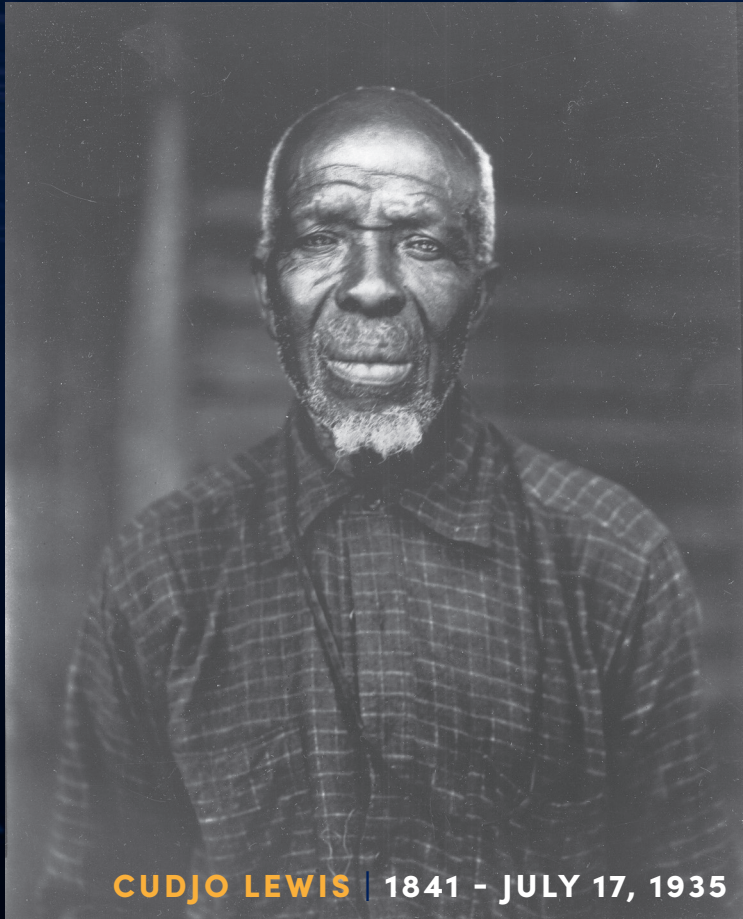




UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
COMMON READ/
COMMON WORLD



CUDJO LEWIS | 1841 - JULY 17, 1935

Photo courtesy of the Erik Overbey Collection, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama.

MEET THE STORYTELLER: **KOSSULA (CUDJO)**

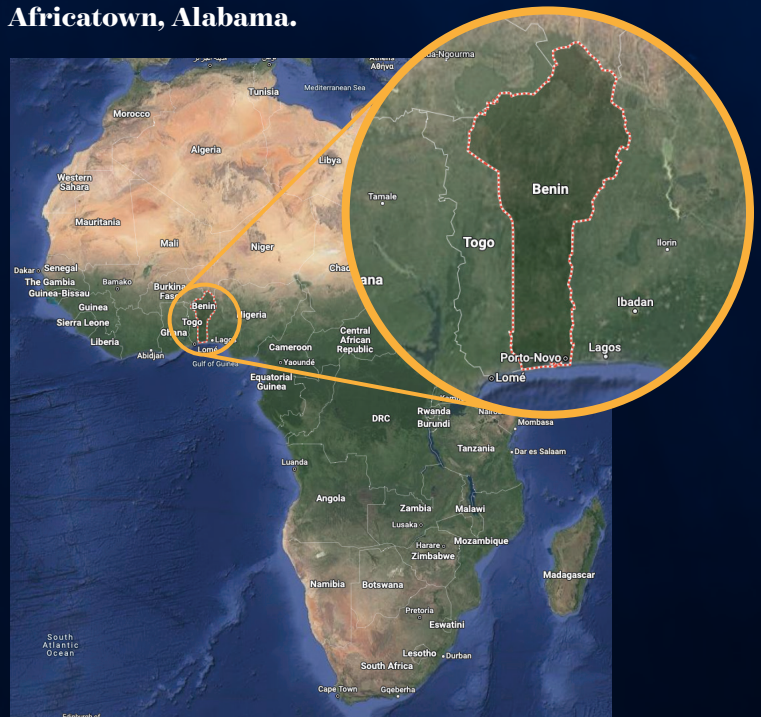
NAME: Oluale Kossula (Kazoola)

