Dr. William Ferris was a folklorist at Jackson State College, Jackson, Mississippi at the time of my initial field research in 1972. During this time, he was also filming in the Delta.

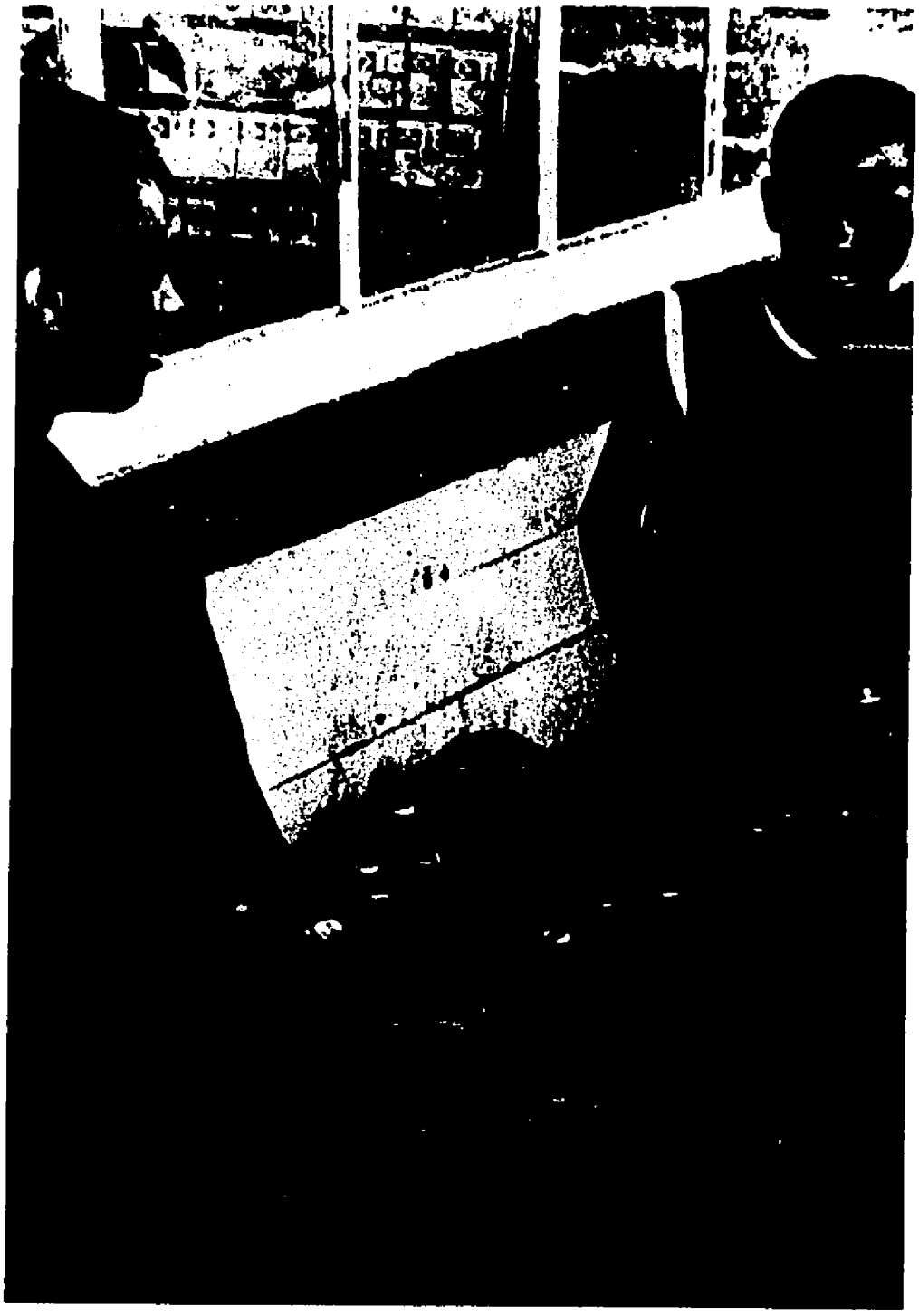

Figure 4.--Young boys playing checkers outside a rural store.

by about a three to one ratio (293,000 blacks and 98,000 whites).[2] Most of this population is grouped around scattered rural towns which number less than 500 inhabitants. Only three towns in the Delta have larger populations--Clarksdale, Greenville, and Greenwood--each of which has approximately 17,000 inhabitants.

Differences between the Delta and isolated areas like the Georgia and South Carolina Sea Islands are very significant in the study. Whereas the Sea Islands continue to be highly isolated because communication with the mainland is by boat, two major highways--U.S. 51 and 61--link the Delta with northern industrial areas. In addition to highways, railroads link the Chicago and Mississippi areas, and have further increased the mobility of Blacks to and from the Delta area.

One of the most interesting things about the study was the observation of daily life. Life in a small Delta town centers on a 'Main Street' or town square, which contains the local bank, post office, assorted stores and restaurants. The main street is a point of reference when discussing sections of the town. People living across the main street are referred to as 'staying over in' that peculiar section. The Black sections have

---

[2]William Ferris, Jr., Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista Limited, 1971), p. 15.

definite names such as 'Black Dog' and the 'Brick Yard,' which only the natives understand. These sections are clearly separated from white areas and when one passes from a Black to a white area, the difference is visible in the more expensive homes and the landscaping. Since the Delta is a flat alluvial plane, there are few breezes in summer to relieve its population from heat. Thus, areas of the town which are shaded and have access to water-streams or lakes are the most desirable. It is in these areas that the wealthiest whites live, and their grassy lawns and flower gardens are maintained by local Blacks whose homes are in striking contrast.

Across the tracks in 'Black Dog' or the 'Brick Yard,' the Black population lives in unbelievable poverty. Most Blacks live in rented property and it is not unusual to find eight to ten people living in a two-room shack. The houses are crowded together with occasional small trees--often chinaberry--that have been planted for shade. Usually the ground around the shack is bare earth, which provides a playground for children of the neighborhood. The ground is hard and women often take a sage brush broom[3] and 'sweep out' the yard as an extension of their homes.

---

[3]A sage brush broom is a yard broom made from tree branches. I have found that it is strictly Southern and used primarily by Blacks and some poor whites to keep their yards free of grass and debris.

The only non-Blacks living in these neighborhoods are merchants--Chinese, Syrian, Jewish and Italian--who own stores there with their homes above them. Since most Blacks in these neighborhoods have no vegetable gardens, they must buy their supplies from the local merchants, who, interestingly, are not referred to as 'white men' or 'American.' For example, Dr. Ferris has recorded an informant who identified white Anglo-Saxons as 'white men' and 'Americans,' and excluded minority groups such as Jews. In this same vein, he recorded an informant who made a similar distinction between white men and Italians:

> I remember I was in Chicago. . . . I got a job out in Cicero. . . . Most of them was Italians, not white men. You hardly catch a white man working in Chicago. They most was Italians. They was good guys.[4]

As Dr. Ferris was a valuable resource during the two months that I traveled and lived in the Delta, Doris Ginn and her family were equally valuable for my research in Southeastern Mississippi.[5] Actually, my research began in Southeastern Mississippi before it began in the Delta. During the summer of 1971, I was invited by Miss Ginn to teach in a linguistics institute

---

[4]William Ferris, Jr., Blues from the Delta, p. 18.

[5]Miss Doris Ginn is on the faculty of Jackson State College and a native of Tylertown, Mississippi.

at Jackson State College. It was while teaching in this institute that I became interested in the language and cultural habits of Black Mississippians. There was a uniqueness and freshness in the way they spoke, the way they ate, the way they had fun, and the way they related to each other that fascinated me. Having studied the Gullah language and its speakers, I saw some subtle similarities in the language and cultural patterns. I shared this interest with Miss Ginn and other members of the institute faculty. Each of them thought that the idea to investigate the possibility of similarity was good.

Since Miss Ginn was also interested in language, being a linguist, she offered to introduce me to relatives and friends throughout the Southeastern Mississippi area. Southeastern Mississippi is bordered by Louisiana. Like the Delta, most of the towns are very small, the largest being McComb, Natchez and Brookhaven. It was not in the larger towns that I found the most interesting informants, but in the smaller hamlets such as Tylertown, Magnolia, Summit and Fayette. The living patterns in this region are the same as in the Delta--whites living in the better homes and the Blacks in deplorable shacks. As I traveled through the Southeastern region, I would have thought that I was in the Delta had it not been for the hills.

Luckily, during the summers of '71 and '72, I was in Mississippi around the Fourth of July. On this day, the Ginns have a family reunion at the home of one of the many Ginns and Alfords, who live throughout Southeastern Mississippi from Jackson to the Louisiana border. Though there were relatives who came from many northern cities such as Chicago, Detroit, New York, Indianapolis and Buffalo and from western cities such as Los Angeles and Denver, I was primarily interested in the ones who had remained in Mississippi.

It was at these family reunions and among the many friendly people whom I met and talked to while in the Delta and Southeastern Mississippi that I was provided the background for this investigation. The stories told to me about the injustices suffered by Blacks, as well as the good times had by Black people at their 'sociation, church revivals, weddings and family reunions, in the midst of white brutality, provided the language samples for the study. These same events as well as personal observations provided the cultural samples.

Language Patterns of Black Mississippians

The same isolation which explains the persistence of Gullah is also responsible for the preservation of the mode of speech among Black Mississippians. In the beginning, Blacks arriving from Africa learned their new

language from their white slave owners. The slave children, prohibited from any great freedom of the 'white house,' and often prohibited from playing with white children, had to learn from their elders, who, of course, spoke a broken English, with sound substitutions and intonations retained from native African languages. The children of these children learned from their own parents, and the pattern repeated itself even to the present time. Therefore, because of discrepancies in education and cultural isolation, the Afro-English of the first slaves has served as the basilect of Black American speech generation after generation.

In order to place the language features supplied by the informants in an observable framework, I took the characteristics of Black speech (identified by Beryle Bailey and by this writer) and placed the speech samples into these established categories, whenever it was possible. For those features which were absolutely distinctive, new categories were listed. The language pattern of Black Mississippians will be listed in three categories: grammatical features, phonological features and lexical items.

Grammatical Features

1. Habitual 'be'

   "Mary, she most often be here when I need her."
   "It usually don't be cold down there much."

