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The Dialect of Grand Cayman

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THE DIALECT OF GRAND CAYMAN

by

Aarona M. Kohlman

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major Subject: English

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Of Science and Technology
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INTRODUCTION

From the linguistic point of view, a dialect is not a language itself, distinct from other languages, nor is a dialect a foreign accent. Neither is it a manner of speaking that necessarily denotes or reveals inferiority of background, education, or intellectual capacity. Dialect is a technical term, not a derogatory term, and is without any emotional connotations or value judgments. It is

... a specific form of a given language, spoken in a certain locality or geographic area, showing sufficient differences from the standard or literary form of that language, as to pronunciation, grammatical construction, and idiomatic usage of words, to be considered a distinct entity ...

A dialect is a system of speech-signs, confined to oral use and largely orally inherited, which are used by two or more persons to communicate with each other, the resultant group being termed a speech-community. The boundaries of a speech-community may be determined by geographical, social, educational, occupational, or other factors. ¹ Thus everyone speaks a dialect, or more likely several dialects, as most persons belong to several speech communities. The enormous variety of dialects among English-speaking persons adds richness, color, imagination, and interest to the language, and at the same time mirrors the background, history, and ways of life of the dialect groups.

¹ A geographical dialect boundary, called isogloss, is seldom if ever clear-cut or abrupt. Isoglosses represent gradual transitions, usually with clear exceptions on either or both sides of the lines. Moreover, the various isoglosses in every bundle rarely if ever coincide exactly.
In literature, authors have used dialect for a variety of reasons: to indicate social or economic levels, to indicate geographical areas or background, for humorous effects, and so on. However, dialect study is important for many disciplines. Dialect development is not haphazard or random, and the variations that occur reveal patterns or correlations of regional and social factors, the study of which "constitutes one of the links between linguistics and anthropological-sociological analysis."

(8, 239) Historical data may be discovered or corroborated from dialect study. The sociologist and the psychologist may utilize the findings of geographico-social analysis in very practical ways. (8,242-243) George Orwell explored the political and philosophical implications of a controlled, authoritarian dialect in his novel, 1984, showing yet another possibility.

This study will be a descriptive discussion of the dialect of a small Caribbean island, Grand Cayman. The dialect is a product of the way of life of the islanders, of their background, and of their isolation until recent years. It is an English dialect, which, because of the long isolation of the island, retains some characteristics that have disappeared or diminished in England and America. Cayman English also shares some features with other West Indian English dialects and a few with non-English West Indian dialects. The particular Grand Cayman speech patterns which have emerged from the combined influences form a dialect which is unique, and can be readily recognized by its phonological, lexical, and grammatical features. The chief difficulty in understanding encountered by those unfamiliar with Grand Cayman English is caused more by the intonation patterns and rhythm of speech than by unfamiliar words and
idioms, although these exist.

Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman make up the group known as the Cayman Islands. There are differences among the dialects of the different islands, and even among those of localities and communities on each island, which are easily recognized and identified by Caymanians. However, this study will be confined to the dialect of Grand Cayman, with little if any distinction made between sub-dialects. Geographical sub-dialect differences were much more apparent a few years ago than they are now, for although the area of Grand Cayman is only about one hundred and sixty square miles, there was little intermingling of the residents of separated areas until recent years. Some communities could be reached only by boat, and many people never travelled as much as ten miles from their homes during their lifetimes. Now that roads connect the different settlements, as does telephone service, increased communication has obliterated some of the sub-dialect differences.

The description in this thesis will concentrate on contemporary dialect features, principally those current within the last twenty-five or thirty years. Little scholarly study has been done on Cayman English. One short article by Edwin Doran, Jr. appeared in American Speech in 1954, listing a few of the characteristics of the Grand Cayman dialect. (3, 82-85) A few travel articles have appeared through the years, beginning in the 1920's, in magazines such as The Saturday Evening Post and National Geographic. The number of these has increased in the last ten years as transportation facilities have made the island more accessible to tourists. Those writers who have visited and written about Grand Cayman almost invariably make some mention of the dialect of the islanders, but the
treatment is scanty and superficial, and many times inaccurate. One typical article appearing in 1950 makes this comment:

Dialect and vocal intonations used by Caymanians have puzzled linguists. It's a mixture of American southern drawl and the English slur, with a Scandinavian lilt to end a statement, all combined to fall charmingly on the ears. V's are pronounced as w's: "prevailing" or "warying wind" are common examples used by these sea-faring people, and nautical terms are used unconsciously. (10,39)

This vague and ambiguous observation is of little use to one wishing to study the dialect. One cannot know just what is meant by "southern drawl," "English slur," or "Scandinavian lilt," and "vocal intonations" reveals a misconception about language, for intonations are by definition vocal. Although the pronunciation of v's is noted, it seems to be equated with the use of nautical terms. None of the other popular articles which have appeared is any more helpful in the area of dialect.

There is not only a dearth of scholarly works on the Cayman dialect, but also of historical works about the islands. The only history, Notes on the History of the Cayman Islands, written by the Commissioner of the Cayman Islands at the time, George S. S. Hirst, was published in 1910. (9) Some significant facts about historical influences on the Grand Cayman dialect can be found here, and tradition, insofar as it can be trusted, indicates some factors. However, the chief purpose of this study is not to trace the history of the Grand Cayman dialect, but to describe it as it is. Wherever possible, influences which have operated on the dialect will be mentioned.

My interest in a study of the Cayman dialect arose initially because of my three years' residence on the island in the 1920's. I was first thoroughly bewildered and confused by the dialect, then fascinated, and by
the time I left the island I yearned to speak as my Caymanian friends spoke. Through the years I have maintained contact with Caymanians through correspondence, visits to the island, and visits of Caymanians in my home. As my interest in language grew, I was increasingly intrigued by the characteristics of the dialect, but my investigations disclosed that little study had ever been made in that area.

In August, 1968, I spent two weeks in Grand Cayman for the purpose of refreshing my memory of the islanders' way of speech, and of gathering further information for this thesis. Because of my wide circle of friends and my acceptance as one of them, I did not need to set up artificial situations or to solicit the aid of informants. I was able to gather all my information in situations of normal conversation. This gave me quite an advantage, for in linguistic field work, as F. G. Cassidy says,

> There can hardly be much question that the best method of collecting facts about living language--in this case dialect speech--is that of direct, personal interview of the speaker by a trained interviewer who knows what is significant, and who can elicit this in a natural way and record it accurately. He will find out the most in the shortest time. This is particularly true of pronunciation patterns, which can hardly be studied in any other way. . . . If it were possible for . . . interviewers to work primarily by personal interview, that would clearly be the best. (1, 9)

For my research there were none of the inhibitions or distortions that would have occurred if I had used a system of prearranged questions with answers supplied by informants. The evidence for this thesis is natural speech, from a natural setting, the least biased linguistic data possible. At no time did I have to explain that I was studying the dialect, and with the exception of two friends who were aware of this, no one ever knew that I was doing this, or that I was also tape recording conversations. I
carried the tape recorder in a hand-woven straw bag made for me by a friend, who just happened to give it to me on the afternoon of my arrival. The bag served as a purse as well, so no one noticed when I removed the small microphone and held it in my hand, operating the on-off button as I wished, while we talked. This arrangement made my task much easier, for although recordings are extremely valuable to a linguistic field worker, Cassidy comments that they are "... almost impossible to make without creating an unnatural situation for the persons interviewed—particularly the less urbanized speakers..." (1, 9) I had discovered the truth of this several years ago, when I had asked my mother to make Caymanian recordings for me. Because the informants knew what she was doing, almost no one would speak into the microphone at all, and if anyone did, he was self-conscious and therefore unnatural in his speech.