NAME GIVEN BY AMERICANS: Cudjo Lewis

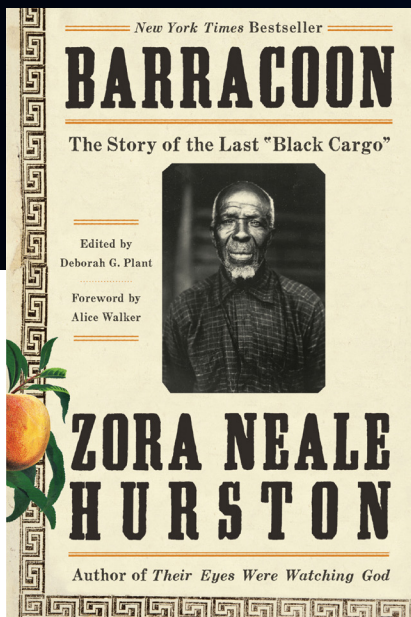
HOMETOWN: Banté (home to the Isha subgroup of the Yoruba people of West Africa)

TRIBAL ORIGIN: Yoruba

Oluale Kossula (Cudjo Lewis) was captured in his village by the neighboring kingdom of Dahomey and sold to white slave traders. Along with 130 other captives, Kossula traveled in the last slave ship, the *Clotilda*, to Mobile, Alabama in 1860. In *Barracoön*, Kossula tells his story of his life as a slave and later as a free man in Africatown, Alabama.



WHO ARE THE STORYTELLERS IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY?



USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:

"BARRACOON: THE STORY OF THE LAST 'BLACK CARGO'"



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu

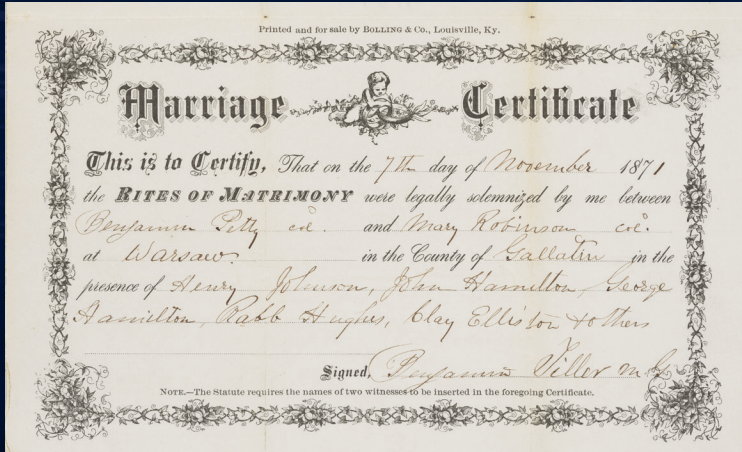
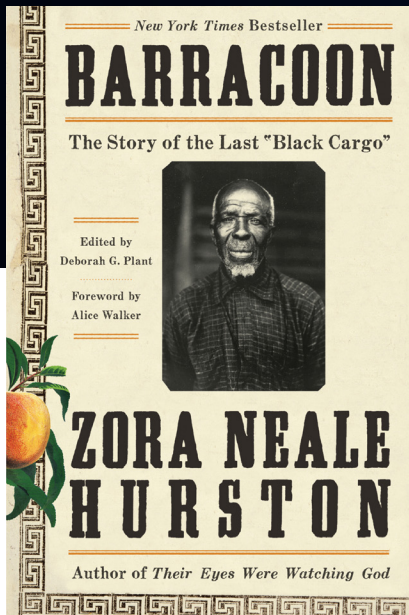


Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

When Cudjo asked Celie to be his wife, she first asked if he could take good care of her and elicited the promise that he would never raise a hand against her before agreeing. Cudjo deeply loves Celie, as she reminds him of the tranquil, family-centered lifestyle of his youth. They lived together happily in a seemingly equal partnership, before finding out that they lacked a marriage certificate.

In African tribes and areas like Benin, it was common for families of younger men and women to pre-arrange with one another that their children would marry when they came of age, and for the women's families to give a dowry of money, livestock, and other valuables to the men's upon the marriage. Once in America, the survivors of the *Clotilda* and their descendants over time adopted Christianity as their own. Cudjo and Celie therefore first got married according to the religious practices of the church.



USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:

“BARRACOON: THE STORY OF
THE LAST ‘BLACK CARGO’”

MEET THE FAMILY: CELIE

NAME: Abila (Abilé)

NAME GIVEN BY AMERICANS: Celie
(Celia, Seely) Lewis

TRIBAL ORIGIN: Yoruba

Because it was after the Civil War, freed formerly enslaved people were required to adhere to the nation's legal practices. So Cudjo and Celie learned that they also had to get an official marriage license (which might have looked something like the one pictured). Written, formal documents like this had not been the norm in African tribes, so they felt that they were already married in every way that mattered regardless of the piece of paper.

After losing 5 of her 6 children and supporting her husband through those losses and throughout his debilitating injury from a train accident, Celie passed away in 1908.

WHAT ARE SOME MARRIAGE TRADITIONS THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED?



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu



Photo courtesy of Amy Walker.

MEET THE COMMUNITY:

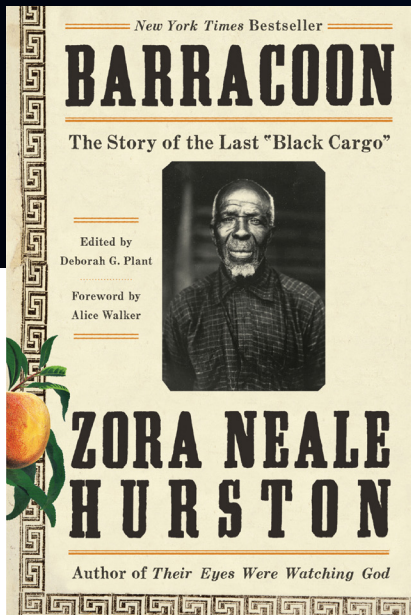
**OLD LANDMARK
BAPTIST CHURCH**

(NOW UNION MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH)

During their time being held in slavery, those brought to Mobile on the *Clotilda* learned about the religious practices of Christianity, because slaveholders often viewed teaching enslaved persons about the Bible and related spiritual beliefs as a way of attempting to control them, to prevent them from revolting, and to strip them of their former cultural values and systems. But eventually, over time, many people who had formerly been enslaved came to adapt and adopt or embrace as their own those elements of Christianity that they found most useful for sustaining community and hope. This evolved after the end of the Civil War into the founding of many all-Black Christian churches in African American communities, including Africatown.

WHY WOULD **ESTABLISHING A CHURCH** BE IMPORTANT TO THE RESIDENTS OF AFRICATOWN?

HOW DOES THE CHURCH RELATE TO **THE DESIRE TO EDUCATE CHILDREN**, WHICH MANIFESTED IN THE ORIGINAL RESIDENTS OF THE AREA EVEN **BUILDING THEIR OWN SCHOOLHOUSE**—WELL BEFORE THE COUNTRY SENT A SCHOOLTEACHER TO WORK WITH THE CHILDREN?



USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:

**“BARRACOOON: THE STORY OF
THE LAST ‘BLACK CARGO’”**



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu



Photo courtesy of the Erik Overbey Collection, *The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library*, University of South Alabama.

MEET THE FAMILY: CUDJO & CELIE'S CHILDREN

1 DAUGHTER:

EE-BEW-O-SEE (SEELY): 1878 - August 5, 1893
(died of illness)

5 SONS:

YAH-JIMMY (ALECK): Married and had a family, but died shortly after his mother ~1908.

AH-NO-NO-TOE (JIMMY): Died of illness

POE-LEE-DAH-OO: Vanished and never returned when he went off to catch fish in the depths of depression after losing multiple siblings.

AH-TENNY-AH (DAVID): Killed by a train in Plateau.

FISH-EE-TON (CUDJO): Killed by a deputy sheriff ~1887.