2. Copula absence

   "He talking about something he don't know nothing 'bout."
   "That John Bell Williams, he real mean."

3. 'Will' or 'would' plus 'be'

   "Sometimes it be three weeks 'fore the grocery truck come again."
   "We be living here in Ginntown forty years this December."

4. 'Been' or 'done' plus past form of the verb.

   "I done work all my life cuttin' pulp wood."
   "I been had that same old Chevy since I first bought it."

5. Use of 'ain't'

   "I ain't 'bout to leave Mississippi now."
   "These white folks ain't scaring nobody these days."

6. Multiple Negation

   "Didn't nobody vote in Walthall County in them days, if he skin was black or yellow."
   "I don't know nobody who is from South Carolina or Georgia."

7, Negativized auxiliary at the beginning of the sentence

   "Can't none of these old folks in Lexington read and write."
   "Don't many people go from Tula to Jackson."

8. Pronominal apposition

   "My children they don't come back here much."
   "The people here Black and white they all get along together."

9. Embedded question inversion

"The people here are very nice. They always want to know do you need anything."
"Well let me see can I tell you what you want to know."

Intersection of Grammar and Pronunciation

10. Absence of -ed past tense marker

"I cook for Dr. Bums for twenty years."
"I ain't work steady for near 'bout six years now."

11. Absence of -s present tense marker

"Ain't much work around here. May be a fellow work two days a week and that it."
"My son cut pulp wood just like I do for a living."

12. Absence of -s possessives

"One of my boys was kill in Tom old log truck,"
"It was my oldest daughter child who done all the reading and writing for us."

13. Absence of -s plural

"You can't buy five cent worth of good meat in these grocery stores like you use to could do."

Phonological and Lexical Features

As among Black speakers throughout the United States, Black Mississippians, for the most part, alter the 'th' sound. Initial 'th' is often pronounced as 'd' so that words like "the," "that," and "them," equal "de," "dat," and "dem" respectively.

While I was in the Delta, I visited the R. B. Schlater Junior High School in Leflore County, Mississippi. The phonological features of the Blacks in this community

are so representative of the total state, that I chose to list a few of the more interesting items.

Informants' Pattern	Standard English
"us went to town"	We went to town
"dis is hit"	This is it
"I do'n know"	I don't know
"Me and John had a fite"	John and I had a fight
"juking"	dancing
"I sot on it"	I sat on it
"sho'nough"	sure enough
"pit the kiver on me"	put the cover on me
"I knowed it"	I knew it
"I done gone to de sto"	I have gone to the store
"Dis here ain't you'ns"	This isn't yours
"quit dat fuss"	stop joking with me
"Dis is yosum"	This is yours
"Git oud a wa"	Get out of the way
"whar her et?"	Where is she?
"tummar"	tomorrow
"Dat ain't a business"	That isn't her business
'nes Chusda"	Next Tuesday
"Go wey fum me"	Get away from me
"Us got u britches"	We have some trousers

At Wilkes School, also in Leflore County, the phonological patterns were the same as those at Schlater Junior

High. To understand the persistence of the phonological pattern it is important to know that the economic, educational and racial patterns of the communities are also the same. Wilkes School is located at Money, Mississippi, nine miles north of Greenwood, Mississippi. Wilkes is in the heart of the Delta. As with all the communities in the Delta, Wilkes is predominately an agricultural town, with cotton as the chief money crop.

Phonological Features of Residents in Money, Mississippi

Informants' Pattern	Standard English
"I sot dar yesterday."	I sat there yesterday
"I retch on de shef."	I reached (for it) on the shelf.
"we fit."	we fought.
"His'n"	That's his.
"I seed you in town."	I saw you in town.
"I comed to yo house last night."	I came to your house last night.
"Ah'm tide."	I'm tired.
"Yeh'm."	Yes ma'am.
"You sho know bout dat girl."	You sure know that girl
"Dem cops cot 'em stealin'"	Those cops caught him stealing.
"He did hit hissef."	He did it himself.
"Mammy do' in wek."	Mama doesn't even work.
"Wuz you et dey play?"	Were you at their play?
"stan' stia."	Stand still.

Informants' Pattern	Standard English
"Chile, naw."	Child, no.
"Hush yo mouf."	Hush your mouth.
"Dem girls los!."	Those girls are lost.
"Dis is ma cut'n Salley."	This is my cousin Salley.
"Have a vesta gashun"	Have a vegetable garden.
"I et' um."	I ate them.
"But 'stificate."	Birth certificate.
"Illi fomed."	ill-formed
"de reker player."	the record player
"I thowed hit."	I threw it.
"'lectic i'on."	electric iron.
"Her wuz goin' nuf."	She was going North.
"T'ain't fita et."	It isn't good to eat.
"Dis e'nem"	This evening

The speech of Blacks living in Canton, Mississippi was no different from those who lived in the Delta. Canton, Mississippi is a small town just north of Jackson, the capital. Canton is in Madison County. As seems to be the pattern in most small communities in Mississippi, Blacks make up the majority of the population. The economy is basically agricultural and most of the people are very poor. One informant told me that even though Blacks are in the majority, whites control everything, even the shanties that the Blacks live in.

Below is a list of language features from informants of Canton, Mississippi:

Informants' Pattern	Standard English
"U'm gwinta go."	I'm going to go.
"Me' Brow' e' hearh."	Mrs. Brown is here.
"Appa cobblu"	apple pie
"fam'ly pie"	apple pie
"swee co'n"	corn on the cob
"ros' neas"	roasting ears
"swee' rings"; "fat cakes"	doughnuts
"goobers; pindas"	peanuts
"county cap'tal	county seat
"skillet"	frying pan
"poke"	paper bag

The interesting point concerning the speech of the informants in Canton was that, for the first time, I noticed several phrases that referred to the same object. For example, one informant would say "apple pie" and another informant would say "family pie," still another informant would say "apple cobbler." I found that all the terms meant "apple pie." There was one elderly female informant who used "family pie" and "apple cobbler" interchangeably.

In Canton, more so than in the Delta, there seemed to have been frequent use of different lexical items

referring to the same object. There was no difference between "dirt," "ground" and "soil." "Creek" and "stream" were the same, as were "kinfolks" and "homefolks."

In Hinds County, the most densely populated area of Mississippi, I confined my field collecting to Jackson, the capital city. Jackson is the perfect city, for it is in the center of the state. One can travel northward for less than an hour, and he will be in the outer perimeter of the Delta. He can go ten miles southward, and he will be in the barren and desolate rural country of Southern Mississippi.

Though Madison and Rankin Counties have their own economic foundations, each depends upon Jackson for its economic stability. Many small communities in Rankin and Madison Counties depend upon Jackson for public utilities. Since Jackson is the center of industry, politics, education and shopping, Mississippians from all over the state come to Jackson. On any Friday or Saturday, it is a common occurrence to meet entire families from Port Gibson, Itta Bena, Why, Summit, Leland and countless other small hamlets. These families have come into the city to spend the day shopping and movie-going. Since these families are Black, they will confine their downtown shopping to stores on Capital Street up to Farrish. On Farrish, the patronage is solid Black. This

is "colored town." Seldom will one see a Black beyond Farrish Street.

Since Jackson is such an attractive area, because of its size and locale, it is understandable that the speech pattern there is, for the most part, consistent with that of the rest of the state. As natives of the Delta migrated to Jackson, they brought with them their language and culture. So it was with migrants from other parts of the state.

To collect speech patterns in Jackson, I used a different approach. Instead of talking with people, I stood downtown on the corner of Farrish and Capital Streets and listened to people converse among themselves. I also went into one restaurant, Primos, which was the first all-white establishment to be forced into integrating, to listen for interesting speech patterns. The more interesting patterns heard in the restaurant and on the street corner are listed below:

"C'mon, les go up deah." "Das a good lunch."

"Her ain' go' see us."

"U'm haungry."

"Ahm some col wauter."

"We ha' greens yistiddy."

"Lemme have dat mada salad."

"C'mon, les git thee."

"Kin ah git two piece uf jelley cake?"

"You don'e drop a penny."

"I wants some 'nana pud'n."

"Gimme some 'tatas an' peas."

"Con' ax me."

"Yeah dans you lak it."

"We ain' got no chilluns."

"Ah yes tol' you."

Vocabulary Heard on Farrish Street in Jackson, Mississippi

d'reckly-soon
hocky-excrement
heared (Heered)-heard
chunk-throw
brung-brought
ketch-catch
wid-wif-with
fetch-bring
noggin-head
sich-surch-such
gooder-goodest-better-best
badder-baddest-worse-worst
tech-touch
goober-peanut
cooter pot-turtle
cuss-swear
ninny jugs-breasts
dukey-excrement
step-ins-panties
snuck-sneaked
tote-carry
whup-whip

The consistency and interesting features of the speech patterns of Black Mississippians is also to be heard in Tylertown and Ginnstown, Mississippi. Tylertown is a typical Mississippi town with its Black and white residential areas well defined. Most of the Blacks live across the tracks on or beyond South Railroad Street. There is a section of Tylertown called Ginnstown; and, it is here where old-timers tell interesting tales about the early history of the town. One informant told me that every white and Black person in the town knows each other. He began to point in certain directions to indicate who

lived where. Though I heard some interesting folktales from the oldtimers in Ginntown, it was at a Fourth of July family reunion picnic, held at the home of Delass Ginn, that I heard the most interesting speech patterns and vocabulary. Listed below are some speech patterns and vocabulary which have not been listed earlier:

Informants' Speech Pattern	Standard English
"He has de trash."	He has a mouth disease.
"See y'all dema."	I'll see you tomorrow.
"Ah'm gwine home."	I'm going home.
"De cush waz' liscious."	The dressing was delicious.
"Boy, ah hamstram you!"	Boy, I'll punish you severely!
"We' air de tick."	We'll air the mattress.
"I won't go the tail of a tapin.'	I won't go anywhere.
"He shet de do.	He shut the door.
"He ain't got a bit a sense."	He is crazy.
"John and nem came."	John and them came.
"I genelly go all de time."	I usually go always.
"This food is pizen."	This food is poisoned.

