

BLACK MUSIC IN THE MARITIMES

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This paper is the result of a study of Black Nova Scotian folk music undertaken during the summer of 1969 as part of a larger ethnographic study of Black communities in Nova Scotia.¹ A research assistant and I spent two months in surveying approximately 30 Black communities in the province. As part of the survey, we inquired into the presence of music and the oral tradition. In all, we were able to tape about twelve hours of music in five different communities. (See Appendix for some examples.) We found two small groups of religious singers, and one modern singing group which included spirituals in its repertoire. Sunday church services also include some spirituals in addition to their regular hymns. We found only a few stories, tales, and legends.²

One of the most surprising results of this study is the apparent dearth of folk music in these communities. With the exception of the few groups noted above, we found very little evidence of an active viable folk-music tradition. This is indeed surprising in view of the vital importance attached to music in all other Black communities in the New World.³ One has only to look at the mass of spirituals produced by American Blacks, and the origins and development of the blues and jazz in the American tradition which has for many years permeated every level of popular music in North America. In the Caribbean area, there is a rich tradition of singing at work, play, and on all social occasions, culminating in the development of the Calypso and steel-band music. In Latin America too, Black groups in Brazil and elsewhere are known for the vibrancy of their musical tradition. One immediately wonders why a folk and particularly a religious musical tradition is not found in Nova Scotia. This paper, therefore, is an inquiry into the possible reasons why a viable folk tradition either did not survive among Nova Scotian Blacks or did not develop there. In posing these questions we are immediately faced with a problem of some historical complexity. Our survey indicates that there is no strong musical tradition in these communities today. But what of the past? And, more specifically, what sort of musical tradition did these migrants come from — what did they bring with them? The few historical studies which have been done were not concerned with cultural traditions and the latest work by Winks gives no clear indication of the kind of culture the Black refugees or their earlier Loyalist predecessors came from. There is little if any mention of music in his work or those written about the religion of the Nova Scotians. Historical studies of the 19th-century slave life in the Chesapeake Bay region from which the majority of the migrants originated are likewise unconcerned with music and folklore. We are therefore making

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²See A. H. Fauset, *Folklore From Nova Scotia*. (Memoirs, American Folklore Society. Volume 24, 1931). This earlier study found little in the way of a musical tradition.

³See, for example, Charles Keil, *Urban Blues*, (University of Chicago Press, 1966).

the assumption that both loyalist and refugee migrants originated in a culture in which music and particularly folk and religious music played an important role. (A study as early as 1867 suggests the feasibility of this assumption.)⁴ A recent and very detailed study of Black American music by Dr. E. Southern provides yet further evidence that our assumption is correct. As early as the 18th century, slaves in the southern colonies were singing songs of their own composition as well as religious songs, particularly those compiled by Dr. Watts whose "psalms and hymns, so beloved of slaves, were published in colonial editions as early as 1729 and 1739."⁵ Dr. Southern's study also emphasizes the integral relationship between the Black church and the musical tradition.

Three factors may, in part, explain why a musical, folk cultural tradition has not survived in this group: (1) the scattered waves of migration which produced the Black population of Nova Scotia, (2) the isolation and marginality of these communities, and (3) the historical development of religion and its role today.

1. History of The Black Communities

The Black population of Nova Scotia today is the result of several migratory streams.⁶ In the first instance, the United Empire Loyalists fleeing the United States after the War of Independence brought their Black slaves with them. Some free Blacks called "Black Pioneers" also entered Nova Scotia at this time. Another war, that of 1812, brought shiploads of a new stream of Blacks, called the "refugees" from the Chesapeake Bay area. They came as a result of a proclamation by the commander of the British fleet that any resident who came to a British ship would be given free transportation to a British possession in North America. Slaves, mainly from Maryland and Virginia, were taken to Nova Scotia. At least 5,000 came during this period and a continuing stream of refugees in 1814 increased their numbers. In addition, fugitive slaves came into Canada between 1830-69 and particularly after 1850 when the American government passed the repressive Fugitive Slave Act. Some of the latter also found their way into the Maritimes; others moved into Ontario and Western Canada. In the 20th century, small groups of Blacks came into Canada. Barbadians were called to the mines in Cape Breton around the turn of the century and their descendants form a substantial part of the Black communities in Sydney and Glace Bay. Of greatest interest in terms of the problem of the survival of folk traditions are the Loyalist groups and particularly the refugee Blacks who populated the province in the early 19th century.

