D1, 4 WADE IN THE WATER

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ the water children

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water, just like John

You know that God’s gonna trouble the water

Well I moved on into the water

The water was a little bit cold

It chilled my natural body

But it didn’t disturb my soul.

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water children

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water just like John

You know that Gods’s gonna trouble the water

If you get there before I do

God’s gonna trouble the water

Tell my mother I’m comin’ too

God’s gonna trouble the water

I’m waden’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water children

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water just like John

You know that God’s gonna trouble the water

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water children

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water just like John

You know that Gods’s gonna trouble the water

58

I know my time for freedom

Is way up ahead of me.

But I keep on moving on

I want my savior to always see that I’m a

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water children

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water just like John

You know that Gods’s gonna trouble the water

Well who’s the children dressed in red

God’s gonna trouble the water

Must be the children that Moses lead.

God’s gonna trouble the water.

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water children

Wadin’ in the water

Wadin’ in the water just like John

You know now Gods’s gonna trouble the water

59

DISCUSSION POINTS

 Looking at your copies of the escape stories we have read, what similarities do

you see between the stories and the song WADE IN THE WATER?

 Moses Roper and Virginia Washington both eventually escaped by water.

 Roper took to water many times to escape pursuers.

 What specific sections of the readings do you see that relate to the song?

 Washington: “… knowed when a boat was due in Memphis, and that they

could get me off safe with some men they knowed on the boat."

 Roper: “…found a little canoe about two feet wide. I managed to get in,

although the irons on my feet made it very dangerous, for if I had upset the

canoe, I could not swim.”

 Roper: “… I had now to wade through another river to which I came, and

which I had great difficulty in crossing, in consequence of the water

overflowing the banks of several rivers to the extent of upwards of twenty

miles. In the midst of the water, I passed one night upon a small island, and

the next day I went through the remainder of the water. On many

occasions, I was obliged to walk upon my toes, and consequently found the

advantage of being six feet two inches high, (I have grown three inches

since,) and at other times was obliged to swim. In the middle of this

extremity, I felt it would be imprudent for me to return; for if my master was

in pursuit of me, my safest place from him was in the water, if I could keep

my head above the surface.I was, however, dreadfully frightened at the

crocodiles, and most earnestly prayed that I might be kept from a watery

grave..”

 Roper: “…at Savannah, the first person I met was the captain of the Fox,

looking for another steward. He was a very kind man, belonging to the Free

States, and inquired if I would go back to his vessel. This usage was very

different to what I expected, and I gladly accepted his offer. This captain did

not know that I was a slave. In about two days we sailed from Savannah to

New York.”

 What is meant by these lyrics? “It chilled my natural body, But it didn’t disturb

my soul.”?

 That the hope of freedom created a willingness to endure physical

suffering.

 What is meant by the lyrics that “God is going to trouble the water”?

 This could be a prediction that God will punish the slaveholders.

60

 In what way could someone claim that “the waters” were eventually

“troubled”?

 The American Civil War.

61

D1, #7: SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

INTRO

Swing low sweet chariot, coming fore to carry me home

Swing low sweet chariot, coming fore to carry me home

Oh Swing down low

Swing down chariot come and let me ride

Swing down chariot come and let me ride

Help me Lord, help me Lord

I got a home on the other side

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see?

Comin’ fore to carry me home.

A band of angels comin’ after me

Comin’ fore to carry me home.

If you get to heaven before I do

Comin’ fore to carry me home.

Tell all my friends I’m comin’ too

Comin’ fore to carry me home.

I’m sometimes up and sometimes down

Comin’ fore to carry me home.

But still my soul feels heavenly bound

Comin’ fore to carry me home.

62

DISCUSSION POINTS

 Looking at your copies of the escape stories we have read, what similarities do

you see between the stories and the song Swing Low Sweet Chariot?

 Rivers are important in the song and in both stories.

 Virginia Washington received outside help (Soldiers=Band of Angels)

 Roper was also helped by an outside person (Captain of the Fox)

 What specific sections of the readings do you see that relate to the song? Give

some quotations and explain how they relate to the songs.

 Swing low sweet chariot, coming fore to carry me home

 Then a bunch of Yankee soldiers come past (Washington)

 Some authorities interpret this as a plea for the North to come

down South to free the slaves. This happened to Virginia

Washington

 Band of Angels

 Then a bunch of Yankee soldiers come past (Washington)

 “Band of Angels” is a possible reference to abolitionists, the

Underground Railroad, or the Union Army.

 River Jordan

 I had now to wade through another river to which I came (Roper)

 Any crossing of rivers on the journey to freedom can be related to

the River Jordan.

 Sweet Chariot

 they knowed when a boat was due in Memphis, and that they could

get me off safe with some men they knowed on the boat.

(Washington)

 Some authorities believe the “chariot” refers to any means of

travel to freedom.

