

FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED STATES

Issued from the Collections of the Archive of American Folk Song

46 A. 1. DO, LORD, REMEMBER ME

Sung with banjo by Jimmie Strothers and Joe Lee at State Farm, Virginia, 1936.

2. HOUSE DONE BUILT WITHOUT HANDS

3. OH, THE LAMB OF GOD, THE LORD DONE SANCTIFIED ME

Sung by Joe Lee at State Farm, Virginia, 1936.

B. 1. WE ARE ALMOST DOWN TO THE SHORE

Sung with banjo by Jimmie Strothers at State Farm, Virginia, 1936.

2. SHINE LIKE A STAR IN THE MORNING

Sung by Joe Lee at State Farm, Virginia, 1936. Recorded by John A. Lomax and Harold Spivacke.

BLIND Jimmie Strothers learned his hearty minstrel style of gospel-singing while traveling with a medicine show. Joe Lee sings jubilee songs in truly spiritual fashion. Both have considerable showmanship. In the first selection Joe Lee beats two pieces of wire on the finger-board of the banjo, deftly avoiding the fingers of the player.

For "Do, Lord, Remember Me," see *Spirituals Triumphant, Old and New*, by Edward Boatner and Mrs. Willa A. Townsend (Nashville, Tennessee, 1927), No. 54, and *American Negro Songs*, by John W. Work (New York, 1940), p. 82. For another version of "We Are Almost Down to the Shore" ("Fighting On! Hallelujah!"), see *Jubilee and Plantation Songs* (Boston, 1887), p. 53.

B. A. B.

DO, LORD, REMEMBER ME

CHORUS:

[Oh,] Do, Lord, do, Lord, Lord, remember me,

Do, Lord, do, Lord, oh, Lord, remember me.

Hallelujah!

Do, Lord, do, Lord, oh, Lord, remember me.

Oh, do, Lord, remember me.

1. Oh, when I'm in trouble,
Down on my knees,
When I was in trouble,
Lord, remember me.
Oh, when I'm in trouble,
Lord, remember me,
Lord, do, Lord, remember me.
2. Oh, when I am dyin',
Lord, remember me,
Oh, when I am dyin',
Lord, remember me,
Oh, when I am dyin',
Lord, remember me,
Oh, do, Lord, remember me.

3. Oh, I'm gonna take a little journey,

Lord, remember me.

I'm gonna take a little journey,

Lord, remember me.

Oh, I'm gonna take a little journey,

Lord, remember me,

Oh, do, Lord, remember me.

HOUSE DONE BUILT WITHOUT HANDS

That was Mary and Martha in the garden,

?

Sister Mary took wings of the eagle,
Sailed away to Galilee.

Oh, Mary, may I go out with you?

Oh, Mary, may I go out with you?

Where you goin' up yonder?

House done built without hands.

Up yonder,

House done built without hands.

Who told you?

House done built without hands.

Jesus told me,

House done built without hands.

Walk in,

House done built without hands.

Walk in,

House done built without hands.

Sit down,

House done built without hands.

Sit down,

House done built without hands.

With the Father,

House done built without hands.

And the Son,

House done built without hands.

Talk about

House done built without hands.

Where you from?

House done built without hands.

Oh, Mary, may I go out with you?

Oh, Mary, may I go out with you?

OH, THE LAMB OF GOD, THE LORD DONE SANCTIFIED ME

CHORUS:

[Children,] Oh, the Lamb of God,

The Lord done sanctified me.

Oh, the Lamb of God [Oh, that holy Lamb],

He done sanctified my soul.

1. Let me tell you what some people will do,
The Lord done sanctified me.
Go all about and talk about you,
He done sanctified my soul.
2. Some say silver, some say gol',
The Lord done sanctified me.
But I say Jesus Christ to my soul,
He done sanctified my soul.

WE ARE ALMOST DOWN TO THE SHORE

CHORUS:

Fight on, fight on,
Children, and don't turn back.
We are almost down to the shore.

1. Peter, Peter, on the sea,
Drop your nets and follow me.
We are almost down to the shore.
2. Moses died in the days of old.
Where was he buried, never been told.
We are almost down to the shore.
3. God called Moses on the mountain top.
Praise the Lord, said Moses' heart.
We are almost down to the shore.
4. His commandments in Moses' mind,
Said Moses, "Gonna leave my children behind."
We are almost down to the shore.

SHINE LIKE A STAR IN THE MORNING

1. I John was standing alone one day,
Heard a voice behind him say,
I am Alpha Omega, the first and last
To conquer death in hell did cast.

CHORUS:

Shine, shine, shine like a star in the morning,
Shine, shine all day around the throne of God.
God knows I'm going to shine,
Shine, shine like a star in the morning,
Shine, shine all day around the throne of God.