In addition to the tape recordings, I kept notes of anything that seemed significant and useful which was not on tape. I carried a small notebook with me, and when I could do so unobtrusively I would jot down words, phrases, pronunciations—anything that seemed linguistically important. I also noted any information I had about the speaker, such as age (or estimated age), educational level, economic level, place of residence, and so forth, that might have a bearing on dialect features. Every night I went through these jottings, filling in where necessary (because of my familiarity with the dialect I often recorded just enough to act as a reminder), and transferred them to a larger, more permanent notebook, transcribing into phonemic symbols as necessary. Sometimes something I had heard during the day would remind me of dialect features I had once known but forgotten, and I would also record these. Then later, I would check
my memory by asking questions that would elicit the verifying response, or simply by asking a friend if this was how he would say it. I tried to keep the linguistic discipline in mind by watching for recurrences of any one item, by checking any questionable items, and discarding anything that could not be verified or that seemed to belong solely to an idiolect, and also by training my ear to discern variations in stress and pitch.

The magazine articles mentioned earlier yielded very little that was usable. A small booklet available in tourist shops in George Town contains an appendix of "A Dictionary of words and phrases of the Islanders." (5) However, from my own knowledge I was able to detect numerous exaggerations and inaccuracies in the main body of the booklet, as well as in the appendix, so I carefully checked with native Caymanians any items of information about which I was at all doubtful.

Other sources of information for the thesis are letters and two newspapers, one published monthly by a religious denomination, and one small weekly newspaper, both of which I have received for several years. Inasmuch as dialect, as defined above, is basically a system of speech signs, confined to oral use, it must be remembered that individuals may, and often do, write in a standard form of a language, but speak in dialect. Thus letters, especially of the better educated Caymanians, reveal almost no evidence of the dialect. The less-well-educated, however, tend to write as they speak, and their letters are much more helpful as sources of material for study of the dialect.

The editors of the newspapers are Caymanians, one at least having received all his education on the island, but very few dialect features appear in the papers, although a few do. The Caymanian occasionally has
locally produced cartoons with dialect. However, the newspapers are a rich source of names, which are useful and important. (See Appendix B) In this thesis, discussion and lists of names are confined to names of living persons or names found in obituaries of the last five years (including names of deceased persons and their parents and brothers and sisters). Only names occurring on Grand Cayman have been used, excluding those of the Lesser Caymans.

Dealing with phonology requires some method or system by which phonemes, sounds, or utterances can be represented orthographically, and the process of accomplishing this is called transcription. Linguists have developed numerous systems of transcription, which often vary quite widely. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is the result of an attempt to create "an alphabet which would have a distinctive symbol for every sound in human speech, and which would supplant the chaos of notations...by one internationally recognized standard." (6, 224) However, for the purposes of this thesis, which deals with a single dialect, phonemic transcription, "the representation of the phonemes in an utterance, carefully excluding all the irrelevant features," (12, 167) is sufficient. A phonemic symbol is a character chosen to represent a phoneme, which may be defined most simply as a "functional unit of speech-sound." (8, 79) A key to the phonemic symbols used in this thesis may be found in Appendix A.

2 A cartoon (2, Feb. 23, 1966) has this dialog: "110 miles per hour! Man, you no worry about cops?"

"No Man. They all busy checking parking Georgetown."
This study of the dialect of Grand Cayman is based on the premise that the dialect has developed into its present state by means of the various forces operating in the lives of the islanders, in response to their communication needs, and is therefore a product of their historical background, of their way of life, and of their isolation, all of which will be summarized briefly. The formal discussion of the dialect includes a description of the phonological characteristics, and of the structure of phrases and sentences. Examination of the lexicon is vital to any dialect study, and consequently distinctive sayings and proverbs, as well as place names, surnames, and given names are included. With the exception of names, examples used are not isolated occurrences, but were heard in many situations.
DESCRIPTION OF THE DIALECT

Historical Background

The Cayman Islands--Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman--are situated about one hundred and eighty miles northwest of Jamaica, and about one hundred and fifty miles west of the southern end of Cuba. The Lesser Caymans are only seven miles apart, but Grand Cayman is sixty miles from the nearer of the two, Little Cayman. They are a part of the British West Indies, the chief governmental official being an administrator appointed by the Crown.

The islands were discovered by Christopher Columbus on his fourth and last voyage from the Central American coast. It seems obvious that only the Lesser Caymans were actually sighted at that time. Fernando Columbo (Christopher's brother) recorded the event in 1503:

Wednesday the 10th of May we were in sight of two very small low islands called Tortugas or the Tortoises on account of the prodigious multitudes of these animals which so swarmed about these islands and in the sea around them that they resembled rocks. (9, 6)

The next recorded historical fact relating to the islands seems to be the diary of Henry Whistler, who was probably sailingmaster on Admiral Penn's flagship the Swiftsure. Under the date of June 26, 1655, his account makes clear that the islands were well known as a source of fresh turtle, and were frequently visited by vessels from Jamaica. Other records indicate that they were also known as a "suitable hiding place for those desirous of retiring from the vengeance of the Law..." (9, 7)

Until about the middle of the seventeenth century, vessels of Spain, France, and England--and others sailing in the Caribbean area--visited the
islands frequently, in search of the fresh meat provided by the turtles so numerous in their waters. The islands remained a "no man's land," however. No one thought them important enough to lay claim to, and there are no records of permanent settlers. The lack of records makes it a matter of conjecture whether any residents were on the islands prior to 1662, but the islands are frequently mentioned in early seventeenth century diaries and naval reports as being the source of turtles not only for individual ships but for the fleet also. Hirst mentions some reports preserved in the *Journal of the Institute of Jamaica* which tell of several vessels simultaneously going to and coming from the islands. (9, 8) In view of all this activity, one might surmise that a few settlers at least had established themselves. By 1670 there must have been quite a number of residents of one of the islands, for on July 5 of that year Captain Manuel Rivero Pardol sent a challenge to the "chief of the squadron of privateers in Jamaica" in which he stated that he had gone "on shore at Caimanos and burnt 20 houses and fought with Captain Ary, and took from him a catch laden with provisions and a canao [sic]." (9, 20)

In 1662, Lord Windsor came to Jamaica, by then under British control, and it was he who ordered the occupation of the Cayman Islands. His instructions give the first recorded mention of the "Caimanes" as "belonging to the territories" of Jamaica, although some other records (9, 16) indicate that the Lesser Caymans at least had a stationary population preceding this time. According to Hirst's history, the best indication of who formed the population is given by tradition, which says that the inhabitants were deserters from Oliver Cromwell's army in Jamaica, with a "very fair sprinkling of 'gentlemen adventures' [sic] or in other words pirates."
Minutes of the Council of Jamaica for August 12, 1671, indicate that the situation remained much the same:

...whereas there are divers soldiers, planters, privateers, and other late inhabitants of this island now at Caimanos... who made scruple of returning... fearing his Majesty's displeasure for their past irregular actions... (9, 20)

It is well-established by records and tradition that Henry Morgan, the pirate, was a frequent visitor to the Caymans. Numerous treacherous and unmarked reefs surrounding Grand Cayman caused rather frequent shipwrecks, some of the ships going aground being slave ships. Often the sailors and slaves remained on the island. In 1677, the Dutch captured five hundred slaves from the French in Hispaniola (Haiti) and took them to Grand Cayman, establishing it at least for awhile as a center of slave trade. (9, 25)

Settlers on the island were also slave owners, and many freed slaves, or slaves who had escaped from their masters, also settled on the island.

