

Some words used in Virgin Islands English Creole, compiled by Sara Smollett, 2011.

Primary sources: Valls, *What a Pistarckle!*, 1981 and <http://cruciandictionary.com/>.

Secondary sources: Seaman, *Virgin Islands Dictionary*, 1967; Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, 1996;

Highfield, *The French Dialect of St. Thomas*, 1979; Emanuel, *Surviving Africanisms in Virgin Islands English Creole*, 1970;

van Rossem, in *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication*, 1996.

ah man - one, first person singular
ahwe, all, a wee, awee, awee own -
we/us/ours, people of our kind
aks - ask (reversal)
alien talk - offisland dialect
alright - greeting, how are you?
all yoh - you and your people, ya'll
an dem - and others, company
an ting - and so on, etc
ants - always plural 'ah ants'
anything to - to be related
apelsina - orange (compare Dutch
'sinaasappel', PR Spanish 'china')
asha - lime preserves (compare
Trinidadian mango preserves 'achar',
Hindi pickle 'achar')
ass pipe - tail pipe of a car (used in a
scratch band)
at all at all - definitely not
(reduplication)
awa - what
ay ay ay - exclamation (compare
Spanish)
baan ya, baan heah - born here, native
(STX and STT variants, STX seen in
print in *St Croix Avis*, 18 Feb 1868)
baba - child, grandchild (compare Twi
'ba', English/Dutch 'baby')
Babylon - the US or the government
(Rastafarian/Biblical reference)
bacalao - saltfish, codfish (compare
Portuguese bacalhau)
back - re, again 'do back', 'open back'
'win back', 'mek back'
back answer - talk back
back back - reverse
bad features, bad hair - non-caucasian
bad marine - unruly person, reference to
US marines during naval rule
Bajan - Barbadian, derogatory
bambai - by and by (compare
Negerhollands 'bambaj', English 'by
and by')
bam bam, bamsie, bana, barna, batty,
baxside, behin, bum - buttocks
bambola, bamboula - lively dance to
drum (compare Yoruba 'bombola')
bambooshay, lamboushay - enjoy
yourself!, revel, dance (esp at carnival,
compare French 'bambocheur', 1954)
bamo - let's go (compare Spanish
'vamos')
bazadee, bazzidy - confused, crazy,
stupid (compare French 'abasourdir')
beel, bile - automobile
belly, breeding - pregnant
berg - hill (compare Dutch 'berg',
Danish 'bjerg')
bes - had better
big big - boastful or pompous person
(reduplication)

big eye - greedy
big wordsin' - using pompous speech
black bread - whole wheat bread
black cake - rich caramelized wedding or
holiday cake
body - person
bomba, bumba - overseer (compare
Negerhollands 'bomba', Fon 'bumba')
brata - something extra added to a
purchase (compare Spanish 'barato')
bragadam, prookootoom - falling
crashing sound (onomatopoeia)
buckra - white man (compare
Negerhollands 'bukra', Ibo 'mbakara')
bush - country, edible plant
caan, cyan - cannot (STT and STX
variants)
cabrita, kabrita - goat (compare
Spanish 'cabra')
cacabeck, cocobay, cocobe - leprosy or
similar disease (compare Twi 'kokobe')
caraf - jug (compare French 'carafe',
Spanish 'garrafa')
carret - sea turtle (compare Spanish
'carey')
catta, cotta, kata - cloth put on the
head for carrying (compare Tshiluba
'nkata')
cha cha - person of French descent,
derogatory
cheese an bread, jeezum bread -
euphemism for exclamation 'Jesus
Christ!')
chook - poke, stab (compare Fula
'jukka', Spanish 'chocar')
chune - tune, song
chupse, chuupse, suck teeth - to suck
ones teeth, expressing irritation or
disagreement (compare African
languages)
clear, clear skin - light black complexion
coki, koki - frog (compare PR Spanish
'coqui')
come go - let's go
como ta - how are you? (compare
Spanish/PR 'como estas')
continental - North American, dates
back to Danish time
coo coo, cucu, kaka - excrement
copa, copasetic - cool
crapo, crappo, krapo - bullfrog
(compare French 'crapaud', French
creole 'krapo')
Crucian - from St Croix
Crucian time - be late
cut eye - disdainful sideways glance
(compare *1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar
Tongue* 'to cutty-eye')
da mek, das wha make - that is why
dan, dan dan - finery, pretty clothes
(compare Yoruba 'dada')

