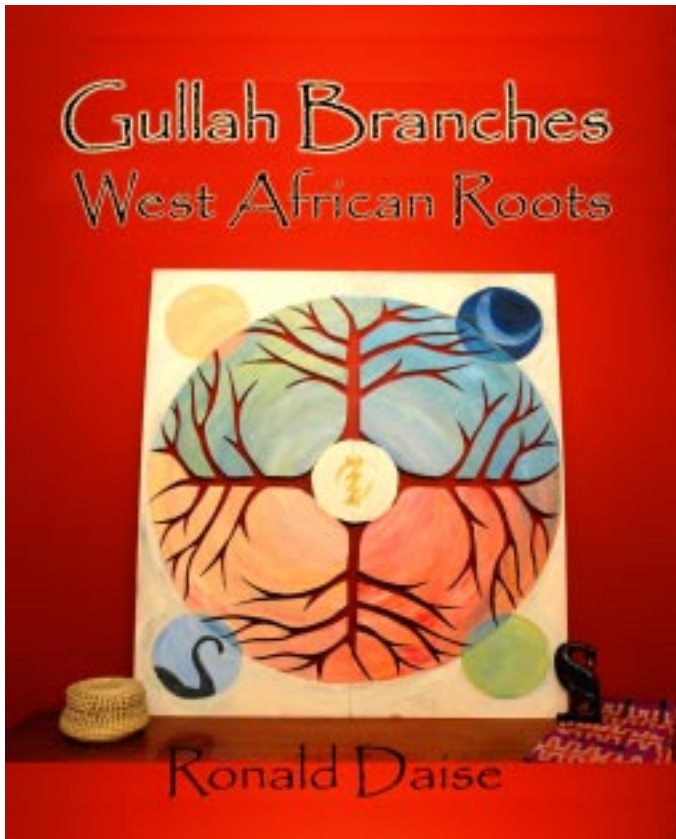


Gullah Branches West African Roots

by Ronald Daise
Foreword by James E. Clyburn



Trade paperback
July 2007
ISBN 0-87844-182-4, \$24.95

Gullah Branches, West African Roots, in part, chronicles Daise's visits to two West African countries. He visited Ghana in 2004 as a Fulbright-Hays, US Department of Education fellowship recipient, and to Sierra Leone in 2005 as a participant in "Priscilla's Homecoming." The Gullah homecoming to Sierra Leone connected the family of Thomalind Martin Polite of Charleston, South Carolina, with the country of its matriarch, Priscilla, who had been enslaved in 1756, at the age of ten. In 2006, Daise learned that his visits to Ghana and Sierra Leone had been more of a personal family reunion than he realized. He shares maternal genetic ancestry with the Temne people living in Sierra Leone. And he shares paternal genetic ancestry with the Ewe and Akan peoples in Ghana.

Ronald Daise, a Gullah native of St. Helena Island, SC, utilizes poetry, prose, creative non-fiction, songs, photographs, and his own unique voice to involve readers in a vibrant journey to cultural and historical roots. The book is a sequel to Daise's ***Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage*** (Sandlapper Publishing, 1986).

In the Foreword, U.S. Congressman and House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (D-SC), who championed the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Act, states: *"Ron has exposed the beauty of a once closeted culture, and compelled his audience with a sense of urgency to preserve it. This work inspires pride in those with Gullah roots, those previously shamed by others outside and even within their own families. Ron is telling their story and the story of their ancestors. It is a story of faith, of courage, and of character."* ***Gullah Branches, West African Roots* is an unabashed celebration of a vibrant culture. Through the eyes of Ron Daise, we experience the daily life of Gullah people past and present. We can almost hear the sounds of Negro spirituals ringing in our ears, feel the romantic language of the Gullah people rolling off our tongues, taste the curried rice and other sea island delicacies, and see the rich colors that express such deep meaning within Gullah traditions. This is a story of hope that breaks the literal and figurative bonds of slavery. Ron has thoughtfully and thoroughly documented the journey of the Gullah culture and instilled pride in all those of Gullah Geechee heritage. His anecdotes are compelling and artfully weaved, much like the sweetgrass baskets that have come to symbolize the Gullah culture. I commend him on this extraordinary book, and I would recommend it as a "must read" for students in South Carolina schools.** **Congressman James E. Clyburn**

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