



## ***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

### **Leader Training Guide**

#### **Places & People Folklore and Foods Along the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor**

##### **Objectives:**

1. Participants will identify the areas known as the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.
2. Participants will learn how to identify people of Gullah Geechee Heritage.
3. Proverbs and Sayings of the culture will be expressed as a means to language patterns.
4. Participants will explore the ingredients of the recipe – one written in Gullah dialect as compared to English language.

##### **Lesson Overview/Introduction:**

Since scholars are not in agreement as to the origins of the terms Gullah and Geechee, the vernacular use of the terms will suffice for the purpose of this study. Gullah people are; therefore, those located in coastal South Carolina and Geechee people are those who live along the Georgia coast and into Florida. Geechee people in Georgia refer to themselves as Freshwater Geechee if they live on the mainland and Saltwater Geechee if they live on the Sea Islands. In some circumstances the term "Geechee" has been used as a blanket term to describe people who live in the Lowcountry, regardless of ethnicity. "Geechee" has also been used in a derogatory manner to show disdain for an African-American, from the Lowcountry region, regardless of specific location.

Gullah/Geechee people of today are descendants of enslaved African from various ethnic groups of west and central Africa who were forced to work on the plantations of coastal South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida. Gullah/Geechee people are survivors – unique groups of African-Americans who lived near the coast and on barrier islands that were separated from the mainland creeks, rivers, and marshes. Because of their geographic protection from outsiders and strong sense of family and community, Gullah/Geechee people maintained a separate creole language and developed distinct culture patterns, which included more of the African cultural tradition than African-American populations in other parts of the United States.

The isolation of these sea island communities from outsiders was vital to the survival of Gullah/Geechee community cultures. Although Gullah/Geechee people traveled to and from the mainland and to nearby islands, outsiders seldom came into their communities, especially after the Civil War. The isolation of Gullah/Geechee people which began in colonial times in response to tropical fevers later became an isolation of choice. People chose to come back to their homes, their families, their language, and their way of life – a slow paced life among majestic trees, tidal marshes, and dirt roads traversed by ox and mule – places where small boats, horses, mules and feet were the primary form of transportation.

Lesson:

Gullah is a culture that is fragile. It is rich in heritage of people who have managed to retain extensive African sources in their speech and folklore. The Gullah language is unique, the only lasting English based creole in North America.

Cast Net Makers

Storytellers

Sweet Grass Basket Weavers

Quilters

Cast Net Makers: Men weave nets to be used to catch the food of the rivers – fish, shrimp. Sometimes crab will find its way into the net. Many times one is throwing the net, a crab trap is nearby.

Storytellers: The mothers and grandmothers tell stories which are past down as oral history. The stories are always close to nature about animals native to the area.

Sweet Grass Basket Weavers: Using bulrush, sweet grass, palmetto, weavers invent forms and experiment with new designs and techniques.

Quilters: Woman would sit around the fireplace and use whatever fabric available to sew square and rectangular pieces together as a frame many times to be filled with cotton, straw or Spanish moss to make quilts.

**Gullah Cultural Expression**

E mout na know no Sunday

E teet da dig e grave

E aint crack e teet

Dog got four foot, but can't walk but one road

E got long ey

Ebry shut eye aint sleep

Cow need e tail more than fly time

Milk aint dry off e mout yet

Ebry frog praise e ownt pond

**English Cultural Expression**

He does not know when to stop talking

He have told things that are untruth

He is not smiling at all/ serious business

Not how many feet you have you can only do one thing at a time

He wants everything he sees

Pretend to be asleep but watch everything that is going on

Don't be so quick to forget the things people have done for you

One still have a lot of growing up to do

Everyone feel whatever they have done it is the best it has ever been done

**Lesson Summary:**

The Gullah people are descendants of various African ethnics groups who were forced together on plantations all along the corridor. The Gullah people managed to retain extensive African sources in their speech and folklore. The grammar of Gullah is African and many aspects of Gullah culture religious beliefs, arts, and craft stories, songs and proverbs were derived from African sources.

**Suggested Activities:**

Prepare the following recipe and share with club members.

**Swimp Pullow Recepte**

Fry fo' slice ub side meat. Tek out de meat en'browing uh chop-up onyun een de greeese. Pit two medjuh ub chop-up tummatuh 'long de onyun en' mix'um 'tell alltwo stan'so.

Pit de side meat, de onyun, en'de tummatuh een de steemuh wid uh medjuh ub rice. T'row uh medjuh ub watuh 'cross'um en' seas'n good-fashin'n.

W'en de rice mos'done, pit uh medjuh ub cook swimp 'long'um. Fawk'um obuh t'ree time fuh de swimp mix wid de rice.

Set'um back fuh res' tell dinnuh time.

Swimp Pullow good fuh hab dush wash day, w'en oonuh yent hab time fuh cook 'nuf bittle. 'E yent need nutt'n fuh 'cump' ny'um. All de dinnuh dey dey tuh one pot.

**Shrimp Pilau (English)**

Fry four slices of bacon. Take out the bacon and brown a chopped onion in the grease. Add two cups of chopped tomatoes to the onion and mix well.

Put the bacon and the onion and tomatoes in the steamer with one cup of raw rice. Add one cup of water, season and stir well.

When the rice is almost done, put a cup of cooked shrimp with it. Mix the rice and the shrimp with a fork. Set the steamer back on the range to cook slowly until time to eat.

Shrimp Pilau is good to serve on wash day when you don't have time to prepare several dishes for the meal. You don't need anything to accompany the pilau. All the dinner is there in one pot.

**Suggested Materials:** Bring examples of sweet grass baskets, quilts and preparation of the recipe. Share copies of the Gullah-Geechee Corridor map.

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**Lesson Review by:** Betty Buff, SCFCL Board Member Emeritus

**Sources/References:**

Bittle en' T'ing' – Virginia Mixion Geraty

Gullah Geeche Management Plan CD

Map <http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org/?Itemid=105>

**Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor**  
 South Carolina - Georgia - North Carolina - Florida

National Park Service  
 U.S. Department of the Interior

