MEMORY SPIRITUALS OF THE EX-SLAVE AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN TRINIDAD'S "COMPANY VILLAGES"

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Research for this paper grew out of a Fulbright grant project that was designed to chart, through the international song repositories, the historical flow of Windward Islands peoples into Trinidad and Tobago. In 1989, during my library searches and culture-bearer interviews in Trinidad and Tobago, I was introduced to Jean Pearse of Tobago. She generously gave me access to the files of the late Andrew Pearse,[1] whose research had been essential to my previous work on Caribbean music.

As I examined the Pearse Archive, a paper-clipped set of ten transcribed songs, called "trumpet songs," came to my attention.[2] I recalled hearing these songs earlier as rousing choruses in services of the Trinidad Spiritual Baptists.[3] I felt that some were North American Negro

1. Andrew Pearse, whom this article celebrates, initiated the unearthing and collecting of valuable Caribbean song and dance materials in the 1950s. Besides numerous nonmusical publications, Pearse produced the Folkways recording *The Big Drum Dance of Carriacou* (for which he also wrote detailed liner notes) and published three significant ethnomusicological papers that suggest research methodologies and classify song genres of Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada, and Carriacou (Pearse 1953, 1955, 1956a, 1956b). He was also, during his diversified career, editor, champion of, and contributor to the journal *Caribbean Quarterly*.

2. A list of these trumpet songs, transcribed by Pearse, is found in Table 1.

3. Spiritual Baptists (or Shouters) are known by their dress—headties, monochrome gowns with belts, sashes, or aprons. The ecstatic services contain multiple symbols in sound, color, and gesture. Besides candles, flower-filled gourds, vials of perfumes and oils, a nautical steering wheel laden with candles, and the Indian *lota* plate, bell-ringing stands as the most idiosyncratic symbol of the movement. These elements surround the center pole where spontaneous libation of alter fluids and bell ringing occur as they do from time to time in the cardinal points or corners of the room, punctuating and shaping the progress of the service. The center pole, "derived from the Ancient African church ... repre-

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spirituals, but could not, at that point, explain their use in that place and time.

Today, the trumpet songs continue among the Spiritual Baptists as ecstatic shouts and musical bannisters that lead toward spiritual trance. This paper initiates the discovery of the origins of a class of trumpet songs and crystallizes what I imagine to have been Pearse's intended research goal for the song folder: the investigation of the source and context of the songs.

Richard Waterman and Melville and Frances Herskovits knew of these songs and referred to them as "spirituals" or "spiritual hymns." They avoided, however, a discussion of their origins (Waterman 1943, 174; Herskovits and Herskovits 1964, 193). But there is a haunting aside drawn from the field notes of the Herskovits team. It reveals their interest in the historical process and complexity of song transmission.[4] Preceding a discussion on the adoption of Sankey hymns and the nature of song revision, the Herskovitses admit to

> the perplexing question which this singing posed when the setting of the
> dimly lit bare church with its earthen floor brought to mind services in
> equally humble settings in the United States: [they had noted in their diary]
> "What is baffling is the miracle that produced the American Spirituals, and
> the *historical reasons* for the acceptance by the folk in these islands of the
> hymns [Sankeys] just as the Whites sing them." (Herskovits and Herskovits
> 1964, 210; emphasis added)

I classify the approach employed here among the various research methods that could be called "historical ethnomusicology," for its focus,

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sents the timber of Lebanon, which was used for the construction of Solomon's temple" (Thomas 1987, 31). Trance states and mental or astral travel govern the mystical goals of believers who contact the spirit world through dreams, visions, and propitiations for healing. Fragments from Roman Catholic ritual as well as many distant vocal musical styles, including Yoruba song, Hindu chant, Sankey hymns, and Anglican hymns, are evident in the Spiritual Baptist worship service. These international invocations constitute the musical ground for the overlayered, superimposed "sheets of sound" that form the prayer ritual and the mental search for "power" and astral flight. "Power" is the state of altered consciousness that is often accompanied by spiritual movement and song; "'doption" is "a mode of spiritual experience, taking the form of one of fourteen stereotyped journeys in the spirit world, to each of which a particular type of song is fitting" (Pearse 1953, 14). The "mourning ground" ceremony ritualizes the mental experience of travel as an initiation or elevation within the hierarchic orders of the Spiritual Baptist religion. Trumpets function in both musical rituals.

4. Richard Waterman, too, notes the similarity and states: "Almost identical Spirituals are sung in both places [Trinidad and the United States], and some of the categories of Trinidad songs which are not now in evidence in the United States are shown by historical writings to have been in the latter country in the past" (Waterman 1943, 174).

rather than simply reporting and interpreting music within its synchronic cultural context, centers on the rich musical materials themselves in an effort to explore origins and bring forward historical knowledge (Shelemay 1980, 234). I also attempt in this historical method an affective anthropology to reveal the song owners' voices and experiences.

The search for origins, suggests Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1988, xxiv), "is an act of speculation, an attempt to weave a fiction of origins and sub-generation. It is to render the implicit as explicit, and at times to imagine the whole from the part." The partial history revealed here, colored by fragmented musical texts and oral descriptive ethnologies, parallels written canonic history but transforms it with alternative shades of meaning and polemic perspectives. The nineteenth-century descriptions are meant to mingle with song vernacular to erect an unobscured cultural trope. Song language and nonmusical anthropological descriptions override musical comparison and textual exegesis in this study because of their importance in filling the vacuum in the telling of the history of the Americas.

