

Slave Resistance – Go Down Moses

Name _____

Go Down Moses

1. When Israel was in Egypt Land, let my people go
Oppressed so hard, they could not stand, let my people go
2. Go Down, Moses, way down in Egypt land
Tell old Pharaoh, let my people go
3. Thus said the Lord, bold Moses said, let my people go
If not I'll strike your first born dead, let my people go
4. No more bondage shall they be, let my people go
And then shall of all humankind be free, let my people go
5. Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land
Tell old, Pharaoh, let my people go.

Identify some words or phrases that you think might be symbols. What do you think they might mean?

What do you think the overall message of this song is, in relation to slavery?

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CODE WORDS AND PHRASES

Baggage: Escaping slaves

Bundles of wood: Fugitives to be expected

Canaan: Canada

Drinking gourd: Big Dipper and the North Star

Forwarding: Taking fugitive slaves from station to station

Freedom Train: The Underground Railroad

Gospel Train: The Underground Railroad

Heaven or Promised Land: Canada

Egypt: Slave states

Pharaoh: Slave holder

Load of Potatoes: Escaping slaves hidden under the farm produce in a wagon

Moses: Harriet Tubman

Parcel: Fugitives to be expected

Preachers: leaders, speakers underground railroad

River Jordan: The Mississippi

Shepherds: people escorting slaves

Station: place of safety and temporary refuge, safe-house

Station Master: keeper of safe-house

Stockholder: donor of money, clothing, or food to the Underground Railroad

Directions: Translate the lyrics to demonstrate your understanding of resistance codes in slave songs. Pay special attention to the underlined words and phrases. Other than the meaning they have as written, what else might they mean?

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3. Thus said the Lord, bold Moses said, let my people go _____

If not I'll strike your first born dead, let my people go _____

4. No more bondage shall they be, let my people go _____

And then shall of all humankind be free, let my people go _____

5. Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land _____ (don't do this line) _____

Tell old, Pharaoh, let my people go. _____ (don't do this line) _____