

The Dixie Dictionary

Tom Howard

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*The Way We Tawk
Down South...*

The Dixie Dictionary

Your complete guide to the Southern Language



Edited by Thomas W. Howard

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Tom Howard : The Dixie Dictionary before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dixie Dictionary:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An interesting collection of Southern words By M. G. SFAELLOUI thoroughly enjoyed reading this dictionary. This is probably the richest collection of Southern words in print. It is true that there are few etymologies provided and the entries are all concise. However, I would much rather have the work as it stands as opposed to having only half the number of entries with a detailed analysis. In fact many of the most interesting entries (i.e. those pertaining to untranslatable concepts) do have a longer explanation. There are many entries contained here which cannot be found in Robert Hendrickson's "Whistlin' Dixie". On the other hand, there are a few entries Hendrickson uses that cannot be found here. Hendrickson also provides a more detailed description of each

entry and perhaps has slightly more toponymous expressions. If you are in doubt as to which dictionary to buy then, if you really love this dialect of American English, I strongly recommend that you buy BOTH. The two important works on Southern speech complement the other and are both reasonably priced. First of all, I would like to say that "The Dixie Dictionary" is extremely rich in folklore entries. For instance, there are fascinating terms like 'belling' (a wedding custom), 'dumb cake' (a cake made in silence and used for fortune telling) and 'infare' (a feast the day after the wedding). There are literally dozens of unique words pertaining to various kinds of legendary monsters such as the 'Bingbuffer', the 'clew bird' and the 'galoopus' etc. There are also words connected with folk healing like 'chamber lye', 'nanny tea' and 'fasting spittle' as well as call words used to command animals (e.g. 'coo-sheep/coon-nan' and 'sukee', etc.). Folk expressions concerning the weather and seasons are also represented in entries like 'blackberry winter' and 'dogwood winter' etc. There are also many terms taken from the Civil War like 'copperhead' (a Northerner/Yankee who sympathised with the South. There are many nicknames e.g. 'Rackensack' (someone from Arkansas) and a 'Cracker' (someone either from Georgia or Florida) etc. in addition to toponymous phrases like the 'Carolina robin' (smoked herring), 'Charsleston eagle' (buzzard) and 'Arkansas toothpick' (bowie knife) etc. Another category of terms which reflects the devout history of the people is the religious terminology like 'amen corner', 'pound' (party for a new preacher), 'toadstool churches' (which grow up as a result of revivals) and 'pokeweed religion' etc. There are also countless terms associated with tobacco, moonshine/whiskey and games like marbles. Several entries do not constitute distinct words as such but rather dialect variants/different pronunciation e.g. 'ovair' (over there), 'leben' (eleven) and 'zactly' (exactly). Talking of the last word 'zactly', dialectologists, will be interested to encounter certain similarities with some West Country British dialects (which often use 'z' in place of 's'). For instance, in the Cornish dialect (many terms of which are derived from an ancient language akin to Welsh not English) I recognised the following entries : 'ashcat', 'cap'n', 'kilt', 'emmet' (meaning ant - in West Cornwall it is 'muryan' yet 'emmet' is used in E.Cornwall and in Devon), 'furmety' and 'rassle' etc. This leads me to postulate that Cornish miners may well have settled in some places in the South. If any fellow-readers would like to purchase a Cornish dialect dictionary then search on this site (there are good dictionaries available by Jago, Phillipps and Ivey). If they are not available in .com then try the .uk branch. As you can probably detect from my review, I found this work most interesting. It is an important contribution to the culture of the South and to dialectology. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Southern Dictionary By Golden Web Colorado A great "Southern" dictionary. The author doesn't add silly examples of the word but instead uses a short example of how the word is used. Very useful and enlightening. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Funny By PFI bought this for a "Northern" friend who makes fun of the way I speak "Southern". It's a pretty funny book

Those who enjoy speaking Southern, or wish they could, will delight in hundreds of regional delights like "abode" (a wooden board), "acknowledge the corn" (to confess), and "pully bone" (wishbone). Includes 4,300 entries and 27,000 words.

From Library Journal Though both these paperback dictionaries are dedicated to the Southern idiom, they are remarkably different in content; a quick cross-check finds many unique entries in each. Written by a Texas native, Southern Tongue, which contains over 1300 words and expressions, provides examples of the word or phrase in a sentence always helpful in this type of dictionary, as it more clearly defines the word for the reader. The Dixie Dictionary, by veteran Richmond Times-Dispatch editor and reporter Howard, does not use examples in its 4300 entries and suffers for it. The definitions in both books are wan at best, which is a shame. Certainly, not every word requires detailed definitions, but these dictionaries capture many colorful and impressive locutions, and it would have been immensely helpful if readers had been given a better feel for that richness. Earlier books that cover the subject include Whistlin' Dixie: A Dictionary of Southern Expressions and You All Spoken Here. Libraries that do not own those titles could address the need for a dictionary-style reference on Southern language with either of these two new books, and inexpensively so. Still, while the average reader may find these of interest, the scholar will find only a scant beginning for research or study here. Manya S. Chylinski, Ernst Young Ctr. for Business Knowledge, Boston Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. Written by a Texas native, Southern Tongue, which contains over 1300 words and expressions, provides examples of the word or phrase in a sentence always helpful in this type of dictionary, as it more clearly defines the word for the reader. The Dixie Dictionary, by veteran Richmond Times-Dispatch editor and reporter Howard, ... capture[s] many colorful and impressive locutions, and it would have been immensely helpful if readers had been given a better feel for that richness. ... Libraries that do not own those titles could address the need for a dictionary-style reference on Southern language ... inexpensively so. Still, while the average reader may find these of interest, the scholar will find only a scant beginning for research or study here. Manya S. Chylinski, Ernst Young Ctr. for Business Knowledge, Boston. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --Library Journal Howards little dictionary actually goes further than merely defining words; it also combines a smattering of regional history and commentary, punctuated tastefully with dashes of dry wit. The books contents run from the useful to the curious, providing an entertaining mix of nostalgic terms of speech native Richmonders heard as

children and an introduction to exotic vernacular from other times and places. --FiftyPlusAbout the AuthorThomas W. Howard has worked as an editor and reporter for the Richmond Times-Dispatch for almost forty years. Currently, he serves as a humor columnist and free-lance writer. Mr. Howard has worked as the Virginia correspondent for McGraw-Hill World News and for Fortune magazine. His book, *Black Voyage*, published by Little Brown in 1971, was ranked as one of that year's ten best juveniles by *The School Library Journal*.