

**GUY AND CANDIE CARAWAN:  
MEDIATING THE MUSIC OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**KRISTEN MEYERS TURNER: Guy and Candie Carawan:  
Mediating the Music of the Civil Rights Movement  
(Under the direction of David Garcia)**

This thesis documents and analyzes Guy and Candie Carawan's mediation of music in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Guy and Candie framed the music of poor, rural blacks as a powerful repertoire that could be used as part of the Civil Rights struggle against oppression. Much of it came out of the church, appealing to the many religious people already part of the Movement. Their interest in the black culture of Johns Island, South Carolina led them to plan festivals and write a book to promote Gullah culture and its music. The reception of their activities among activists highlights the ambivalent attitude many middle-class blacks held for people still living in rural poverty. I also analyze issues of gender in their working method, which mirrored the gender roles in the Civil Rights Movement.

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“It is in the music of the movement, not in the newspapers, that the meaning and the reality of the movement and its people will be recorded and preserved.”<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The Civil Rights Movement was one of the most successful political campaigns in United States history. As a result of the efforts of thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of people across the country, major legislation was passed, and court rulings overturning Jim Crow laws were enforced ending legalized segregation. The Movement depended upon a cadre of mostly young people who organized at the grassroots level encouraging others to demand change, so that the ideals of equality under the law enshrined in the Constitution would finally be realized. The Civil Rights struggle also relied upon the power of music to an unusual extent. Activists then and now talk and write of the music they heard and sang at mass meetings, at demonstrations, and in jail, as being an important part of some of the most powerful experiences of their lives. Bernice Johnson Reagon explains, “Singing voiced the basic position of the movement, of taking action in your life.”<sup>2</sup> Bob Zellner remembers that, “whatever your ideological commitment or intellectual involvement, or your fears—the movement’s music leveled us all to the same emotional and spiritual plain.”<sup>3</sup> “I began to see the music itself as an

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<sup>1</sup>Sam Clark, “Freedom Songs and the Folk Process,” *Sing Out!* 41, no. 1 (February-March, 1964): 15.

<sup>2</sup>Bernice Johnson Reagon, “Interview” in *They Should Have Served that Cup of Coffee*, ed. Richard Cluster (Boston: South End Press, 1979), 99. Reagon is an activist, song leader, and a historian of the Movement.

<sup>3</sup>Bob Zellner with Constance Curry, *The Wrong Side of Murder Creek: A White Southerner in the Freedom Movement* (Montgomery, Alabama: New South Books, 2008), 148. Bob Zellner, the first white employee of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and was known for his willingness to be arrested.

important organizing tool to really bring people together—not only to bring them together but also as the organizational glue to hold them together,” says field secretary Sam Block.<sup>4</sup> And Bruce Hartford writes, “Freedom songs were the vows we took to stand together for justice and freedom, they were the pledges we made, each one to the other, to stand side by side through all that we might have to endure. As the furnace-fire turns ore into steel, singing our shared songs forged bonds of loyalty that for many of us have not withered with age in five decades.”<sup>5</sup>

The story of how music came to hold such a central position in the Civil Rights Movement is a complex one with many actors. As activist and historian Bernice Johnson Reagon points out, singing has long been an integral part of black culture. Beginning during slavery days, blacks turned to song in times of crisis to express what was fundamental to their condition, and sometimes dangerous to voice in spoken words.<sup>6</sup> Hollis Watkins explains it this way, “Singing music is an integral part of southern black people’s lives. So, it’s deeply embedded into the culture. So the reason this was so important is because this is something that black people could relate to. This is something that black people could identify with.”<sup>7</sup> Though people sang in the mass meetings that

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<sup>4</sup>Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 147.

<sup>5</sup>Bruce Hartford, “The Power of Freedom Songs,” Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement website, <http://bit.ly/dSdfkc> (accessed February 13, 2011). Hartford was an activist in the 1960s.

<sup>6</sup>Bernice Johnson Reagon, “Songs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1965” (PhD diss., Howard University, 1975), 29. I will be using the term “blacks” rather than African-American throughout as it is a term associated more closely with the time period I am discussing. I am uncomfortable using the word Negro, the most common term in the 1960s, because of the term’s racist connotations.