Vocabulary Words Heard in Tylertown

heb'n	heaven
pit	put
shan'	shall not
foots	feet
toofes	teeth
yeas	ears

Vocabulary Words Cont.

fuge	forge
po	poor
ingently	generally
gence	while
Ferginia	Virginia
tolable	tolerable
hobblin	walking
tuck	took
sich	such
mess	a serving of food (a mess of greens)
merch	much
sepper	supper
dunner	dinner
whent	went
hancha	handkerchief
'sociation	church meeting
nelli' bout	nearly
plum	completely
thunk	thought
hilt	held
fit	fought
Sat'dy	Saturday
nigh gone	almost gone
mi' nigh	most likely

Specific Phonological Features in the Speech of Black Mississippians

1. Words which have "ore," "oor," "our," in their spelling become pronounced as "o," as in the words store (sto), door (do), four (fo).
2. Words which have "ure" in their spelling also are pronounced as "o," as in sure (sho).
3. "O" becomes "e" in words as in cover (kiver), discover (di'skiver), poison (pizen).
4. "Th" becomes "d," as in the words this (dis), these (dese), those (dose), them (dem), they (dey), with (wid). In the words with and fifth this final "th" is also pronounced as "f" or "t" by some speakers.
5. Final "th" is frequently pronounced as "f" and "v" as in both (bof), breathe (breav), breath (breaf), mouth (mouf), death (deaf), south (douf).
6. "Et" as in bet becomes "a" as in bay in words as dead, bed, red, bread, spread.
7. Intervocalic "r" and post vocalic "r" is not pronounced, as in the words there (dea), where (shea), born (bon), corn (con), morning (mornin'), worn (woun), tire (tie), fire (fie).
8. "Ere" becomes "a" in there and where (da), (wha); "ire" becomes "a" in fire, tire, wire (fa, ta, wa).
9. "I" as in bike becomes "a" as in sat and as in like (lak).

10. "A" as in cat becomes "a" as in pain in words as can't, aunt, man.
11. Linking "r" is omitted both within a word and between words, as in carry (kai), far away (fa' way).
12. "It" becomes "hit," usually in stressed positions.
13. (L) before (k) is pronounced as the (u) in put, as in the word milk (miuk).
14. (N) in the final position becomes (m) as in rosin (rosum), telephone (telafoum), turpentine (tupemtim).
15. (R) is lost from the initial clusters (thr, pr), as in throw, present, throat, through, pressure, prefer, promote.
16. The loss of initial syllables, such as in the words about ('bout), behind ('hind), molasses ('lasses), peculiar ('culier), respond ('spon'), imagine (imagin'), potatoes ('tatas), considerable ('sidable).
17. The loss of medial syllables or parts of syllables, as in the words aggravate (agavat), arguing (a'gin), dangerous (dangus), electricity (lectwisti), Saturday (sadi).
18. The combining of syllables as in the words below (blow), believe (bliv), belong (blong) suppose (spose).

Consonant Clusters Affected by Reduction

1. nd

sound	-	soun
found	-	found

round	-	roun
hound dog	-	houn dog

2. ft

left	-	lef
lift	-	lif

3. th

with	-	wif
fifth	-	fif

4. st

test	-	tes
best	-	bes

5. sp

wasp	-	was

6. sk

mask	-	mas
ask	-	ass

7. nt

count	-	coun
can't	-	can
didn't	-	did'n

8. ld

cold	-	col
bold	-	bol
told	-	tol

Phonological Features of Black Mississippian Speech Held in Common with Gullah Phonological Features

All of the features listed as "specific features of Black Mississippian speech" can be found in the Gullah dialect. The major difference between the two speech patterns is the way Gullah is spoken. Whereas Black Mississippian speech is slow with a drawl, Gullah is characterized by its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch. It can best be compared with the speech of the West Indies and the English speakers of West Africa. Guy B. Johnson wrote:

> The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.[6]

If we take Johnson's analysis as a base, it becomes quite clear that both English and African influences are responsible for the rapid speed and high pitch inflection of Gullah speech. As mentioned earlier, the two features of Gullah which distinguish it from Black Mississippian speech are pitch inflection and the rapid speed of

---

[6]Guy B. Johnson, Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina (Hatboro, Penn., 1969), p. 52.

articulation. The similarities in the phonology of the two speech patterns can further be illustrated by supplying a translation of Gullah sentences into Black Mississippian speech patterns.

In the illustration below, the top lines are Gullah and the bottom lines are Black Mississippian speech:

"Wey yo' is bun? Tell me say."[7]
"Whea yo' bin, huh?"

"Down een de 'za'b."
"Dow' een dah pon'."

"Wuh yuh bun duh do down de-dey een de 'za'b?"
"Whut wuz yuh doin' down deah een duh pon'?"

"Bun duh fush."
"I wuz fishin'."

"Ketch um?"
"Ketch eny?"

"Sho!"
"Sho!"

"How many?"
"Ha' meny?"

"Too many."
"Uh lot uhm."

"Lemme shum! Wey'e dey?"
"Le'me see um! Whea ah dey?"

"E de-dey."
"Hea dey ah."

"Wey?"
"Whea?"

"De de-dey, Opey do'!"
"Dea de ah, o'um duh do!"

---

[7]Ibid., p. 14.

"Yunt opey do' twill me yiz shum!"
"Ah ain' gon o'um duh do teah you show me dem!"

"Yunt gwine shum twill opey do!"
"Ah ain' gwa she um teah you o'um duh do!"

It is clear that the speech patterns of Gullah speakers and Mississippi Blacks have some differences phonologically and grammatically; but, they also have many similarities, especially phonologically, as has been shown throughout this chapter. These similarities can be attributed to the same dominant linguistic influences (peasant English and African dialects) which form the basilects for both speech patterns. Just as the African slaves in South Carolina and Georgia learned their English from the unlettered indentured servants and overseers from England, so did the slaves in Mississippi. The Gullah speakers have retained more of the early speech characteristics of the New World Blacks, because of their isolation on the out islands of South Carolina and Georgia. In Mississippi, on the other hand, the isolation of Blacks was not as thorough; so, Mississippi Blacks retained more influence from the white speech, especially the drawl, than the Gullah speakers received from the low-country whites in South Carolina.

Johnson's explanation as to the persistence of Gullah can also be applied to the persistence of Black Mississippians' speech:

> . . . Even in a strange environment they (language patterns) tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new pattern for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.[8]

Black Mississippian Cultural Patterns Held in Common with Gullah Cultural Patterns

As one travels through the small towns and countryside of Mississippi, he is immediately reminded of an America of long ago. As he passes the unpainted, delapidated sheds and barns, the smelly pig pens and chicken coops, the shanties and shotgun houses, the long rows of cotton in the seemingly endless fields, and the barking hounds along the winding dirt lanes, it is difficult to believe that he is still in the United States, a country of space age technology and affluence.

Though much of white America reaped the benefits of this space age technology and affluence, the above description of rural Mississippi has been the background for the Black experience. It has been this background out of which the Black cultural patterns of Mississippi evolved. Because of imposed isolation from mainstream society, racism, injustices and inferior or no educational opportunities, the Black Mississippian, in order to

---

[8] Ibid., p. 61.

survive, developed cultural patterns alien to mainstream society, and nurtured those patterns that were passed on from the slaves.

For the purpose of this research, I arbitrarily divided the cultural patterns to include life style, religion, beliefs and work patterns. These patterns have been chosen because they represent significant parts of Black culture in the United States. The other parts of Black culture such as folktales, folksongs and legends are left out of this study because the field research did not include their treatment. Because there was no particular technique used in collecting data from informants, no attempt was made to secure cultural samples outside of those supplied by the informants in a natural context.

Life Style

The life style of the Black Mississippian is not that different from that of other Black Americans. However, since advancements in technology and education have been late getting to him, he has retained some of the old ways of yesteryear.

It is not unusual to see a large group of children with buckets, washtubs and foottubs headed toward the spring or creek. It is Monday, wash day for most small town Mississippians. The older children have the

responsibility of getting the wash water and starting the fire around the boiling pot. Since they must also get ready for school, they have to get out of bed around 6:00 a.m. to make sure that they are not late. Not all Black families have to depend upon the springs and creeks for their wash water. Some have dug wells and even others have plumbing. For most of them, however, wells (from which the water has to be drawn by rope and bucket) and creeks supply most of the washing water. For those who have wells, that water is used mainly for household purposes. Since summers in Mississippi can be very dry, the well water cannot be spared for washing, so creek water must be used.

As I looked through available research that has been done on Gullah Blacks, I did not find any mention of "the wash day." I was surprised, since the wash day is as much a part of basilect Black culture as singing and dancing. I was fortunate, however, to have a native Charlestonian as my housemate. Though Moses is not a Gullah speaker, his mother, Sarah, speaks the dialect with all the rapidity in articulation and staccato in intonation which typify Gullah. Both Sarah and Moses had much to say about the wash day on the out islands, which are connected to Charleston by the Ashley River Bridge. Mrs. Green (Sarah) gave the following account:

> Drawing water for washing and going to de creek or spring still go on over dere on de out islands. Use to, we did de same thing heah in Charleston. De children, dey get up 'fo day to start the fire 'round the pot and get the wash and wrenching (rinsing) water. It sometime would take all day to finish 'cause in dem days you had to wash by hand on a rub board. What take so long is the boiling. You had to boil the white clothes first and then you boil the colored things. It be so hot, by de time the colored clothes was ready for wrenching (rinsing), the white ones would one dried already.

"Sunday dinner" is very important to the Black Mississippian. This is the one day which everyone looks forward to, because he knows that some pies or cakes, if not both, will be a part of the menu. I got an eye-witness account of all the excitement created by the Sunday dinner, when I was a guest in the home of Delass and Nell Ginn. As mentioned earlier, Delass and Nell live in Tylertown, Mississippi. They are prominent citizens in the community for numerous reasons; the major ones being, Delass is a high school principal and Nell is the head cook at the hospital. These are good jobs for Blacks in Tylertown, Mississippi. Adding to the jobs is the fact that there is a settlement named for the Ginn family, Ginntown.