Trinidad and Tobago's rich multinational song repertoires were transported along with the transplanted cultures of immigrant people from neighboring islands, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Consequently, the songs in question, which I will refer to as American spirituals, could have traveled to Trinidad by curious, circuitous routes, under varied circumstances, through missionary or secular voices; they could have been appropriated through (1) Trinidad's undulating mid–nineteenth-century migratory cycles or (2) borrowed in the 1920s by Trinidadian bridge and subway workers in New York City. My thesis is that the songs were (3) introduced to Trinidad during the early nineteenth century by black North American soldiers who were liberated from slavery after their service in the British navy. I suggest that the Trinidad spirituals may have been nurtured by all three interactions and developed into the trumpet songs sung in Trinidad by the Spiritual Baptists of today. That is, though introduced in Trinidad by black American soldiers, they could have gained further passage, revitalization, and re-creation through the other two vehicles mentioned above.

In setting this hypothesis I kept an awareness of tenets, some of which, owing to the extraordinary experiences of the African song owners (which include slavery, colonization, legal religious persecution), may have exclusive employment in the research of black song. The tenets follow.

1. Song origins must coincide with the history of the people and meanings interpreted in tandem with the song's functions.

2. Physical and cultural environment, migration, escape/flight, religious conversion, postwar dispersal, and colonization impact melody, text, imagery, and meaning in song.

3. A song may be donated or appropriated by a small or large band of people.

4. The song's structure may change as the function of the singing alters.

5. Song imagery may survive with similar or altered meanings; texts may bear double or triple meanings and there may be a "double affect" in the music and words.

6. Song repertoires may carry knowledge and a "connectedness" to another time sphere and another continent.

Long before commencing the investigation of song origins, I had read of Baptist Americans who had individually escaped slavery, joined the British navy or army, and, with the aid of the British, were disbanded and settled in Trinidad (Wood 1986, 38). During the War of 1812, the British assured those who were "'disposed to emigrate' from the United States that they would be welcomed abroad . . . and given 'their choice of either entering into His Majesty's sea or land forces, or of being sent as free settlers to the British possessions in North America or the West Indies, where they [would] meet with all due encouragement'" (Foner 1974, 23). This proclamation spread by word of mouth to enslaved people, and many sought their freedom in this way. Escapees not willing to join the troops were evacuated by the British to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Many enslaved men also bought their freedom by joining the American navy, while others were pressed into service by their slaveholders. In all, "about 3,600 enslaved people detached themselves from their owners during the War of 1812" (Mahon 1972, 313). Those who chose to aid the British naval onslaught against the United States bore arms and worked as guides and spies on familiar terrains during land combat.

The British knew of the humiliation, shock, and distress caused, especially to southern Americans, by the sight of blacks participating in warfare. They imagined that African soldiers, with their experience as horsemen, would be especially intimidating to the foe in cavalry crusades; the British also felt that "[the blacks'] hatred of slavery would make them as

ruthless as Cossacks" (Mahon 1972, 313). Moreover, British Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane was aware of the real and implied threat to America of the insurrectionary powers of enslaved blacks and Native American populations and used this type of psychological warfare to some extent in his battles with the U.S. forces.

After the War of 1812, the African soldiers were indeed transported to Trinidad by the British and settled in eight company villages. These were eventually named New Grant/Mount Elvin, Indian Walk, Mount Pleasant, Hard Bargain, Montserrat/Sherring Ville, and Matilda Bounty. The descendants of the early settlers still inhabit the five surviving company villages, and there they continue to practice Baptist rituals and other modes of American culture inherited from their forebears.

I visited Princes Town in the southern district of Trinidad in search of song survivals and fortuitously found myself at Third Company Baptist Church on Moruga Road in Mt. Pleasant. The pastor of the church suggested that I visit a women's group to find out more about the song materials that I sought. Returning to the church the next day, I introduced my project to a community of sixteen women. Without hesitation the women transformed their structured Bible study hour into two hours of spiritual singing interspersed with descriptions of old practices, personal reminiscences, and prayers. In this way they introduced me to their "oldest songs," which included choruses and common meter hymns. Their president, Mrs. Millicent Sambury, advised that "the songs bring back our memory. . . . We don't know the meaning . . . , but we just sing them—not just for spiritual upliftment, but so others can learn from them" (Sambury 1989).

The women of the Third Company Baptist Church sing in a strong-voiced, heterophonic style over persistent foot-patting accompaniment. The effect is ecstatic. As I recited the texts of each selection from the Pearse list, the women sang those they knew (all except "Look at the Work" and "David Mourns Absalom") and added "old songs" that proved immensely valuable and complemented my search. The original Pearse list is presented with the twelve additional "old songs" in Table 1.