From their arrival, penniless, demoralized, and products of an exceedingly brutalized slave system, these refugees became and continued to be wards of the state. They were untrained and, unlike the earlier group who had accompanied the Loyalists, they had, in the main, been field hands without the benefits of civilized domesticity. They were ignorant, unused to either

⁴W. F. Allen, *Slave Songs of the United States*, (N.Y. 1867).

⁵E. Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, (Norton & Co., N.Y. 1971), p. 59.

⁶R. Winks, *Blacks in Canada*, (Yale University Press, 1971).

independent agriculture or the cold climate of the Maritimes. In addition, they arrived at a time when local white labor was abundant and cheap. Much of the good land in the province had already been allocated. Land allotted to the refugees was often the worst, being rocky and infertile. Under these very trying social and economic conditions, the refugees remained apathetic and became increasingly demoralized. Petty thievery, fighting, and internal bickering took place in the Halifax and the Preston area. Many became itinerant beggars. By 1814, it was decided to attempt a dispersal scheme to settle families of Blacks throughout the province as a way of establishing independent communities and at the same time breaking up the growing urban ghetto in Halifax and the large population in the Preston area. Small lots of land of ten acres were allotted to some families. This ambitious scheme failed in part because of the inadequacy of the supplies and rations provided by the government and also the ineptitude of the refugees to settle into a new agricultural life. Attempts were made to transport some Blacks to Trinidad and a small group left the province for the Caribbean. Most refused to go, however, because they feared that removal would mean a return to slavery in the West Indies. As a result of these failures the refugees continued to be public wards receiving small annual grants for over four decades. By the mid 19th century, small groups moved from Halifax county into the interior, settling the isolated communities we know today. Schooling was, of course, inadequate since most communities did not qualify for a school. As a result, they remained in their state of illiteracy. Most refugees were Baptists and apparently clung to their religion in the absence of all else. The history of the refugee settlement throughout the first half of the 19th century is one of untold misery and starvation. Their lack of success in farming poor rocky land led them to lumbering and they quickly denuded the forest cover. They were afraid of being moved and they became increasingly demoralized. The patterns crystallized in the 19th century and for the next seventy odd years, the Black communities lived alone and neglected in their isolated communities. Historical accounts of the standards of living and general life style of these people do not mention a folk culture. The word "miserable" is frequently applied to them and we may conclude that whatever folk culture they came with from Virginia and Maryland was quickly eroded and did not survive the gruelling period of adjustment to their new surroundings.

2. Isolation and Marginality

The Blacks settled in Halifax county, in the city and in Bedford Basin (to become Africville), the Preston area, some twelve miles out of Dartmouth, and Hammonds Plains. Later, small groups retreated inland to Pictou, Tracadie, Digby, etc., forming the bases of these communities today. The isolation of these latter groups was severe – including isolation from white neighbors who despised them and would have nothing to do with them. Even in Halifax, the Blacks lived isolated and segregated lives. This pattern of segregation was, of course, enforced by the lack of mobility open to them. Their white neighbors moved when their crops failed but the Blacks, who did not hold clear title to their land ("tickets of occupation rather than direct

ownership")⁷, were afraid to move. Their skin color and the image of ignorance, which their lowly condition had inspired, set them apart as objects of discrimination. They resisted the province's attempt to resettle them in smaller groups elsewhere. They preferred to work at odd jobs near the capital rather than persist at farming, lumbering, and fishing. In social, economic, and cultural terms, such isolation produced underorganized and very marginal communities whose interaction at any level with other groups was minimal. Today, many of the Black communities are still isolated and lie well off the beaten track. In the U.S., constant contact between Blacks and Whites influenced the development of both cultures. These populations were shut off from centres where new ideas, stories, music, or songs might have been learned. The government neglect in providing social, medical, and, above all, educational facilities, which are even lacking in some of the communities today, lends weight to this factor. Given the abject demoralization of these communities throughout the 19th century, incentives to create in terms of music and folk art must also have been lacking.

