

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, Antiguan, 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 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)