WHY DO YOU THINK CUDJO GAVE HIS CHILDREN **TWO NAMES?**

WHAT IS **THE STORY OF YOUR NAME?**

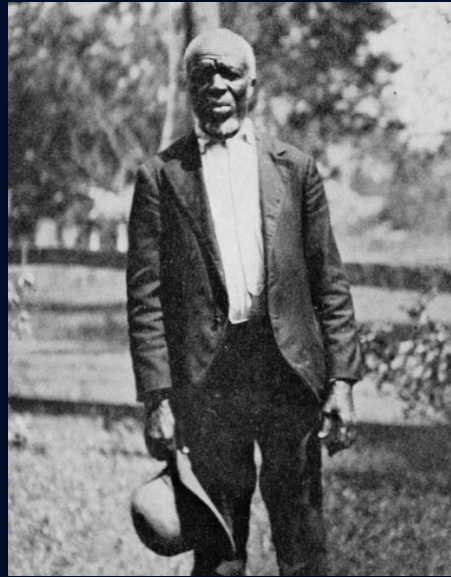
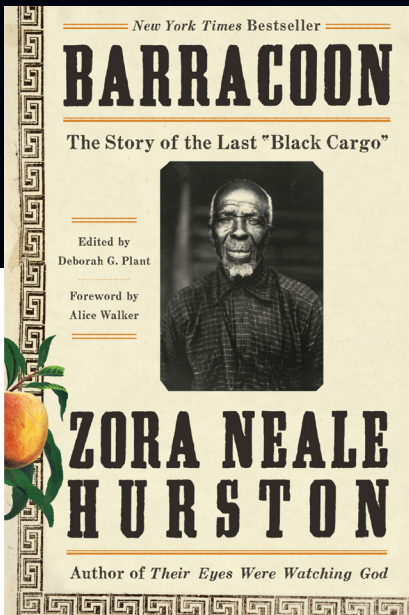


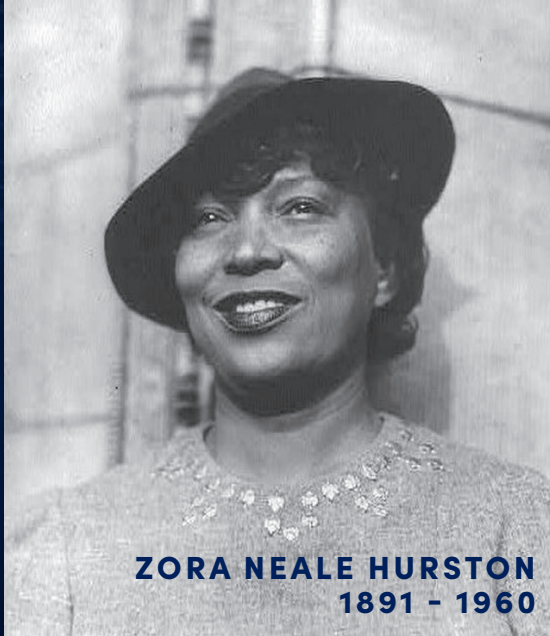
Photo courtesy of Emma Langdon Roche - *Historic Sketches of the South* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1913), Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=73898532>

USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:

"BARRACOOON: THE STORY OF THE LAST 'BLACK CARGO'"



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu



ZORA NEALE HURSTON
1891 - 1960

Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

MEET THE RESEARCHER: ZORA NEALE HURSTON

HOMETOWN: Born in Notasulga, Alabama; grew up in Eatonville, Florida; lived in New York City, with travels in the American South and the Caribbean for research.

MOST ASSOCIATED WITH: The Harlem Renaissance, a literary movement most active from 1919-1929 during which she and Langston Hughes collaborated and published key works.

MOST IMPORTANT WORKS:

- ▶ The novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
- ▶ Collections of folklore gathered from the South, Haiti, and Jamaica.

FUN FACT: Early adopter of the automobile because it allowed her to travel more freely in an era when single women doing so was scandalous.

EDUCATION: Barnard College & Columbia University

WHAT IS A FOLKLORIST?

Someone who practices a specific subtype of anthropology that focuses on studying, collecting, and preserving important cultural objects and social practices associated with the everyday life of a specific culture, such as songs, stories, and rituals.

Photo courtesy Barbara Hurston Lewis, Faye Hurston, and Lois Gaston

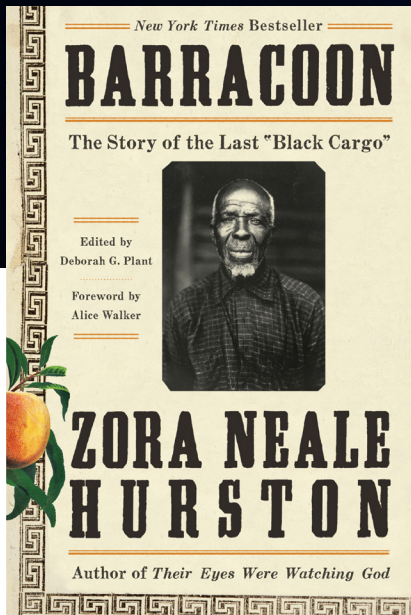


"I WAS SENT TO ASK"

—ZORA NEALE HURSTON

USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:

"BARRACOOON: THE STORY OF THE LAST 'BLACK CARGO'"



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
COMMON READ/
COMMON WORLD



CHARLOTTE OSGOOD MASON
MAY 18, 1854 - APRIL 15, 1946

Photo courtesy of collections of Yale University Library.