During the taping session, one of the women proposed that "Jacob's Ladder" be sung, but other members dismissed the suggestion, for they were sure that I knew it. This song and several others, because of their universal popularity, may represent items recently borrowed. However, a notion of the longevity of the other American spirituals in Trinidad was confirmed for me by older members who had "heard it as a child." The women noted that "Sail Out and Buy," in particular, was considered a Spiritual Baptist song and "No Man to Hinder Me" and "O, We

Table 1. Inventory of Performed and Archived Songs

Third Baptist Church's "Old Songs"	Trumpet Songs Collected by Pearse
1. Jesus, Lend Me Your Wings	1. Buy Me Own Land
2. Trouble-o	2. King Jesus Give Us Water
3. I Want to Dance	3. Look at the Work
4. Tell Zacchaeus	4. Sail Out and Buy
5. No Man to Hinder Me	5. Jordan River
6. Hold on the Vine	6. Shout, Believer, Shout
7. Groanin'	7. David Mourns Absalom
8. The Angel That Visit the Jail	8. The Israelites in the Morning
9. Tell Mary to Tell Martha	9. On the Battlefield
10. O, We Build a Camp in the Wilderness	10. We're Gwine to Nineveh
11. Happy Day	
12. Every Time I Feel the Spirit	

Build a Camp" were "old, old ones." Three of the songs transcribed by Pearse from a 1950s Spiritual Baptist context—"King Jesus Give Us Water," "The Israelites in the Morning," and "We're Gwine to Nineveh"—had generated alternative tunes and texts, though retaining the basic textural imagery of the songs sung by the Third Company Baptist Church. However, all of the songs share textual or musical features or tropes of imagery with the body of celebrated American spirituals (see Table 2).

In a meticulous analysis, Portia Maultsby (1976, 60) identifies the most usual textual characteristics of the Negro spiritual to be the four-line chorus and verse in varying patterns of line repetitions—abcb, abcd, aaab, abac, and abab. The Trinidad trumpet songs under discussion here conform to the general textual properties of the evolved Negro spiritual

Table 2. Textual Comparisons of Company Village Songs and American
Spirituals

Each of the company village songs (except "Every Time I Feel the Spirit") has
one or more textual parallels in the songs indexed in Southern and Wright
(1990). In some cases, the critical literary correspondence is found within the
text rather than in the title. In the table below, tune titles are given in quotes;
first lines, without quotes.

Third Baptist Church Songs	Corresponding Spirituals in Southern and Wright (1990)
"Jesus, Lend Me Your Wings"	Oh, give me wings and I'll fly to New Jerusalem
"Trouble-o"	Trouble gwine to war'y me down
"I Want to Dance Like King David Dance"	I want to sing as the angels sing
"Tell Zacchaeus"	"Tell All Dis Worl'" and seven other directive songs
"No Man to Hinder Me"	"No Man Can Hinder Me"
"Hold on the Vine"	"Hold the Wind, Hold the Wind"
"Groanin'"	"As I Went Down in the Valley to Pray"
"The Angel That Visit the Jail"	Paul and Silas, bound in jail
"Tell Mary to Tell Martha"	"Mary an' Marthy," "Feed My Lambs," and five additional "Mary and Martha" songs
"O, We Build a Camp in the Wilderness"	"We'll Camp a Little While in the Wilderness"
"Happy Day"	"Oh, Happy Day"
"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"	"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"*

* This selection is found in Johnson and Johnson (1926, 142) or Bernard (1966, 92).

as listed above, except that they are choruses. Only one song, "The Isra-elites," has a verse/chorus structure. In most cases the repeated chorus receives minor textual alteration with each iteration, giving it the ap-pearance of a strophic-formed song. The poetic structure of each verse mirrors that of the West African stick-fighting song, the kalenda. The kalenda was one of the earliest dance songs brought to the "new world," and it, like many of the trumpets, features rapid antiphonal in-teraction between leader and chorus.

The Trinidad trumpets bear the greatest resemblance to the American slave songs in their textual, metaphoric, Signifyin(g) wordplay and their revision of Biblical themes. Popular stories in the huge body of Ameri-can spirituals center on Satan, Jacob, Daniel, Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, Ezekial and the wheel, Moses, Paul and Silas, Mary and Martha, Jonah and the whale, Gabriel the trumpeter,[5] and of course, Je-sus (Southern 1983, 199). Of the twenty-two Trinidad songs listed here, the last six Biblical story types figure in the narratives.

The Trinidad texts form single-sided dialogues that reveal a personal involvement with Biblical figures. They are often direct messages trans-mitted in the voice of a bold neighbor instructing one, for instance, to "tell Mary to tell Martha"; or they speak with the authority of a mother who orders Zacchaeas to come down from the tree. Other analogies with the North American Negro spiritual are found in persistent water imagery, as in "Jordan river," "Canaan's shore," and references to ships. The use of metaphors such as "in the wilderness" or "down in the val-ley" abound (Southern 1983, 166, 198). Similarly, allusions to the He-