This particular Sunday, Delass was up at 7:00 a.m. letting everyone know that he was hungry. Soon, I heard Mrs. Ginn go into the kitchen to answer his alarm. Almost like clockwork, Doris, Mae Nell and I headed for

the bathroom at the same time. Without realizing it, we were following Mr. Ginn's call to rise. After we had gone through the hygiene routine, we all ended up in the kitchen for a delicious breakfast. It was after breakfast that all the excitement around the Sunday dinner started. Nell wanted to know from all of us our choice of meat. I wanted one thing, Doris wanted another, Mae Nell wanted another and Delass another. After much dialogue, screaming and debate, Delass's choice was the meat for the day. Though we knew what the meat would be, the dessert was to be the surprise. It is the one law that a mother never breaks, no matter how old the children live to be. When we were called to dinner, we were deliciously surprised, for Mrs. Ginn had prepared blackberry cobbler for dessert. "Everybody who is a true Black Mississippian loves blackberry cobbler," said Mr. Delass Ginn.

The "Sunday dinner" is not only important to Black Mississippians in the Southeastern region of the state, it is also important to those living in the large cities and in the Delta. Daisy Peeples and Barbara Townsend, both natives of Jackson but who teach in the Delta, told me that "Sunday dinner" is just as important among Jacksonians as it is among residents of small Delta towns. Daisy said that wives in the Delta begin preparing the main courses of the meal on Saturday, so that

after church on Sunday all they would have to do is cook the bread and make the drink. According to Daisy and Barbara, the majority of Black wives in Jackson follow the same process.

The Sunday dinner is also an important occasion among the Gullah speakers in South Carolina. While I was collecting language and cultural samples in Jackson, I was fortunate to meet a native Gullah speaker from Charleston. Theodore Chisolm's parents had come to Charleston from Trinidad. He interestingly told me how his mother used to stay up late on Saturday nights preparing Sunday's meal. He said that she would let him stay in the kitchen with her, until she was ready to start preparing the dessert. Mr. Chisolm said that it has been many years since he has been back to Charleston, but he doesn't find too much difference between the Black people of Mississippi and those of Charleston.

No treatise on the life style of Black Americans, no matter what the geographical region, has any credence unless it includes the importance of singing and dancing. This seemed especially true in Mississippi. In small towns, in the Delta, in the isolated hamlets, on the Gulf Coast and in Jackson, singing and dancing was the one main cultural aspect which linked all of Black Mississippi. In McComb, as I drove through the Black section, children

were singing and dancing on the dirt yards. In Jackson, on Lynch and Dalton Streets, young boys and girls, on their way from school, sang, danced and snapped their fingers in a rhythm that is uniquely Black American.

In Jackson, I had many occasions to visit Neta's Lounge, a favorite night spot among the young as well as older Jacksonians. As the band played Mississippi blues, every man and woman was singing, finger-popping and giving testimony as to what the music meant to him or her. Movement never stopped, even as the band took a short break. The music was so much a part of their existence that the finger-popping and testimony continued until the band returned to the stage. Even after closing time, almost everyone still danced and sang as he got into his car. The lounge had closed but the music, being a natural part of the people's culture, continued.

Dr. William Ferris has captured the beauty of song and dance of Black Mississippians on film. During the summers of '71 and '72, he traveled throughout the Delta filming blues singers in their homes and in the cafes. Young and old alike performed dances such as "The Camel Walk," "The Duck Walk" and "The Buzzard Lope," just as they have been performed for generations.

Lydia Parrish, in her book, Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands, presented snapshots of St. Simon

Islanders performing the Buzzard Lope, a dance found among older Black Mississippians as well.[9] This further serves to show the cultural linkage between Blacks in Mississippi and in the Gullah regions. There are other dances described in her work that are similar to those found in rural Mississippi, but the names are different.

Moses told me that singing and dancing are major cultural patterns among Black South Carolinians. He remembers seeing dancing and singing very similar to that which is characteristic of Black Mississippians:

> When I was very young, my mother used to visit one of her relatives who lived on St. John's Island. At night, we would sit in the front yard and sing and dance and laugh. Most of the singing and dancing were done by the grown folk. We would all sit around a "smoke," made from old rags and paper, to keep the mosquitoes away. It was around this "smoke" that all of the action took place. It seems that everyone already knew every song that was sung. One person would start it and all the others would chime in. This would go on until almost midnight. Many of the smaller children would already be asleep and I remember that I, too, would fall asleep at times.

Moses also told me that in Charleston the teenagers and even the younger children sing, dance, and finger-pop just as the young Mississippians do. "In the nightclubs and cafes everbody dances. Old men and women never get too old to dance. Although the younger people do the

---

[9]Lydia Parrish, Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands (New York: Creative Age Press, 1942), p. 128.

modern dances of today, the older people do the dances of their youth. They look strange to me, but they don't care, they be enjoying themselves," said Moses.

Singing and Dancing are learned very early among Black Americans. A Black child is born into a world of music as he is born into an existence of the blues. When he is unhappy, his mother sings blues to him. When he is hungry and there is no milk, his mother again sings to him. An infant is sung to asleep when it is time for his midday nap. When there is happiness, he sees everyone dancing and hears everyone singing and finger-popping. One of his elder brothers or sisters will grab him and say, "Come on baby, dance for us." "Come on sweet thang, show 'em how you can do it." Once the baby starts making babbling sounds and jumping up and down, all the attention is now on him. The cultural pattern has been firmly implanted. Someone will say, "Oh honey, that gal is gonna be a killer, look how she keep in time wif de music." "Oowee, look at that baby go!"

Though this could have come from my own childhood, I experienced this acculturation ritual at the home of Doris Ginn in Jackson, Mississippi. Doris' sister, Mae Nell, and her husband and baby live with her. Brietta, the baby, is already an accomplished dancer at two years

old. This particular day, Doris was playing Aretha Franklin albums; and, all of us were testifying and singing along with the record. Without a word of warning, Brietta jumped out of her little chair, got in the middle of the floor, and started dancing and singing at the top of her voice. The more she sang, the more she expressed herself through dance. We joined her. She had the pattern that has been among Black Mississippians and indeed, Black Americans, ever since the first African set foot on American soil.

Religion

Religion is not just a Sunday occurrence for Black Mississippians. It is an intimate part of their everyday lives. Also, religion goes farther than a belief in Christ and his teachings; it is a combination of traditional Christianity mixed with the passion, compassion and understanding for one's fellowman. This mixture is the results of the suffering, degradation and injustices that the Black American has experienced during the four hundred years that he has been on the American continent. Yvonne Ainsworth, a teacher in the Jackson Public Schools, gave the following meaning of religion:

> Well, Darnell, religion is a lot of things to me. When I get up in the morning and I still have my health and strength, I feel thankful. So I get down on my knees and thank God. I don't believe that you can have religion if you just go to church on Sunday; religion is with you

> everyday of your life in your heart. A lot of people today just go to church, because it won't look good if they don't. They ain't going there to serve God; they going there to look good to other folks. I know, at my church, we don't shout anymore. Some of the older sisters shout, but they look at them funny. I just want to live a good clean life and be thankful for what God has given me.

Almost everyone I talked with had a similar view of what religion meant to him.

As I visited Black churches, one of the persistent occurrences was audience participation while the preacher delivered the sermon. Whether the affiliation was Baptist, Methodist or Holiness, the response was the same. As the preacher made specific points, the audience responded with "Amen," "Yes sir," "That's right," "Lord help him," "Amen Jesus," "Preach, Reverend," and other expressions to let the minister know that they were in absolute agreement with him. On those rare occasions when the audience was "cold," the minister would let them know of his displeasure by interjecting into his sermon statements such as, "Y'all ain't with me this morning?" "Lord help us this morning, for the devil is in our midst!" The minister would continue to interject such statements until the audience "warmed-up." Reverend McCrory, a popular minister in the Jackson community, gave me his reasons for soliciting audience participation in the sermon:

Figure 5.--A Black family at a 'sociation.

> I tell you Brother Williams, we Black folks are used to doing things together. It's the same way with church. We are there to make a joyful noise to the Lord, and He don't like no "quite" church. It says it right here in Psalm 150. That's why the devil is still in white people, because they churches are so so quiet. God is never a part of they services. You never hear any of them say "amen" or nothing. We, We worship together just like we suffer together. We have always done things together, that's how we made it for so long.

The compassion and togetherness continue even outside of church services. It is manifested also during the season for "'sociations" (associations).[10] Though all denominations of Black protestants have some form of revival and homecoming, it is the Baptist Church that is noted for its "'sociations." During this time of the year, visiting ministers, congregations and choirs come from all over the state to help the host church celebrate its association and revival services. If visiting ministers are going to stay during the entire week-long celebration, members of the host church will have them as guests in their homes. In Mississippi, this celebration is still an important social event, as can be seen in the description of the "Meetin' Day" as told to me by Daisy Peeples:

> Darnell, child, up in LeFlore County where I teach, meetin' day is just as big as it was when I was a kid. Honey, two weeks 'fore time, people

---

[10]Association is a social function held at churches during August and September. It can be compared to a homecoming, for former church members travel great distances to return home for this event.

> be gettin' their meetin' dresses out of lay-way (lay-a-way). You go to town and all you see is Black folks. In Jackson, the churches done got "cididy" (sophisticated); they don't put dinner on the ground anymore; they cook and serve it in the church kitchens. But up here, they still cook all they cakes and pies and dressing and stuff and serve it from the boxes on the ground. It more fun that way, 'cause you can go 'round and get a little bit from everybody boxes.

Barbara Townsend also teaches in LeFlore County. She also told me about the "big meetin' day" in the area:

> Since I been teaching up here (in the Delta), I go to Shiloh Baptist Church. We have our 'sociation on the fourth Sunday in August. Since so many people be comin' back home from up North, the Church members open up their homes to them. Everybody be dressed up for that day. The chil'ren have new shoes and the women be done bought new dresses and hats. Everybody get plenty to eat, too, 'cause there be so much food! A lot of people get them two or three plates so they can take some home. Everybody be having so much fun laughin' and talkin', because they see so many of their friends they went to high school with.

Adalia Ginn (Aunt Dale as she is known in Tylertown) gave an account of "'sociation day" in Magnolia, Mississippi:

> Mostly all the Ginns in Ginntown and Tylertown are Church of Christ Holiness, but we have some kinfolks on the Alford side who is Baptist. Dey mostly live in Summit and Magnolia. Dey meetin' day up there is duh secon' Sunday in September. Dey sho have a good time honey 'cause dey do some singin' an' shoutin'! Dem young chil'ren kin sho sang, dem preachers kin preach too!