The probability of interaction with any of their white neighbors was extremely low. The Acadians, among the first settlers in the province, lived in isolated communities themselves and were further cut off by their adherence to the Catholic faith and the French language. The English, Germans, New Englanders, and Scots who settled in the 19th century were, in the main, farmers who established themselves in small rural farming communities, often surrounded by uncleared forest areas. A sense of closeness pervaded these communities such that they were not overly friendly to outsiders in any case, much less Black ones. The economic hardship of the province in the mid-19th century and the lack of industrialization led to the migration of young people out of the province leaving the staid, conservative, and slow to change behind.⁸ The Blacks, even if they had desired contact, were thus virtually cut off from any other groups who might have become role models and opened their community life to a new set of influences.

3. The Role of Religion

Previous studies of New World Black communities elsewhere have indicated that the church has traditionally played an important role in the lives of the people. Churches, sects, and cults of all kinds pervade the Black community. While the Baptist and Methodist faiths are common, numerous independent sects of a basically fundamentalistic or "shouting" variety abound. Cult groups led by charismatic leaders are also common. The Black church is usually oriented to the individual emotional experience and shouting, dancing, singing, speaking in tongues, and other manifestations of the Holy Spirit are part of the church service. The service itself is usually led by a charismatic preacher and music, bells, tambourines, piano, organ, and other rhythmic instruments play an important role. Services are held at least twice weekly and frequently bible reading, prayer sessions, and choir practice are also held throughout the week. The subservient mystical dependency on the Lord and Heaven has always pervaded Black religious life and the notion

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ G. G. Campbell, *A History of Nova Scotia*, (Ryerson Press, 1948).

that the after-life will provide the rewards that are denied in the here-and-now was one of the most important values taught in Black churches all over the New World.

One of the important effects of this religiosity has been to stimulate the development of a folk-music tradition springing from its religious source. It is the music of the Black church — whether soulful, mournful hymns or quick-paced rhythmic and syncophonic spirituals in which the essence and philosophy of life is uncovered. The richness of the music tradition in Black areas of the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America can be traced to the importance of the church and subsequently the major role of music and songs in the church service.

Neither the music nor the traditional importance of the church was maintained in Nova Scotia.

The early Black Loyalists settlers were, as their masters, Anglicans and Presbyterians, but the more numerous refugees who followed them were Baptists. By 1844, almost all remaining Anglican Blacks became Baptists. Their religion, if reports of the early 19th century can be trusted, was clearly fundamentalistic in nature. One William Nisbett, an Anglican, put in charge of a church group in Preston, reported that the Blacks were superstitious, mad, ridiculous, and given to “monstrous absurdities that they believe, and substitute in the place of religion.”⁹ He was also opposed to their insistence on “experiencing God.” Thus, Black churches in the 19th century appeared to be both numerous and of a “shouting” emotionally-oriented fundamentalistic variety. The exposure of the migrants, even if limited, to the camp meetings of the turn of the century with their emphasis on spiritual singing and expressive behavior was instrumental here. Neither of these characteristics are to be noted in the churches today. The organized Baptist church seems to play a much less important role than in other New World Black communities and the religious service is not characterized by emotional experimental fundamentalism. Far more hymns than spirituals are sung during an average service. There is no shouting, rolling, speaking in tongues, public confession, or any of the other features of fundamentalism. The church does not in any real sense provide a value system for its adherents. Generalized religion and a deep belief in God, however, are quite characteristic and religion is important on a personal, individual level. Nevertheless church attendance is low. There is religiosity but without necessarily the benefit of the organized church.¹⁰

We hypothesize that somewhere in the middle of the 19th century a crucial change occurred within the Black church; such that the Baptist churches changed their emphasis away from fundamentalism and towards a standard denominational Baptism. Perhaps one of the most important factors which influenced this change was the general decline of fundamentalist evangelism in the province which affected Blacks as well as whites.¹¹

We have already noted that religious life among the early Blacks was of a

⁹Winks, p. 138.
¹⁰D. Clairmont and D. Magill, *Africville*, (McClelland and Stewart, 1974). They report that membership and church attendance in the Africville church, one of the most viable of all the Black churches in the Province, was small.