The first settler whose name is known was Isaac Bawden, who apparently went to Grand Cayman early in the eighteenth century. Nothing is known of his origin, except that he probably came from the English county of Cornwall, as Bawden is a south country name. (9, 68)

The origin of other early settlers can be determined chiefly by their surnames. Hirst matches the most common names of Grand Cayman with their places of origin thus:

Bawden (Bodden): south country name, originating in Cornwall.
Foster (from forester): southern and midland counties of England, where the Royal Forests were most plentiful.


Jennett (not common now): Southern counties of England where name is still common.


Wood: County Sligo, Ireland.

Edwin Doran, Jr. suggests the origin of some of the settlers when he says that two expressions common on Grand Cayman, "Wednesday gone a week," and "I threw," meaning "I vomited," have a background of Northumberland, North Yorkshire, Cumberland, and Durham. (3, 84)

These attributions of location of the origins of early settlers are of little use in trying to determine the influences of particular English dialects on the Cayman dialect, for the counties and cities named stretch from Northumberland in the extreme north to Southampton (Hampshire county) in the south, including numerous areas in between, both to the east and the west, and extending to Ireland and Scotland.

For the two hundred years following settlement, the Caymans remained relatively isolated. Few vessels other than the native schooners visited the islands after the turtle supply was depleted. Consequently there were few visitors and almost no immigrants after the first few years of colonization. The women and children for the most part remained on their island while the men went to sea. Today Caymanians serve on most sea-going vessels of the western hemisphere, traveling over all the seas of the world. However, their speech patterns were set in the isolation of their early lives at home, and seem to be little affected by the limited
contact with speakers of other dialects that is offered by the continued isolation of shipboard life. This early and long-continued isolation of the islanders tended to preserve dialect features that had disappeared in other English dialects, and aided in the development of unique features.

The establishment of air service to Grand Cayman in the 1940's brought radical changes. Hotels have been built and tourist trade encouraged and solicited. The establishment of foreign-owned businesses, such as Canadian banks, on the island has brought in immigrants, both temporary and permanent. The islanders themselves now travel more frequently and more widely. The younger ones are receiving a better education at home than in former years, and many go to schools and colleges in Jamaica, the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. These changes have increased the incidence of intermarriage between Caymanians and non-Caymanians. No radical changes can be seen yet in the dialect, especially of course of the adults, but all these factors will influence it in time, probably with increasing rapidity. The changes that progress has already brought are most apparent in the lexicon, but in any dialect, lexical changes can be great while phonology and syntax are retained, and this seems to be the case at the present time in the Grand Cayman dialect, for Caymanians who have been away from the island for many years, even those living ashore in populous areas, tend to retain their dialect, especially the phonological characteristics.
Phonology

As does any dialect, Cayman English has distinctive phonological characteristics. Because of the extreme isolation of the islands, some features which have disappeared from other English dialects have been retained. One example of this is found in the sounds assigned to the consonants \( y \) and \( w \), which in many words can scarcely be differentiated, and in other cases are interchanged. Hence we find /wes\(\ddot{e}l\)/ (vessel), /ves\(\ddot{e}\)n/ (as in Wesson Oil), /wir\(\ddot{j}n\)/ (virgin), /wer\(\ddot{y}\)/ (very), /vud/ (wood), /vili\(\ddot{y}\)/ (Willie), and /wir\(\ddot{n}\)/ (Verna). In the speech of many Caymanians, the standard English \( y \) and \( w \) sounds are not clearly distinguished, the articulation being instead a combination of features of both. Thus for these speakers, the \( y \)'s in such words as invited, several, and have and the \( w \)'s in words such as worship, we, work, wish, want, and wife seem to be a common phoneme. The combination of the broad English \( a \) and the Caymanian \( y \) produces /waz/ (vase). The \( y-w \) transposition in some earlier English dialects is revealed in dialog in Dickens' novels—for instance, when the guttersnipe in Bleak House is speaking. This feature may be in the process of disappearing, as it seems less prominent in the speech of the younger people, but it can still be detected in the speech of persons of all ages.

In most English dialects, O.E. a\(\ddot{e}\)sian has by the process of metathesis become ask, in both spelling and pronunciation. However, many Caymanians of all ages, although they spell the word conventionally, commonly say /\(\ddot{e}\)ks/. Whether one says /\(\ddot{e}\)ks/ or /\(\ddot{e}\)sk/ does not seem to be determined by social, economic, or educational level, as it occurs in all the levels.
Retention of the broad English a is seen in many words. Bang[e], for instance, is /bæŋgl/, and marry is /məri/. Man, which is used as an ejaculatory term in reference to anyone, regardless of sex (as in the reply "No Man") is /mæn/. Other important characteristic vowel sounds in Grand Cayman English are illustrated by the following list: /fær/ (fear), /bɛr/ (beer), /ʃɛr/ (chair), /ɹɪn/ (rain), /ʃiŋ/ (change), /hɛyd/ (head), /bɔyt/ (beat), /bɔrd/ (bird), /ʃɔrɔ/ (church), /t æ stɔməni/ (testimony), /rɪnd/ (rind). The vowel sound of yes is often lowered into /yɛs/, with the /ɛ/ lengthened.

The post vocalic r in words such as word, sermon, Bertha, and return is not pronounced by Caymanians, and the preceding vowel becomes nearly /ɔ/. Also, the final r in many words, such as before and door, is similarly unpronounced, the ɔ becoming /ɔ/. The initial /dɔ/ often becomes the stop /d/, as in /dæt/ (that).

Intonation patterns of pitch and stress mark important distinctions in the dialect. In single polysyllabic words the primary stress is most likely to fall on the final syllable, as in these words: Jesús, family, showcase, limeadé, refreshments, concérnt, hurricanes, social, telephoney, November, teacher, grandfather, and also in words ending in -ing, such as evening and talking, although the final ə is not pronounced (as it was not in Early Modern English). In pairs such as the names of towns the primary stress also falls on the final syllable: Bodden Town, George Town, West Bay. Cayman follows this pattern--Cayman--except when it occurs in combination with Brac--Caymán Brac or Caymán Brac.

The sentence final intonation pattern of the Grand Cayman dialect shows a rise in pitch, with the final stress usually stronger than the
preceding, or of equal strength, in both declarative sentences and questions (which will be discussed later). The following, taken from tapes, are representative examples of this pattern of rise in pitch:

1. She'll be coming Friday, too.
2. I don't know.
3. You weren't at that house.
4. Nobody's come yet.
5. He do that about four times now.
6. But she not coming.
7. And you caught it?
8. But, Aaron, you don't have to wear glasses?