> Since we all kinfolks, we always visit each other churches on Revival Day. When duh Ginns go to church, dey always fill up a whole sections. Deah (there) ah (are) a lot of Ginns in dis part of Mississippi. We are all over Walthall and Pike County. We mostly kin to everybody down hear (here).

The brotherhood and compassion that are intimate parts of the religion of Black Mississippians are manifested further in their concern for bereaved families. Since most towns in Mississippi are small and since most Blacks are confined to one residential section, practically all the Black citizens of a particular town know each other. Even in the smaller counties, because of church visitations, many of the residents know each other. Because of this close relationship, when someone dies, everyone knows about it. The sadness is experienced by the entire community. Everyone takes part in consoling family members of the deceased. Every night the home of the deceased is packed with people from the community and neighboring towns. They bring food to feed the out-of-town relatives and family members. Women from the community come over daily to do house chores and to help in making funeral arrangements. At night, the men sit around and tell jokes to relieve as much of the sadness as possible. This goes on well past midnight in many instances.

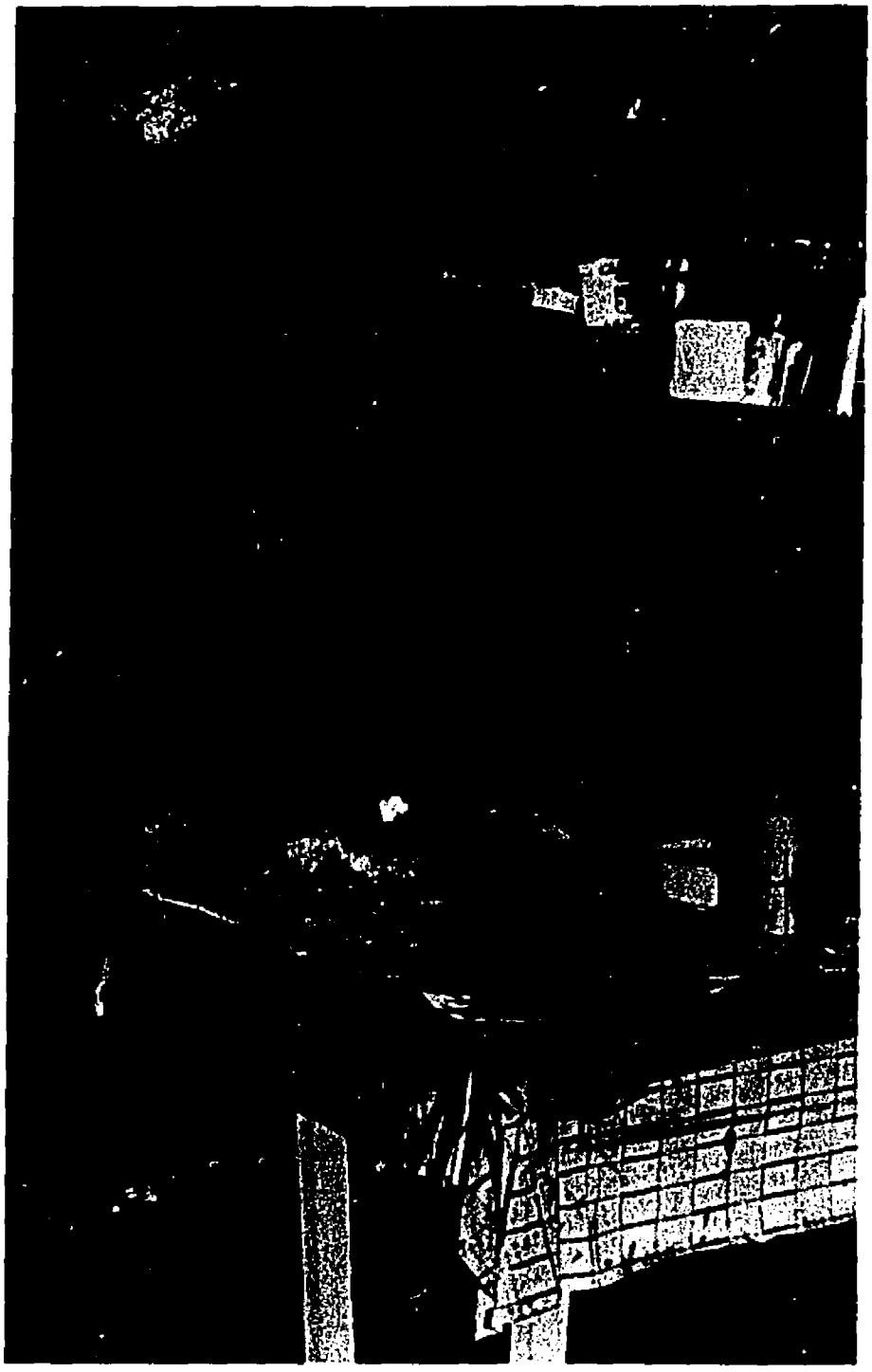

Figure 6.--A typical kitchen in the homes of Blacks living in the Delta.

Though I didn't have the opportunity to attend a "settin'-up" or funeral, Frankie Ginn (Aunt Frankie) told me about her father's death:

> When papa died, we had to keep him out for a week, because we had to wait for all our kin to come from California, Indiana and Michigan. There were so many people here every night, we had to use Dale and Nell's house. They brought all kind of food. Honey, I didn't know we had so many cousins. Seemed like everybody in Walthall and Pike County is a Ginn or Alford. Papa was well known all over this area. Our white kinfolks even came some nights. Papa used to tell us that all those white Ginns who live in Magnolia are from Ginntown. They have the same great-great-granddaddy as we do. . . .

"Settin'-up" is also a part of the Gullah religious pattern. Lydia Parrish recorded an account of "settin'-up" as told to her by an informant from St. Simon Island, Georgia:

> The custom of "settin'up" with the dead prevails among Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grand-mother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body (p. 174).
>
> At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake (p. 174).

Though the custom of "settin'-up" is different in present day Mississippi than it was among the Gullahs of Lydia Parrish's account, which was recorded in 1942, the compassion and sense of brotherhood have been retained. People still come from miles around and they still sing and bring food. Mourning and praying do not continue throughout the night but they are still a part of the "settin'-up" custom among Black Mississippians.

Beliefs

Beliefs are as intimate a part of the culture of Black Mississippians as religion. In almost any home visited, the family members will have some beliefs that govern their everyday lives. These beliefs are passed on from one generation to the next. Most of the beliefs have to do with death, bad luck, good luck and voodoo. (In Mississippi and many other parts of the South, voodoo is also known as hoodoo.) Puckett has shown that beliefs, such as the ones listed below, are traditional in the culture of Black Mississippians.[10] Many of the ones I have collected was collected by Puckett as early as 1925.

During the summer of 1972, while I was a Visiting Professor at Jackson State College, I asked the teachers

---

[10]Newbell Niles Puckett, Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), p. vii.

in my graduate seminar to make a list of the beliefs that they really believe to be true. I was particularly interested in what these teachers would write, because they, first of all, represented the Black Middle-Class. This was significant to my investigation, since most of my contacts had been with rural, small town, poor Black Mississippians. The following are the various beliefs which they listed.[11]

> "It is bad luck to rock a rocking chair without somebody in it, because you will rock somebody out of your family" (Puckett, p. 411).
>
> "It is bad luck to spin a door latch, because you will spin someone out of your family" (Pubkett, p. 411).
>
> "It is bad luck to wear your hat in the house" (Puckett, p. 394).
>
> "It is bad luck to open an umbrella indoors."
>
> "If you point at the stars, your finger will rot off. You have to bite that finger to keep it from rotting off" (Puckett, p. 434).
>
> "If you sweep trash outdoors at night, you sweep someone out of your family" (Puckett, p. 395).
>
> "It is bad luck for two people to walk on opposite sides of a pole."
>
> "It is bad luck to break a mirror" (Puckett, p. 441).
>
> "If you hear ringing in your ears, they are your death bells ringing."

---

[11]Many of the informants included in their listings the same beliefs. Those listed in this study represent the various beliefs without the duplications.

"It is bad luck to cross the tail of a black cat" (Puckett, p. 468).

"It is bad luck to pour dishwater out the back door."

"It is bad luck to move around while it is lightening and thundering, because God is at work."

"It is bad luck to cook on Sunday, because this is God's day of rest."

"It is bad luck for somebody to walk in your tracks."

"You will get some money if your left hand is itching all the time" (Puckett, p. 450).

"A person born with a veil over his face can see the dead."

"A horseshoe over your front door will keep out the ghosts."

"You will have good luck if your right eye is jumping" (Puckett, p. 449).

"You will have good luck if you keep a rabbit foot on you" (Puckett, p. 474).

"You can open any door with the leg bone of a cooked black cat."

"You should knock on wood if something good happens to you so that it can happen again" (Puckett, p. 434).

"Put a four-leaf clover in the Bible and it will bring you good luck."

"If a child put a pulled tooth under his pillow, he will get some money."

"A person can hoodoo you if he gets a piece of your hair" (Puckett, p. 399).

"A person can control you if he gets some of your pubic hairs" (Puckett, p. 399).

"Never leave your drinks on a table, because someone can put a snake or frog in your body through the drink."

"A child who is born head first will not have a good life."

"A child born with teeth will be very wise."

"If you kiss a dead person, you won't see its ghost and you won't be scared of dead people anymore."

Lydia Parrish collected similar beliefs among Gullah speakers of the Georgia Sea Islands to those given to me by teachers in my class:

> Ten years ago Katie told me that the Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night, if they could help it. If they did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'em," or "'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their kinfolk who might be passing by or who might be "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's, I was told if it were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.
>
> On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under your pillow Katie told me that when you had occasion to speak of dead, you make the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster. Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.
>
> In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo, I was told that the alarm clocks--of which

> there were many--are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. Petersville graveyard has lamps and electric light bulbs that are as popular as cups and pitchers (Parrish, 1942, pp. 30-31).

Lydia Parrish included in her study customs and traditions among the Gullahs, that are also found among the more isolated Blacks in the Delta region of Mississippi. Below are the ones I found to be in common with those in Mississippi:

> It is not right to walk side by side. To this day older members of the race walk single file--the men in front. . . . In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right (Parrish, p. 31).

> . . . Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched (blessed) (Parrish, p. 32).

> . . . On investigation we found that a glass bowl had been broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going to die. . . . Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor (Parrish, pp. 32-33).

