

Chapter 1 : Down on Me (traditional song) - Wikipedia

The lyrics are indexed by title and by first line, and a general index provides access to topics, themes, persons, and places. The spirituals are pervasive in Afro-American life, and this collection will be a basic resource for researchers in all aspects of Afro-American culture, religion, and history, and useful, as well, for musicologists.

Spirituals were primarily expressions of religious faith. Some may also have served as socio-political protests veiled as assimilation to white American culture. They originated among enslaved Africans in the United States. Slavery was introduced to the British colonies in the early 17th century, and enslaved people largely replaced indentured servants as an economic labor force during the 17th century. In the United States, these people would remain in bondage for the entire 18th century and much of the 19th century. Most were not fully emancipated until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1865. ^{Suppression of indigenous religion}[edit] This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. August Learn how and when to remove this template message Slaves were forbidden to speak their native languages, and were generally converted to Christianity. With narrow vocabularies, slaves would use the words they did know to translate biblical information and facts from their other sources into song. Forced conversion only worked to a point since church attendance might be required, but control could not extend to thoughts and feelings. Some slaves became Christians voluntarily, either because it helped them endure hardships or because membership may have offered other benefits. In some places enslaved Africans were permitted, or even encouraged, to hold their own prayer meetings. Shouts begin slowly with the shuffling of feet and clapping of hands but the feet never cross because that was seen as dancing, which was forbidden within the church. Drums were used as they had been in Africa, for communication. When the connection between drumming, communication, and resistance was eventually made drums were forbidden. Slaves introduced a number of new instruments to America: They drew on native rhythms and their African heritage. The primary function of the spirituals was as communal songs sung in a religious gathering, performed in a call-response pattern reminiscent of West African traditional religions. Examples include the "call and response" style of preaching in which the speaker speaks for an interval and the congregation responds in unison in a continual pattern throughout the sermon. Speaking in tongues is also a persistent practice, as is "getting happy. In spirituals, there also rose what is known as the "straining preacher" sound where the preacher, during song, literally strains the voice to produce a unique tone. This is used throughout recorded spirituals, blues, and jazz music. The locations and the era may be different; but the same emphasis on combining sound, movement, emotion, and communal interaction into one focus on faith and its role in overcoming struggles, whether as an individual or a people group, remain the same. As Africans were exposed to stories from the Bible, they began to see parallels to their own experiences. The story of the exile of the Jews and their captivity in Babylon, resonated with their own captivity. There is also a duality in the lyrics of spirituals. They communicated many Christian ideals while also communicating the hardship that was a result of being an African-American slave. The river Jordan in traditional African American religious song became a symbolic borderland not only between this world and the next. It could also symbolize travel to the north and freedom or could signify a proverbial border from the status of slavery to living free. The rhythms of Protestant hymns were transformed and the songs were played on African-inspired instruments. Frederick Douglass , himself a former slave who became one of the leading 19th-century African-American literary and cultural figures, emphasized the dual nature of the lyrics of spirituals when he recalled in Chapter VI of his *My Bondage and My Freedom*: I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meanings of those rude, and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle, so that I neither saw or heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones, loud, long and deep, breathing the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirits, and filled my heart with ineffable sadness. The mere recurrence, even now, afflicts my spirit, and while I am

writing these lines, my tears are falling. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conceptions of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds. Free, individualistic whites on the make in a prospering civilization, nursing the American dream, could well have felt their only bondage to be that of sin, and freedom to be religious salvation. The scholars certainly do not make it clear, but rather take refuge in such dicta as: Ex-slaves, of course, inform us differently. The spirituals speak up strongly for freedom not only from sin dear as that freedom was to the true believer but from physical bondage. Those attacking slavery as such had to be as rare as anti-Hitler marching songs in occupied France. But there were oblique references. Frederick Douglass has told us of the double-talk of the spirituals: Canaan, for instance, stood for Canada; and over and beyond hidden satire the songs also were grapevines for communications. Harriet Tubman, herself called the Moses of her people, has told us that Go Down Moses was tabu in the slave states, but the people sang it nonetheless. Within the liberal academy, this dialectical understanding of slave consciousness effectively broke the back of the simplistic Sambo-Revolutionary dichotomy, giving way to a plethora of treatises that examine the ways that slaves mediated the tension between passivity and insurrection see Blassingame, ; Genovese, ; Levine, ; Stuckey, However, studies that examine the role played by music in articulating the concept of freedom have frequently reproduced this problematic binary. This broadly Hegelian-Marxist approach argues that the concrete experience of freedom no matter how limited was only possible because of the existence freedom as an idea, and, conversely, that freedom as an idea was only possible because it was available as concrete experience: Rosamond Johnson presented Spirituals as the only type of folk music that America has. Some spirituals were adapted as work songs.