This distinctive intonation pattern in Caymanian speech, once it has become familiar, is readily and unmistakably recognized in contrast to the standard English I don't know pattern. Caymanians who have lived away from the island for many years usually retain their pattern.

Morphology

A number of omissions occur in the dialect of Grand Cayman which are not found in standard English. Unlike most English dialects, which use structure or function words as noun-marking signals (i.e., noun-determiners), Grand Cayman English often omits these noun-determiners. Prepositions are also sometimes omitted, leaving only the noun of the prepositional phrase. The following examples illustrate these features:

... getting him into casket and helping put him in ground.

We got rope, made sling, and got calf out.

When I get Spotts, little rain come down. (When I got to Spotts, a
little rain came down.) Here both the preposition and noun determiner are omitted.

I stand under little almond tree till little rain over.
I received answer to my application.
They are planning for opening early in January.
I expected to make longer stay on the way down.
I am going town.
I am looking mangoes.
You go George Town?
I got thinking about Stanley.
I have to take the bush. (I had to take to the bush [the woods].)
...a glass water.

Other noun-determiners (morphologically classed as pronouns), such as your, his, her, are often spoken in the subjective form. For instance, Caymanians use such constructions as "What he name?" and "But how you mama is?" Also, a genitive noun modifying a noun may be spoken without the genitive inflection: "What her daughter name?"

Verbal forms in the Grand Cayman dialect show a number of distinctive characteristics. Verb forms including the auxiliary with the infinitive form of the verb (to+base) following, often do not follow the agreement of subject and verb found in standard English; the result is structures like these:

I has to go.
They has to go.
That's all I gets.
He weren't no hurt to me,
We goes in small boats.
I thinks I can do it.
We sets long nets.
I wants Marie to come live with me.
She keep well.
You knows the meaning of it.
Annie say to tell you she is glad you is coming.
I still feels a little jittery.
The other blades is too big.
There were no truck at the scene.3

The verb to be appears in a number of forms that vary from standard English. For instance, although not found as commonly in the speech of those of all educational levels, the following types of utterances are found in various age levels of the less well educated persons: "All these boys that bes around here," and "When I be sick, I couldn't plait."

Preterites and present tenses are often expressed the same, the clue to meaning being the context, or words such as yesterday which indicate time. The underlined verbs in the examples are all preterites:

I tell her I did.
I ask her what she see.
When I look, it was gone.
She tie it round my waist.

3The last statement was found in the Caymanian, Feb. 6, 1969, p. 12. A number of the others were taken from personal letters written in the last five years, and the remainder occurred in conversation.
After work I clean up.

He say I must go home.

I go Tampa.  (This would also express future if "tomorrow" were added.)

She turn back.

I had just leave from his house.

I walk with her.

She catch me by the hand.

I hear that long time.  (I heard that a long time ago.)

I save it being sold.  (I kept it from being sold.)

I didn't know it was light.  (I didn't know the stove was lit.)

An unusual pluperfect written form is found in this statement, "This was the first time Kendal was seeing his little son." (2, Feb. 23, 1966, p. 4)

A number of other forms of usage occur at times. One of these is the use of the noun or adjectival form for the verb form, as thief for steal ("He thief my cow") and hot for heat ("Hot the soup"). This headline appeared recently: "Hospital Equipment Gifted from USA." (2, April 24, 1969)

Back is the accepted verb meaning to carry something on one's back in a basket, with the strap handle across the forehead or around the crossed wrists. They keep their yards beautiful by backing sand from the beach and spreading it smoothly over the yard. Another practice is the insertion of -en before -ing, as fishening and groanening.

A widely distributed dialectal feature which is also found in pidgin languages (3, 376) is the omission of forms of be, especially when the omitted term would occupy an auxiliary position, but also at times when it is the verb for the sentence or clause. The latter is illustrated by
these utterances:

I do hope she up and around again.
I not sick.
He on the road at five every evening.
I sick in my head.
What he name?

Examples of the omission of the auxiliary be are:

She not coming today.
I bringing her up. (Rearing her)
I telling you my memory just about gone.
She not getting it.
I not telling you why.
I not going.
But you know he not sleeping.
If you going fishing, don't let this stand in your way.

One common construction eliminates the auxiliary and also employs a past participle to express an impending action (ingressive aspect). This is the statement, "I gone," meaning "I am about to leave." This construction is quite common.

Questions most commonly heard are of two main types of construction. In one type we see the omission of the auxiliary, as discussed above regarding statements. Examples of such questions are:

Why they go so fast?
Where she gone now?
Where he go or went?
And you not going Jamaica?
You going sleep?
Ella coming down to my house today?
You go Breakers?

A second question construction places the interrogative pronoun first, followed by a pronoun, and then the verb. For example:

Who you is and where you stays?
Who it was had on a face [Halloween mask]?
Where that is?
Who that was?
What that is?

A question that is frequently heard is "Who 'n' you?" ("Who and you?") which is used when one wants to ask another who is joining him in some action. If one wishes to ask what is wrong with someone, he asks, "What do you?"

The negative interrogative in the Grand Cayman dialect takes two forms. In one, no, with a rising pitch, follows a statement to form a question: "The limes all gone, no?" (standard English: "The limes are all gone, aren't they?") Another negative interrogative form places nuh /nah/ at the end: "Sweeter baby, nuh?" ("This is a sweet baby, isn't she?"), or "He look like his father, nuh?" Often a command or request is dealt with in the same manner: "Go so and bring me some guavas, nuh?" ("Bring me some guavas, will you?").

When emphasis is desired in certain statements, the process employed utilizes the first person pronoun in the objective rather than the subjective case, as:

Me and me alone stands by her.
Me one can do it.

But me poor fool now, I got thinking about Sammy.

Other examples of emphatics are:

They all jump in and there was just me one [left].

All two of us went.

The use of the double negative form occurs quite commonly among speakers who are on the lower educational level, and sometimes with speakers on all levels. Sometimes patterns also illustrate the omission of the auxiliary:

I not buying no shoes.

I don't know that he not gone.

It not no good.

We did not have no Easter service as we don't have no minister. (From a letter)

I don't have no monkey to model off, or no pictures. (From a letter)

Don't never let nobody ever tell you there ain't no duppies. (5, iii)

In commands, so is very frequently employed immediately following the verb, but it has no lexical meaning in this context. Illustrations of this are:

Arthur, ring so and tell Bertie to bring my dark shades [sun glasses].

Run so and bring my shoes.

Do so come back.

Go so get some ice.

Come so and sit down.

Examination of the Grand Cayman dialect reveals a number of syntactic features that appear consistently in the speech of the people on all
levels, although a few do not appear in the speech of all speakers. The chief syntactic features seem to be the intonation contour patterns of sentences, the absence of be, auxiliaries, prepositions, etc., in certain constructions, distinctive emphatic devices, the personal pronoun verb agreement pattern, and the preterite and perfective verb patterns.

Lexicon

The vocabulary of the Grand Cayman dialect is predominantly English, so that once the outsider has mastered the stress and pitch patterns and those basic syntactic patterns described above, he experiences little difficulty from unfamiliar words or expressions. However, there are some words and expressions that are unique, and others that are used in distinctive ways.

