

## Nonstandard Language

### Objective

Students will understand the difference between standard and non-standard language.

### Procedure

1. Students will form small groups and be given one of three interviews of Ben Horry from Murrells Inlet, South Carolina.
2. Based on their reading, students will be asked to develop a dictionary of slang terms or sayings used by Ben Horry.
3. Students will brain storm a list of slang terms or dialect used by modern South Carolinians.
4. Students will write a paragraph on their opinion on the use of slang terms or dialect in literature.

Evaluation Paragraphs will be graded.



## ***Ben Horry Murrells Inlet, South Carolina***

Interviewed by Mrs. Genevieve W. Chandler

*[Note: There are three separate interviews with Ben Horry, each presented here.]*

### **Interview Transcript #1:**

"God knows Missus, glad to yeddy dat! Picture in Washington! You mean bout my fadder? Been in duh - lemme see now kin I remember - 'casionally he would drink a little 'sumpting. Gone to town. Come back. Drink. Bring Jug from town. Drop 'em. Broke 'em. To disencourage him from doing that again - (boss man lowing nobody to whip my fadder thout he do it!) - overseer, them men give my fadder a piece of the broke Jug (every time he share out rations) to disencourage him bout drink. Thought that a great way to broke him off. And he do so. Fadder have the three brudder - Daniel, Summer and Define."

"Look on you hand! Look on mine! I know you ain't want me black man - buck up, gainst all o' you! And you had the

law in you hand all dese day! You had the learning in you head!

Give me that pencil to catch up dem thing. I couldn't to save my life! 'Am I my Brudder Keeper?' You'll find that stripture round somewhere bout Cain and Able!

"Missus, I play 'STOP' wid duh lawyer.

"Storm? Yes, Missus, more den one. Carry duh boat out. Carry duh seine outside. As we get the boat outside, been rough. Make the rope been taut. And dat make the breaker have the boat. And I swim till I get the rope hold - wuz on the outside holding the top rope hold and two men on the shore have the end rope.

"I turn over twice outside, When I turn over there in that ocean, been forty odd. Vettril Deas come the Captain o' the crew. September. Nobody drown them trip we didn't have nobody drown outside there. Yorrick - I miss he name by it so long - but he kin to Feenie -

*[end p. 194]*

---

dem family - dem relation. Diss a young man jest growed out coming on to get married. Had boat full o' people this last go round.

"Had a boat full o' people this last go round - Miss Mary, he Aunty and the lawyer and I take them out there. And I take them outside there and I come halfway to Drunken Jack. And then breaker start to lick in the boat. And I start to bail. And that been dangerous because we have all women in there - and couldn't swim like a man! And it happen by accident, when the boat swamp our FEET COULD TECH BOTTOM! Only an accident from God. When he turn over, I didn't a do nothing but SWIM FOR

MYSELF for I couldn't help nobody. But our feet tech bottom!

"When I swamp out-side we wuz coming from South Santee to North Santee - on government work. Jest as we got 'tween Georgetown and Charleston, the boat get captied with water. Nothing to do. Try to bail. Stay outside. Swim with one hand and hold boat with other. Roughest time I ever had cause it cold wedder. First frost. Missus, I gone through some ROUGH. Old 'before time' yawl boat. Old "make-out" boat - yonder 1877. Young man then! Boat carry eight oar - four on each side. We wuz there hunting fish you know. Go out-side see big school fish, put dem gang o' man to dat car and dat net get a gang o' fish! After de wedder surrender, went back in dere and get hold o' line going up and down - save net and all!

"In 1893 working for Ravenel and Holmes and Company in dere steamer boat. I wuz taken up in dat storm. Went from Charleston. Start

*[end p. 195]*

---

Georgetown. Ginerally start boat five o'clock; never reach Georgetown till nine! Come on breakers and front head o' boat went down. And we had to go in the hold and take all the barrel. Meet a man got his wife hug to mast. In little thing they call life boat. And I quile my line! I fly dat line! If she go round you neck and you hold that rope you safe! We save five or six different people. One man had a little corn boat. Had he wife and two little children. Had he two chillun rope rop round dat mast. Dem get his wife den gone back and save man and trunk. Quit call me "Ben" den; call me "Rooster."

"On steamer Planter one time. Couldn't talk bout come to no land a tall. Leave Charleston five in Morning and that storm rise on us! Rise at the bell buoy Charleston. Have a Cap'n and a mate. Cap'n Scott - dat wuz duh Cap'n. Dis here man been mate been one 'Brook' - New Jersey. Missus, people goes out dere for fish to bring in fish for breakfast, dinner, supper! In row boat. See man holding up he hand - but floating. If he catch duh line I save 'em! Miss the line - he drown man! When you come up on next wave, you way yonder! Cap'n Springs hunt dem dead body! He wuz a mighty one out dere!