> When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women, if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stone onto it with a stick, and throw them far

> away. The other particularized and said you musn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle--and it was much safer to throw them into the fire (Parrish, p. 33).
>
> . . . I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle--to ward off bad luck--at a little Negro Church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles" (Parrish, p. 33).
>
> . . . In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens. These curious looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. . . . If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck (Parrish, p. 34).

Work Patterns

As one travels on the endless red clay roads in the Mississippi Delta, he will see miles of cotton fields in full bloom, especially if he goes there during the months of August and September. It is still not unusual to see Black men, women and children strung out across these fields gathering the precious cotton. Some of these Blacks pick cotton for the poorer white farmers and some work on their own "spreads" (farms). Since the more wealthy white farmers can afford cotton-picking machines, they no longer need Black pickers.

However, there are still enough small farmers who must rely upon the toil and sweat of Black pickers. As these Blacks labor, they sing songs to make the work less

Figure 7.--Bales of cotton loaded on trains to be taken to northern textile factories.

burdensome. These songs also generate a uniformity among the workers, as their hands go from the cotton ball to the sack. Simultaneously, as they sing, their backs go down, at the same time, their hands move toward the ball and back to the sack in the same fashion. The rhythmic pattern is never broken.

Bill Ferris and I visited a cotton field in Leland, Mississippi. We got there around 6:00 a.m., just as the big van trucks loaded with Black laborers arrived. There must have been two hundred men, women and children there. Many were already singing and humming as they prepared their sacks for the "white gold" (cotton). As they went through the gate to the fields, the women were adjusting their head scarfs and bonnets and the men felt the top of their hats and caps, as if to reassure themselves that they were prepared to withstand the hot midday Mississippi sunshine.

The singing didn't start as soon as they began to pick the cotton. There seemed to have been despair and sadness among all of them at first. As they got halfway through the field, though, the singing and rhythmic work pattern had been established. The sadness and despair that showed on their faces initially had disappeared. The songs they sang were neither religious nor secular in nature. They were in a genre all their own. Folklorists

Figure 8.--A woman working in her garden in the Delta.

have named this style of Black music as "field or work-songs."[12] The uniformity in the work is known as "cooperative work."

Cooperative work is not only restricted to field work. I noticed it among women in Tylertown as they were preparing food for the Fourth of July Celebration at the Ginns'. As they peeled the potatoes, stirred the batter for the different cakes and breads, cut up chickens and whipped cake icing, their strokes with the spoons and forks were governed by the rhythm of the hums and songs. Though each woman seemed to have been humming a different song, the rhythms were the same; consequently, the strokes were simultaneous.

In Jackson, a group of Neighborhood Youth Corps teenagers were "slinging grass" (cutting grass) alongside streets in the Jackson State College area. Their cutters went up and down at the same time. I moved closer to the young men to find out if they were singing or humming. They were doing neither; instead, they were talking to each other and the rhythm of their sentences determined the up and down swings of the grass cutters.

---

[12]The worksong is any humming or singing which accompanies work. Though it is known among folklorists as a group phenomenon, among Black people, it is often used by one person. To make his task bearable, he sets it to rhythm.

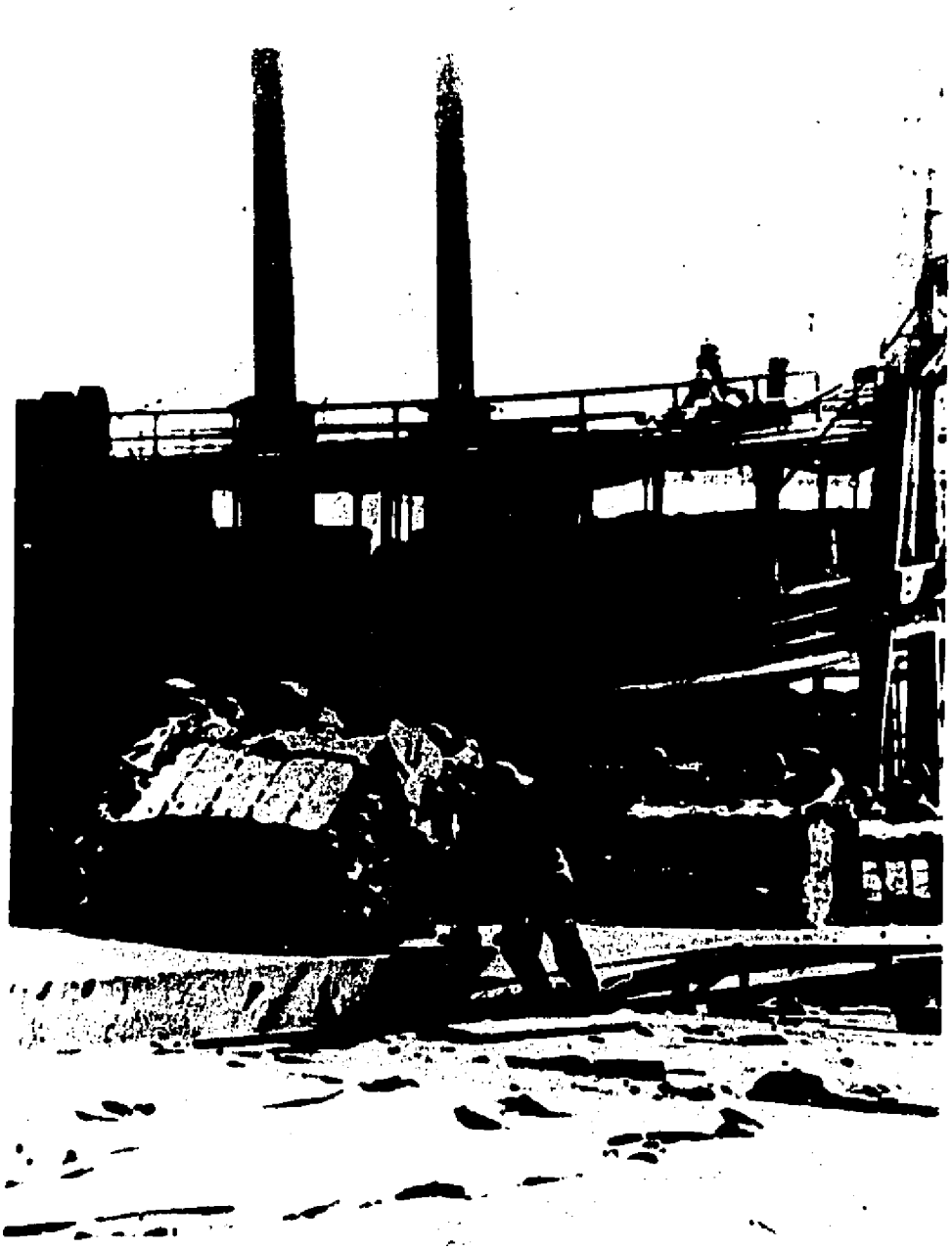

Figure 9.--Loading cotton bales on a boat in Vicksburg.

Though the worksong in its original form is rapidly being lost among Black Mississippians, it can still be heard among fishermen and field workers of the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina. "On Sapeloe Island in Georgia informants remember large groups, apparently of between 30 and 50 persons hoeing side by side in the fields."[13] Lydia Parrish had this to say about the significance of worksongs in the daily lives of Gullah Blacks:

> In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they walked and most of their tasks were lightened with songs. One of my pleasantest memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning at sunup,--and during the heat of the day--calling to each other across wide fields (p. 197).
>
> . . . In factories where large numbers are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung whenever work is heavy. . .(p. 197).

Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the background of the investigation and the language and cultural patterns of Gullahs and Black Mississippians. After having compiled the language and cultural samples

---

[13]William R. Bascom, "Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes," The Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series in Black Studies BC-17, Reprinted from American Anthropologist, Vol. 431, 1941.

supplied by Black Mississippian informants, it became increasingly more evident that the language and cultural patterns between the two groups were indeed similar; but, one was not the product of the other(i.e., Gullah is not the basilect for the language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians). The scholarship of Guy B. Johnson, Lydia Parrish, Lorenzo Turner and Newbell N. Puckett supports the theory that American Black language patterns have an Afro-English pidgin (which was spoken by the early slaves) as its basilect. These same scholars show that the cultural patterns of Black-Americans evolved from a mixture of African and British cultural patterns. The information in this chapter has shown that both Gullah and Black Mississippian language and cultural patterns have remained similar because of isolation and inferior education.

Chapter IV will present a discussion of the initial assumptions upon which the investigation was conducted.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of this investigation whose purpose was to provide evidence concerning Gullah survivals in the speech and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians. Each assumption, upon which the investigation was based, will be presented followed by the results of the findings and discussion.

Assumption 1

Because of isolation and little or no formal education, Gullah features have survived among Mississippi Blacks.

Results

There are similar cultural and language features among Gullah and Black Mississippians, but the Black Mississippian features are not a result of Gullah survivals. Therefore, assumption one was found to be false.

Discussion

The language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians were collected from informants throughout

the state. In order to secure as many natural features as possible, no tape recorders or note pads were used. It was after I had left an informant that I made notes of specific language features. The Gullah features were based upon the research of Lydia Parrish, Guy B. Johnson and Lorenzo Dow Turner.

After comparing the Black Mississippian's patterns with those of Gullah, it became apparent that both had derived independently from the same sources, African and unlettered British influences. The Black Mississippians, just as the Blacks of Coastal South Carolina and Georgia, speak dialects which have many African dialects and unlettered British speech as their basilect. The same is true for the cultural patterns. Thus, a Black Mississippian says "dat dere" and "shet duh do" not because of Gullah retentions but because his language pattern evolved from the same basilect as Gullah. The "settin'-up," "washday," beliefs and religious practices are similar among the two cultural groups for the same reasons that the languages are.

It has been a popular theory among contemporary scholars of Black speech that Gullah is the basilect for all regions of Black speech in the United States. My investigation has shown that this theory is not sound. It is true, however, that because of virtually no contact with mainland South Carolina and Georgia, Blacks

living on the islands have maintained the purest Afro-English than any other region. Likewise, they have maintained the cultural patterns of their slave ancestors.

Because Gullah has been the most studied of all the Black speech patterns, when contemporary scholars find non-standard features in the speech of Blacks, they call them "Gullah retention"; they are retentions of early Afro-English which is the basilect for all Black speech patterns in the United States.