In supernatural matters, the vocabulary is that used in other West Indian dialects. Belief in obeah (witchcraft) is fading, and with it the obeah man, but the concepts and words are still current, and the duppies, which are wraiths or ghosts that appear in many forms, are still seen and feared, so it is said. In connection with obeah, a common expression is used, "put him so," meaning an obeah spell has been placed on him by someone. Another term, "fireball," refers to an apparition seen on tombstones, in midair, or under the eaves of a house.

4Although both obeah and duppy are of African origin, very few other African influences can be found, which is surprising considering the large numbers of slaves which were brought to the island. Also, although the Spanish were once in possession of Jamaica, there is hardly any Spanish influence. It is probable that the slaves, because they were not left with others of their own tribes, were forced to use English as a common language, and no African terms survived. As for the Spanish, their power in the West Indies had waned by the time the Cayman Islands were settled.
A word that is linguistically intriguing, and one that seems unique to the Cayman Islands, is the second person plural pronoun *unna*. (This is my own spelling, based on the spoken /əna/, for I have not found it in print or writing). This pronoun is used by the younger people (e.g., a nineteen-year-old Caymanian girl in her third year of college in the United States), although it is not as widely used as in former years. Much searching has revealed only one set of words that could conceivably have any relation to *unna*. These are the Old English dual personal pronouns *uncit, uncy, unker*, etc.

Because the sea is so much a part of the life of Grand Caymanians, nautical terms are common. Land distance is measured in fathoms much of the time—"for about fifteen fathoms from the gate," "twenty fathoms down the road," and "up the beach about five hundred fathoms." Directions are also given in nautical terms:

She was gone leeward [west].

He went on to the leeward and I came to windward [east].

He glanced to starboard [right].

It was on the port [left] side.

Modern travelers by plane still "engage passage." The floor is often referred to as the "deck." A metal container that is too dirty to use or that has holes in it is said to be "bilged."

One term has been obliterated by modern transportation. Before planes came to the island, when only ships linked it to the rest of the world, the coming of a vessel was a major event, and was announced by a long-drawn-out, musical cry of "Sail ho-o-o-o," sounded by the first person to sight the ship on the horizon, and repeated by anyone who heard it.
Thus it was passed on, so that in a very short time the news was widely spread—as far as the voices could carry. When most of these vessels were Cayman-built schooners, one would hear the expression, "a two-master heading down." A boat that was "coming under power" was a schooner using an auxiliary engine as well as sails. Today many of the ships coming in to port are small "motor vessels," powered by engines alone.

A number of terms having to do with boats and the sea are still current. "Plain navigation" is navigation without instruments, and Caymanians have been well-known for their ability in this line. To "push a boat" means to propel a small boat (dory or catboat) in shallow water with a pole. To "pull a boat" means to row with oars. A seaman is "home from sea," or has "returned from sea," and when he rejoins his ship he "returns to sea." A seaman who has taken an examination for promotion—to Chief Engineer, for example—is said to have "sat for his Chief Engineer's license." (2, Sept. 26, 1968, p. 10) Fresh water that is tainted with sea water is described as "brackish." "Where the white water begins" refers to the reef. The Caymanian does not go swimming—he goes "in the sea." Much of the shoreline is made up of a lava-type rock, very rough and very hard, which is called "iron shore."

One of the occupations of Grand Cayman over the years has been the weaving of baskets, hats, and mats. The "tops" (thatch palm leaves) are stripped into "string" which is then "plaited" into "string work." (You get any string work from Cayman?"

Another industry of the island is the making of rope from thatch, which takes place outdoors, usually along the beach, in the "rope walk." The "pegs" (strips of thatch) are guided through the triple-grooved "cob"
and hand-twisted by the use of a triple-cranked "cart."

With plentiful hardwoods--such as mahogany, ironwood, fiddlewood, and pompero--growing on Grand Cayman, the ship-building industry once flourished there, and a few schooners are still built. Launchings were accomplished without machinery, with men, women, and children joining in pulling on the ropes. The work was directed by cries like these:

Man your falls! All hands!
Walk away! Walk back!
Comin' home! Walk away!
She's two blocks referring to block and tackle! Whoa!

And sea chanteys spurred the crowd on, coordinating all the work with their rhythm. When the boat was launched and completed, it was said, "She got her sails on."

Turtling has been the chief occupation of Caymanians throughout their history. One term that can be traced to South African origin appears in this connection. **Crawl**, which is used as a verb or a noun, derives from the Afrikaans **kraal** (pen). It refers to the pen in shallow water where the turtles are confined after capture, or to the process of placing them there: ". . .they took the turtle down to Savannah Cay to crawl it there." (2, Sept. 3, 1968, p. 6) The three types of turtles caught are known by the same names that are used elsewhere: green, hawksbill, and loggerhead, but the last is usually pronounced /ləˈɡrid/. The same term is also applied to a type of conch. The flipper of a turtle is called the "hoof." An empty turtle net is a "water set," but an empty fish line is a "water haul." A small land turtle found on the island is called a "hickatee."
Agricultural terms reflect the difficulty of tilling the land. Any small piece of tilled ground is a "plantation," which has been laboriously cleared from the "bush" with a "machete" /məʃət/, this word being one of the very few Spanish words in the dialect. Sometimes a cultivated spot is called a "provision ground," or just "the ground"—"He walked across the ground." A pasture is "the grass piece." Agricultural products are "provisions"—"Provisions from Costa Rica will now be available at Comart, Merren's, Shirley's Super Store and Kirk Plaza on Wednesday afternoons." (2, Dec. 12, 1968, p. 8) Provisions is the term used whether they are locally produced or imported.

Terminology for food items is sometimes distinctive, but often common English. Biscuit is used to refer to a cookie, as in British usage. Fish chowder may be a soup, but it may also be a baked casserole. Meat kind contrasts with bread kind, which refers to any starchy food, such as breadfruit, cassava, cocos (white starchy roots), and yams (also white starchy roots). Coconuts are a staple of the Caymanian diet, and require various terms. An immature coconut, containing "water" for drinking and "cream," a soft pulp for eating, is a "green coconut" or a "water coconut." Coconut "juice" is squeezed from grated "dry" (mature) coconut meat, and is used in cooking. The "trash" that remains after the juice has been squeezed out is discarded. "Heavy cake" is a moist pudding-like cake made of bread kind, sugar or molasses, and coconut juice. Almonds, which grow on the island, and chopped coconut are made up into candy, called "stuck almonds" and "stuck coconut." Three general types of bananas are found—bananas, plantains, and botlers, the latter two for cooking. The term botler seems to occur only in the Cayman Islands, as
it is not listed in dictionaries. One small, thin-skinned plump banana is called "Chinese banana," and another small one is called "apple banana" because of its apple-like flavor. The size of banana bunches is indicated by the number of "hands"—ten-hand bunch, or twelve-hand bunch, for instance. Another fruit goes by a name not located or identified elsewhere, the "guinep" /gɪnɪp/ (variant spellings: guineppe, ginip, ginep). Naseberry is given as an alternate term for star apple in the Oxford English Dictionary, but in Grand Cayman the star apple is known as "star apple" and naseberry has become neeseberry, being applied to a fruit which is altogether different from the star apple. A small purplish fruit growing on low bushes along the beach is called "cocomul." The avocado is usually called simply "pear." A type of grapefruit that was once plentiful but is now disappearing is called "shaddock," which is derived from Captain Shaddock, who brought the fruit from the East Indies to the West Indies at the end of the seventeenth century. Fruit that is ready for consumption is said to be "fit," or if not ripe, "not fit"—"That mango not fit, you know."

