# Freedom Songs: Selma, Alabama

A Documentary Recording by Carl Benkert Folkways Records FH 5594



FOLKWAYS FH 5594

# Freedom Songs: Selma, Alabama

GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER STEAL AWAY NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN COME BY HERE BERLIN WALL WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED OH, FREEDOM!

IF YOU MISS ME FROM THE BACK OF THE BUS WOKE UP THIS MORNING WITH MY MIND STAYED ON FREEDOM WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PRIZE EVERYBODY WANTS FREEDOM GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY OH, WALLACE

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. R 65-1452 @1965 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE Corp. 701 Seventh Ave., New York City Distributed by Folkways/Scholastic Records. 906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632 GET ON BOARD
AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY TURN ME ROUND
THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE
COME BY HERE
WE SHALL OVERCOME
AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY TURN ME AROUND
OH, WALLACE
WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY

#### SELMA FREEDOM SONGS A Documentary Recording by Carl Benkert FH 5594

#### INTRODUCTION

Those who made the journey to Selma at the time of the march to Montgomery and shared the frustrations and fears of the Black Belt Negro, even if only for a few hours, were privileged to see life in a vital totality never otherwise experienced. Values and purposes became clear and concise as they took their place beside their oppressed brother in the non-violent battle against man's barbarous mistreatment of his fellow man. Through all the events of those days music was an essential element; music in song expressing hope and sorrow: music to music in song expressing hope and sorrow; music to pacify or excite; music with the power to engage the intelligence and even touch the spirit. In these circumstances of tension many freedom songs were adapted or created to suit contemporary situations, ideas or personalities. Names like Al Lingo and Jim Clark came to sound as established in Americana as Casey Jones. Songs like "Berlin Wall", based on "Joshua fit the Battle of Jericho", and "Oh, Wallace" are products of the Selma struggle.

Monday, March 15th. In the morning, a half block from Brown A. M. E. Chapel on Sylvan Street, marchers turned back in the week before were still maintaining their vigil of prayer and song. Here a new march attempt was halted bringing several hundred demonstrators against a hundred or more troopers and police. The tension that followed was broken by Hosea Williams of Dr. Martin Luther King's SCLC staff who led the marchers in traditional spirituals. (Side One, Bands 1, 2) A barricade, tabbed the Berlin Wall, previously set up by the police to define the line of restriction, was now recrected as the singing continued into the day. (Side One, Bands 3, 4, 5) Inside, Brown Chapel was crowded with people from all parts of the country singing before the speeches and prayers marking the death of Rev. James Reeb. (Side One, Bands 6, 7, 8) Afterward Dr. King led them in a march to the Dallas County courthouse placing a wreath at the door.

Tuesday, March 16th. During the day, James Orange, an SCLC worker, directed the group gathered in Brown Chapel in song (Side One, Band 9) later sending them out in pairs to visit homes in the Negro neighborhoods of Selma. It was profoundly impressive to see the visiting clerics, nuns and laymen moving out in all directions, hand in hand with their guides, mostly children, to be personally introduced to people and conditions. Several march attempts in the afternoon were turned back by Sheriff Jim Clark and another in the early evening was stopped and confined just outside early evening was stopped and confined just outside Brown Chapel by Commissioner of Public Safety Wilson Baker. Finally, sitting on the church steps and side-walk, the demonstrators sang forth for hours often with words devised in that moment to speak to the officers and troopers present. (Side One, Bands 10, 11, 12)

Wednesday, March 17th. Two little girls, about five years old, who were frequently in the forefront of the group singing in Brown Chapel, sang alone for this recording. (Side Two, Band 3) Outside in the backyards I had just passed other youngsters engaged in their game "State Trooper" in which half the number lined up, locked arms, and proceeded to march singing "We Shall Overcome", then were set upon and beat down by the others wielding sticks and branches. In situations like these, one must observe the tragedy: that the misdeeds of our immature society are imprinted in the minds of innocent children. innocent children.

Thursday, March 18th. In the Zion Methodist Church of Marion, where Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed, an evening mass meeting was attended to overflowing by evening mass meeting was attended to overflowing by residents and visitors who had spent the day working in the counties north of Selma. (Side Two, Bands 4, 5) Participating in "We Shall Overcome" is always a moving occasion for the spirit, but this was for the few outsiders present the most powerful and electrifying yet experienced. The meeting was reluctantly dismissed by Al Turner but the enthusiastic young folks stayed on to sing with big James Orange. (Side Two, Bands 6, 7) with big James Orange. (Side Two, Bands 6, 7)

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ALL PHOTOS BY TOSHI SEEGER



"OH WALLACE"

#### SIDE ONE:

"Let's sing a song we truly understand and believe in...."