5. I could get no clues from culture bearers as to the meaning or origin of the name of the song genre, the trumpets. I suggest that the songs derived their name from the Biblical reference to Gabriel and his essential musical role. On the last "getting up morning," he will blow his silver trumpet "right calm and easy," then as "loud as seven peals of thun-der" to "wake the living nations." Eileen Southern points to these phrases, preserved in a single generative spiritual, as "wandering phrases." The sixty-verse spiritual "In That Great Getting-up Morning" has inspired many songs and is itself a Signifyin(g) revision of a favorite hymn, "Behold the Awful Trumpet Sounds," published in Richard Allen's *A.M.E. Hymnal* (1801). From the relationship between these two magnificent examples, Southern explores compositional codes of the spiritual (Southern 1983, 172–177) and ex-plains the correspondences in the American spiritual this way: "There are some words, some phrases, some lines that reappear so consistently from song to song that they can be regarded as 'wandering' phrases and verses" (Southern, 1983, 198). The following is a Trinidad spiritual hymn documented by Melville Herskovits that finds its place in the family of songs that recall the inspiration of "In That Great Getting-up Morning": "Where are you been/When de firs' trumpet soun'?/Where are you been/An' it soun' so loud,/An' it soun' so hard,/As to wake up de dead?/Where are you been/When de firs' trumpet sound'?" (Herskovits and Herskovits 1964, 212). Its North American counterpart is the spiritual "Where Shall I Be When the First Trumpet Sounds" (Fenner [1920] 1973, 172).

brew struggles, wanderings, and alienation permeate the texts of both the American spirituals and the Trinidad items. And further, four of the ten trumpets listed by Pearse allude to water, three speak of the land, and two refer to the Hebrew nation.

History of the Company Villages

Some of the singers who participated in the taped interview are descendants of liberated black soldiers from South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, and Virginia. After fleeing slavery to fight under the British flag in the War of 1812, these soldiers were resettled in the company villages mentioned above. The soldiers' exchange for "blood price" military service was manumission and asylum outside the United States. After the war the rebellious ex-slave soldiers were sent to the Corps of Colonial Marines base in Bermuda, from which the disbanded troops were finally exported to the Savanna Grande region of Trinidad as settlers in the British colony. In a detailed paper based on British colonial documents, K. O. Laurence (1963, 26) explains that the slave soldiers "for whom the British government accepted responsibility . . . [had] fallen into British hands during the war with the United States. . . . Others seem simply to have been former slaves liberated by the British during their campaign in America."

Laurence explains further that some Americans were also settled in Nova Scotia while soldiers liberated from West Indian Regiments, formerly recruited in Sierra Leone, made up the north Trinidad settlements in Arima and Manzanilla. The northern settlements, created under similar colonial principles and practices, produced a distinct and separate history and culture from that of the American troops settled in south Trinidad. The northern units, with more recent African experience, cultivated an Islamic culture and a Creole "Manzanillan" language that were nurtured under the dominance of Muslim ex-sergeants who assumed the roles of priests and teachers (Wood 1986, 39). Called "Mandingos," they may have been an association of people from Arabic-speaking nations, such as Fulanis, Wolofs, and Mandingos from Senegal, Gambia, and other areas throughout West Africa.

The first ex-slave refugees entered the colony of Trinidad in 1815—only eighteen years after Britain had seized it from Spain. Under Spain's aegis, the colony had vigorously recruited Catholic immigrants to the sparsely populated island by offering land grant awards. But the lands generously offered to Creoles of the neighboring islands (Grenada, St. Vincent, Martinique, St. Lucia, and Guadeloupe) remained inadequately cultivated owing to the small workforce. Because the legal importation

of enslaved people had been proscribed in 1807, the agricultural potential of the verdant and sparsely populated real estate could not be achieved.

The colonial government was well aware of the need to attract immigrants who would build and cultivate the infant colony; therefore, the prospect of including this group of Americans fit comfortably with the colonial agenda of the era. That the Americans were English-speaking made them especially adaptable and useful to the English leaders who had come through happenstance to govern a French- and Patois-speaking population. The free black settlers, probably registered as "free coloureds," enlarged a population that, in 1817, consisted of 3,650 whites, 10,830 "free coloureds," 1,157 Amerindians, and 23,828 slaves (total 39,465; see Williams 1952, 381).

After the 1838 emancipation of enslaved Africans in British territories, newly freed people from neighboring islands were lured to Trinidad's sugar fields by the appealing work opportunities (Hill 1977, 219). A short time later, waves of indentured servants came ashore from distant points to join the African, "coloured," and white Patois-speaking, Catholic and Anglican population. These indentured persons included Chinese, Indian, and liberated West African workers who swarmed to Trinidad (beginning in the 1840s), creating what is today, undoubtedly, one of the most ethnically heterogeneous regions of the world.

Arriving in 1815, the ex-slave American soldiers were among the earliest of the foreign settlers in Trinidad, and they stand out as singular, being the only group admitted to Trinidad (during its short history as a slave society) as independent, peasant farmers (Vincent 1975, 11). Each family was promised, though not ever fully granted (Verteuil 1884, 310), sixteen acres of land in the outlying areas of the eight "company villages" that were set up.

Fifty-seven Americans arrived first, then 575 Americans in 1816, and 79 in 1821. In 1817, in order to equalize the gender ratio, 52 African women "liberated" from slaver ships were brought in, and later another 11 women were recruited from Barbados. In 1824 the villages' colonial manager, Robert Mitchell, estimated the total number of company village inhabitants at 876 (Colonial Department [1824] 1827).