Chapter 2 : Lord, I Want to Be a Christian | calendrierdelascience.com

Only occasionally does the layout suggest the interplay of call-and-response, leader and chorus, as in "Were You There" (47), despite the statement in the introduction that "the Afro-American spiritual is fundamentally antiphonal in structure, the verse and refrain or chorus being sung alternately" (xx).

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. There has been great debate over the origins of this song. At least three distinct stories have come to varying stages of acceptance by the public. One story is that it originated in the southern coastal regions of the U. Another story comes from the authorship claims of Marvin Frey. Frey has claimed a copyright on the song. The third and most likely story is that it is an African-American spiritual that originated at an unknown date in the American South. This is supported by the existence of a cylinder recording of the song in the American Folklife Center archives in the Library of Congress. The recording was collected in 1927 ten years before Frey claimed to have written it in Georgia by Robert Gordon and was sung by H. A transcription of that recording bears a close resemblance to the song we know today in the structure of the tune and the form and wording of the lyrics. This folksong has become popular all over the world. It was most popular from the 1930s to the 1950s, but its use started declining in the 1960s. There are many stanzas to this song. Most of the other stanzas are on a sad theme: A few are on a happier note: As with many folk songs, there is no single accepted version. It is best sung in unison with little or no accompaniment. The desired mood should determine the tempo. For the subdued stanzas, keep the tempo moderate to slow. For the upbeat stanzas, move the tempo ahead. This song could be used to open a worship service. Tiffany Shomsky, FlexScores are available in the Media section below.

Chapter 3 : Lyrics of the Afro-American Spiritual : Erskine Peters :

Spirituals tell the story of an embattled people, while presenting a theology of salvation. This research collection contains lyrics of spirituals, culled from numerous sources.

