



## *Religious Songs of Enslaved African Americans*

selections from W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and L. M. Garrison, eds.

*Slave Songs of the United States*, 1867

Soon after the end of the Civil War, a collection of 136 religious and secular songs of enslaved African Americans was published as *Slave Songs of the United States*, compiled primarily by three white northerners who had gone to the South Carolina sea islands in 1862-63 to work with recently freed African Americans. The collection includes songs documented by the three editors and others throughout the Confederate South.

STATE(S)	NUMBER OF SONGS
South Carolina, Georgia, and the Sea Islands (primarily Port Royal Island, SC)	88
Virginia	13
North Carolina	8
Florida	6
Louisiana	6
Tennessee	5
Maryland	4
Arkansas	3
Delaware	1
New York	1
on the Mississippi River	1
TOTAL	136

The six religious songs presented here emphasize the community bond enhanced among the enslaved by singing. Two were sung at “the breaking up of a [religious] meeting,” two at gatherings for the dead, and two for expressing the desire for freedom (with coded words to hide their meaning from slaveholders).

**28. JINE 'EM.**

On Sunday mornin' I seek my Lord; Jine 'em, jine 'em oh! Oh  
jine 'em, be-lie-ver, jine 'em so; Jine 'em, jine 'em oh!

On Sunday mornin' I seek my Lord;  
Jine 'em, jine 'em oh!  
Oh jine 'em, believer, jine 'em so;  
Jine 'em, jine 'em oh!

—documented in the Port Royal Islands, South Carolina, by C. P. Ware

**60. NO MORE RAIN FALL FOR WET YOU.**

1. No more rain fall for wet you, Hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu  
- lu, No more rain fall for wet you, Hal-le-lu-jah.

1. No more rain fall for [to] wet you, Hallelu, hallelu,  
No more rain fall for wet you, Hallelujah.
2. No more sun shine for burn you.
3. No more parting in de kingdom.
4. No more backbiting in de kingdom.
5. Every day shall be Sunday.

—documented in South Carolina by Captain J. S. Rogers,  
in Col. T. W. Higginson's Regiment (First 33<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry)

## African American Songs documented in South Carolina, ca. 1865

Allan, Ware, and Garrison, eds., *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1867

### 62. GOOD-BYE, BROTHER.

1. Good-bye, brother, good-bye, brother, If I don't see you more;  
Now God bless you, now God bless you, If I don't see you more.

1. Good-bye, brother, good-bye, brother,  
If I don't see you more;  
Now God bless you, now God bless you,  
If I don't see you more.
2. We part in de body but we meet in de spirit,  
We'll meet in de heaben in de blessed\* kingdom.
3. So good-bye, brother, good-bye, sister;  
Now God bless you, now God bless you.

\*Glorious.

Sung at the breaking up of a midnight meeting after the death of a soldier. These midnight wails are very solemn to me, and exhibit the sadness of the present mingled with the joyful hope of the future. I have known the negroes to get together in groups of six or eight around a small fire, and sing and pray alternatively from nine o'clock till three the next morning, after the death of one of their number.

—documented in South Carolina by J. S. R., with  
Col. T. W. Higginson's Regiment (First 33<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry)

### 70. GOOD-BYE.

Good-bye, my brudder, good-bye, Hal - le - lu - jah! Good-bye, sister  
Sal - ly, good-bye, Hal - le - lu - jah! Go - ing home, Hal - le -  
- lu - jah! Je - sus call me, Hal - le - lu - jah! Lin - ger no  
longer, Hal - le - lu - jah! Tar - ry no longer, Hal - le - lu - jah!

Good-by, my brudder, good-by, Hallelujah!  
Good-by, sister Sally, good-bye, Hallelujah!  
Going home, Hallelujah!  
Jesus call me, Hallelujah!  
Linger no longer, Hallelujah!  
Tarry no longer, Hallelujah!

This is sung at the breaking up of a meeting, with a general shaking of hands, and the name of him or her pronounced, whose hand is shaken; of course there is seeming confusion.

—documented in Charleston, South Carolina,  
by Mrs. C. J. Bowen

## African American Songs documented in Florida and North Carolina, ca. 1865

Allan, Ware, and Garrison, eds., *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1867

### 112. MY FATHER, HOW LONG?

My father,\* how long, My father, how long, My father, how  
long, Poor sinner suf-fer here? I. And it won't be long, And it  
won't be long, And it won't be long, Poor sinner suffer here.

My father,\* how long,  
My father, how long,  
My father how long,  
Poor sinner suffer here?

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|---|---|
| <p>1. And it won't be long,<br/>And it won't be long,<br/>And it won't be long,<br/>Poor sinner suffer here.</p> <p>2. We'll soon be free,<br/>De Lord will call us home.</p> | <p>3. We'll walk de miry road<br/>Where pleasure never dies.</p> <p>4. We'll walk de golden streets<br/>Of de New Jerusalem.</p> <p>5. My brudders do sing<br/>De praises of de Lord.</p> <p>6. We'll fight for Liberty<br/>When de Lord will call us home.</p> |
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\*Mother, etc.

For singing this "the negroes had been put in jail at Georgetown, S. C., at the outbreak of the Rebellion. 'We'll soon be free' was too dangerous an assertion, and though the chant was an old one, it was no doubt sung with redoubled emphasis during the new events. 'De lord will call us home,' was evidently thought to be a symbolical verse; for, as a little drummer boy explained it to me, showing all his white teeth as he sat in the moonlight by the door of my tent, 'Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say *de Yankees*.'"

—documented in Florida by G. H. Allen, quoting Col. T. W. Higginson

### 124. THESE ARE ALL MY FATHER'S CHILDREN.

Dese all my fader's children, Dese all my fader's children,  
Dese all my fa-der's children, Out-shine de sun.  
My fader's done wid de trouble o' de world, wid de  
trouble o' de world, wid de trouble o' de world, My  
fader's done wid de trouble o' de world, Outshine de sun.

<p>Dese all my fader's children, Dese all my fader's children, Dese all my fader's children, Outshine de sun.</p>	<p>My fader's done wid de trouble o' de world, wid de trouble o' de world, wid de trouble o' de world, My fader's done wid de trouble o' de world, Outshine de sun.</p>
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. . . [When a leading man of the family dies] his family assemble in the room where the coffin is, and, ranging themselves round the body in the order of age and relationship, sing this hymn, marching round and round. They also take the youngest and pass him first over and then under the coffin. Then two men take the coffin on their shoulders and carry it on the run to the grave.

—as described by a "North Carolina negro," documented by C. P. Ware