When speaking of coconut trees, or trees of the banana family, Caymanians use shoot to mean that the plant shows signs of producing fruit:

Experts... advise that no more than three plants should be allowed on one spot, say a plant shot already or nearly ready to shoot;... [speaking of the banana, plantain, and botler trees].
(2, March 27, 1969, p. 8)

That coconut tree starting to shoot.

Names of other growing things show some variations from better-known names. Frangipani, which is a jasmine, is called "wild jasmie" (plural "jasmies"). Another flower, growing in pink and white clusters,
called "rice-and-peas." "Tree" is frequently applied to what would be
called a "bush" in most American dialects. One such is the maiden plum,
whose sap will cause large blisters, which turn into sores, wherever it
touches the skin. "Cowitch" is itching powder which is gathered from a
bush of the same name. "Ganja" /ɡænja/ is the term applied to marijuana.
When the Australian pine was imported to Grand Cayman, in the early part
of this century, it was called "weeping willow," but this term has largely
been dropped, and the trees are now called simply "pines."

Most animals are known by the usual English names, with a few excep-
tions. The Cayman egret is locally known as the "long-necked gaullin," and
migratory birds are called "periodical birds." The name "wilks" (cf.
whelk) is applied to a variety of small edible snails, and small land
crabs are "red shanks." The agouti, a small rodent of the guinea pig
family, which was imported to the island years ago and is now wild, is
called "rabbit." Parrots and iguanas are found on Grand Cayman, but have
no local names.

Some household items have names of linguistic interest. An extension
cord is an "expansion cord"; The British term "tin" is used for "can"; a
"pudding pan" is a large, deep pan; "carboy" refers to a jug; a chamber
pot is humorously called a "night compass" or just "compass." Most Cay-
man houses until recent years had an outside cooking shed, with a sand-
dcovered fire platform, which was called a "caboose." Some homes still
have these cook houses, but the name has shifted to "fireside" in the
most common usage. The roof of a house is referred to as the "house-
top": "He fix our house-top." Sandals made of pieces of old tire, tied
on with thatch string, are "wampers," and rubber thong sandals are "tips."
Automotive terms are mostly British, although most cars on the island are American. The hood of the car is the "bonnet," the windshield is the "wind-screen," the gasoline gauge is the "meter."

Grand Caymanians have distinctive terms to describe aberrant personal qualities. A shy person is said to be "shame-face," while someone who is slightly crazy is "fufu." One who has not much sense, or is unreliable, is "too fool." Someone who is lightly built, weak, or sickly, or who was coddled in his rearing, is "nash." Two terms are used to designate an illegitimate child: "bush child," which is a derogatory term, and "outside child," which is not derogatory. "Stupidness" is an expletive used by young people much as American teenagers would exclaim "That's dumb."

Physical ailments or conditions are often described with what seem to Americans to be simple, homely, but descriptive, terms. She has been "punishin'" (suffering) because she is "sick by the foot." Or perhaps her back or head "is sick." The newspaper even reported "...a motor 'went sick' just prior to landing..." (2, Nov. 14, 1968, p. 5) One woman explained that she had quit going away from home because "I had too many fall-downs" and she had also suffered several heart attacks: "The next one will carry [kill] me." Another woman was indignant because a man had left his wife, "And he jus' filled her with a baby already."

When "John is running Mary" they are going steady, and when she is "spoken for" they are engaged to be married. To "come to look for" is to court a girl, or it may mean simply to visit someone, in another context. "She's had a bad heart for me ever since," means she has had hard feelings or resentment. "She smelled my neck" means she demonstrated affection, or the same idea might be expressed another way, "She hugged me up."
Expressions denoting time in several ways are illustrated by the following examples, which are in common use today:

We left from Friday. (We left on Friday.)

I was coming from Friday, but couldn't get a reservation. (I planned to leave Friday, but couldn't get a reservation.)

They went from Monday. (They left on Monday.)

We went out from eight o'clock that morning. (We left at eight o'clock that morning.)

Saturday gone a week ago. (A week ago Saturday.)

Tuesday gone week. (A week ago Tuesday.)

I been gone since soon. (I left early today.)

I had to stop these two nights from doing it. (I haven't done it for the last two nights.)

A number of miscellaneous expressions or types of expressions are given below:

She had to stop, and she all ready. (She had to stay at home, and she was all ready to go.)

Mr. Terry did say to one individual that he had part a mind to arrest him. (2, Jan. 6, 1969, p. 12)

That don't go for me. (I don't like that.)

I feel you. (I understand how you feel.)

He was no hurt to you. (He didn't hurt you.)

I didn't think on it. (I didn't think about it.)

I never heard such a piece of thing as that was--never.

Once in a ways. (Sometimes, or once in a while.)

Either letter for Mama? (Is there a letter for Mama?)

Come off the mattress.

Come look at the door. (Come to the door.)
Come this way a little. (Come here for a little while.)

That breakfast and dinner she's up with every morning. (She brings breakfast and dinner every morning.)

I'm getting too far up now. I'm getting too old.)

Buy a pint. (Buy a pint jar.)

I took in with a trembling all over my body.

Let me see your foot bottom.

No, I don't think he got quite our way.

He knew the war [or the trouble, storm, etc.] was heading [was coming].

I took foolishness and got my hair cut off.

Who are you for? (Whose child are you?)

Who is the car for? (Whom does the car belong to?)

What part have you been? (Where have you been?)

What he do to us in school was not fittin'.

So many new houses have been put down [built].

He didn't do me anything. (He didn't do anything to me.)

He do her mischief.

A number of other lexical items in the Grand Cayman dialect need explanations for the outsider. A small sandy cove where small boats or dories can come ashore is called a "barquedere" (alternate spelling barcadere). The derivation for this word appears to be the Spanish barque (ship; cf. San Francisco's Embarcadero), but it may have originated and developed through the same process as the related English word embark and its derivatives. Barquedere is found in neither English nor Spanish dictionaries. "Two 'n' um" means "two of them." To go "marching" means to go serenading, especially for a period of about a month preceding Christ-
mas. "Concert" refers to any public program of short numbers, with or without musical numbers. When making a statement of some future action, Caymanians may place "D. V.," the abbreviation for "Deo volente" (God being willing), at the end: "We hope to have the new rollers for our press next month. D. V." (7, June, 1968) "Help us pray down a real old-fashioned outpoured Holy Ghost Revival. Special singing nightly at 7:15 p. m. D. V. Cayman surely need a revival." (2, March 20, 1969, p. 6) When spoken, "I'll come to see you next year. D. V.," the v becomes the /v-w/ combination sound mentioned earlier. Caymanians of all ages and all educational, social, and economic levels use make meaning permit:

Make I go? (May I go?)

She didn't make /let/ me get my ears pierced.

Make /let/ her know you're going.

Not quite as consistently used, but also appearing in the speech of all ages and levels is the use of tell meaning ask: "I will tell her if she can come." Another common English word with a variant meaning in Grand Cayman is worry, which is sometimes used to mean steal or bother: "No one will worry the coconuts."