MEET THE PATRON:

CHARLOTTE OSGOOD MASON

Charlotte Osgood Mason was an American socialite and philanthropist who came from a wealthy family and then also inherited a great deal more money upon her husband's passing. She contributed more than \$100,000 to African American writers and artists during the height of the Harlem Renaissance (1929-1939—the equivalent of well over \$1 million today!

INTERESTING FACTS: She insisted on being called "Godmother" and at times tried to control or manipulate the works of the writers whose research and art she was funding.

CONNECTION TO CUDJO: After learning about Cudjo Lewis from Zora Neale Hurston, Charlotte Osgood Mason sent Cudjo monthly checks, likely until his death in 1935.

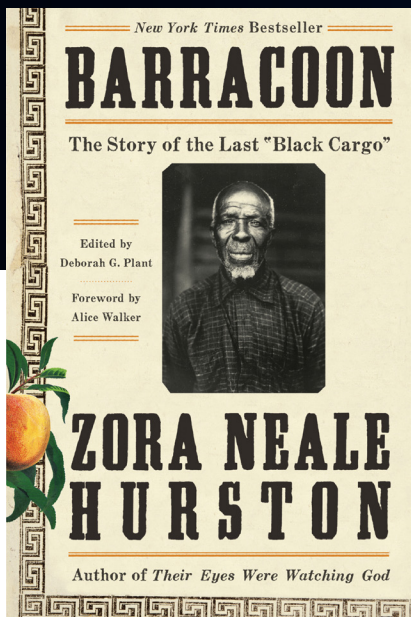
SPONSORED WRITERS:

- ▶ Alain Locke
- ▶ Langston Hughes
- ▶ Zora Neale Hurston

WHAT PROBLEMS MIGHT EMERGE IF AN AUTHOR'S RESEARCH AND WORK IS BEING SPONSORED, FUNDED, AND PATRONIZED BY SOMEONE ELSE?

**USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:**

"BARRACOOON: THE STORY OF THE LAST 'BLACK CARGO'"



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
COMMON READ/
COMMON WORLD



Photo by Gloria Plant-Gilbert.

MEET THE SCHOLAR: DEBORAH G. PLANT

Deborah G. Plant is an independent scholar of African American & Africana Studies, specializing in Zora Neale Hurston.

EDUCATION: BA degree in Fine Arts, Southern University (Baton Rouge), a MA degree in French, Atlanta University, and MA and Ph.D. degrees in English, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

SCHOLARLY WORKS: Editor of *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"* by Zora Neale Hurston; Author of *Zora Neale Hurston: A Biography of the Spirit*, *Every Tub Must Sit on Its Own Bottom: The Philosophy and Politics of Zora Neale Hurston*, and *Alice Walker: A Woman for Our Times*

ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS:

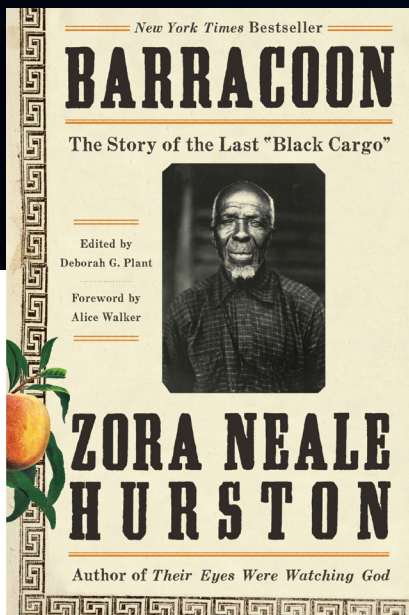
- ▶ Founded the University of South Florida's Department of Africana Studies
- ▶ Chair of Department of Africana Studies for 5 years
- ▶ Associate Professor of Africana Studies and English

HOW DO YOU HELP OTHERS
SHARE THEIR STORIES IN
YOUR OWN LIFE?

WHAT DOES A **SCHOLARLY EDITOR** DO?

USA COMMON READ/COMMON WORLD
2023/24 BOOK SELECTION:

"BARRACOON: THE STORY OF
THE LAST 'BLACK CARGO'"



@USACommonRead
SouthAlabama.edu/CommonRead
commonread@southalabama.edu