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Anacostia Community Museum Archives

Sea-Island Dialect of South Carolina

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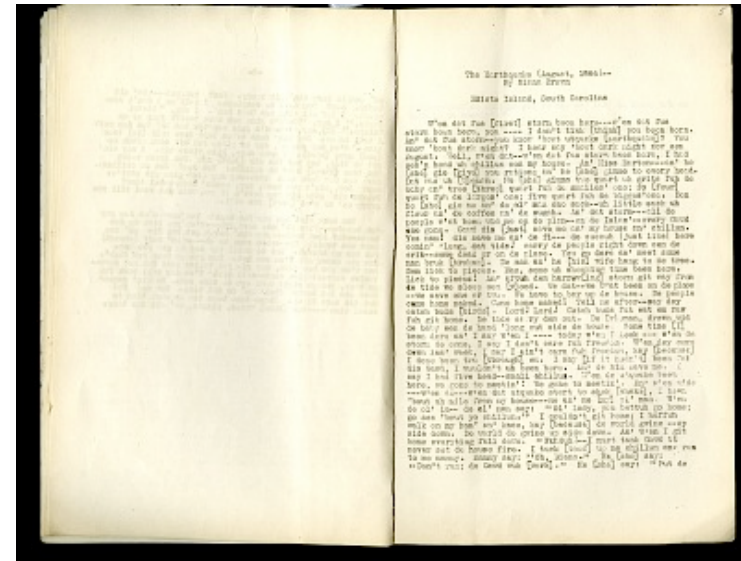
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 The Earthquake (August, 1886)--
 By Diana Brown

Edisto Island, South Carolina

W'en dat fus [first] storm been here---w'en dat fus storm been here, you
 ---- I don't tink [think] you been born. An' dat fus storm--you know 'bout
 utquake [earthquake]? You know 'bout dark night? I hear say 'bout dark
 night now een August. Well, w'en dat--w'en dat fus storm been here, I
 had seb'n head u chillun een my house. An' Miss Barton---an' he [she]
 gie [give] you ration; an' he [she] gimme to every head. Dat was un
 [w]oman. He [she] gimme two quart un grits fuh de baby an' tree [three]
 quart fuh de smalles' one; fo [four] quart fuh de larges' one; five quart
 duh de bigges'one. Den he [she] gie me an' de ol' man one sack--uh
 little sack uh flour an' de coffee an' de sugah. An' dat storm---all de
 people w'at been wid me on de plan--on de Islan'--every Gawd one
 gone. Gawd dis [just] save me an' my house an' chillun. Yes mam! dis
 save me an' de fi--- de succuh [just like] here comin' 'long, dat tide!
 carry de people right down een de crik--some dead or on de place. You
 go dere an' meet some man bruk [broken]. De man an' he [his] wife
 hang to de tree. Dem lick to pieces. Man, some uh shocking time been
 here. Lick to pieces! An' aftuh dem harrow[ing] storm git way from de
 tide we sleep een [w]ood. We dat--we w'at been on de place--we save
 one or two. We have to bar up de house. De people come home
 naked. Come home naked! Tell me after--say dey catch buds [birds].
 Lord! Lord! Catch buds fuh eat em raw fuh git home. De tide carry
 dem out. De [w]oman, drown wid de baby een de hand 'long out side de
 house. Some time [I] been dere an' I say w'en I ---- today w'en I look ---
 w'en de storm de come, I say I don't care fuh freedom. W'en dey come
 down las' week, I say I ain't care fuh freedom, kay [because] I done
 been tru [through] em. I say [if it hadn't] been fuh dis Gawd, I wouldn't
 uh been here. An' de him save me. I say I had five head--small chillun.
 W'en de utquake been here, we gone to meetin': We gone to meetin'.
 An' w'en wide---w'en de--w'en dat utquake start to shek [shake], I been
 'bout uh mile from my house---me an' me [my] ol' man. W'en de ol' la--
 de ol' man say: "Ol' lady, you bettuh go home; go see 'bout yo chillun." I
 couldn't git home; I haffuh walk on my han' an' knee, kay [because] de
 world gwine --up side down. De world de gwine up side down. An' w'en
 I git home everything dall down. "Fahduh!--I must tank Gawd it never
 set de house fire. I tuck [took] up me chillun an' run to me mammy.
 Mammy say: "Oh, Diana." He [she] say: "Don't run; de Gawd wuk
 [work]." He [she] say: "Put de
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