¹¹S. P. Clark, *Church and Sect in Canada*, (University of Toronto Press, 1948).

fundamentalist or revivalist type. In this, they were not alone. Towards the end of the 18th century, a wave of evangelicism called the "Great Awakening" swept the province under the leadership of Rev. Alline who called his movement "The Newlight Movement." It successfully eroded the Congregational church as great numbers of converts, including Blacks, were converted to the new faith. Amongst the Loyalists, there were several Baptist evangelists, including a Black man – David George – who was a colleague of Rev. Alline. These sect movements emphasized revivalism – they held camp meetings in which crying, shouting, fainting and "fits", seeing visions and hearing voices were important elements of the service. While these evangelical sects developed as the dominant form of religious organization towards the end of the century and on into the early 1800s, internal divisions led increasingly to the development of a more organized church, as opposed to sect type organization. Amongst the Newlighters, there was a movement towards the Baptist doctrine. Amongst the Methodists a break with the church in the United States occurred and a connection with the English Wesleyan Conference was established. Around 1820, in the face of wider changes in the community structure, including the arrival of greater numbers of English and Scot migrants, the Canadian Baptist churches accepted the leadership of the English Baptist missionary organizations. Little distinguished the revised Baptist service from that of the Congregational or Presbyterian. "The exhortations of the local preachers gave way increasingly to the polished sermons of the missionary."¹² This Baptist influence after 1828, when many of the Black Baptist churches were beginning to be established, was particularly effective because of their active missionary organization. One Rev. David Nutter, an English Baptist missionary, preached in many areas of the province including Truro, Guysborough, Tracadie, Canso, and other Black areas.¹³ The Methodists likewise became controlled by the English General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. As their missionary work progressed, "The evangelical appeal became caught up, as in the Baptist church, within institutional systems."¹⁴ Thus, by about 1840, the Baptist denomination became an institutionalized religious organization. By 1885, it had also established itself as an urban church, in addition to its ministry among the rural population.

Before the establishment of separate Black churches, many Blacks participated in white Baptist and Methodist churches as their presence is noted in the records of the time. Gradually, in the period between 1854-60, Richard Preston, a Black minister trained in England, established separate Black churches. They were, therefore, undoubtedly influenced by the swing away from evangelicism and were also under the influence of the English Baptist missionaries. We may hypothesize, therefore, that as preaching gave way to sermons, church meetings took the place of campsites and Bibles and hymnals from Great Britain came into use in the province, the singing of spirituals and folk songs likewise gave way to Protestant hymns and the role of folk and spiritual music in the service declined.

¹²Ibid., p. 229.

¹³I. E. Hill, *Fifty Years with the Baptist Ministers and Churches of the Maritime Provinces*, (St. John, 1880), pp. 237-9.

¹⁴Clark, p. 237.

Today, and probably for many years, the hymnals used in Black Baptist churches are of English origin and publication. The hymns are those which can be heard in any Baptist and other Protestant church and with few exceptions, "shouting" spirituals are heard only occasionally in an average service. Church attendance tends to be low, particularly in rural areas, and one minister frequently serves the needs of several communities. The church is relatively unimportant, except perhaps in the two major urban centres, as a centre for social, recreational, or leisure activities. Our conclusion is, therefore, that as a result of the move from sect to church organization in the province generally, and because of Preston's influence, the church became a united organization but the tenor of its service moved towards standard Protestantism. The church today lacks the signs of fundamentalism and this suggests that one of the most important stimuli to the creation and continuance of folk music and spirituals based upon the religious experience was seriously undermined in these Black communities.¹⁵

Music in the Black Communities Today

To the best of our knowledge, music and singing takes place only during church services, at private parties or get-togethers in individual homes, and at public occasions such as dances.

Religious Music

There is a Baptist church in almost every community. Sydney is an exception because the African Methodist church there is organized along Roman Catholic lines. Despite an active congenial minister or "Father" as he is called, attendance is limited on an average to about 30 participants. Sunday services are held everywhere but attendance is extremely small. In one rural community of 300, not more than 15 people appeared at any service during the course of our field period. In another, which claimed also to have Wednesday evening meetings, attendance never reached more than 30 people. One or more Deacons preside in the absence of the minister so that there is a semblance of church organization. Some churches claim to have groups such as Ladies' Auxiliaries, but they do not appear to be viable units. The larger churches in Halifax and Dartmouth attract a larger attendance. A Sunday service consists of prayers, announcements, hymn singing, and a major sermon by the minister. Protestant hymns are occasionally interspersed with one or two "shouting" spirituals, usually well known songs of American origin. We noted that the singing of spirituals takes place more frequently during services in North Preston (which appears to have the most developed musical tradition), a community in the Digby area (because of the presence of a "singer" and his "family"), and in the now demolished church in Africville, where spirituals outnumbered hymns in at least one service. (We have a recording made of the Easter Service of 1965.) Most relocated Africville

