



Gullah Culture in America

Wilbur Cross

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Gullah Culture in America begins with the journeys of 15 Gullah speakers who went to Sierra Leone and other parts of West Africa in 1989, 1998, and 2005 to trace their origins and history. Their stories frame this fascinating look at the extraordinary history of the Gullah culture.

The existence of the Gullahs went almost unnoticed until the 1860s, when missionaries from Philadelphia made their way to St. Helena Island, South Carolina, to establish the Penn School to help freed slaves learn to read and write. There, they discovered hidden pockets of a bygone African culture with its own language, traditions, medicine, weaving, and art.

Today, more than 300,000 Gullah people live in the remote areas of the sea islands of St. Helena, Edisto, Coosay, Ossabaw, Sapelo, Daufuski, and Cumberland, their way of life endangered by overdevelopment in an increasingly popular tourist destination. Having evolved from the original Penn School, the Penn Center, based on St. Helena Island, works to preserve and document the Gullah and Geechee cultures.

Author Wilbur Cross originally set out to make the excellent work of the Penn Center known and to introduce the Gullah culture to people in America. He became entranced with the Gullah way of life and ended up with 12 chapters that explore the various facets of Gullah culture. *Gullah Culture in America* not only explores the history of Gullah but also shows readers what it s like to grow up and live in this unique American community.

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