<sup>7</sup>“An Oral History with Mr. Hollis Watkins,” interview by John Rachal, October 23-30, 1995, Transcript, The University of Southern Mississippi Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, <http://bit.ly/hvAK6X>, 11. (Accessed February 6, 2011). Hollis Watkins was an activist who began working with SNCC in McComb, Mississippi.

helped to sustain the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56, which kicked off the modern Civil Rights Movement, no lasting Freedom Songs emerged from that campaign nor did music assume the central importance that it would assume later. It was not, as Robert Shelton (a music critic for the *New York Times* in the 1960s) wrote “a spontaneous mass movement of expression in song, arising from the urgency of the need to build morale among the Negroes and their white friends.”<sup>8</sup> Instead, music in the Movement was carefully and deliberately nurtured by musician/activists. Though music had long enjoyed a place in political movements, and Pete Seeger and other Northern folk singers were surely role models for some Southern activists, Guy Carawan collaborated with Movement workers on a consistent basis in 1960, encouraging students to use music as one of their organizing tools.<sup>9</sup> Black singers such as Cordell Reagon, Charles Neblett, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Bertha Gober, Rutha Mae Harris, and a host of others used their song leading abilities to both demonstrate the power and solidify the place of Freedom Songs in the Movement.

As it became clear that music had been established as an important component of the Movement, Guy (joined by his wife Candie) changed his involvement to a more documentary role. In the 1960s, Guy and Candie produced six LPs about the Movement, two printed songbooks, and a book about the people and culture of Johns Island, South Carolina.

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<sup>8</sup>Robert Shelton, “Singing for Freedom: Music in the Integration Movement,” *Sing Out!* 12, no. 5 (December-January 1962): 12. (Expanded reprint of *New York Times* article published August 20, 1962)

<sup>9</sup>It is important to realize that the bulk of the activists in SNCC were college age or younger. Many came from completely non-political backgrounds, so the use of music in the Labor movement, and the work of political folk singers like Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie would have been unfamiliar to many of the people Guy first worked with in 1960. Guy was likely the first political folk singer many of them had ever encountered.

Guy and Candie have deposited many of their own source recordings at the Southern Folklife Collection (SFC) at UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as written material such as letters, newspaper clippings, contracts and papers related to their writing projects and work at the Highlander Folk School. I interviewed the couple in June 2010, and I was also able to access several long interviews of the Carawans done by other researchers.

Historians and sociologists have written extensively about the Civil Rights Movement. The work of Charles Payne and Belinda Robnett in particular about grass roots organizing and leadership models have been important in my thinking about this period. Activists themselves have written prolifically about their experiences in the Movement providing me with valuable insight into the time period, and the importance the music seemed to have for all of them. Bernice Johnson Reagon has led the way in scholarly consideration of the music in the Movement.

My goal in this study is to intertwine a fuller account of the Carawans' work in the Movement with a consideration of the implications of their efforts. By examining their LPs and books, as well as the archival material at the SFC, I hope to bring more of their story to light. Though several scholars have written about Guy's work in 1960, their continuing work in the Movement is rarely discussed. Perhaps because Guy was the more public face of the couple, Candie's role in their partnership has never been studied to my knowledge. By examining their published work and LPs, as well as their source recordings, as historical documents, we can see how they presented black rural music in a highly politicized context.

In 1960 and 1961 Guy framed the music of poor, rural blacks as a repertoire useful to the Civil Rights struggle. The spirituals were powerful statements against



oppression, were part of black culture and came out of the church, appealing to the many religious people already part of the Movement. Later Guy and Candie brought other types of rural music such as children's songs and work songs to the attention of activists, presenting the music as a way to promote pride among blacks in the Movement in their cultural heritage, and to help construct a new empowered black national identity. Their work on Johns Island was devoted to documenting, preserving, and promoting the roots music and culture they thought were dying as a result of modernity.<sup>10</sup> For them this effort was part of their commitment to the Movement. The reception of their book, *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?*, however, highlighted the ambivalence many middle-class blacks felt for people still living in rural poverty.