This site is devoted to traditional African American spirituals, and some information is given about the early Gospel songs. The parts of this site are: History , how the spirituals change is linked to the History of African American Singers at various periods Composers during and after the slavery period Search gives the lyrics of over traditional spirituals Shop to acquire books and records of spirituals Before The tunes and the beats, before The tunes and the beats of negro spirituals and Gospel songs are highly influenced by the music of their actual cultural environment. It means that their styles are continuously changing. The very first negro spirituals were inspired by African music even if the tunes were not far from those of hymns. Some of them, which were called "shouts" were accompanied with typical dancing including hand clapping and foot tapping. It was a survival of primitive African dance. So, educated ministers and members placed a ban on it. The men and women arranged themselves in a ring. The music started, perhaps with a Spiritual, and the ring began to move, at first slowly, then with quickening pace. The same musical phrase was repeated over and over for hours. This produced an ecstatic state. Women screamed and fell. Men, exhausted, dropped out of the ring Some African American religious singing at this time was referred as a "moan" or a "groan". Moaning or groaning does not imply pain. It is a kind of blissful rendition of a song, often mixed with humming and spontaneous melodic variation. The lyrics before In the early nineteenth century, African Americans were involved in the "Second Awakening". They met in camp meetings and sang without any hymnbook. Spontaneous songs were composed on the spot. They were called "spiritual songs and the term "sperichil" spiritual appeared for the first time in the book "Slave Songs of The United States" by Allen, Ware, Garrison, As negro spirituals are Christian songs, most of them concern what the Bible says and how to live with the Spirit of God. For example, the "dark days of bondage" were enlightened by the hope and faith that God will not leave slaves alone. By the way, African Americans used to sing outside of churches. During slavery and afterwards, slaves and workers who were working at fields or elsewhere outdoors, were allowed to sing "work songs". This was the case, when they had to coordinate their efforts for hauling a fallen tree or any heavy load. Even prisoners used to sing "chain gang" songs when they worked on the road or on some construction project. But some "drivers" also allowed slaves to sing "quiet" songs, if they were not apparently against slaveholders. Such songs could be sung either by only one soloist or by several slaves. They were used for expressing personal feeling and for cheering one another. So, even at work, slaves could sing "secret messages". This was the case of negro spirituals, which were sung at church, in meetings, at work and at home. The meaning of these songs was most often covert. Therefore, only Christian slaves understood them, and even when ordinary words were used, they reflected personal relationship between the slave singer and God. The codes of the first negro spirituals are often related with an escape to a free country. For example, a "home" is a safe place where everyone can live free. So, a "home" can mean Heaven, but it covertly means a sweet and free country, a haven for slaves. The ways used by fugitives running to a free country were riding a "chariot or a "train". The negro spirituals "The Gospel Train" and "Swing low, sweet chariot" which directly refer to the Underground Railroad, an informal organization who helped many slaves to flee. The lyrics of "The Gospel train" are "She is coming Then, "Swing low, sweet chariot" refers to Ripley, a "station" of the Underground Railroad, where fugitive slaves were welcome. This town is atop a hill, by Ohio River, which is not easy to cross. So, to reach this place, fugitives had to wait for help coming from the hill. This difference is interesting to comment. In the Old Testament, the balm of Gilead cannot heal sinners. In the New Testament, Jesus heals everyone who comes to Him. So, in the book of Jeremiah, several verses speak about Gilead. In chapter 22, v. The Lord says about the palace of the king of Judea "Though you are like Gilead to me, like the summit of Lebanon, I will surely make you like a desert, like towns inhabited Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labour". In the same book of Jeremiah, chapter 46, v. Go up to Gilead and get balm, O Virgin Daughter of Egypt, but you

multiply remedies in vain; here is no healing for you". In the New Testament, the four Gospels say that Jesus healed many people whatever their conditions: A Christian who feels the Spirit must share its faith and "preach", like Peter and Paul. Between and The lyrics between and Spirituals were sung at churches with an active participation of the congregation as it is usual in a Pentecostal church. Their lyrics mainly remain similar to those of the first negro spirituals. They were often embellished and they were also called either "church songs" or "jubilees" or "holy roller songs". The various Protestant denominations adopted his hymns, which were included in several hymnals, at that time. Missionaries reported on the "ecstatic delight" slaves took in singing the psalms and hymns of Dr Watts. However, in the early s, Black ministers took seriously the admonition of Dr Isaac Watts: So, homiletic spirituals were created by preachers and taught to the congregation by them or by deacons. During the post-Civil War period and later, some congregation conducted services without hymnbooks. A deacon or precentor set the pitch and reminded the words in half-singing half-chanting stentorian tones. The people called their songs "long-meter hymns because the tempo was very low or "Dr Watts", even if they have not been written by this gentleman. The male voices doubled the female voices an octave below and with the thirds and the fifths occurring when individuals left the melody to sing in a more comfortable range. These beats are usually classed in three groups: An example of such songs is "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot": Swing low, sweet chariot Chorus: Coming for to carry me home Lead: If you get there before I do Chorus: Coming for to carry me home - "Slow and long-phase song" Here are some examples of negro spirituals with a slow, long-phase melody. This concerns spirituals sung at church, by a group not by a soloist. The rhythm of such a spiritual is based on the swinging of head and body. The swaying of the body marks the regular beat, but more or less strict in time. The singer takes the fundamental beat, almost monotonously, with his left hand, while he juggles it with his right hand MP3 "Heaven" by JoAnne Stephenson, acc. Lorna Young-Wright click here Between and , many tunes were arranged as classical European pieces for choirs. Some negro spirituals had been sung during worship services. Here are negro spirituals sung by a congregation during a worship service. MP3 "His eye is on the sparrow", click here Between and The lyrics between and As traditional negro spirituals continued to be sung, new Gospel songs were created. The lyrics of these new songs dealt with praising the Lord, with personal improvement and with brotherly community life. Many of them were inspired by social problems: Sometimes the words of traditional negro spirituals were slightly changed and adapted to special events. They were included in shows like "Tambourine to Glory" by Langston Hughes. This type of singing needs several instruments to accompany the singers who are often assembled in choirs. The music between and Between and , negro spirituals were sung in local communities. Some scientists, such as Alan Lomax and John Lomax, collected them, as they were spontaneous performed. At the same time, composers, such as John W. Work, arranged their tunes. Some of these composers , such as Jester Hairston , were influenced by the Black Renaissance. This means that their arrangements were influenced by the European classic music. After , artists created Gospel songs, which were either "soul" or "hard beat". The number of instruments accompanying singers increased. After Some composers, such as Moses Hogan , arranged traditional negro spirituals. The new Gospel songs created after are of two types. The first type concerns songs, which are for either worship services or special events in churches. The second type includes songs, which are for concerts. They are more or less secular even when they speak of Christian life. This section is organized.

