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Dictionary of the Alabama Language. By Cora Sylestine, Heather K. Hardy, and Timothy Montler. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993. 768 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

This is the first dictionary of a Muskogean language published in twenty years, and only the second published since the turn of the century. It is the only dictionary of a Muskogean language using a modern scientific orthography. Alabama is one of six languages of the Muskogean family that are still spoken, and one of the smallest, with less than five hundred speakers. Most of its speakers are of middle age or older, but there are some young adult and child speakers. Alabama was originally spoken in what is now the central portion of the state of Alabama; the community is located near the town of Livingston in Polk County, Texas. Like the other Muskogean languages, it received little or no linguistic study until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The dictionary is a collaboration between Cora Sylestine, a native speaker of Alabama, and linguists Heather K. Hardy and Timothy Montler. Although the bulk of the book's design can be attributed to Hardy and Montler, there are clear marks of Sylestine's contributions, primarily in the introduction, which clearly was written for the use of Alabama speakers with only a high school education in English, and in the colloquial English used in the definitions. One other contribution is less pleasing to the linguist: An experienced school teacher, Sylestine wanted all English words used in Alabama contexts to be written with English orthography, rather than spelled as they are pronounced in Alabama. This policy was carried out in the main; however, there are a number of precious examples, primarily proper names, that are written as they are pronounced in Alabama, not as they are spelled in English.

The dictionary consists of four principal sections: (1) introductory material; (2) the Alabama-English dictionary; (3) the English-Alabama findex; and (4) an appendix containing Alabama affixes.

The introductory material is divided into six sections: a preface, an introduction to the dictionary, instructions for using the dictionary, technical information, a list of abbreviations, and sample entries. The first three sections are aimed at a general audience, including speakers of Alabama who have a high school education in English; these sections accomplish their aims very well. The technical information is written solely for linguists and will not be

easily accessible to the reader who does not possess a college education. Nonetheless, it is a very important section, since it contains the only published summary of Alabama grammar currently to be found (Hardy is in the process of writing a grammar of Alabama). Certain linguists may quibble with the way in which grammatical information is set out in this section, but it is internally consistent and agrees with the dictionary itself. The list of abbreviations consists of four sections: (1) abbreviations in the main dictionary; (2) Contributors (Alabama speakers who contributed to the dictionary); (3) text codes (listing Alabama texts from which examples found in the dictionary were drawn); and (4) abbreviations in the appendix (which describe the grammatical function of affixes listed in the appendix). Finally, the sample entries are clear and well organized.

The central and most important part of the work is the Alabama-English dictionary. The dictionary and the finderlist were produced using the computer program "Lexware" developed by Robert Hsu of the University of Hawaii. So far as I can determine, the dictionary is quite full, with at least 40 to 50 percent of the lexical items including an example sentence. These sentences are partly from the texts contained in the list of abbreviations, and partly from elicitation. On three occasions (*hasokbibí*, to be sun-scorched; *ittapanayli*, to weave (the edge of a basket); and *locha*, to be black, dark), the example given with a headword does not contain the word itself but rather a related word; clearly these are minor oversights.

On the whole, the definitions are clear and concise and written in colloquial English. It is apparent that the lexical work on Alabama was begun almost too late, for there are indications of lexical attrition in the language, where the referents of words are no longer clearly understood—a prologue to their being forgotten. This is most apparent in the realm of natural history, especially bird names, where the exact species to which a name refers is no longer known. The following list gives some examples, with cognates in the related Koasati language, spoken in Louisiana, where lexical work began before lexical attrition occurred:

chatcha—small brown bird of winter and spring, poss. brown thrasher or a kind of woodpecker [cf. Koasati *catcá* 'brown thrasher'].

chittoto—little red bird similar to a mockingbird, smaller than a cardinal [cf. Koasati *citotó* 'summer tanager'].

obilli—brown bird the size of a robin [cf. Koasati *obilli* 'purple gallinule'].

okcháhta—small black bird species (about the size of a cardinal) which appear in large flocks [cf. Koasati *okcáhi* 'black-bird'].

okcáchoba—bird species, kind of kingfisher (?) [cf. Koasati *okcácobá* 'anhinga'].

opasaksa—owl species; type of witch [cf. Koasati *opá saksá* 'barn owl'].

salikli—hawk species like a small chicken hawk [cf. Koasati *salikli* 'sparrowhawk'].

watola—type of powerful bird of prey; eagle [cf. Koasati *watolá* 'whooping crane'].

Other interesting cultural and linguistic observations can be drawn from the dictionary—too many to be discussed here.

One alphabetizational quirk of Lexware is a bit distracting: It occasionally splits up semantic groups of items, as on page 106, where *hakchoobi* 'inner ear' is separated from other words derived from *hakcho* by words derived from *hakchomma* 'tobacco' (a separate root). On page 342, a number of phrases based on *oow!* oops! oh my! oh! are separated from their headword by two to seven unrelated words. However, this procedure is typical for dictionaries of European languages and cannot be faulted on grounds of style.

There are very few lacunae in the dictionary, the most notable of which are the lack of negative forms for a number of impersonal verbs, such as *bassi* 'to be poor, destitute' and *tonohki* 'to be round, spherical, circular' and the lack of plural verbs for a few roots, such as *notaktopotli* 'to cross under once' and *onasikopli* 'to tie (one object).' These lacunae can be filled in the next edition of the dictionary.

Finally, the orthography for vowel length, a doubled vowel, is generally adequate for most occurrences of vowel length in Alabama. However, writing of vowel length as vowel gemination obscures the occasions when vowel length acts as a consonant closing a penultimate syllable, which is important in assigning inflectional morphology. In this case, the orthography requires the authors to postulate irregular inflection for verbs of this

nature, even though they are perfectly regular. Often a Koasati cognate will have a consonant cluster that has been lost through phonological change in Alabama, e.g., *okchaaya* 'to come alive' (cf. Koasati *okcáyyan*) and *oofaaya* 'to be shy, timid, ashamed' (cf. Koasati *ofáhyan*).

The English-Alabama finderlist is just that, a list in which English words are glossed by Alabama words. The reader is expected to turn to the Alabama-English dictionary to find the full meaning and use of the Alabama words. One fears that some readers will use the finderlist as an English-Alabama dictionary, which it is not and was never intended to be. Because of the nature of this section, fine distinctions are not made between English homonyms; thus under one entry, *bat*, one can find *bat* the animal, *bat* the tool, and *bat* the quilting material; under *light*, *light* of the sun, *light* of weight, and *light* of taste.

The appendix of affixes will be of great interest to linguists, since it contains a list of nearly all affixes used in Alabama, each with examples, some of them quite extensive. In the Alabama-English dictionary the reader is left to pick out the exemplified word from the example sentence; in the appendix of affixes, the exemplified affix is underlined in the example sentence. Furthermore, the vast majority of examples are taken from natural texts, which enhances their linguistic value.

The work as a whole, like every book produced from camera-ready copy, contains some typographical errors, although these do not interfere with the usefulness of the work. The most important errors are found in the morphological analyses, where -\$chi ought to be -chi¹, and -ka\$ ought to be -ka¹.

In spite of these minor problems, this is an excellent work and will serve as a foundation for the study of the Alabama language in the future.

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An Eagle Nation. By Carter C. Revard. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993. 140 pages. \$35 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

Carter Revard is a gracious, generous poet who has been long-deserving of the extended, book form in which he makes his debut with *An Eagle Nation*. That generosity shines through from the