das - that is
day clean - dawn, sunrise (calque,
compare African languages)
de - the, there, they, they're
dem - them, those, pluralizer
directly - shortly, but not immediately
done - already, finished
donkey years - a long time
door mout - door, doorway, entrance
(calque, compare Yoruba 'iloru enu',
Igbo 'onu uzo', Nupe 'eko misun')
draf, draft - cold, sickness
duty up - to soil (compare Twi 'dote',
English 'dirty')
eh eh - interjection of surprise (compare
Twi 'ei eei', seen in print in *St Croix
Avis*, 12 Apr 1844)
fa, foh - modal, of, belonging to, in
order to, to
far far far - very far (reduplication)
fa true, foh true for true - really
fig - small banana (also 'bacuba',
'manatosa')
finish - to be out of
floupe - portmanteau of carnival
float/troupe
flummox - confuse (mid-19th century
English)
foot - leg, any part of the leg (calque,
compare African languages)
fraco, fraico - shaved ice refreshment
(compare PR Spanish 'refresco', also
known as icepop, limbel, lindy, special)
fret - scold, quarrel (compare British
English)
frickadella - meatballs (compare Danish
'frikadeller')
fungee, fungi - cornmeal (compare
Negerhollands 'funtji', African
languages)
ga - to have, got
gade - street (compare Danish 'gade')
gahrot, garrat, garrot, garrote - alien
downislander, Antigua, derogatory
goat mout - jinx, prophetic person (seen
in print in *St Croix Avis*, 1 Nov 1867)
gone - last, e.g., 'Sunday gone'
gingambo - okra (compare Tshiluba
'tshingambo', Spanish 'quingombo',
Portuguese 'quiabo')
gongolo, gungalo - millipede (compare
Yoruba 'gongoluto')
good ting - luckily
gundi, gundy - the large claw of a crab,
a dish of herring or saltfish with
potatoes, etc. served for Good Friday
gut - small stream or stream bed
(compare Dutch 'goot', 'Hindi 'ghaut')
hersown, she own - hers
he self - the one and the same
how yoh mean - certainly

I gone - goodbye
irie - cool (Rastafarian)
it had - there was/were
jam - dance
johnny cake - fried bread
j'ouvert - beginning of carnival
(compare French creole 'jou-ouve')
jumbee, jumbi, jumbie - ghost, spirit,
boogeyman (compare Negerhollands
'jumbi', Bantu 'njambe', Kongo)
jump up - dance, tramp
kalaloo, kallaloo - native soup (compare
Negerhollands 'kallaloo', Twi 'kalalu')
kill devil - rum
kin teeth, skin teeth - grin
learn - teach (compare Irish English)
lick down - knock down intentionally
lime - hang about idly
Love City - St John
lyrics - flirtation sweet talk
manganeel - poisonous tree Manchineel
mash - step on, crash, sugar cane trash
maubi, mauby - drink made from
mauby bark (compare PR 'mabi', likely
Carib origin, in print by Biet 1664)
meain know, me noh no - I don't know
meh - me, my
mehson, me son - nominative address,
not necessarily to a young male
mele, melee, mellee - gossip (compare
French creole 'mele')
mines own, mines - mine
moko jumbee, moko jumbi, moko
jumbie - stilt walker, at Carnival
muddahscunt, muddahskunt - crude
(compare English 'motherfucker')
na - in (compare Ibo 'na')
ngam-nyam, ninyam, nyam, yam, yam
yam - food, eat (compare Twi 'enam'
and other African languages)
nyampe, nyampi - eye mucus (compare
Twi 'aniwampe')
obeah, obiah - witchcraft (compare Twi

'obeye', Ashanti 'obuye')
Old Year's night - New Year's eve
outside chile - illegitimate child
pam pam - spank (onomatopoeia)
pascalam - rowdy party, Easter
shrovetide party (compare Danish
'Fastelavn', English 'pascal lamb'?)
pate - fried meat-filled turnover
patois - French creole language, speaker
peas an rice, rice an peas - dish of rice
and legumes
pear - avocado
pickin' welks, pickin' whelks, pickin'
wilks - wearing very short pants (as
when gathering sea snails)
picknee, pickney - child (compare
Portuguese 'pequenino')
pistacle, pistarckle - boisterous
performance, confusion, stupidity
(compare Negerhollands 'pistarkle',
English 'spectacle'?)
plat - braid (compare British English)
police - policeman ('a police' sing,
'police dem' pl)
potekari - pharmacy (compare Danish
'apotek', Dutch 'apotheek', English
'apothecary')
pumpkin - squash in general (compare
Australian English)
quadrille - old-fashioned French square
dance
quelbe, scratch band - local folk music
(compare BVI 'fungi')
rass - arse, ass
Rock City - St Thomas
roogoodoo - noisy disturbance
(onomatopoeia)
roti - Indian bread, typically filled with
curry (compare Hindi 'roti')
run mout' - gossip
shack shak, shak shak, shek shek -
Flamboyant or Woman's Tongue tree,
rattle from such a tree

skaal - drinking toast (compare Danish
'skaal')
slow up - slow down
stan' - to stay, to behave, to look like,
to be in a state
strong eye - covetous (calque, compare
Twi)
strumoo - scandal, gossip
study your head - think carefully
(calque, compare Yoruba)
strupidness - stupidity
sweet eye - sensual wink (calque,
compare Twi)
sweet mout', sweet mouth - sweet talk
(calque, compare Twi)
talk talk - gossip (reduplication)
taman, tambran - tamarind tree
teef, t'ief - to steal
tree foot - three-legged frame for
cooking over a fire
true true - very true (reduplication)
tutu - conch shell horn
Twin City - St Croix
vex, vex up - annoy, anger, irritate
(compare Irish English)
wa - what, which, who, how much
wa mek - why
wari, warri - African mancala game also
known as oware (compare African
languages)
wa'side, wapah, we pah - where
win', wine - dance, particularly with the
hips
work up, wuk up - dance
yam - root vegetable (compare Twi
'oyam kaude')
yank - to talk in Stateside English, one
who talks so (compare American
English 'Yankee')
zamba - simple bed, small wooden cot
(compare Negerhollands 'zamba',
African languages)