Assumption II

A greater frequency of Gullah survivals will be found among the poorer Blacks in the Mississippi Delta and in the rural areas of Southeastern Mississippi than in other regions of the state.

Results

It is true that Blacks living in the Mississippi Delta and in the rural areas of Southeastern Mississippi have more cultural and language features in common with Gullah Blacks than Black Mississippians who live in the larger cities. However, though there are similarities, the assumption is rejected because its premise is false. There are more similarities in these areas, because of early Afro-British retentions and not because of Gullah survivals.

Discussion

Out of the more than one hundred informants interviewed, only one, Theodore Chisolm, was of Gullah background. None of the others knew of any of their relatives who might have come into Mississippi from the Carolinas or Georgia. All of them talked about their roots in Mississippi and how "bad times" had caused many of their relatives to leave Mississippi for northern cities.

It can be concluded, then, that the same factors which explain the persistence of Gullah can be applied to explain the persistence of the language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians.

> . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships, but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[1]

---

[1]Reed Smith, "Gullah," University of South Carolina Bulletin, No. 190 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1926), pp. 9-10.

Since the system of slavery was basically the same in all of the Southern states, the slaves in these states had similar experiences. The Blacks in Mississippi were just as isolated from the whites as those living in the Gullah regions. In the hamlets and towns of Southeastern Mississippi, even today, the white and Black residential areas are rigidly defined. Therefore, these Blacks have had little contact with the whites of the area. As Smith explained in his analysis, these Blacks living in almost complete isolation have retained traditions, language, beliefs, customs, religion and mental background practically unchanged.

Johnson's explanation of the persistence of Gullah can also be applied to explain the similarities between Gullah and Black Mississippian language and cultural patterns.

> . . . Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographically and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished in isolation and has survived with little change because of the continued isolation from its native area.[2]

---

[2]Guy B. Johnson, Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina (Hatboro, Penn.: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1968), p. 9.

Assumption III

There will be more Gullah survivals present in the cultural pattern than in the language.

Results

In my investigation, I found that cultural patterns of Black Mississippians are more noticeably similar to Gullah cultural patterns than the language patterns. However, the assumption has to be rejected for two reasons: the cultural patterns are similar because of African-British influences which are the foundations for both cultures; and, there was not enough evidence to show that the cultures of the two regions are more similar than the language patterns.

Discussion

As I observed the life styles of Black Mississippians, I did notice many similarities to Gullah patterns as recorded by Johnson and Parrish. However, it has been established in the two previous discussion that similarities exist because both are products of African and unlettered British influences. The Gullah patterns have remained virtually unchanged as they were among the early descendents of Afro-British influences. On the other hand, because isolation of Black Mississippians has not been so permanent, modern American language and cultural patterns have had a greater effect.

For example, Johnson stated that "until recently, the only contact the Gullah islanders had with the mainland was by beat." Consequently, there was very little contact with the mainstream culture. The situation has been different for the Black Mississippian. Though he was isolated from the local white citizens by residential restrictions and social and school segregation, there was still substantial contact. Unlike the Gullahs, who were isolated from the mainstream culture by miles of water, there were only barriers of fear and ignorance which separated Black and white Mississippians. Because there were no physical barriers, Black Mississippians came in contact with whites while shopping and working. As was the case in most southern white homes, a Black maid was essential in the homes of white Mississippians. The same is true for Black men who tended the lawns, vegetable and flower gardens. These Blacks imitated the life styles and language of the whites because what was white was right.

Practically every Black woman and man I talked with had worked as a maid and yardman respectively. Each one had stories to tell about how they listened to the speech of whites, observed their home life and dress patterns and wished that they, too, were white. Because of the will to be like whites, Black Mississippians began to

lose, very early, the Afro-British language and cultural patterns of their ancestors. Because the loss began so early, it is understandable why, although African influences are unmistakably the foundation of their life style, the language and cultural patterns are not as pure as those of the Gullahs.

To an outside observer, it might appear that there are more similarities between the cultural patterns of Black Mississippians and Gullahs. But his observation will not be altogether accurate. The Gullah dialect is so noticeable because of its rapid and staccato articulation and sing-song intonation. During my investigation, I was able to catalogue a significant number of lexical, grammatical and phonological features which Gullah and Black Mississippian speech hold in common.[3] For a knowledgeable person, it is as easy to detect African and unlettered British influences in the speech and culture of Black Mississippians as it is in Gullah. The difference will be that they will be more subtle in the Black Mississippians' patterns.[4]

Therefore, since both language and cultural patterns developed from the same influences, neither is responsible

---

[3]A detailed listing of these features are to be found in Chapter III of this study.

[4]See Chapter III for evidence pertaining to this point.

for the similarities which exist between them. That is to say that the peculiarities which exist in the speech and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians are not as a result of Gullah retentions but of Afro-British survivals.

Summary

Results of the findings indicate that Gullah and Black Mississippian language and cultural patterns developed from the same Afro-British influences. Also, the similarities which exist between them are not as a result of Gullah survivals in the Black Mississippian patterns but of Afro-British retentions. It could not be determined whether there were more similarities between the cultural patterns than between the language patterns. It was determined, however, that both language and cultural patterns are significantly similar, with the Gullah language pattern being more noticeable because of its unique intonation and articulation.

Chapter V will present a summary of the study and the conclusions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate Gullah survivals in the speech and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians. Creolists, linguists and dialect geographers as well as the contemporary sociolinguists have purported Gullah to be the basilect for the language and cultural patterns of Black Americans. Since the language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians are parts of cultural and language patterns of the total Black American community; and, since Gullah has been established as the basilect for these patterns, this study sought to investigate the relationship between Gullah and Black Mississippian language and cultural patterns.

To conduct this investigation, three assumptions were made based upon available research concerning Gullah and its significance in the development of contemporary Black American language and cultural patterns:

1. Because of isolation and little or no formal education, Gullah features have survived among Black Mississippians.

2. A greater frequency of Gullah survivals will be found among the poorer Blacks in the Mississippi Delta and in the rural regions of Southeastern Mississippi than in the larger cities.

3. There will be present more Gullah survivals in the cultural pattern than in the language.

To validate or invalidate the assumptions, the investigation was conducted in four stages: (1) a review of the literature, (2) collecting language and cultural data from Black Mississippians, (3) comparing the collected data with Gullah language and cultural patterns, and (4) listing and discussing the results.

Findings

The major findings of this study were:

1. There are similar cultural and language features among Gullah and Black Mississippians but the Black Mississippian features are not as a result of Gullah survivals.

2. Black Mississippians living in the Delta and in the rural regions of the Southeastern part of the state have more cultural and language features in common with Gullah Blacks than those Black Mississippians who live in the larger cities.

3. Black Mississippian cultural patterns are more noticeably similar to Gullah cultural patterns than are the language patterns.

(a) Black Mississippians are still quite isolated residentially from the whites.

(b) Compulsory education for all Mississippians had influenced the language pattern.

4. Gullah is not the basilect for the language and cultural patterns of Black Mississippians:

(a) African and unlettered British language and cultural survivals form the basilect for both Gullah and Black Mississippian language and cultural patterns.

(b) African and unlettered British language and cultural survivals form the basilect for the language and cultural patterns of the total Black American Community.

Conclusions

The findings of this study support the following conclusions:

1. The cultural and language patterns of Black Mississippians are similar to those of the Gullahs. Those Black Mississippians living in the rural areas will have more in common with the Gullah patterns than urban Black Mississippians.

2. There are many common phonological, lexical and grammatical features between the Black Mississippian and Gullah dialects. The Gullah dialect is distinctive

because of its rapid and staccato articulation of sounds.

3. The cultural patterns of the Gullahs and Black Mississippians have been influenced more by African cultural patterns than by British patterns.

4. African and unlettered British language and cultural patterns have been retained virtually unchanged among the Gullahs. This has not been the case with the Black Mississippians.

Limitations

1. The effects of recent linkage of the Gullah islands to mainland South Carolina and Georgia have had on Gullah language and cultural patterns were not determined in this study, because only previous research data on Gullah was used.

2. No association was made between Gullah, Black Mississippian and the total language and cultural patterns of the Black American community because of the scope of the investigation.

3. No attempt was made to chart African and unlettered British cultural and language survivals in either group.

4. No attempt was made to show a correlation between Black Mississippians of different socio-economic levels and the degree of Gullah similarities in their speech and cultural patterns. However, it was established that rural

Mississippians (who are basically poor) do hold more in common with the Gullahs.

Implications

The significant findings of this investigation involved the relationship between Gullah and Black Mississippian cultural and language patterns; the effect of isolation on both language and cultural groups; and, the degree of Afro-British language and cultural survivals in each group.

Though it was significant to this study to find that Black Mississippian and Gullah language and cultural patterns have many common features, the most important single finding was that Gullah survivals are not responsible for the similarities between the two language and cultural groups. Both developed from the Afro-British pidgin spoken by the slaves of each respective region. Because of virtually complete isolation from the whites of the regions and inferior or no educational opportunities, both groups maintained the language and culture of their slave ancestors. Since most of the slaves on all the plantations of the South were from West Africa and most of the overseers from whom they learned their English were unlettered British peasants, the pidgin spoken by the slaves throughout the South was the product of the same linguistic forces--mixtures of

African and British language characteristics.

The implication here is that, since this pattern of language and cultural mergers was consistent throughout the South, the Afro-British patterns are not only the sources of the language and cultural patterns for Gullahs and Black Mississippians but for the entire Black American community. If this is true, it answers the question which has perplexed linguists and dialectologists for many years--"what accounts for the consistency of speech and cultural patterns among Black Americans?" It would also invalidate many existing theories and assumptions about the consistency of the patterns--the most popular one being that Gullah is the basilect for Black language and cultural patterns in this country. My investigation proved this assumption to be false because, though Black Mississippian patterns hold much in common with Gullah patterns, Gullah survivals are not responsible for the theories and assumptions about the consistency of Black language and culture, which were based upon Gullah as the basilect, can no longer be valid. Gullah Blacks have the same Afro-British language and cultural admixtures as the source of their language and cultural patterns as the other Black Americans. As was shown in this investigation, Gullah has retained more of the early Afro-British patterns because

of virtually complete isolation from the local mainstream population.