Belinda Robnett, in her monograph, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*, identifies many of the central people in the Movement as "bridge leaders" who "foster ties between the social movement and the community."<sup>11</sup> Robnett characterizes bridge leaders as follows:

1. They become bridge leaders because of a social construct that denies them leadership opportunities for reasons other than their leadership experience.
2. Sometimes they do initiate organizations and do the groundwork, which means they may be more visible before an organization is finalized.
3. They operate in the free space of a movement or organization so they can make connections that formal leaders usually cannot.
4. They use a one-on-one style of leadership for mobilization and recruitment.

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<sup>10</sup>The concern that folk cultures were dying out was one that was deeply embedded in research on folk music. See Timothy J. Cooley, "Introduction," in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, eds. Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) for more information.

<sup>11</sup>Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19.

5. They have more leadership mobility in nonhierarchical structures and groups.
6. They may act as formal leaders during moments of crisis because of spontaneous and emotional events.
7. They are more closely bound to what the immediate participants want because they do not need to maintain legitimacy with the state.
8. They tend to want to take more radical or provocative action because they do not have to maintain legitimacy with the state.
9. They may hold formal leadership positions but are outside the inner circle of the formal leaders.
10. They may be leaders at the local level but excluded from the national level leadership.<sup>12</sup>

The Carawans were at once at the periphery and in the center of the Movement. In many ways, the Carawans meet the criteria that Robnett lays out for bridge leaders. Because they are white, they could not hold a formal leadership role in a Civil Rights group, though they were known in all of them.<sup>13</sup> They did not plan demonstrations or strategy, yet they helped nurture one of the most important aspects of the Movement. They operated in a free space within the Movement where they could foster connections between the music of rural, poor blacks and young activists largely drawn from the urban middle class. They did not have or want legitimacy from the state.<sup>14</sup> But in other ways they do not fit Robnett's criteria. They did not act as formal leaders in times of crises and since they did not plan strategy, they could not advocate for radical or provocative action. More importantly, since Robnett does not insist that a bridge leader must meet all of her

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<sup>12</sup>Robnett, pp. 20-3.

<sup>13</sup>Though most Civil Rights organizations were committed to integration, they were always led by blacks. All involved understood that the only way for blacks to take back the power denied them by segregation was to force the white power structure to deal with them as equals. If whites usurped this role, the struggle itself had the potential of becoming just another expression of white paternalism.

<sup>14</sup>See chapter 1 of *How Long? How Long?* for a complete explanation of Robnett's concept of bridge leadership.

conditions, the Carawans were not members of the constituency (poor, rural blacks) they connected to the Movement, nor were they a two-way conduit for information and ideas between the Movement and other people, both of which are inherent in Robnett's conception of bridge leaders.<sup>15</sup>

Though they introduced roots music to activists, Guy and Candie wanted to maintain a particular tradition, which they thought should not be modified by the Movement or its ideology. Instead, they hoped that as people's lives improved as a result of the successes of the Civil Rights struggle, roots music and culture would be revitalized along with the people, while the style and repertoire would not change. While they hoped that activists would be affected by the music they introduced, the Carawans did not want the roots culture from which the music originated to be modified by the Movement.

Even though the Carawans might not precisely fit Robnett's concept of a bridge leader, her ideas are still important in understanding how Guy and Candie came to have credibility with activists. Guy was not a paid employee in the 1960s, but the Carawans were closely associated with the Highlander Folk School during the Civil Rights period.<sup>16</sup> This unique institution, still in existence today, is dedicated to training activists and encouraging social change in the South. Founded by Myles Horton in 1932, Highlander staff first worked with the Labor Movement, but by the time Guy arrived, the focus of the school had shifted to Civil Rights. Highlander always had a strong music program

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<sup>15</sup>A classic bridge leader is Fannie Lou Hamer, a poor tenant farmer from Mississippi who connected people like her to the Movement. She helped translate the goals of the Movement to share croppers, explaining why they should register to vote and how the Movement could help them, but she also explained the lives and needs of tenant farmers to the young, often middle-class activists in Mississippi. Her advice and insight helped change the way Movement participants approached tenant farmers.