 I’m sometimes up and sometimes down

 we gave all up for lost, and sometimes hoped, and sometimes feared

to hope, that we should never see the morning (Roper)

 On the back, give some additional quotations and explain their meaning.

63

D1, #8 BACK, BACK TRAIN

Back, Back train and get your load

Back, back train and get your load

Back, back Train

Back, Back Train

Back, back train and get your load.

I thought I heard that church bell tone.

I thought I heard that church bell tone.

Tone just like,

Tone just like,

Tone just like somebody’s gone.

I’m going home on the morning train.

I’m going home on the morning train.

Evening train

Evening train

Evening train might be too late.

Back, Back train and get your load

Back, back train and get your load

Back, back Train

Back, Back Train

Back, back train and get your load.

I thought I heard that church bell tone.

I thought I heard that church bell tone.

Tone just like,

Tone just like,

Tone just like somebody’s gone.

Get right church and let’s go home.

Get right church and lets go home.

Get right church

Get right church

Get right church and let’s go home.

Back, Back train and get your load

Back, back train and get your load

Back, back Train

Back, Back Train

Back, back train and get your load.

64

DISCUSSION POINTS

 Looking at your copies of the escape stories we have read, what similarities do

you see between the stories and the songs you were assigned?

 The song refers to people being gone, as in the escapes in the stories.

 What specific sections of the readings do you see that relate to the song? Give

some quotations and explain how they relate to the songs.

 a boat was due in Memphis (Washington)

 found a little canoe about two feet wide (Roper)

 the first person I met was the captain of the Fox, looking for another

steward. He was a very kind man, belonging to the Free States, and inquired

if I would go back to his vessel. This usage was very different to what I

expected, and I gladly accepted his offer. (roper)

 For all three he song refers to a train, but boats serve the same purpose.

 On the back, give some additional quotations and explain their meaning.

 Evening train might be too late

 Refers to the need to escape when the chance arises, rather than

waiting.

 let’s go home.

 This refers to escaping the freedom, not returning to the slaveholder.

Home=Freedom, even if going to a new place.

65

D1, #13 DANIEL

I’m gonna tell my Lord

Daniel

REPEAT 3

How they doin’ me here

Daniel

REPEAT 5

Put on your wabash shoes.

Daniel

REPEAT 2

Slip and slide the streets

Daniel

REPEAT 4

Put on your moving shoes

Daniel

REPEAT 2

Getting’ in a hurry now

Daniel

REPEAT 4

This ain’t none of my home

Daniel

NO REPEAT

Sure ain’t none of my home

Daniel

NO REPEAT

Living on borrowed land

Daniel

REPEAT 4

66

This ain’t none of my home

Daniel

NO REPEAT

Sure ain’t none of my home

Daniel

NO REPEAT

Living on borrowed land

Daniel

REPEAT 4

Well, I’m going to tell my Lord

Daniel

REPEAT 3

How they doing me here

Daniel

Repeat 5

Put on your Wabash shoes

Daniel

REPEAT 2

Slip and slide the streets

Daniel

REPEAT 4

Put on your moving shoes

Daniel

REPEAT 2

Getting in a hurry now

Daniel

REPEAT 4

67

I’m gonna tell my Lord

Daniel

REPEAT 3

How they doin’ me here

Daniel

REPEAT 7

68

DISCUSSION POINTS

 Looking at your copies of the escape stories we have read, what similarities do

you see between the stories and the songs you were assigned?

 There are complaints of mistreatment in the song and in the stories.

 There are numerous references in the song to leaving and “moving”.

 What specific sections of the readings do you see that relate to the song? Give

some quotations and explain how they relate to the songs.

 I was goin' to try and get away, if I died in doin' it, because I done got to

where I'd rather be dead than keep on so. Do you know that hard

treatment…(Washington)

 Relates to the complaint I’m gonna tell my Lord how they doing me here.

 One night I saw it was the best chance I'd ever get, so I 'slipped away…

(Washington)

 Put on your moving shoes

 Put on your Wabash shoes

 Slip and slide the streets

 I went on very quickly the whole of that day, fearful of being pursued. AND

I immediately rushed into the thickest part of the wood (Roper)

 Getting in a hurry now

 I was, however, dreadfully frightened at the crocodiles, and most earnestly

prayed that I might be kept from a watery grave

 I’m gonna tell my Lord. (Reference to communication with God)

 On the back, give some additional quotations and explain their meaning.

 Put on your wabash shoes.

 Wabash is a river that was crossed by some on the road to freedom. So

“Wabash shoes” could refer to escape.

69

D2, #8 STORIES FROM DA DIRT III

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus.

Steal away, steal away, Oh, I ain’t got long to stay here. (sung)

SPOKEN

If the dirt could talk, it sure would tell us a lot.

‘Cause in this here dirt,

Them old slaves, their bare feets runs to freedom

Right here, in this here dirt.

Listen, children. ‘Cause this be a story from the dirt.

It’s time to take the train to freedom.