Some words that have shifted in modern English dialects from everyday usage to more formal use are still part of the dialect of even very young Caymanians. The term laden has survived since 1670 at least (see page 11), but is used today in commonplace situations: "That tree just laden with mangoes." Other examples spoken by persons of various ages are:

When he got over his vexation...

She went and chastised him.

The eldest one name John.
Conditions of early settlement of the Cayman Islands brought about a mixing of the white and black races, as the first women on the islands were probably black slaves. Some areas of Grand Cayman have tended to be predominantly white or colored, but it has never been possible to make any clear racial distinctions. The dialect mirrors this condition, for the term Negro is rarely heard, at least in reference to Caymanians by Caymanians. In order to describe someone, the terms "black," "brown," "dark," "light," or "white" are used. For the most part there is no denigration implied, but the terms are simply necessary in descriptive functions.

Proverbs and sayings give insight not only into the dialect but also into ways of life of the people. In certain seasons of the year land crabs swarm from the bush and from their holes under the stone walls that serve as fences, so plentiful that their rustling in the dry almond leaves makes quite a loud noise, as they scurry about after dark. From this facet of life has come the expression, "every crab from the bush," meaning "everybody." Before the coming of amusement places to the island, the usual evening diversion was walking or bicycling in groups along the roads, talking, of course, all the while. Thus "I heard it on the marl road" expresses the idea of having heard a rumor. Sandy ground is sought for graves, as the rock is much too hard for digging, and the expression "You'll be satisfied when you get a mouth full of sand" (when you're buried) arose. Other sayings or proverbs are:

As fast as lightning over Cuba.

Cow knows where weak fence is. (A bully is careful whom he tackles.)

He doesn't have his head for his hat alone. (He's smart.)

Greedy choke puppy. (Don't take more than your share.)
If you can't get Harry you get his jacket. (Be satisfied with what you get.)

Walk the twelve steps. (Go to court.)

Go and bite your own color. (Said to mosquitoes.)

One hand washes the other. (A favor is returned by a favor, as "You scratch my back; I'll scratch yours.")

Names

Many aspects of the life and history of a people, and of their physical surroundings, can be discovered by an examination of place names. The origins of many of the place names of Grand Cayman are now unknown, but others can be quite readily identified. The origin of the name Cayman itself can only be speculated about, because there is no recorded account of why the islands were given this name, although there is an explanation for the first name given to the islands. When Columbus discovered the Lesser Caymans on May 10, 1503, he named them "Las Tortugas" because of the large numbers of turtles in the sea and on the shores. (Kerr's Voyages and Travels, Vol. iii, p. 224, as quoted in 4, p. 6)

Some have speculated that as cayman or caiman is the name (of Carib origin) applied to Central and South American saurians of the crocodile family, the name was given to Grand Cayman because of the similarity of its shape to that of a crocodile. Aside from the fact that it stretches the imagination to see this resemblance, the best reason for discounting this theory is that in 1503 the shape of the island could have been seen only from a map, and no map of the island existed then or for many years afterward. Hirst offers two explanations, either of which might be acceptable. He says that in the early navigators' day the sea was the
"main" and "cay" meant "shoal or reef," the combination of the two giving the meaning of "reef in the sea," which could have been applied to any of the three islands. (9, p. 30) Support for this theory can be found in one spelling of the name—"Kie of Manus"—which occurred in 1655. (9, p. 30)

A second, and, he feels, a more plausible explanation may be found in the fact that both alligators and iguanas were discovered in quantity in the Lesser Caymans, which could have been the first to bear the name of "Cayman." (9, p. 31) On the other hand, there is evidence that the name might have been first applied to Grand Cayman, for William Dampier, 1662-1715, an English buccaneer and navigator, recorded in 1699: "At the Isle Grand Caymanes, there are crocodiles, but no alligators. . .Both kinds are called caymanes by the Spanish." (11, Vol. II, p. 206) The second theory is also supported by this statement:

Very positive statements, however, assert the word \( \text{Cayman} \) to be African, from Congo; Pigafetto 1598 (trans. in Yule) says 'In this river. . .are mighty great crocodiles, which the country people there call caiman.' And Cuvier Rigne Animal, Sauri (trans) ix. 196 says 'The slaves on their arrival from Africa gave it immediately the name of cayman. It would appear from this that it was the negroes who spread the name throughout America.' . . .The name appears to be one of those. . .which the Portuguese or Spaniards very early caught up in one part of the world, and naturalized in another. (11, Vol. II, p. 206)

The following list shows the chronology of the development of the name of the islands:

- Las Tortugas 1503
- Kie of Manus 1655
- Caymanos 1655
- Kiemanos 1661
- Caimanos 1661
The three main towns on Grand Cayman are George Town, the capital of the islands, established about 1735, and named for the reigning monarch, King George II; Bodden Town, established about 1741, and named for an early settler; and West Bay, settled by Samuel Spofforth about 1741. (4) Other settlements are Newlands (named for an early settler, Thomas Newlands), Savannah, Prospect, East End, and North Side.

Physical geography is a significant factor in determining place names in Grand Cayman as elsewhere. Because Grand Cayman is only sixty feet above sea level at its highest point, there are no references to hills or other high spots, other than a few names including bluff (Gun Bluff, Gorling Bluff, etc). There are no fresh water streams on the island, but two coves are designated Salt Creek and Governors Creek. A few rocky formations off-shore are named, as well as the cays: Booby Cay, Barker Cays, and Sand Cay. (Cay is pronounced /kiy/ in contrast to the pronunciation /key/ in Cayman, /kiy/ being the prevailing modern pronunciation of cay in most English and American dialects.

The place names of Grand Cayman are predominantly simple, nonexotic
English, mostly descriptive of the terrain or history of the island, or taken from names of early settlers, with a few being names from other places. (Modern tourist developments are being given more fanciful names, such as Emerald Beach, Cayman Kai.) A few of the names in use today are: Old Isaacs, Batabano, Breakers, Head of Barkers, Maryland, Sand Bluff, South Sound, Conch Point, Boatswain (Bosun) Point, Gun Bay, and Hell, a particularly barren, rough bit of terrain.

Intermarriage for many years between members of the established families, which resulted from the isolation of Grand Cayman for so long, has caused confusion in identification, because of the duplication of names. A partial solution is the practice of calling a married woman (whose given name is the same as that of one or more other women) by her first name and her husband's first name. For instance, Lina Jackson, the wife of Farrell Jackson, is called "Lina Farrell," or sometimes "Mrs. Farrell," to differentiate between her and Lina Jackson, the wife of Hugh Jackson. To avoid confusion, some persons have simply changed their last names completely, while others have made such changes as Bodden to Borden, or Ebanks to Banks. Another solution is to be found in the multiplicity of unusual given names, which makes identification easier when so many persons share the same surname.