Recommendations

1. Future research should be conducted to firmly establish the Afro-British language and cultural patterns of the slaves as the source of the consistency of Black American language and cultural patterns.

2. A study should be conducted to determine the effects of recent annexation of the Gullah islands to the mainland of South Carolina and Georgia on the language and culture of the inhabitants.

3. An investigation should be conducted to determine the degree of retention of Afro-British language and cultural characteristics among Black Mississippians of various socio-economic levels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aaron, Alfred C., Barbara Y. Gordon, and William A. Stewart, eds. Linguistic--Cultural Differences and American Education. Special Anthology Issue, Florida FL Reporter 7, No. 1, 1969.

Alatis, James ed., ed. Linguistics and the Teaching of Standard English to Speakers of Other Languages or Dialects. Report on the 20th annual round table meeting on linguistics and language studies. Washington: Georgetown University Press, monograph 22, 1970.

Atwood, E. Bagby. A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1953.

Bailey, Beryl L. "Toward a New Perspective in English Dialectology." American Speech, 40 (1965), 171-77.

_____. Jamaican Creole Syntax. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966.

_____. "Some Aspects of the Impact of Linguistics on Language Teaching in Disadvantages Communities." Elementary English, 45 (1968), 570-582, 626.

_____. "Language and Communicative Style of Afro-American Children in the United States." The Florida FL Reporter, 7 (1969), 46, 153.

Baratz, Jean C. and Povich Edna. "Grammatical Construction in the Language of Negro Preschool Children." ERIC Research in Education. ED 020518, June, 1968.

Bigelow, Gordon E. "More Evidence of Early Loss of (r) in Eastern American Speech." American Speech, 30 (1955), 154-56.

Bloomfield, Leonard. Language. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

Bolinger, Dwight. Aspects of Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968.

Bronstein, Arthur J. "A Study of Predominant Dialect Variations of Standard English in the United States During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1949.

Brooks, Cleanth. The Relation of the Alabama-Georgia Dialect to the Provincial Dialects of Great Britain. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1935.

Buck, Joyce F. "The Effects of Negro and White Dialectal Variations Upon Attitudes of College Students." Speech Monographs, 35 (1968), 181-86.

Cassidy, Frederick G. A Method for Collecting Dialect. Publication of the American Dialect Society, 20, 1953.

Davis, Alva L. "Social Dialects and Social Change." Instructor, 75 (1966), 93-100.

Dearden, Elizabeth J. "Dialect Areas of the South Atlantic States as Determined by Variations in Vocabulary." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1941.

Dillard, J. L. "Negro Children's Dialect in the Inner-City." Florida FL Reporter, 5:3 (1967), 7-8, 10.

_____. "Non-standard Negro Dialects--Convergence or Divergence?" Florida FL Reporter, 6:2 (1968), 9-10, 12.

Drake, James A. "The Effect of Urbanization Upon Regional Vocabulary." American Speech, 36 (1961), 17-33.

Farrison, William E. "The Phonology of the Illiterate Negro Dialect of Guilford County, North Carolina." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1937.

Fasold, Ralph W. "Tense and the Form "b" in Black Speech." Language, 45 (1969): 763-67.

_____. Some Grammatical Features of Negro Dialect. Prepublication Edition. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969.

Ferris, William Jr. Blues from the Delta. London: Studio Vista Limited, 1971.

Francis, W. Nelson. "Some Dialect Isoglasses in England." American Speech, 34 (1959), 243-57.

Gleason, H. A., Jr. Linguistics and English Grammar. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965.

Hanley, Theodore D. "An Analysis of Vocal Frequency and Duration Characteristics of Selected Samples from General American, Eastern American, and Southern American Dialect Regions." Unpublised Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1950.

Herskovits, Melville J. The Myth of the Negro Past. Boston: Beacon Press, 1941.

Houston, Susan H. "A Sociolinguistic Consideration of the Black English of Children in Northern Florida." Language, 45 (1969): 599-607.

Ives, Sumner A. "The Negro Dialect of the Uncle Remus Stories." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1950.

_____. "Vocal Transcriptions in a George Field Record." Tulane Studies in English, 4 (1953), 147-69.

_____. "Dialect Differentiation in the Stories of Joel Chandler Harris." American Literature, 28 (1955), 88-96.

_____. "Use of Field Materials in the Determining of Dialect Groupings." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 41 (1955), 359-64.

Johnson, Dora Kennedy. "An Investigation of the Oral Language and Oral Reading of Black First Grade Children. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1970.

Johnson, Guy B. Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. The University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

Kurath, Hans. "The Origin of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." Modern Philology, 25 (1928), 385-95.

_____. "Dialect Areas, Settlement Areas, and Cultural Areas in the United States," in The Cultural Approach to History. Edited by C. F. Ware. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940, pp. 331-51.

_____. "The Investigation of Urban Speech." Publication of the American Dialect Society, 49 (1968), 1-7.

Labov, William. "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Non-standard English." New Directions in Elementary English. Edited by Alexander Frazier. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

Labov, William and Robins, Clarence. "A Note on the Relation of Reading Failure of Peer-Group Status in Urban Ghettos." Teachers College Record, 70 (1969), 395-405.

Labov, William and Cohen, Paul. "Systematic Relations of Standard and Non-Standard Rules in the Grammars of Negro Speakers." Project Literacy Reports No. 8. Ithaca: Cornell University, 66-84.

Langacker, Ronald M. Language and Its Structure: Some Fundamental Linguistic Concepts. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968.

Le Compte, Nolan P., Jr. "Certain Points of Dialectal Usage in South Louisiana." Louisiana Studies, 7 (1968), pp. 149-58.

Lieberson, Stanley, ed. "Explorations in Sociolinguistics." International Journal of American Linguistics, 33 (1967), No. 4, pt. 2.

Loman, Bengt, ed. Conversation in a Negro Dialect. Transcribed by Bengt Loman. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1967.

Long, Richard A. "The Uncle Remus Dialect: A Preliminary Linguistic View. ERIC Research in Education. ED028 416, March 1969.

Lucke, Jessie R. "A Study of the Virginia Dialect and Its Origin in England." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1949.

McDavid, Raven I., Jr. "The Influence of French on Southern American Speech: Evidence of the Linguistic Atlas." Studies in Linguistics, 6 (1948), 39-43.

_____. "The Position of the Charleston Dialect." Publication of the American Dialect Society, 23 (1955), 35-53.

_____. "The Dialects of American English," Chapter 9 in W. Nelson Francis', The Structure of American English. New York: Ronald Press, 1958, pp. 480-543.

_____. "Linguistic Geography and the Study of Folklore." New York Folklore Quarterly, 14 (1958), 242-62.

_____. "American Social Dialects." College English, 26 (1965), 254-59.

McDavid, Raven I., Jr., and Virginia G. McDavid. "The Relation of the Speech of American Negroes to the Speech of the Whites." American Speech, 26 (1951), 3-17.

Malmstrom, Jean, and Annabel Ashley. "Dialects U.S.A." National Council of Teachers of English, 1963.

Malmstrom, Jean. "Dialects-Updated." The Florida FL Reporter, 7 (1969).

Martin, Rudolph, Jr. "Four Undescribed Verb Forms in American Negro English." American Speech, 35 (1960), 238-39.

Matthew, Mitford M. Some Sources of Southernisms. University of Alabama Press, 1948.

Moulton, William G. "Structural Dialectology." Language, 44 (1968), 451-66.

New York City Board of Education. Nonstrandard Dialect. National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

Newton, Eunice S. "The Culturally Disadvantaged Child in our Verbal Schools." Journal of Negro Education, 31 (1962), 184-87.

_____. "Planning for the Language Development of Disadvantaged Children and Youth." Journal of Negro Education, 32 (1964), 264-74.

Pardee, Earl. "A Historical and Phonetic Study of Negro Dialect. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana University, 1936.

Parrish, Lydia. Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands. New York: Creative Age Press, Inc., 1942.

Pederson, Lee A. The Pronunciation of English in Metropolitan Chicago. Publication of the American Dialect Society, 44, 1965.

_____. "Terms of Abuse for Some Chicago Social Groups," Publication of the American Dialect Society, 42 (1964), 26-48.

Pound, Louise. "Folklore and Dialect." California Folklore Quarterly, 4 (1945), 46-53.

Puckett, Newbell N. Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro. Dover Publication, Inc., New York, 1969.

Reed, Carroll E. Dialects of American English. Cleveland: World Press, 1967.

Roberts, Margaret M. "The Pronunciation of Vowels in Negro Speech." Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1967.

Shuy, Roger W., ed. Social Dialects and Language Learning. Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965.

_____. "Dialectology and Usage." Baltimore Bulletin of Education, 43 (1966-67), 2-4, 40-51.

_____. Discovering American Dialects. Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.

Sledd, James H. "Breaking, Umlat, and the Southern Drawl." Language, 42 (1966), 18-41.

Smith, Riley B. "Interrelatedness of Certain Deviant Grammatical Structures in Negro Nonstandard Dialects." Journal of English Linguistics, 3 (1969), 82-88.

Stanley, Oma. "Negro Speech of East Texas." American Speech, 16 (1941), 3-16.

Stewart, William A. "Nonstandard Speech Patterns." Baltimore Bulletin of Education, 43 (1966-67), 2-4, 52-65.

_____. "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects." Florida FL Reporter, 5 (1969), 2, 1-4.

_____. "Continuity and Change in American Negro Dialects." Florida FL Reporter, 6 (1968), 1. 3-4, 14-16, 18.

Tidwell, James N. "The Literacy Representation of the Phonology of the Southern Dialect. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1948.

Todd, Julia M. "A Phonological Analysis of the Speech of Aged Citizens of Claiborne County, Mississippi." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1965.

Turner, Lorenzo D. "Notes on the Sounds and Vocabulary of Gullah." Publication of the American Dialect Society, 3 (1945), 13-28.

_____. Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

Walker, Saunders. "A Dictionary of the Folk Speech of the East Alabama Negro." Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1956.

Williamson, Juanita V. "A Phonological and Morphological Study of the Speech of the Negro of Memphis, Tennessee." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1961.

Wise, C. M. "Southern American Dialect." American Speech, 8 (1933), 37-43.

Wood, Gordon R. Word Dissemination: A Study of Regional Words in Eight of the Southern States. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970.