¹⁵Clairmont and Magill's data revealed that some expressive emotionalism characterized some of the services in the Africville church. An earlier study suggests that the most emotional services were held there, the least expressive at a large urban church in Halifax and that rural churches fall somewhere in-between in terms of emotional expressiveness. C. R. Brookbank, *Afro Canadian Communities in Halifax County, Nova Scotia*, M. A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1949.

residents attend church in Halifax where an informant told us the service was too "staid". The minister supposedly relented and allowed a few spirituals to be sung during service.

"Sing-songs" and "hymn sings" are supposedly held in the churches on Sunday evening, but again we did not observe any during our field period. We were told that they are occasionally held by old people but that the practice has died out among the young people. Another religious occasion is the special baptismal ceremony. In all the communities surveyed, the baptismal ceremony, by total immersion, took place only in the Preston area. At the largest, in North Preston, we saw 21 candidates baptized. Each candidate is first dressed in white robe and turban and then brought to the lake front in the back of a truck. They are led into the water one by one by a Deacon to the waiting minister and his assistant, who stand about hip deep in water. The minister intones, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and the waiting group of candidates and members of the church sing a refrain from a hymn. The same refrain is sung each time. (At similar ceremonies, witnessed in American Black groups, the immersion is noted by shrieks, shouts, possession by the Holy Spirit, and very active singing. The tenor of the ceremony is far more spontaneous and emotional.) The Baptism attracts hundreds of onlookers and the affair takes on a secular nature. Hawkers sell soft drinks and ice cream to the hordes of children; people mingle about and greet their friends. A number of interested white spectators are also in attendance. Afterwards, all candidates return home, dress, and come to the church where a usual Sunday service is held. The candidates are presented to the congregation and admonished by the minister to become good members of the Christian church. Some informants claim that a vision must have been experienced prior to admission. Others say that this is no longer an important requirement. The service then proceeds in the ordinary manner. A baptismal service attracts more than the usual number of church attenders, but many of these were, in fact, friends and relatives of the candidates. Following the North Preston baptism, many people invite friends and guests for dinner and this social occasion sometimes leads into a "sing-song" where hymns and spirituals are sung. Whether a sing-song develops, however, is completely dependent upon the accidental presence of a singer or two. This is not, in other words, an institutionalized musical occasion. (We were guests in a home where some of the sons hope to establish themselves as professional singers. We were thus able to record a "sing-song" but were told that if singing would take place in any home, "it would be in (this) the Smith home.") Yet, this community probably has a more viable cultural tradition than any of the others in the province. The Baptism ceremonies in the other two communities in the Preston area are much smaller, both in terms of numbers of spectators and candidates. One community that summer offered one candidate and the other three. Many of the larger homes also invite friends and guests for dinner but singing, due to the absence of singers in these communities, rarely takes place. We were told that there is also some singing at Christmas time, but mainly of the standard Christmas songs and carols.

The African Baptist Association, at its annual conventions, is another

occasion when singing may be heard. Services, speeches, announcements, and future plans of the Association are aired, but the singing is much the same as can be heard at a typical Sunday service. Hymns are emphasized and an occasional spiritual is sung. Musical terms associated with religious music included "sing-song", "hymn-sings" and more rarely "shouts" and "Jubilee" songs. Only a few singers could define the latter two terms.

Social Singing

In some of the communities, recreation centres or community halls are available for public dances. These are held in the larger urban and semi-urban communities and attended primarily by young people. Music is occasionally supplied by live musicians, otherwise taped and radio music is used. In either case, the music is modern with a heavy reliance on country western style. In one rural community, a few men played the guitar and occasionally there are private parties where singing of country western type music takes place. Radio music of the popular variety is also listened to in the homes. In Sydney, where the population is West Indian descended, we found no evidence of any Calypso or West Indian music. Among teenagers, particularly in or near urban groups, modern Black music is favored and such names as Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, and others, are well known.