2. There's what I see right in the book,
For from old death that St. John took
John turned to see that voice repeat.
He begin to tremble, he begin to quake.
3. Then at first he opened, first he said,
He too risen from the dead,
Nailed to the cross and as he fell,
Went through that grave down into hell.
4. Then second he opened, then second he said,
Jesus rose up from the dead,
Right up that road, he said,
God gonna take me from that earthly board.

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47 A. AIN'T NO GRAVE CAN HOLD MY BODY DOWN

Sung by Bozie Sturdivant at Silent Grove Baptist Church, Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1942. Recorded by Alan Lomax and Lewis Jones.

“AIN'T No Grave Can Hold My Body Down” is an excellent example of the intrusion of jazz into Negro religion. In many cases a jazz singer or musician simply carries his art over from secular entertainment into the religious service, where it still partly serves the purpose of entertainment. The song itself illustrates the new kind of gospel song growing out of the union of jazz and religion.

B. A. B.

Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down, my body down.
When the first trumpet sound,
I'll be gettin' up, walkin' round.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down, my body down.
Now when that first trumpet sound,
I'll be gettin' up, walkin' round.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
When I heard of a beautiful city,
The street was paved with gold.
Then I had not been to Heaven.
Oh, Lord, I've been told.
Then I found this throne of grace.
It's gonna 'point my soul a place.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
When that first trumpet sound,
I'll be gettin' up, walkin' round.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
When Jesus was hangin' on the cross,
It made poor Mary moan.
He looked down on His disciples.
“They've taken my mother home.”
Ain't that a pity and dark shame,
How they crucified the Name!
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.
When the first trumpet sound,
I'll be gettin' up, walkin' round.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.

47 B. 1. DOWN ON ME

Sung by Dock Reed at Livingston, Alabama, 1940.

2. CERTAINLY, LORD

Sung by Dock Reed and Vera Hall at Livingston, Alabama, 1940. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax.

“DOWN on Me” has the quality of a man talking to himself, but it speaks for a whole class of those whom the “world is down on.” In a simple baptizing song like “Certainly, Lord” the more formal type of Negro spiritual may be seen in the making.

For the former, see *American Negro Songs*, by John W. Work (New York, 1940), p. 115; for the latter, *Spirituals Triumphant, Old and New*, by Edward Boatner and Mrs. Willa A. Townsend (Nashville, Tennessee, 1927), No. 86.

B. A. B.

DOWN ON ME

CHORUS:

Oh, down on me,
Down on me,
Looks like everybody in this whole round world down on me.

1. One of these mornings, bright and fair,
Hitch on my wings and try the air.
Looks like everybody in this whole round world down on me.
2. Mary and Martha, Luke and John,
All God's prophets dead and gone.
Looks like everybody in this whole round world down on me.
3. Ain't been to heaven, but I been told
Gates is pearl and the streets is gold.
Looks like everybody in this whole round world down on me.
4. God is God, God is God, rain is rain,
God's a man don't never change.
Looks like everybody in this whole round world down on me.

CERTAINLY, LORD

1. [I've been to the pool,]
Certainly, Lord.
I've been to the pool,
Certainly, Lord.
I've been to the pool,
Certainly, Lord,
Ah, certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord.

2. I've been baptized, etc.

3. My mother done told me,
Certainly, Lord,
If I should die,
Certainly, Lord,
A newborn babe,
Certainly, Lord,
A motherless child,
Certainly, Lord.

Ah, certainly, certainly,
Certainly, Lord.

Ah, certainly, certainly,
Certainly, Lord.

Ah, certainly, certainly,
Certainly, Lord.

Ah, certainly, certainly, certainly, Lord.

4. I've been redeemed, etc.

FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED STATES

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48 A. THE MAN OF CALVARY (Easter Day Service)

Spoken by Sin-Killer Griffin, with congregational responses and singing, at Darrington State Farm, Sandy Point, Texas, 1934. Recorded by John A. Lomax.

AFTER the Reverend Sin-Killer Griffin, Negro prison chaplain, had heard the recording of his Calvary sermon played back, he turned and said to John A. Lomax: "Mr. Lomax, for a long time I've been hearing that I'm a good preacher. Now I know it." This remarkable Easter Service points to the origin of all the arts of sound—music, poetry, drama, and oratory—in rhythm. By a similar process, the preacher and his sermon here become one in poetic and dramatic intensity. In order to catch the full beauty and significance of the cadenced prose and the apocalyptic imagery, one should follow the printed text closely.

For a longer version, see *Our Singing Country*, collected and compiled by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, Ruth Crawford Seeger, music editor (New York, 1941), pp. 9–13.