#### Band 1.

#### (a) GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU

God will take care of you Through every day all the way He will take care of you God will take care of you. Repeat

#### (b) CLIMBING JACOB'S LADDER

We are climbing Jacob's ladder (3x) Soldiers of the cross

Every rung goes higher, higher Soldiers of the cross

(3x)

Do you think I'll make a soldier Soldiers of the cross.

(3x)

# Band 2. (a) STEAL AWAY

Steal away, steal away to Jesus Steal away, steal away home I ain't got long to stay here

(REFRAIN)

My Lord, He calls me
He calls me by the thunder
The trumpet sounds within my soul
I ain't got long to stay here.
Refrain

"Here's another one that we used to sing on the farm back down in the red hills of Georgia that I learned to love at an early age... the song of a sharecropper. And it was this one...."

#### (b) NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen Nobody knows but Jesus Nobody knows the trouble I've seen Glory hallelujah.

# Band 3. COME BY HERE

Come by here, my Lordy, come by here (3x) Oh, Lord, come by here. Refrain

Wallace needs you, won't you come by here (3x)
Refrain

We need you, Lordy, won't you come by here (3x) Oh, Lord, come by here.

# Band 4, BERLIN WALL

(We're gonna break this Berlin Wall, Berlin Wall, Berlin Wall We're gonna break this Berlin Wall in Selma, Alabama.)

We're gonna stay here 'til it fall, 'til it fall, 'til it fall, 'til

We're gonna stay here 'til it fall in Selma, Alabama.

Alabama.

Hate is the thing that built that wall, built that wall, built that wall, Hate is the thing that built that wall in Selma,

Love is the thing that'll make it fall, make it fall, make it fall,

Love is the thing that'll make it fall, in Selma, Alabama.

We're gonna stand here 'til it fall, 'til it fall,
 'til it fall,
We're gonna stand here 'til it fall in Selma,
 Alabama.

Band 5.

WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

Tell Mayor Smitherman, we shall not be moved (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water Oh, we shall not be moved.

(REFRAIN)

All the state troopers, we shall not be moved Refrain (2x)

Tell Governor Wallace, we shall not be moved Refrain (2x)

We love everybody, we shall not be moved Refrain (2x)

Tell Jim Clark, Lord, we shall not be moved Refrain (2x)

We shall not, we shall not be moved Refrain (2x)

On our way to the courthouse.....

# Band 6. OH, FREEDOM!

Oh, freedom, oh, freedom, oh, freedom over me, over me,
And before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free.

No more Jim Crow, no more Jim Crow, no more Jim Crow over me, over me, And before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free.

### Band 7. IF YOU MISS ME FROM THE BACK OF THE BUS

(If you miss me from the back of the bus)
You can't find me nowhere
Come on up to the front of the bus
I'll be riding up there, (3x)

Come on up to the front of the bus I'll be riding up there.

If you miss me from the Berlin Wall
You can't find me nowhere
Come on over to the courthouse
I'll be standing right there (3x)

Come on over to the courthouse I'll be standing right there.



ROUTE 80

Band 8.

WOKE UP THIS MORNING WITH MY MIND STAYED ON FREEDOM

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom (3x)

Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah,

Walkin' and talkin' with my mind stayed on freedom (3x)
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.

Band 9

(a) WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY

Which side are you on, boy, which side are you on, everybody
Which side are you on, boy, which side are you on?

(REFRAIN)

Don't 'tom' to Mr. Charlie, don't listen to his lies Us black folks, we ain't got a chance unless we organize. Oh, Refrain

My daddy was a freedom fighter, and I'm his freedom son I'll stick to this freedom fight, until every battle's won. Oh, Refrain

#### (b) KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PRIZE

Paul and Silas was bound in jail
Had no money for to go their bail
Keep your eye on the prize, hold on, why don't
you hold on
Hold on, hold on,
Keep your eye on the prize, hold on, why don't
you hold on,

Paul and Silas began to shout
Cell doors open and they walked out
Keep your eye on the prize, hold on, why don't
you hold on
Hold on, hold on,
Keep your eye on the prize, hold on, why don't
you hold on.