In all, we found only two organized singing groups. One, a group of four or five young people, led by a young man who is intensely interested in music, has revived some spiritual singing and has learned many of them from published American sources. He also composed original spirituals. The other consists of a family group led by an official of the local church who has a fine voice and a real interest in keeping a musical tradition alive. His group consists of members of his immediate family, who come together at various times to sing as a form of recreation. This group also leads the singing in the church and they are often invited by other churches (including white congregations) to sing at Sunday services. Their repertoire in spiritual singing is the largest of any we heard and they have learned their material from a tattered copy of a book entitled *Spirituals of the American South*. One other singer, now deceased, was called to our attention and we were able to hear a recording of his songs made some years ago. He sang some spirituals which he claimed to have heard from old people in his youth. His original home was in the same community as the group referred to above and this community, as a result, has more music than many others, although here too, few others than these individuals sing.

The scarcity of singers and social and/or religious occasions in which singing takes place indicate that there is no really viable folk-music tradition remaining in these communities. Most religious music revolves around hymns, and social music is heavily influenced by pop and country western. There is, of course, no blues tradition since this did not develop in the U.S. until the early 20th century and apparently never reached the province.

The Blacks of Nova Scotia are called, and many still call themselves, "colored people". The term "Black" is still a label of denigration, particularly amongst the older generation. A clearly articulated Black identity is only beginning to emerge in this population. There is no immediate awareness of

the Black heritage in historical or cultural terms. Their lack of education is important here, in that the present adult population has, on the average, a grade 5-6 education. They were never taught their own history and most adults are unaware of how Blacks came to be in Nova Scotia; they know even less of their African past. The very concept of Black history or culture is only beginning to be known in the average population and, as a result, the prideful awakening so evident in American Blacks has only recently reached Nova Scotia. This lack of Black identity has persevered throughout the history of the Nova Scotia settlements and has been carried forward to present times. Folk music, an important part of Black culture, has suffered.

There is evidence, however, of a growing change on the part of the younger population today. They are more aware of their history, less subservient towards whites, and increasingly militant in their quest for changes. More youngsters are completing high school and a small group are attending university, although the total number of Black university graduates is still painfully small. Newly formed Black organizations are urgently pressing for socio-cultural and economic change. Pride in Black culture is a real feature of the younger generation today, and it will in all likelihood lead to an awakening of the Black folk culture.

Spirituals Recorded by Group of Family Singers

THAT GREAT DAY

$\text{♩} = 1\frac{1}{2} \text{ m.m.}$
 F

God is gettin' us ready for that great day (oh yes!) God is gettin' us
 ready for that great day; God is gettin' us ready for that great
 day, and who shall be a-ble to stand.

First chorus rhythm for M. 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15:
 (From M12³ to end of chorus free harmonization ends and is replaced by unison singing.)

WHEN THE TRUMPET SOUNDS

$\text{♩} = 138 \text{ m.m.}$
 F B^b F

Tell me where shall I be when that first trum-pet sounds, just tell me
 where shall I be when it sounds (it sounds). It will sound so loud it will
 wake up the dead. Just tell me where shall I be when it sounds.

HOLD ONTO JESUS

J. = 48 m.m. A^b

Hold onto Him, hold onto Je - sus; you just hold onto Him, hold onto
 Je - sus, you just hold onto Him, hold onto Je - sus; and I
 know He will answer yes when you call.

Detailed description: The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'J. = 48 m.m.' and the mode is 'A^b'. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some phrases tied across measures. Chord symbols A^b, D^b, and F^b are placed above the staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

I CAME TO JESUS

J. = 48-52 m.m.

I came to Je-sus as I was, weary I was and sad. I found in
 him a rest-ing place, and He has made me glad. Shine on me, shine on
 me, I won-der if the light-house will shine on me. Shine on me,
 shine on me, I won-der if the light-house will shine on me.

Detailed description: The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'J. = 48-52 m.m.'. The melody is primarily eighth notes with some quarter notes. Chord symbols B^b, F, C, and F^b are placed above the staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Other Spirituals Sung

I Know the Lord Will Lead the Way
 O Freedom
 Amen
 If I Lay My Burden Down
 I'm in His Care
 Will the Circle Be Unbroken

I Know I've Been Redeemed
 Shine on Me
 Hush, Hush
 The Train is A-Coming
 Music in the Air

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Resumé: *Frances Henry commente les raisons pour lesquelles les communautés de Noirs des Provinces Maritimes Canadiennes n'ont pas beaucoup de chants folkloriques traditionnels et elle offre des exemples de quelques-uns de leurs chants religieux qu'elle a recueillis.*