

Two Songs Lesson, pt. 2

“Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round” Background and History

Adapted from Smithsonian ["Love Is the Thing to Make it Fall":](#)

African-American Music in Alabama before and during the Civil Rights Movement



This song addresses broader issues of unfairness. It is not used to play a game. This song is what we call a ‘Freedom Song’ and was used in the African-American Civil Rights Movement.

Not so very long ago in this country, people with different skin color were treated differently. There were restaurants, schools, hospitals, and stores that only white people could go into. There were even separate bathrooms and water fountains for white people and black people. During this time, in the southeast of the United States, where Alabama is located, there were many African-Americans who decided they no longer wanted to be treated differently. They wanted the government to treat them the same way as other people. They wanted to have equal voting rights. They wanted to be able to go to the same schools. They wanted to have the same freedoms as their white neighbors. The journey for freedom is what we now call the civil

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rights movement. One of the leaders of the civil rights movement was Martin Luther King, Jr. Let's stop right there for a moment, and listen to the song again. As we listen, listen to the words and how they relate to what was going on during this time."

Play track again.

African-Americans wanted to be treated more fairly in this country, so they held demonstrations, marches, and other protests to let people know that they wanted to be treated differently and wanted the same rights. While African-Americans campaigned for change, there were other people who were afraid of change. They liked things how they were and worried about things changing too quickly. They didn't feel everyone should be treated equally, and some of these people had powerful positions. For instance, the police chief in Birmingham, Alabama, Bull Connor, tried to scare demonstrators away by using water hoses against them or brought ferocious dogs close to them. Sometimes tear gas was used against the peaceful demonstrators. So it was a very scary time for the people who were fighting for freedom.

Let's look at the words of the song:

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round, 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', marchin' up to Freedomland.

Ain't gonna let no tear gas...

Ain't gonna let no horses...

Ain't gonna let George Wallace...

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round
trans. Kelley African-American Freedom Song

The musical score is written on three staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the song. The second staff contains the second line. The third staff contains the third line. The lyrics are: 'Ain't gon na let ___ no _ bo dy turn me round ___ Oh Lord, turn me round _', 'Oh Lord, turn me round. Ain't gon na let ___ no bo dy turn me round .', and '___ I'm gon na keep on a walk in' _ keep on a talk in' _ march in' up to Free dom land.'

Ain't gon na let ___ no _ bo dy turn me round ___ Oh Lord, turn me round _

Oh Lord, turn me round. Ain't gon na let ___ no bo dy turn me round .

___ I'm gon na keep on a walk in' _ keep on a talk in' _ march in' up to Free dom land.

Walking Democracy: The Power of Creativity During the Great Migration to the March on Washington

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School

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This song is a way for the singers to build courage. The song lists the things that are opposing them in their fight for freedom. George Wallace was the governor of Alabama at the time; he is very famous for his stance on segregation; he believed that whites and blacks should always be separated. George Wallace was mentioned in the song because he was in opposition of the demonstrators.

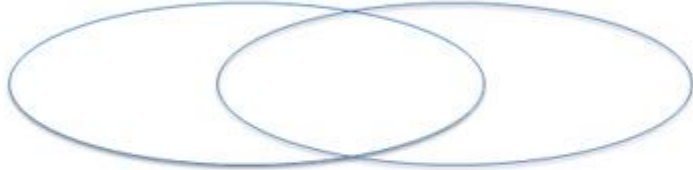
Activity

Create a Venn diagram comparing “Ain’t Nobody Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round” to “May Go Round the Needle”

Name _____ EXIT SLIP

1. How are “May Go ‘Round the Needle” and “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody” similar and different? Give at least one similarity and one difference.

May Go ‘Round the Needle Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody



Special to this song Both songs share Special to this song

2. List two important facts about the civil rights movement:

- 1.
- 2.