

Been Down Into the South

Page 1 of 2

Adaptation of a traditional song by
SNCC's Bob Zellner

Taught to the Freedom Summer '08 group
by Hollis Watkins of *Southern Echo, Inc.*

The musical score is written for three voices: Tenor Leader, Tenor, and Baritone. It is in 8/8 time and consists of two systems of three staves each. The lyrics are as follows:

System 1:

Tenor Leader: I hav - en't been to hea - ven but I've been told
I hav - en't been to hea - ven but I think I'm right
Some says Pe - ter and some says Paul,

Tenor: Been down in -

Baritone: Been down in -

System 2:

Tenor Leader: in hea - ven there is no Jim Crow
the peo - ple in - a hea - ven both Black and white
there's on - ly one God that made us all.

Tenor: to the South. Been down in -

Baritone: to the South Been down

More verses:

I want to go to heaven but I want to go right
I don't want to go without my civil rights

Segregation is chilly and cold
Chills my body but not my soul

Freedom sounds so mighty sweet
Soon one day we're gonna meet

I been knockin' on doors and spreadin' the news
And gettin' big holes in the bottom of my shoes

Yes I've got big holes in the bottom of my shoes
But this is one battle that we can't lose

If you don't think I've been to hell
Just follow me down to Parchman jail

You can talk about me just as much as you please
Well the more you talk I'm gonna bend my knees

The only thing that we did wrong
stay in the wilderness a day too long

The only thing that we did right
Was the day we started to fight

We are fighting both Black and white
Fighting for our civil rights

Been Down into the South

2 of 2

8

Hal - le - lu - ia free - dom! Hal - le lu - ia free - dom
to the South. Hal - le - lu - ia free-dom! Hal - le - lu - ia free-dom!
Sing hal - - - - Sing hal - - - - Sing

13

Hal - le - lu - ia free - dom! _____ Been down___ in - to the South.
Hal - le - lu - ia free - dom! _____ Been down___ in - to the South.
hal - le - lu - ia free - dom! _____ Been down___ in - to the South.

Mr. Hollis Watkins taught this song to the Freedom Summer '08 class from Indiana University South Bend in his Southern Echo, Inc. office in Jackson, Mississippi on Thursday, May 15, 2008. This is my loose attempt at re-creating his arrangement.

This, from *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through Its Songs*, by Guy and Candie Carawan, Montgomery, Louisville: NewSouth Books. 2007: "This old spiritual was first adapted by Bob Zellner, SNCC field secretary, in a car on the way back to Atlanta from Baton Rouge where he had been arrested, jailed and indicted for 'criminal anarchy.' Charles McDew, SNCC Chairman, and also under indictment for the same charge, was one of those singing in the car and helping improvise this new freedom song. Later Bob introduced it to the Talladega student movement during their protest campaign against segregated public facilities. It immediately became one of the most popular songs at their mass meetings, demonstrations, and jam sessions. Since then it has spread to other areas and taken up new verses." [This was originally written in 1963, in the authors' Oak Publications book, *We Shall Overcome: Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement.*]

Compiled by:
David James
Tiompán Alley Music
www.tiopanalley.com
for Freedom Summer '08