<sup>16</sup>Guy sometimes received payments for leading Highlander workshops, but the Carawans' only source of income from 1960 to 1966 was a grant from the Newport Folk Foundation and fees from Guy's folk music concerts.

because Myles' wife Zilphia was a musician. Robnett describes a bridge organization as one that empowers the masses "by teaching indigenous groups how to help themselves."<sup>17</sup> The Highlander educational philosophy, which held that local people involved in local struggles must decide for themselves the best strategy for affecting change in their communities, exactly fits Robnett's contention that "tactics, strategies and activities of these organizations are born of the wishes of those whom they seek to empower."<sup>18</sup> Because the Carawans were associated with Highlander, and Guy held a leadership position in the organization as volunteer music director, the activists were inclined to listen to, and trust, them.

As a result of his expertise in folk music, his political awareness and his connection to Highlander, Guy was in a unique position to introduce music to activists. As a folk singer, with ties to the Left, he understood how important music could be in a political struggle. Because he was involved with Highlander (a bridge organization), which hosted many workshops for Civil Rights activists in the early 1960s, he had access to, and more importantly, credibility with young people who were just beginning to shape the strategies they would use to fight segregation. Rather than functioning as a true bridge leader however, I contend that Guy and Candie can better be understood as mediators. Though he was committed to the Highlander educational philosophy, Guy still had an agenda of his own. He was convinced that the spirituals sung in poor, rural black communities could be a powerful tool in the Movement, and he introduced that music to activists in a calculated manner at several key gatherings and workshops between May

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<sup>17</sup>Robnett, 23.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 24.

1959 and May 1961.<sup>19</sup> Some activists, young and from the middle class, associated Negro spirituals with degradation, slavery and poverty, though most came to understand and appreciate the usefulness and power of the songs.

Once music had been established, Guy changed his approach. And, it is in the second phase of his involvement with the Movement that his wife Candie comes to play a key role with him. Married to Guy in March 1961, Candie was much younger and not a trained musician. Together they attended and recorded mass meetings throughout the South and interviewed activists about the songs they were singing. These tapes and conversations formed the basis of six documentary LPs, whose sales went to Civil Rights organizations, but also were designed to explain the Movement to outsiders. Once again, the Carawans were in the role of mediators, not between songs and activists, but between the goals and aspirations of the Movement and mainstream America. The recordings were shaped to highlight the music, but also to explain what was happening in the South. They included short speeches and even little plays so that listeners could have a sense of what the Movement was all about.<sup>20</sup> Their LPs include *Nashville Sit-In Story: Songs & Scenes of Nashville Lunch Counter Desegregation* and *Freedom in the Air: A Documentary on Albany, Georgia*.

The two planned, and Guy led, several important workshops in 1964 and 1965 in which they continued to encourage Civil Rights workers to learn about and respect the roots culture of Southern rural blacks, bringing in performers like Doc Reese and the Sea Island Singers to teach activists prison, work, and children's songs. The Carawans again

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<sup>19</sup>Guy Carawan, interview by Josh Dunson, December 11, 1964, FS-7389 in the Ronald D. Cohen Collection Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>20</sup>See Appendix 1 with listing of the Civil Rights recordings and publications.

encountered resistance from some of the workshop participants. While they accepted the spirituals of the rural South, some people were uncomfortable with the work, prison and children's songs that were introduced in the meetings. The workshops, which have not been extensively studied, were one component in fostering the growing black pride and black nationalism that would eventually alter the Civil Rights struggle in the late 1960s.

The Carawans also published two songbooks containing the repertoire of the Movement culled from their interviews and recordings. The introductions to these books and the contextual quotations and information about the songs, are the basis of the Carawans' public mediation. They framed the pieces, not just as music used in the Movement, but also as an important part of black cultural heritage. If the songs were the expression of the thoughts of the Movement as Bernice Johnson Reagon and many others attest, then the Carawans were the ones who presented those thoughts in their LPs and songbooks. While Guy took the lead in their public work with the Movement, Candie was the inside person who organized and wrote. She composed all their rough drafts, and dealt with many of the mundane organizational details involved in getting their work published and planning their workshops.<sup>21</sup> This more nurturing, background role was one that many women filled in the Movement, and was connected with the culturally accepted role for women in the 1960s.