The "principal group" arrived during the rainy season and, as Vincent (1975, 11) reports from culture-bearer interviews, they treked forty miles on muddy bridle paths from Port of Spain to a wooded camp site. An area had been cleared for them by Native Americans of the Jesuit Mission (now Princes Town). Four thatched structures (60' x 20'), as well as a planted crop of provisions, awaited them. It is presumed that they were divided in military fashion and assigned to camps spread about

four or five miles apart, which were policed by a sergeant and a corporal. Initially, each reorganized troop lived together and ate in cooperative mess arrangements, for which iron pots were provided. Rations (for up to eight months), hoes, cutlasses, nails, and other basic tools were also supplied to each company. Each group had the benefit of its own "craftsmen and mechanics" who were, presumably, equally distributed among the settlers to supervise the erection of individual houses. The taxes levied on each land parcel was that of "quit rent" (no services attached) of fifteen shillings per year and a hospital dues of eighteen shillings each quarter. All the camps were supervised by the white manager, Robert Mitchell (Colonial Department [1824] 1827).

According to Des Isles (1987), the refugee soldiers planted corn, banana, yams, cassava, eddoes, tannias, and arrowroot, and they introduced rice cultivation to Trinidad, for which they have gained distinction. In the early history of the settlements, the newcomers worked mainly as road builders, lumberers, and trenchers; they cleared land for cane agriculture, and some worked as casual laborers on the neighboring estates. W. H. Gamble (1866, 109) describes them as "great hunters," and Mahon (1972, 313) reveals that they were also horsemen.

A Revised History

The details above, if compared with contemporary accounts of refugee flight and expatriation, appear innocuous, but when read in tandem with oral histories and the published complaint of the nineteenth-century, mixed-race activist Jean Baptist Philip (Phillippe [1824] 1987, 159–165), they bring forth contrary interpretations and reify a subjugated knowledge. Philip, a doctor who lived among other wealthy "free coloureds" in the Naparima area and in the vicinity of the company villages, must have written from personal experience about the plight of the refugees. His bitter narrative alters the facts presented about the self-styled supervisor, Robert Mitchell, whom the governor titled, "friend and protector of the settlers" (Laurence 1963, 31). Mitchell himself explains in an 1824 transcript, "Minutes of Evidence Taken by the Committee of the Council of Trinidad, for Enquiring into the Negroe Character," that he had the authority to mete out sentences up to fifty lashes for small offences, but to that date, he said, had sentenced only twenty-five blows (Colonial Department [1824] 1827). Philip reports the payment of hospital dues as a scam and accuses Mitchell of exploiting the trust of the Americans, using them improperly and sentencing a major case without a jury (Phillippe [1824] 1987, 159–165).

Because of these and many other allegations by Philip and others, one

suspects the government of neglecting the company villages and ques-
tions the initial motive of the British, who, it could be suggested, acted
in less than humanitarian ways. Rather than "accepting responsibility
for them" (as phrased above) the "protection" of the soldiers may be
seen as originating purely for economic advantage (Laurence 1963, 28).
In fact, the settlers were unknowingly part of the larger pragmatic de-
sign to conquer the Trinidad frontier and establish a road system con-
necting the mission with San Fernando and Moruga; the villages were
strategically placed with these and other commercial goals on the colo-
nial agenda in mind (Vincent 1975, 10; Laurence 1963, 27; Verteuil 1884,
310).

The lot of the liberated soldiers was one of double exploitation: first as
"blood" soldiers in a war that was not theirs, then as transplanted peons
serving as an unpaid work force for a new master, Mitchell. Thus, the
ex-slave Americans, as Philip declares, merely exchanged the American
slavemaster for a paternalistic commander who treated them as en-
slaved people (Phillippe [1824] 1987, 163).

Historical document, memory, and song create a picture of abandon-
ment and neglect of the refugees whose experience in Trinidad may
have been terrifyingly akin to the slavery in the United States from
which they sought relief. At least one missionary diarist writing in the
1860s describes the people as "self-reliant and sensitive of control," "in-
dependent of the outer world," "slow to yield obedience to the law and
unwilling to submit" (Gamble 1866, 107, 104). The official evaluation of
them, in Governor MacLeod's words, is that they proved themselves "a
most valuable acquisition." They spoke English, "were industrious, . . .
of correct moral conduct and held strong religious views" (Carmichael
1976, 207). Philip also commented in a similar way: "[The refugees]
have, by their conduct laughed to scorn the suspicions of those who
opposed their admission into the quarter, and have demonstrated
clearly that free negroes, although uneducated, can be useful citizens,
and live very differently than the state predicted" (Phillippe [1824] 1987,
165).

The villages inhabited by the free black Americans were located
within lush virgin woods, far from paths that were, in the rainy season,
muddy, utterly impassable—in essence, nonfunctional. Living far afield
from settlements of the major Creole society, they pursued only limited
contact with enslaved people. As free people inserted into a slave econ-
omy, they moved within an alienated, "walled-in" culture. However, the
marginalization imposed upon them through their expatriation created a
curious self-reliance and a fierce independence that to this day qualifies
their descendants to be called, in a slightly derogatory way, "'Merikins."