"After Flagg storm Colonel Ward take me and Peter Carr, give us a horse a pier take that shore to Little River. All two dem chillun find to Dick Pond. Been on Magnolia. Find them in a distant here to that house. Couldn't dentify wedder Miss - or she dater-in-law." (Reported articles of clothing and household linen found all way to Little River). "I got on this shirt got "Ben" on it. Have no trouble trace when clothes got he mark. One man broke open one trunk, but I

*[end p. 196]*

---

didn't care cause I had somebody to my back. Thing you put on your wrist ("bracelet") comb for your hair and all in that trunk find to Myrtle Beach. Sich a thing like towel and collar, I find some; Peter find some. Something else Gracious God! Don't want to see no more sumpting like cat! White folks dem time move carry dem poetry (poultry). Dead horses, dead cow, ox, turkey, fowl everywhere! But no dead body find on us beach out-side Flagg family, One Northern woman marry in Ward family. Dr. Flagg marry in Ward family. Didn't want to acknowledge this lady richer den him. Dat malice. All his family and chillun drown out. Doctor wouldn't go this lady house. Wouldn't let none rest go. He had one woman somewhere bout Lenwood - Betsy. Kit, Mom Adele drown! Tom Duncan boy, drown! Couldn't identify who loss from who save - till next morning! Kinder feet (effect) like a fog raise by storm and can't see. If you servant they can put confidence in they send you where the tornado been. My house wash down from block. Didn't broke up.

"Fetch old Doctor body to shore, watch ticking.

"Dem time (fore freedom) most o' people treated right by owner. Diss blue drilling - yards after yards! Have a man wuz tailor. Make little pants for you. And you wuz gal, make dress out of same. Uncle Tomas make the clothes - Tomas Rutledge. Our Master didn't want to see us patchety up - nor naked! Our Master treat us right. My days they give you (you know we wuz rice-planter! You know these FINE (small) rice they save for feeding Prospect, Watsaw, Longwood, Brookgreen. Never have much grits. Have fine rice. Peck o' grits (large family) half

[end p. 197]

bushel dis fine rice (weeks supply family.) He got three nets running (to supply fish in plantations.) Send men woods, kill cow. Kill hog. He see that you get garden. Talk bout garden - all run here to see Brookgreen garden. Dem day you could see a garden! Right dere to Marty gate had what you call 'shrubs'. That garden been cross wid lead pipe. Dat were a garden! Orange - every fruit! We use to dig 'em up - ditch up that pipe to melt 'em for shot to shoot duck and ting!"

---

### Interview Transcript #2:

"He was a full-blooded man --- the Cap'n. Didn't disgrace. He put goat on Goat Island. Money was bury to Goat Island. People after people been sent. I dinnah know wedder they find or no.

"Mack McCosky was sent by the State to fetch molasses, meal and hominy and goat on Goat Island. He can't tell you! People can't know sumpin when they ain't born.

"After de war 'e come back and take into big drinkin' and was 'em (waste them) till 'e fall tru. He been fell tru wid his money (lost his property). Didn't bury so destent (decent).

"We smaller one didn't have chance to go to war. My Daddy have for go. Have to go ditch and all and tend his subshun. His subshun was waste and steal. Paris! He the man control all the Buckra sing. And, by God, he go and show Yankee all dem sing! Ole Miss git order to have him kill and don't harm none! She ain't one to see him tru all that thousand head o' nigger for get 'em.

"They come have big dinner. Cap'n come from Muldro. (Marlboro). Drum beatin' little one dancin'. Gone back to Muldro. (Maham Ward and these udder come from Muldro.) And they leave ting in Uncle William Baillard hand. And he carry on till everting surrender And then the Cap'n come home from Muldro and they try give you sumpin to make start on like cow and sing. They ain't treat you like a beast. Ain't take no advance o' you. What the Cap'n do he do for you good. I b' long Dr. Ward. I entitle to bring him two string o' bird. Rice bird come like jest as tick as dat (thick as that). Sometimes a bushel one shot.

[end p. 199]

"They put you in the flat and put you over there. When they tink Yankee comin' you take to Sandhole Crick for hide. Mr. Carmichael sent by the state. Go to Brookgreen, Longwood, Watsaw. Tell everting surrender. Go to any located place. He's a General. Go open the barn door and give us all us need. He better to we nigger boy den he Daddy been! Wouldn't beat you 'thout the lil' boy really fightin'.