Band 10. EVERYBODY WANTS FREEDOM

> (Freedom) Everybody wants freedom, Everybody wants freedom, freedom, freedom

LBJ wants freedom LBJ wants freedom LBJ wants freedom, freedom, freedom

Band 11. Freedom! Now! (Chanting)

Band 12.
(a) GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Go tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere Go tell it on the mountain To let my people go. (REFRAIN)

I would not be Mr. Baker, I'll tell you the reason why
I wouldn't be pleasing my maker, and I couldn't get ready to die.
Refrain

I would not be Al Lingo, I'll tell you the reason why
When my Lord calls to go up to heaven, it might be bingo
Refrain

I would not be a posse man, I'll tell you the reason why
I'm afraid my Lord might call for me
And I couldn't get ready to die,
Refrain

I would not be an Uncle Tom, I'll tell you the reason why Because an Uncle Tom just ain't nowhere In these new Freedom songs. Refrain

I would not be Sheriff Clark, I'll tell you the reason why
I'd be ashamed to walk in the non-violent army
Even after it got dark,
Refrain

#### (b) WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY

All you freedom lovers, good news to you I tell, Of how the freedom fighters came into your town to dwell,

Oh, which side are you on, boy, which side are you on,
Which side are you on, boy, which side are you on?

(REFRAIN)

Oh, listen, Mr. Baker, you're standing in the way Oh, we'll sit here all night long until the break of day. Refrain

Oh, listen, State Trooper, go get your night stick Because we've got enough heads to hit, and we'll take every lick. Refrain

Just go and get your horses, bring your cans of gas We'll be here and die like men, until the very last. Refrain



SIDE TWO:

IN LINE FOR MEALS

Band 1. OH, WALLACE

(Well, I read in the paper, just the other day) That the freedom fighters were on their way They're coming by bus, and airplane, too They'll even walk if you ask them to.

Oh, Wallace, you never can jail us all
Oh, Wallace, segregation's bound to fall.
(REFRAIN)

Now I'm no preacher, but I can tell You've got to straighten up or you're bound for hell

You can tell Wilson Baker and Al Lingo (head of State Troopers)

That the people in Selma won't take no mo'.

Refrain

Well I've never been to heaven, but I think I'm

That the people in heaven are both black and white

You can tell Jim Clark and Al Lingo That the people in Selma won't take no mo'. Refrain

Well, this is the message I wanna you to hear You know I want our freedom and I want it this year

So you can tell Jim Clark and all those state guys, too

I'm gonna have my freedom, they can rope if they wanna. Refrain

Got to have those troopers
His name is Joe (Smitherman, Mayor of Selma)
But you tell Joe, we're gonna beg no mo'
We're tired of his mess, we're tired of his jive
We want our freedom in '65.
Refrain

Band 2. GET ON BOARD

It'll be carrying, carrying, carrying freedom fighters, fighters, fighters (3x)
Get on board, get on board.

It'll be killing, killing, killing, segregation, -gation, -gation. (3x) Get on board, get on board.

It'll be carrying, carrying, carrying all God's ministers, ministers, ministers (3x) Get on board, get on board.

Band 3.
AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY TURN ME ROUND

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round, Oh, Lord, turn me round, turn me round Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round

I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin', marching up to freedom land. (REFRAIN)

Ain't gonna let no tear gas turn me round, Oh,
Lord, turn me round, turn me round
Ain't gonna let no tear gas turn me round
Refrain

Ain't gonna let no horses turn me round, Oh Lord, turn me round, turn me round Ain't gonna let no horses turn me round Refrain

Ain't gonna let George Wallace turn me round, Oh, Lord, turn me round, turn me round Ain't gonna let George Wallace turn me round Refrain

Band 4.
(a) THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

God gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine (3x) Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

(b) WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY

Refrain

Which side are you on, boy, which side are you on,
Which side are you on, boy, which side are you on?

(REFRAIN)

Come all you freedom lovers, good news to you I tell,
Of how the freedom fighters came into your

Of how the freedom fighters came into your town to dwell.

Refrain

Come all you faithful children, lift you your voices and sing,
Will you follow the Citizen's Council or
Martin Luther King?