Evidence of the historical, tight-knit social bonding of the people may be found in their "cutting feasts," a mutual-aid enterprise that called together the men of the village. Each man was armed with two sharp cutlasses to eliminate the high grass and cornstalks from the last crop. After the work was accomplished, a feast (food and liquor) was offered by the host as reward. The following quote from Gamble describes a forest variation of the cutting feast, also called "day for day" (Vincent 1975, 13) or, most correctly, "sawing feast."[6]

> A number of them (say twenty or fifty) assemble together in the woods, where, a few days previously, several cedar-trees have been felled, squared, and cut into lengths. With much good will and noisy mirth they turn to, and with cutlass, axe, and liane for ropes, they soon rig up a famous saw-pit. They choose two standing trees at convenient distance from each other, fell a couple sufficiently strong for runners, rest one end of them in a crutch of a standing tree, secure it with lianes, the other end resting on the ground—thus forming an incline plane, up which they soon roll the timber. They level it with wedges—line it into boards or planks or scantling, using charcoal, or the juice of a nut, which in colour is red, according to the nature of the wood they have to saw, and away they work. I have known them to saw as many as 250 cedar boards—12' long, 12" wide and 1" thick—in a day. (Gamble 1866, 108)

Physically walled in by the forest and culturally isolated by language and nationality, the ex-slave Baptists held closely to their southern American religious heritage. Recognizing their need for religious instruction, they petitioned for a minister as early as 1817. The people of the company villages had to wait twenty-eight years for a missionary, for it was not until 1845 that the Rev. George Cowen of the London Baptist Missionary Society arrived in southern Trinidad. Until then, three men from the group had served as preachers. One of them remembered having been flogged in America, thirty years before, for conducting a prayer meeting in his community (Underhill [1862] 1970, 47). It is not clear whether he was the "Brother Will" Hamilton, the first American preacher in Trinidad, who served the Fifth Company church from the time of his landing in Trinidad until his death in 1860. Though Rev. Hamilton did not meet the requisites set for a pastor by British missionaries, these same missionaries did concede that he was an eloquent speaker and a literate man (Gamble 1866, 113).

6. Similar patterns of communal labor are known by various names in societies in the Caribbean and in Dahomey: *gayap* in Trinidad, *len' han'* in Tobago, *combite* in Haiti, *maroon* in Grenada, *helping han'* in Carriacou, *coup d' main* in St. Lucia, and *dopkwe* in Dahomey (note from the Pearse Archives).

Edward Underhill, a British missionary who visited the Third Company Baptist church during Hamilton's lifetime, hints at the cultural differences that created confusion in modes of worship and tensions between the African congregations and the English missionaries:

> A very pleasant ride through the woods brought us to one of the neatest chapels I had seen—the entire work of the people themselves: it was built of cedar, and shingled; and with its pointed windows, and high roof, bore quite an ecclesiastical appearance. . . . The land of the settlers was cleaner and better cultivated than any I had seen. About 150 people, summoned by the sounding of a conch shell, met us, filling the chapel; all well-dressed, and many coming on horseback. . . . For some time past they have stood aloof from the missionary, a position which originated . . . in the introduction of fanatical excesses among them. (Underhill [1862] 1970, 58)

The "fanatical excesses" referred to by Underhill were the ecstatic expressions of the church that, to the British missionary Baptists, seemed out of keeping with their conservative style of worship. Underhill describes his discomfort at a service he led at the Fourth Company Baptist Church where "one woman swayed her body from side to side, and was scarcely held in the seat by her neighbors." When he saw these "symptoms of excitement," Underhill reveals, he hurriedly concluded the service (Underhill [1862] 1970, 48).

Though today less evident in contemporary Sunday services, the "fanatical excesses" are still practiced at meetings, revivals, funerals, and baptisms; they were also expressed, to some extent, at our taping session. Contemporary spiritual behaviors only faintly mirror the dance/shout (the "breakaway") that was practiced regularly by the old folks up to approximately twenty-five years ago. Mrs. Sambury (1989) of the modern Third Company Baptist Church explains the nature of the religious fervour that confused Underhill in this way:

> When you sing, as you sing, you get strong.
> And when you get strong, the spirit arrests you.
> And when the spirit arrests you, you have to sing—
> and when you sing . . . (We dance too . . . dance in the spirit).

The transmission of American songs of enslaved people to Trinidad and Tobago affected not only the song repertoire of the Independent and British Baptist company village churches, but also that of the Spiritual Baptists, a church movement that flourished in southern Trinidad. The complete history of the Spiritual Baptists (formerly known as the Shouters) has yet to be written. Because its activities were forced underground, the dates and personalities surrounding the inception of the religion remain uncertain. The African orientation of the group's worship

style advances in self-contained and secretive ways for public obser-
vances have, in the past, resulted in social discrimination and legal sup-
pression by the authorities. Longstanding attitudes and codes against
African drumming were revived and enacted under the 1917 legislation,
the Shouter Prohibition Ordinance, in order to wipe out practices that
were seen as related to *obeah* and witchcraft (Herskovits and Herskovits
1964, 340). During 1917–1951, police raids of services were common, but
spiritual dissenters were not generally physically abused for their relig-
ious faith as the enslaved Baptists of the previous century had been.
They were, however, penalized by the courts with fines.

"Papa Neza" (Samuel Ebenezer Eliot), born in 1901, was an influential
leader of the Shango movement.[7] He was born of African-American de-
scent at Third Company Village and is regarded by some people as an
essential musical link between the American black Baptists and the Or-
isa religion (Huggins 1978, 64).