Chapter 4 : Kum Ba Yah | calendrierdelascience.com

Lyrics of the Afro-American Spiritual: A Documentary Collection (The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Black Music) () Hardcover - Be the first to review this item See all 2 formats and editions Hide other formats and editions.

Leave a comment Music has been the lynch pin to worship since the beginning of time. Through the years the Black church has always been a place of refuge, support and direction has always been the faith. The churches and choir masters and leaders have always been charismatic, creative voices who set history aflame with new innovative thinking and challenging growth. Music has always been the key that held our communication system together. During slavery, many slaves were stripped of their African belief systems and typically denied free religious practice, forced to become Christian. Slaves managed, however, to hang on to some practices by integrating them into Christian worship in secret meetings. These practices, including dance, shouts, African rhythms, and enthusiastic singing, remain a large part of worship in the African American church. The African American church focused on the message of equality and hopes for a better future. Some of the greatest Christian Spirituals were in fact born of the drive and communication. Many of them have been performed and interpreted in dance, hip hop, pop and jazz versions. Here is a list of the Greatest 8 Spirituals of All Time. The main chorus is: Wade in the water. The song relates to both the Old and New Testaments. The verses reflect the Israelites escape out of Egypt as found in Exodus: The chorus refers to healing: Crosby in lyrics and William H. Doane in music. It is the plea to be remembered during trials and tribulations and is the cry The main chorus is: The lyrics of the song proclaim the promise of Heaven and the Salvation. It is simply put a praise a worship song based on the Psalm of David Martin and composer Charles H. The song is most associated with actress-singer Ethel Waters who used the title for her autobiography. What is your favorite?

Chapter 5 : He Rose! - Spiritual, arr. Ronald Nelson

This is a well-known negro spiritual, which has an interesting meaning. The "balm in Gilead" is quoted in the Old Testament, but the lyrics of this spiritual refer to the New Testament (Jesus, Holy Spirit, Peter, and Paul). This difference is interesting to comment.

Chapter 6 : African American Songs | Lift Up Your Hearts

AFS L 3: Afro-American Spirituals, Work SongS, and Ballads. ARCHIVE OF AMERICAN FOLK SONG. IIA. 1. TROUBLE SO HARD. 2. CHOOSE YOUR SEAT AND SET DOWN.

Chapter 7 : Top 8 Christian Spirituals Of All Time | Elev8

The following songs originate from the African American community, or are composed, arranged, or written by African Americans. The second list that appears farther down the page is a list of all the songs that appaer in both Lift Up Your Hearts and the Africian American Heritage Hymnal.

Chapter 8 : The Official Site of the Negro Spirituals, antique Gospel Music

We shall overcome, we shall overcome We shall overcome some day Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe We shall overcome some day.

Chapter 9 : WE SHALL OVERCOME Official Site of Negro Spirituals, antique Gospel Music

A spiritual is a type of religious folksong that is most closely associated with the enslavement of African people in the American South. The songs proliferated in the last few decades of the eighteenth century leading up to the abolishment

of legalized slavery in the s.