B. A. B.

. . . Roman soldiers come riding in full speed on their horses and splunged Him in the side.
We seen blood and water came out.
Oh-h, Godamighty placed it in the minds of the people
Why the water is for baptism
And the blood is for cleansin'.
I don't care how mean you've been,
Godamighty's blood'll cleanse you from all sin.
I seen, my dear friends,
How the times moved on.
Great God looked down,
He began to look at the temple—
Jesus said to tear down the temple
And in three days I'll rise up again in all sight.
They didn't know what He was talkin' about.
Jesus was talkin' about His temple body.
I seen while He was hanging,
The mounting began to tremble on which Jesus was hanging on.
The blood was dropping on the mounting,
Holy blood, dropping on the mounting,
My dear friends, corrupting the mounting.
I seen about that time while the blood was drop-ping down,
One—drop—after—another,
I seen the sun that Jesus made in creation;
The sun rose, my dear friends,
And it recognized Jesus hanging on the cross.
Just as soon as the sun recognized its Maker,
Why, it clothed itself in sack cloth-ing and went down,
Oh-h, went down in mournin'.

"Look at my Maker dying on the cross."
And when the sun went down,
We seen the moon, that was his Maker, too,
Oh-h, he made the moo-oon,
My dear friends, yes, both time and seasons,
We seen, my dear friends,
When the moon recognized Jesus dying on the cross,
I seen the moon, yes, took with a judgment hemorrhage and bled away.
Good God, looked down.
Oh-h, the dyin' thief on the cross
Saw the moon goin' down in blood.
I seen, my dear friends,
About that time they looked at that,
And when the moon went down, it done bled away.
I seen the little stars, great God, that was there;
They remembered Jesus when He struck on the anvil of time.
And the little stars began to show their beautiful ray of light,
And the stars recognized their Maker dying on the cross;
Each little star leaped out of its silver orbit,
Come to make the funeral torches of a dark and un-benointed world.
It got so dark until the men who was puttin' Jesus to death,
They said they could feel the darkness in their fingers.
Great Godamighty, they were close to one another.
And it was so dark they could feel one another,
They could hear one another talk, but they couldn't see each other.
I heard one of the centurions say,
"Sholy, sholy, this must be the Son of God."
'Bout that time, we seen, my dear friends,
The prophet Isaiah said the dead in the grave would hear His voice and come forward.
They saw the dead gettin' up out of the grave.
On the east side of Jerusalem,
Gettin' up out of the grave,
Walking about,
Going down in town.
Oh-h, 'way over on Nebo's mounting!
We seen the great lawgiver
Got up out of his grave and began to walk about, my dear friends,
Walking because Jesus said it was finished.
We notice, my dear friends,
Here about that time, I shouldn't wonder, my dear friends,
The church will save you when you get into trouble.

I heard the church so many times singing when you get
overwhelmed into trouble.
I heard the church said:
How can I die while Jesus lives?
How can I die while Jesus lives?

48 B. WASN'T THAT A MIGHTY STORM

Sung by Sin-Killer Griffin and congregation at Darrington
State Farm, Sandy Point, Texas, 1934. Recorded by
John A. Lomax.

IN STRUCTURE and style this song about the Galveston
tidal wave is in the tradition of ballads about disasters,
such as the more familiar "Sinking of the Titanic." At
the same time it has the religious setting and flavor of a
song sermon on death, as Sin-Killer Griffin and his con-
gregation point up the awfulness of physical destruction,
with implied spiritual symbolism.

B. A. B.

1. [——— Galveston] with a sea-wall
To keep the water down.
But the high tide from the ocean
Washed water over the town.

CHORUS:

Wasn't that a mighty storm!
Oh, wasn't that a mighty storm with water!
Wasn't that a mighty storm
That blew the people away!

2. Their trumpets give them warning,
"You'd better leave this place."
They never thought of leaving
Till death looked them in the face.

3. The trains they were loaded
With people leaving town.
The tracks give away from the ocean.
The trains they went on down.
4. Death like a cruel master,
As the wind began to blow,
Rode out on a train of horses.
Said, "Death, let me go."
5. Now, Death, in 1900—
That was fifteen years ago—
You threw a stone at my mother.
With you she had to go.
6. Now, Death, your hands is icy,
You've got them on my knees.
You done carried away my mother,
Now come back after me.
7. The trees fell on the island,
The houses give away.
Some people strived and drowned,
Some died 'most every way.
8. The lightning played — ?—
The thunder began to roar,
The wind it began blowing,
The rain began to fall.
9. The sea it began rolling,
The ships could not land.
I heard the captain crying,
"Please save a drowning man."

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49 A. HOLY BABE—PART I

B. HOLY BABE—PART II

Sung by Kelley Pace, Aaron Brown, Joe Green, Matthew Johnson, and Paul Hayes at Cumins State Farm, Gould, Arkansas, 1942. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax.