In addition to individuals like "Papa Neza," I include, as an active
agent in song dissemination, the quest of the Spiritual Baptists for social
protection. I suggest here that they may have sought acceptability and
"authenticity" by identifying with the black Baptists during the era of
Shouter persecution (1917–1951). They may have masked themselves as
'Merikins by changing their name from Shouters to Spiritual Baptists
and by preserving the dress of nineteenth-century American enslaved
people (apron, long skirt, head wrap, and bare feet). Thus, I suspect that
the desire for inclusion, evidenced by the revision of the name and dress
code, may have extended to their choice of musical items.

It is essential to the argument in this study that the themes of isolation
and cultural seclusion be appreciated and seen as operating in favor of
song continuity. Isolation was promoted by the placement of the vil-
lages, and cultural seclusion was advanced by language and by national
and religious differences.

I propose that, because of their special experience, religious convic-
tion, and positive self-concept, the free American people of the early
company villages, fiercely seeking to control their lives, sustained and
protected their culture. Central in their lives were the southern Baptist
teachings and the ecstatic songs retained from the experience of the

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7. The Grenadian Yoruba ritual is called Shango, while many people have changed the
name of the Trinidad Shango to Orisa. Within the Orisa religion of Trinidad, the rites,
sacrifices, feasts, and music establish spiritual contact with African gods. The visiting spir-
its often overcome and transform the personality, behavior, and dance of many communi-
cants. Because the participants of the Orisa and the Spiritual Baptists are often the same
people, the boundaries between these practices become blurred, but the borrowed musical
traditions are noticeable in both traditions.

American Second Awakening that was in full force during the period of
their relocation.

The exuberant worship behavior of the American settlers merged with
that of the post-emancipation (1838) influxes of Grenadian workers fa-
miliar with Shango ritual tradition and with the renewal of African tra-
ditions initiated by the soon-to-arrive Yoruba indentured workers. With
the syncretization of these late vigorous immigrant currents, the musical
voice of the Trinidad Spiritual Baptists was founded. Donald Wood
(1986, 39) anticipates my conclusions by stating that the American ex-
slaves "brought with them a highly emotional Baptist worship. . . . They
started a fashion in the religious life of Trinidad that has persisted, in
spite of official disapproval, until the present day."

I have reinforced Wood's statement with a cultural analysis based
upon an analogy of personal and social needs. The social mirroring com-
pares the physical and cultural imprisonment of the early nineteenth-
century refugees with that of the immigrant workers of the early years
of this century—it was the latter group, made up of workers from the
Windward Islands, converging near oil fields in south Trinidad, that
formed the nucleus of the newer religious body, the Spiritual Baptists.
Though such parallels remain interpretive, we compare the two Baptist
groups—the nineteenth-century Americans in Trinidad, as escapees
from slavery, and the Spiritual Baptists, as twentieth-century people de-
void of religious freedom—in similar bonded conditions, equally experi-
encing overt and legal religious suppression. There was an identifica-
tion, on the part of the Shouters, with the American Baptists that
defined the choice, selection, and process in song transmission. One may
suggest that the American spiritual functioned similarly for both groups
as a meaningful and unifying musical strategy.

The existence of the significant repertoire of spirituals in Trinidad and
Tobago constitutes historical data from which we may, through recon-
struction of text, bring forth an undeniable history of African diasporic
migration. But besides aiding in the documentation of chronological
fact, the songs stretch memory and, when used as a journal, expose the
people's unuttered experience and concealed knowledge. Furthermore,
these rich musical materials store messages and testimonies that may
later explain the survival of this key literature. Perhaps the survival of
the people and their communities may well be attributed to their sense
of "song."[8]

8. Culture bearers for this study, besides the women of the Third Company Baptist
Church (Mt. Pleasant), include Leader Cecil Jerry of Mt. St. George at Pembroke, Tobago;
Leader Cyril Alexander of Mt. Arrarat at Bon Accord, Tobago; and Bishop Eudora Thomas
of Mt. Carmelite National Evangelical Spiritual Baptist Faith Spiritual Assembly at
Tunapuna.

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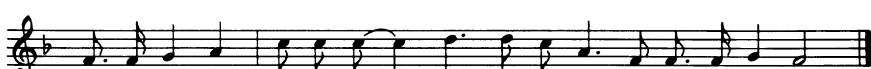
APPENDIX

Presented below are the trumpet songs collected and transcribed by Andrew Pearse. I gathered the additional verses from the women of the Third Company Baptist Church (Mt. Pleasant).

In view of their special historical interest, two blues/spirituals, taped at the Third Company Baptist Church interview, accompany the Pearse transcriptions. These two songs stand apart from the others in their obvious structural portrayal of the blues. Like the trumpets, the specific eras of appropriation and revitalization are undetermined. However, Eileen Southern (1983, 190, 191) notes that American spirituals with three-line structures (such as "Groanin'") were called "sorrow songs," and the earliest publication of this genre was in 1855. The first of these two songs, "Trouble-o," has been earlier documented by the Trinidadian scholar J. D. Elder (1971).

"Buy Me Own Lan'"

I'm goin' buy me land in Ca-naan, buy me own lan'. Buy me lan' in Ca-naan,

Buy me own lan'. De spir - it ___ wait - ing on me To buy me own lan'.

"King Jesus Give Us Water"

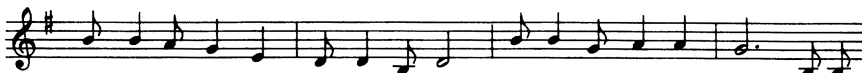King Je - sus give us wa-ter, but not from de well. King Je - sus give us

wa - ter, but not from de well. We went out sing-ing, we came back

bring - ing. King Je - sus give us wa - ter, but not from de well.