Now I ain’t talking about no old railroad.

C’mon y’all. Get on board!

SUNG

Get on board little children

Get on board little children

Get on board little children

There’s room for many a more

Get on board little children

Get on board little children

Get on board little children

There’s room for many a more

SPOKEN

Hear tell there’s freedom at the old Fort Donelson

The Yankees done took over the place

We’d better get moving, folks.

There’s freedom! Freedom!

70

SUNG

Freedom, freedom, freedom is calling our names.

Oh, freedom, oh freedom. Freedom is calling our names, oh

Freedom, oh freedom, freedom is calling our names

Who, freedom, oh freedom, freedom is calling our names.

Run, ………………………. (SOUNDS OF FEAR AND THE BARKING OF DOGS) Run……

Run, brother, run. Or the paddyroll gonna get you.

Run brother run, and we’ll all get away.

Come on now, run Brother run, or the paddyroll gonna get you

You better run, Brother, run, and we’ll all get away.

Brother run, and Brother flew.

Brother lost his coat and shoes.

Tore his shirt in two

You better run, Brother Run.

Come on and run, Brother, run

Oh, the paddyroll gonna get you.

Oh run, Brother run,

And we’ll all get away.

You better run, brother run

Or the paddyroll gonna get you

Run, Brother run

And we’ll all get away.

SPOKEN

My pappy, my pappy, my pappy run away

My pappy run away during the war.

He became a bluesman for the Yankees.

Said he was gonna go fight old Jeff Davison.

Now folks say,

Folks say that my Pappy done gone to Lincolndon.

And he do it on the back of Old Massa’s horse.

Run………………………..

Hush………………………

71

DISCUSSION POINTS

 Looking at your copies of the escape stories we have read, what similarities do

you see between the stories and the songs you were assigned?

There are many references to “stealing away”, running away, being pursued,

Yankee soldiers, etc.

Students should have no trouble in finding similarities.

 What specific sections of the readings do you see that relate to the song? Give

some quotations and explain how they relate to the songs.

Selections from the readings are given here, but explaining the relation is not

done. The relations tend to be obvious.

 Then a bunch of Yankee soldiers come past (Washington)

 One day I made up my mind I was goin' to try and get away, (Washington)

 Steal away, steal away, steal away

 Them old slaves, their bare feets runs to freedom

 the dogs smelt me out and barked; upon which, Mr. Crockett came out,

followed me with his rifle, and came up with me (Roper)

 Run, brother, run. Or the paddyroll gonna get you (“paddyroll” refers to

patrollers and slave catchers)

 I turned round in all directions to see if I was pursued, and if I caught a

glimpse of any one coming along the road, I immediately rushed into the

thickest part of the wood, to elude the grasp of what, I was afraid, might be

my master. I went on in this way the whole day. (Roper)

 Run, brother, run. Or the paddyroll gonna get you

 I didn't have nothin' cept de clothes on my back, and not many of them.

(Washington)

 Brother run, and Brother flew, Brother lost his coat and shoes, Tore his

shirt in two

 On the back, give some additional quotations and explain their meaning.

 He became a bluesman for the Yankees.Said he was gonna go fight old Jeff

Davison.

 Joined the Union army (blue uniform)

72

D2, #17 IF YOU DON’T GO, DON’T HINDER ME.

If you don’t go, don’t hinder me

If you don’t go, don’t hinder me

If you don’t go, don’t hinder me

I’m on my way, Great God , I’m on my way

I’m on my way to Canaan Land

I’m on my way to Canaan Land

I’m on my way to Canaan Land

I’m on my way, Great God , I’m on my way

I’m on my way to Freedom Land

I’m on my way to Beaulah Land

I’m on my way to Freedom Land

I’m on my way, Great God, I’m on my way

I asked my mother, come go with me

I asked my mother, come go with me

I asked my mother, won’t you come go with me

I’m on my way, Great God, I’m on my way

If you don’t go, I’m going on anyhow

If you don’t go, going on anyhow

If you don’t go, going on anyhow

I’m on my way, Great God, I’m on my way

I’m on my way, Great God, I’m on my way

I’m on my way, Great God, I’m on my way

73

DISCUSSION POINTS

 Looking at your copies of the escape stories we have read, what similarities do

you see between the stories and the songs you were assigned?

Students can be expected to give answers similar to those on the other discussion

point sheets.

 They may refer to the mention of asking Mother to go, and the story about

Roper’s mother.

 What specific sections of the readings do you see that relate to the song? Give

some quotations and explain how they relate to the songs.

Students can be expected to give similar answers as on the discussion

sheets for the other songs

 On the back, give some additional quotations from the songs and explain their

meaning.

 I’m on my way to Canaan Land

 Canaan Land refers to the biblical Promised Land. In slave culture

Canaan Land refers to any place of freedom.

 I’m on my way to Beaulah Land

 Beaulah Land is also a reference to freedom