



Pride · Future · Courage · Purpose · Culture

Our Name

The name **WeGOJA** (pronounced *we-GO-juh*) is a fusion of words from three languages. Their speakers were people of African descent who were unwilling immigrants, brought to the Americas as a result of the Atlantic Slave Trade. They became major contributors to the growth, development, maintenance and success of Carolina colony, later South Carolina.

“**We**” is from the **Gullah** language and means “Our”. Historically, Gullah Geechee people hail from what is now southern coastal North Carolina, coastal South Carolina and Georgia, northern coastal Florida and extending inland about thirty miles. West Africans who were enslaved in this geographical area were literate in many Old World languages. They were denied the opportunity to learn English formally; English was the main language of their enslavers. So, to communicate, a language evolved that meshed West African languages with the United Kingdom Englishes and influences from the English Caribbean. This language became known as Gullah.

“**G**em sa bop” (pron. *THEM suh bop*) is from the **Wolof** language and means “Believe in yourself”. Wolof is spoken widely in Senegal and The Gambia. Countless Africans from these countries, including the Wolof, were enslaved and brought to South Carolina. In addition, Wolof heavily influenced the shaping of the Gullah language.

“**O**jo lwamtu” (pron. *o-joe e-WAHM-to*) is from the **Yoruba** language and means “Future”. Yoruba people primarily inhabit southwestern Nigeria, and similarly to the Wolofs, countless Yoruba bondsmen and bondswomen were brought to South Carolina. Yoruba heavily influenced the shaping of the Gullah language also.

“**J**om” (pron. *jome*) is **Wolof** and means “Purpose”, and it also means “Courage”.

“**A**sa” (pron. *AH-suh*) is **Yoruba** and means “Culture”.

The **WeGOJA Foundation** is thrilled to personify the message of **Our Proud Belief in Ourselves** to shape **Our Future** and **Our Courage** to execute **Our Purpose** to preserve **Our Culture** as we continue to support the ongoing work of the **South Carolina African American Heritage Commission**.

Many thanks to Dr. Dior Konate for West African languages assistance. She is Associate Professor & Coordinator of History at South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC.



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