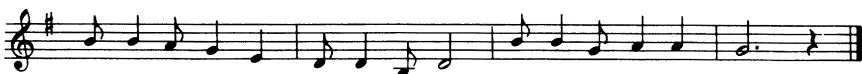*"Look at de Work"*

Look at de work laid   down on de field,   Show me your chil-dren   work.   Oh, I

look at de work laid   down on de field,   Show me your chil-dren   work.   Oh, I

look at de work laid   down on de field,   Show me your chil- dren   work.   Oh, I

look at de work laid   down on de field,   Show me your chil-dren   work.

2. Asked de Captain show me de work,
    Show me de children work.

3. Asked de Nurse show me the work,
    Show me de children work.

4. Asked the Prover show me the work,
    Show me the children work.

5. Asked the Diver show me de work,
    Show me de children work.

6. Asked de Leader show me de work,
    Show me de children work.

7. Asked the Watchman show me the work,
    Show me de children work.

8. Asked the Pumper show me de work,
    Show me de children work.

"Sail Out and Buy"

Cap - tain say, "Sail   out and buy- oh."   Sail - ee - oh, sail   out and buy-oh.

Sail - ee - oh,   sail   out and buy- oh.   Sail - ee - oh, sail   out and buy.

Sail - ee-oh, sail   out and buy, sail - ee - oh, sail out and   buy.____ De

> 2. De nursey say, "sail out and buy-oh."
>   Sail-ee-oh.
>   De nursey say, "sail out and buy-oh."
>   Sail-ee-oh.

(Note by Pearse: "The movement of this song is fast rowing, with strong off beat. It is reiterative, and as it warms up, the accented "Sail-ee-oh!" cuts in earlier and earlier . . .") Subsequent verses substitute the spiritual "gifts," the emblems of church hierarchy: Nurse, Watchman, Captain, Diver, Pumper, Preacher, Teacher, Physician.

"Jordan River"

Jor - dan   riv- er   so chil-ly and cold,   Help me to cross o -ver Jor - dan.

Jor - dan riv-er   so

> 2. Crossing, rolling Jordan,
>   Help me to cross over Jordan.

(Pearse note: "Sung on reaching the river for baptism.")

"Shout, Believer, Shout"

Shout,   be - liev - er,   shout,   on   Ca - naan's hap - py   shore.   I

land   you   safe   on   Ca - naan's hap - py   shore.

"David Mourns Absalom"

King Da - vid mourn-ing   for his   son   Ab - sa - lom,   son   Ab - sa - lom,____

son   Ab - sa - lom. King   Da - vid   mourn - ing   for his   son   Ab - sa - lom.

Oh,   Ab - sa - lom   my   son.____

2.   Go bring me back my very son, Absalom,
     Son, Absalom, son, Absalom.
     Go bring me back my son, Absalom,
     Son, Absalom, son, Absalom.

"De Israelites Travel in de Morning"

De   dumb and   de   blind   and   de   world - ly   man   cry, "De

Is - rael - ites   trav - el in   de   morn - ing." De   morn - ing.

CHORUS

Good   Lord   is   an   Is - rael - ite.   Good Lord   is   an

Is - rael - ite.   Good Lord   is   an   Is - rael - ite, _____   de

Is - rael - ites   trav - el   in   de   morn - ing. _____

2.   "Moses, Moses, take off the shoes!"
     The Israelites travel in de morning.
     "De ground thou stand is Holy Ground!"
     "The Israelites travel in de morning.

     (Chorus)

"On the Battlefield"

We're on the bat - tle - field for my Lord. We're on the bat - tle -

field for my Lord. We'll tell it to de world. We'll fight it to de

end. We're on de bat - tle - field for my Lord.
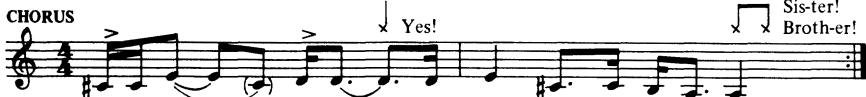
"We're Gwine to Nineveh"

We're gwine,— we're gwine — to Nin - e - veh land. Praise

ye the Lord. _____ We're gwine — we're gwine — to

Nin - e - veh land. Praise ye the Lord.

2. Captain sailing to Nineveh land.
   Praise ye the Lord.
   Captain sailing to Nineveh land.
   Praise ye the Lord.

3. Nineveh land is a beautiful land.
   Praise ye the Lord.
   Nineveh land is a beautiful land.
   Praise ye the Lord.

4. Nineveh land will soon overflow.
   Praise ye the Lord.
   Nineveh land will soon overflow.
   Praise ye the Lord.

"Trouble-o," Third Company Baptist Church

Trou-ble o, _____ trou-ble. ___ The whole world in trou-ble. ___

Climb - in' up the moun - tain, _____ creep - in' on me knees,

search - in' for me Je - sus ___ to tell Him a - bout me trou -ble. ___

"Groanin'," Third Company Baptist Church

I'm groan - in', I'm groan - in', groan - in' be - neath the moun-tain