My daddy was a freedom fighter, and I'm his freedom son I'll stick to this freedom fight, until every battle's won. Refrain (c) Freedom! Now! (Chanting and handclapping)

#### (d) COME BY HERE

Come by here, my Lordy, come by here (3x) Oh, Lord, come by here.

(REFRAIN)

People are begging, my Lord, come by here (3x)

People are suffering, Lord, come by here (3x) Refrain

People are dying, my Lord, come by here (3x) Refrain

#### Band 5.

#### WE SHALL OVERCOME

We shall overcome, my Lord, we shall overcome, my Lord, We shall overcome some day

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

(REFRAIN)

We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace, We shall live in peace some day Refrain

God is on our side, God is on our side, God is on our side today Refrain

(Hum one stanza during Benediction prayer) Refrain

We are not afraid, we are not afraid, We are not afraid today Refrain

We shall overcome, we shall overcome, We shall overcome some day Refrain

#### (a) AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY TURN ME AROUND

Ain't gonna let no tear gas turn me round, turn me round, turn me round Ain't gonna let no tear gas turn me round

I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin', marching up to freedom land. (REFRAIN)

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round, turn me round, turn me round
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round

Ain't gonna let George Wallace turn me round, turn me round, turn me round, Ain't gonna let George Wallace turn me round Refrain

(b) Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!

#### (c) OH, WALLACE by James Drange

People in Selma are going to heaven Listen Sheriff Clark, you can hear this plea You can lock us in the house, you can throw away the key

Oh, Wallace, you never can jail us all Oh, Wallace, segregation's bound to fall. (REFRAIN)

You can push me around, you can throw me away But I still want freedom and I want it every day The people in Marion are here to stay And you can tell those people, we will demonstrate. Refrain

# Band 7. WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON, BOY

All you freedomlovers, you know what I think Will you follow the non-violent army of Martin Luther King?

Which side are you on, boy, which side are you Which side are you on, boy, which side are you (REFRAIN)

Oh, brother, how do you stand it, Oh, tell me how you can Will you be an Uncle Tom or will you be a man? Refrain

Don't 'tom' to Mr. Charlie, don't listen to his Us black folks we haven't got a chance, unless we organize. Refrain

They say old George Wallace, he is a mighty mean man, Once we get together, boys, we'll take it out of his



# BROTHERHOOD

### FOLKWAYS RECORDS

# THE NEGRO

FD5252 AMERICAN NEGRO SONGS FROM SLAVERY TIMES: (1619-1865) Sung by Michel La Rue. Link O'Day, I Just Come From The Fountain, Po' Mourner, You Gonna Reap Just What You Saw, Ain't That Good News, IStood On The River, Certainly Lawd, Railroad Bill, On The River, Certainly Lawd, Kailroad Bill, Children's Game Songs, Git Up, Chillums, Go To Sleep, This Little Light of Mine, Easy Rider, I Shall Know Him, My Lawd's Gitting Us Ready, One Morning Soon, Get Right, Stars Begin To Fall, Better Day A-Coming, Salagandou, Step This Way, Pm In Trouble, Salagandou, Step This Way, Pm In Trouble, Stand Still, Jordan, Do' Lawd, Remember Me, Trouble, Gwine To Alabamy, Come & Go With Me To My Father's House, Before The Sun Goes Down, How Come Me Here? March On. Notes feature background of American Negro 

FE4500 NEGRO MUSIC OF AFRICA and FE4500 NEGRO MUSIC OF AFRICA and AMERICA, edited by Harold Courlander. Recorded in Africa and the New World, including South Africa, (Zulu), French Equatorial Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Zanzibar, Eritea, Ethiopia, Brazil, Columbia, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Trinidad and the U.S. Selections include recordings made by Melville J. Herskovits, Ricardo Alegra, etc. Notes by Harold Courlander and Richard A. Waterman.

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Player, Aunt Jane Allen, Philadelphia; CLAUDE McKAY: North and South, The Spanish Needle, The Tropics in New York; New York, Home Thoughts, Spring in New Hampshire; ARNA BONTEMPS: Dark Girl, Miracles; WARING CUNEY: Troubled Jesus, No Images; WESLEY CURTRIGHT: Heart of the Woods; GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON: My Little Dreams; FRANK HORNE: To James; TRADITIONAL: Did You Feed My Cow? Bedbug, Precious Things, I'm a Round-Town Gent, Take Yo' Time Miss Lucy. Com-

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