"Time o' the war the colored people hear 'bout Yankee. Not a one eber understand to run way and go to Yankee boat from WE plantation. These Yankee people wuz walkin' 'bout on the beach. And while they come in to the hill, the Reb have a battery to Laurel Hill and they cut off them Yankee from the ocean. These they cut off they carry dem to Brookgreen barn. Hang one colored man and one white man to

Oaks Seashore. White man musser be Sergeant or big Cap'n. Just as soon as the sun go down you see a big streak come over and they BUSS (bust) Duds. Woman in the street killed. (Street of negro Quarters -- Brookgreen) Blacksmith killed. Cut off he brudder-in-law (Judy's) and kill Judy. Dem shell go clean to Sandy Island. Pump make out o' brick to Brookgreen. Dat boy (shell) come and hit the pump. De horn blow and they make for flat and gwine on to Sandhole down that black crick. There a man for dat --- dat flat. Get everybody line up. Ain't gone there for PLAY. Gone for wuk (work). I wuz big 'nouf to do diss -- - go wid my fadder and hold light.

"It this way. You ain't LOW to eat the whole rice you kin make money outer. Beat dat rice. But my Daddy been a great whiskey man. Liquor. Didn't have 'em less he go to town. Money scase.

*[end p. 200]*

---

('E wuz a kind of musicianer for the Ward fambly). But he break he jug. He break he whiskey jug. En when de obersheer (overseer) git out de ration and gib 'em to mah Ma and us chillun he hand mah Pa a piece o' dem break jug! That keep him in mind o' that whiskey jug.

"Yankee come here and butt us colored people. I 'member we youngun's just could 'tote up dem gold pitcher and bury dem in the garden. Not far from the flowers tank. Tank have on 'em a woman head (Flowers' tank was a fountain). All the master fine ting way down there bury! De Ward didn't loss nothin'. They move us out the plantation. Col. Ward took 'em in a 'lat to Mulbro.

"Dr. Heriot after the war took into big drinkin'. Didn't bury so decent. Fell tru wid all he money. Not bury so decent."

*[end p. 201]*

---

### Interview Transcript #3:

Uncle Beauregard was queer in his latter days.

"Gee Morgan! Haw Lewis!" were the orders he gave to his two feet as he walked the sandy old King's Road. "Giving orders to his foots, Walking through the woods at night time, you could hear him a long way. He'd (hello), holler,

"Whoopee! Whoopee! Whoopee! Whoopee -- e -- e-e-e-e!"

"Gone to Georgetown. Eat three four fish while you eat one. Wouldn't pick a bone out. Jess (Just) work 'em out the corner of his mouth. He had married Uncle Cato sister Mary. They's have a son name Beaurie atter his Daddy, Tall as a pine. Yes suh. They take 'em there and put 'em in jail. Holler there on the street right in the middle of the town."

(Uncle Beauregard's method of eating fish reminds one of a picture given by a white man who worked in the lumber woods in Georgetown county.)

Dinner time had come. The woods' worker approached an isolated cabin hunting water. A very old colored woman sat on her door step eating from a tin pan with a tin spoon. Desirous of finding out her "diet" the man drew up as close as expedient, having no desire to disturb her. As he watched over her shoulder, he discovered she was eating fish and rice - and in queer fashion. The fish was not picked - the bones and all were put into her mouth and thoroughly chewed. From the left hand corner of her mouth

there poured a steady stream of half chewed bones.

As he stood there, a kitten, lured by the delicious smell of the fish, approached stealthily and finally reaching the old lady's knee,

[end p. 202]

---

jumped up and sniffed with appreciation of a good odor. Putting down her spoon and with arms akimbo Auntie measured her uninvited guest with her eyes. Then, becoming articulate, she announced deliberately:

"Kitteny, if you wants to face you God this day, put you nose in my bittle!")

Recorded Sentences -

"You gwine wait a long wait, if you waits for me."

"Didn't eat enough to keep a mosquito wing flapping."

"Stella! Oh, Stella! Come here! Come quick! You deaf? (deaf) Yeddy? You know the voice!" Called Uncle Ben Horry - past eighty - when he wanted Stella to come help him take in a turn of groceries.

"I going to stop fool up wid "sell" awhile," spoke Uncle Ben who had been having trouble with an unscrupulous lawyer who almost made him sign away his land.

"Missus, I didn't tired. Mr. Burris tell me come on home and get that paper and fetch 'em back to him. And I tek (take) my time till I hit you house."

Uncle Ben Horry, aged 89 walks once or twice weekly (and oftener if notion strikes him) to Conway and back - sixty miles or more the route he travels.

Given by Ben Horry - age 89 Murrells Inlet, S.C.

[end p. 203]

---

Source: *The American Slave*, Supp. Series 1, Vol. 11: 194-203.

For more on Ben Horry and slave life in the South Carolina lowcountry, see Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

---

<a href="#">Top of Document</a>	<a href="#">Index of Narratives</a>	<a href="#">Home Page</a>
---------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------------

*Send comments and suggestions to Bruce Fort*

*Last revised: August 10, 1997*