NUMBER songs, counting either forward or backward, are common in most languages. Most familiar are the counting and counting-out rhymes of children. The present cumulative song is a version of "The Carol of the Twelve Numbers" (often known as "The Dilly Song"). There is a good deal of variation in the symbolism of the twelve numbers, and in the present song their significance has often been lost.

For texts and notes, see "The Twelve Apostles," by Phillips Barry, *Bulletin of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast*, Number 9 (1935), pp. 3-4; "Ballads and Songs," by George Lyman Kittredge, *Journal of American Folklore*, Volume xxx (July-September, 1917), pp. 335-337; "The Carol of the Twelve Numbers," by William Wells Newell, *ibid.*, Volume iv (July-September, 1891), pp. 215-220; and "The Carol of the Twelve Numbers," by Leah Rachel Clara Yoffie, *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, Volume iv (June, 1940), pp. 73-75.

B. A. B.

1. Children, I'm going, I will send [sing] thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee one by one.
Well, one was the Holy Baby,
Was borne by the Virgin Mary,
Was wrapped in the hollow of a clawhorn,
Was laid in a hollow manger,
Was born, born, Lordy, born in Bethlehem.
2. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee two by two.
Well, two was the Paul and Silas,
And one was the Holy Baby, etc.
3. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee three by three.
Well, three was the Hebrew children,
And two was the Paul and Silas, etc.
4. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee four by four.
Well, four was the four come a-knockin' at the door,
And three was the Hebrew children, etc.
5. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee five by five.
Well, five was the Gospel writers,
And four was the four come a-knockin' at the door, etc.
6. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee six by six.
Well, six was the six that couldn't get fixed.
Oh, five was the Gospel writers, etc.
7. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee seven by seven.
Well, seven was the seven came down from heaven,
And six was the six that couldn't get fixed, etc.
8. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee eight by eight.
Well, eight was the eight that stood at the gate,
And seven was the seven came down from heaven, etc.
9. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee nine by nine.
Well, nine was the nine that dressed so fine.
Oh, eight was the eight that stood at the gate, etc.
10. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee ten by ten.
Well, ten was the Ten Commandments,
And nine was the nine that dressed so fine, etc.
11. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee eleven by eleven.
Well, eleven was the eleven riders,
And ten was the Ten Commandments, etc.
12. Children, I'm going, I will send thee.
What shall I send thee?
Lord, I shall send thee twelve by twelve.
Well, twelve was the twelve disciples,
And eleven was the eleven riders,
And ten was the Ten Commandments,
And nine was the nine that dressed so fine,
And eight was the eight that stood at the gate,
And seven was the seven came down from heaven,
And six was the six that couldn't get fixed,
And five was the Gospel writers,
And four was the four come a-knockin' at the door,
And three was the Hebrew children,
And two was the Paul and Silas,
And one was the Holy Baby,
Was borne by the Virgin Mary,
Was wrapped in the hollow of a clawhorn,
Was laid in a hollow manger,
Was born, born, Lordy, born in Bethlehem.

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FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED STATES

Issued from the Collections of the Archive of American Folk Song

- 50 A. 1. MEET ME IN JERUSALEM
2. WHEN I LAY MY BURDEN DOWN
B. 1. IN NEW JERUSALEM
2. STEAL AWAY

Sung with harmonica by Turner Junior Johnson at Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1942. Recorded by Alan Lomax and Lewis Jones.

THROUGH a whimsical mixture of harmonica and voice, the former casually taking up where the latter leaves off, Turner Junior Johnson achieves bizarre effects with his street-corner performance of hymn tunes. On the one hand, he is in the spontaneous, ejaculatory tradition of the revival or camp-meeting singer. On the other hand, he is like any number of self-trained musicians who like to see what they can do with an inexpensive harmonica. The result combines freedom and naturalness with stirring fervor.

B. A. B.

MEET ME IN JERUSALEM

Where the blood washed on a crucified—
I'll meet my mother—well, some place in—

WHEN I LAY MY BURDEN DOWN

CHORUS:
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
When I lay my burden down.
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
When I lay my burden down.

1. I'll see Jesus, hallelujah!
When I —
2. I'm goin' home there to live with my Jesus—
When I lay —
3. I'm goin' meet my lovin' mother —
4. I'm goin' meet my lovin' father —

IN NEW JERUSALEM

1. There's a bright—
There's a bright—
2. My mother, my mother in—

STEAL AWAY

1. My Lord He call me,
He call me by the lightnin'.
Well, the trumpet sounds down in-uh my soul.
Well, I ain't got long to stay here.
2. Dark clouds arising,
Po' sinner stands a-tremblin'.
If he ain't got the love of God in his soul,
Well, he ain't got long to stay here.