The most common surnames on Grand Cayman are Bodden, Ebanks, Watler, Jackson, Bush, and Thompson, with Coe, Hurlston, Eden, Merren, Parsons, Wood, and Arch occurring frequently. Although not of long-standing or frequent occurrence, two unusual surnames are Powery and Pouchie /puwej/. The origin of Bodden, which is the most common surname on the island, has been discussed above. According to Hirst, the name Ebanks is
unknown in England, but he gives no background for the statement. He suggests that it probably is an old slave name, derived from the master's name E. Banks, although he says it may have originated in Jamaica, where he was told it was found. (9, p. 73) The name Watler does not exist in Great Britain, says Hirst, again without explanation. He thinks the name is of Welsh origin and is a corruption of Walters. The first Watler on Grand Cayman is said to have been a deserter from Cromwell's army in Jamaica. (9, p. 70) Surnames brought to Grand Cayman from England between 1750 and 1800 which are still found there are Parsons, Eden, Coe, Wood, Jackson, and Bush, with Thompson coming at the same time from Scotland. (9, p. 85) According to tradition, the surname Bush has an unusual origin. Christopher Charles deserted from one of His Majesty's warships in the Caribbean sometime between 1750 and 1758, and took refuge on Grand Cayman. Fearing recapture by one of the warships which frequently visited the island, he established his home in the "bush," and reared a large family. They were dubbed the "bushers," which in time became "Bush." (9, p. 96)

Unusual given names abound, showing imaginative features similar to the Bible-belt names of the United States. Of course the well-known and popular English names (Elizabeth, Mary, Charles, etc.) are also used, as are the -ie endings by which the English develop nicknames for men (Bertie, Orrie, Eddie, Hughie, Georgie). Some male given names have a feminine sound—Alvey, Atha, Earyn, Elvy—while others are usually considered definitely feminine in other dialects—Sherly, Winsome, Lorraine.

The influence of factors outside the island is found principally in male given names, where we see religious, political, military, and other
factors operating to produce these names:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>London</th>
<th>Kennedy</th>
<th>Tennesen</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardinal</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Bunyan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Czar</td>
<td>Charles Lindberg</td>
<td>Adonis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asquith</td>
<td>Pershing</td>
<td>Orion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truman</td>
<td>Cromwell</td>
<td>Lazarus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Churchill</td>
<td>Hitler</td>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt</td>
<td>Darwin</td>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Variant spellings of well-known English names are quite common, as these examples demonstrate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neita</th>
<th>Gennine</th>
<th>Lenord</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mirindie</td>
<td>Elovesa</td>
<td>Kaven</td>
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Feminine given names reveal elements of sentimentality, as seen in these (which are not nicknames):  

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<th>Queenie</th>
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<td>Peachie</td>
<td>Eva Doll</td>
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<td>Princess</td>
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$^5$This may be a variant spelling of Geraldine, with initial /g/.
Unusual given names often appear in family groupings, such as Adonza, a sister to Kurney and Burney; two sisters, Ventrimena and Lepersha; Adena McLaughlin's sons, Haldane and Malcus, and her daughters, Evline, Vivine, and Vernicia (others had more common names); and Agnes Julian's sons Lumbert and Dupley, and daughters Albina, Elvery, and Glena (others had more common names).

Some of the feminine given names which are most unusual and show most imagination, inventiveness, and originality are:

- Acidilla
- Adina
- Aldice
- Angelia
- Aretta
- Avanza
- Carstene
- Chotilda
- Clearn
- Darley
- Davelyn
- Del Rose
- Delva
- Disa
- Dracey
- Elluda
- Gozel
- Iselma
- Lecensy
- Mescertha
- Naldi
- Nasaria
- Oleceta
- Osafa
- Otencha
- Petrona
- Petronella
- Phhemelia
- Quinze Gay
- Redly
- Stutzie
- Ursalena
- Ventrice
- Zennica
- Zilphie
- Edlee
- Edlin
- Edrin
- Edroy
Elnathan  
Evenidas  
Hazmah  
Hemerdy  
Kaisley  
Kesley  

Kirksey  
Kivie  
Leathon  
Mellino  
Miothan (Myothan)  

Outon  
Quistnell  
Rayal Brazley  
Tidyman  
Wosley  

(Further lists of given names may be found in Appendix B.)
CONCLUSION

The dialect of Grand Cayman is decidedly English in phonology, syntax, and lexicon, yet the isolation of the islanders and their limited contact with other people for approximately two hundred years brought about phonological, syntactic, and lexical variations that make the dialect unique. Some lexical and phonological archaisms have been preserved. The lexicon has been limited by the needs and experiences of the islanders, and syntactic variations have occurred. But the most important distinguishing characteristic of the Grand Cayman dialect is the intonation pattern, with emphatic stress variations from other English dialects, and a wider range in pitch, and more frequent changes in pitch.

The distinctively human capability to manipulate symbols in the form of language in order to communicate with other human beings is both a specific characteristic which sets man apart from other animals, and also a very private and personal component of the individual human personality. Relatively small groups of men, those making up a speech community, adapt and adjust in many ways as they carry on their community and family affairs in cooperation made possible by language. The particular form of language, the dialect, that develops in any such group contains those elements that meet the needs of the people, and reflect their experiences, their background, and their values. Dialect might be said to be a component of the group personality. This concept of language places value not on correctness, i.e., on conforming to some standard imposed from the outside, but on the efficiency, suitability, and usefulness of the language to the people who are using it. Furthermore, dialect is then seen as a
necessity in human experience, for in no other way can a group of people meet their communication needs than by a dialect that expresses their needs and wants and ideas in ways that are exclusive to the group.

Once one has rid himself of the notion that there is one standard of correctness for any given language, or that there is something inherently wrong with dialect (especially that spoken by other people!) he can experience the delight of exploring the depths and nuances of language as these are expressed in dialects, and as they reveal aspects of humanity nothing else does.

The people of Grand Cayman have developed a dialect that is solidly rooted in the British tradition, one that has retained elements that were useful, but one that has created new forms and adapted old ones to new uses. The dialect of Grand Cayman expresses a collective personality of the islanders, and familiarity with the dialect gives insight into that personality that makes it an experience similar in nature to that of discovering a new friend.
LITERATURE CITED


7. The Gospel of the Kingdom (monthly). Cayman Islands, B. W. I., Church of God.


APPENDIX A

Transcription Symbols

Phonemic:

/i/  fit, sin
/e/  any, bed
/æ/  back, hat
/ı/  bird, curd
/ə/  some, but
/a/  hard, not
/u/  full, put
/o/  home, mole
/ɔ/  all, taught
/iy/ be, sea
/ay/ side, mile
/uw/ truth, sue
/aw/ house, trout
/yuw/ use, cube
/ow/ goat, moan
/øy/ toil, boy
/p/  pop
/t/  tot
/k/  kick
/b/  bob

/ɑ/  dud
/g/  gag
/č/  church
/ʒ/  judge
/f/  fife
/v/  revive
/ø/  thick
/θ/  these
/s/  sister
/ʃ/  session
/z/  raise
/ʒ/  treasure
/m/  mum
/n/  nun
/ŋ/  ring
/l/  lull
/r/  roar
/w/  was
/y/  young
/h/  hole
Stress:

Primary stress (loudest): /'/
Secondary stress (next to loudest): /^/
Tertiary stress (next to softest): /\/
Weak stress (softest): /\-

Pitch:
High: /\4/
Next to high: /\3/
Next to low: /\2/
Lowest: /\1/

(These symbols have been compiled from An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics, by H. A. Gleason, and The Structure of American English, by W. Nelson Francis.)
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