The couple lived and worked on Johns Island in South Carolina for two years between 1963 and 1965. Guy applied for, and received, a grant from the Newport Folk Foundation for a series of folk festivals on Johns Island aiming to provide work for local

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<sup>21</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

musicians, and trying to generate interest in roots music in the area.<sup>22</sup> While living on Johns Island, Guy and Candie conducted interviews and research about the Gullah culture that culminated in a book, published in 1967, called *Ain't We Got a Right to the Tree of Life*. As was their custom, Candie wrote the rough draft of the book, and they edited it together.

In 1965 the Carawans left Johns Island, because they no longer felt comfortable living there. “You almost had to criticize any white people that were taking a serious interest in black culture or history or politics,” explains Candie.<sup>23</sup> Although they continued to publish their work, it was not always well received among activists and even among some of the residents of Johns Island.

As whites working in the Civil Rights Movement, Guy and Candie always had to negotiate the fine line between helpfulness and paternalism. As the 1960s wore on, that line became harder to define. Early in the 1960s, activists were working towards integration and wanted white involvement, as long as blacks were always in leadership roles. The Carawans, who acted as free agents, were not seen as a threat, and were generally welcomed. As the 1960s progressed, white participation in the Movement became more problematic. Actions that were interpreted as helpful in 1960, were seen as paternalistic by 1966. A white man interested in black culture might have been regarded as an oddity in 1960, but it looked more sinister to some activists in 1966. The rise of black nationalist ideology within the Movement, most especially in the Student

Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), led to a heightened sensitivity among

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<sup>22</sup>Guy Carawan, interview by Studs Terkel, broadcast on WFMT Radio Chicago, January 18, 1964, FT-3720 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>23</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

many blacks to any white involvement with the struggle, or anything else they identified as inherently black. Many activists argued that there was no way for a white person to be involved with black culture without being paternalistic and condescending at best, racist at worst. Unfortunately, this attitude helped lead to an almost complete breakdown of trust between whites and blacks in the Movement and narrowed the areas open to white participation.

Mediation is a difficult business. Mediators are always open to the criticism that they are distorting the original artifact they are introducing to a new audience. As mediators the Carawans tried to leave as little trace of their own personalities as possible in order to give previously voiceless people a voice without interference. An interesting tension results between the Carawans' desire to be anonymous, and their own role in shaping the message that their work presents. Whether it was Guy speaking to activists, or Candie writing for the general public, the two stressed the value and worth of the rural people in the South and their music. Some people, including those on Johns Island, found the image they presented unpalatable. Though no one disputed that the population Guy and Candie described in *Ain't We Got a Right* was largely poor and uneducated, this truth inconveniently challenged the "uplift" narrative that was so important to many blacks. In the end they were unable to completely sidestep all the pitfalls that come with mediation.

**Guy Carawan—"I don't want to be just an entertainer."**<sup>24</sup>

Guy Carawan was born on July 27, 1927 in Los Angeles, California, the son of two Southerners who had moved West.<sup>25</sup> He became interested in folk music around the

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<sup>24</sup>Guy Carawan to Moe Asch, August 12 [1959] in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



time he graduated with a degree in mathematics from Occidental College. As a result of his contact with the Los Angeles folk music scene, he developed an interest in the study of culture and folklore. He decided to go back to school (this time to the University of California at Los Angeles) to pursue a master's degree in sociology. While there, he studied with renowned folklorist Wayland Hand and even after graduating in 1952, he continued to work with Hand on "folklore and the history of ballad and folksong collecting in the U.S. and the British Isles."<sup>26</sup> Hand evidently recognized Guy's growing commitment to activism, because he advised Guy not to mix folklore studies with politics.<sup>27</sup> Guy chose to ignore this piece of advice.

During his first trip to the South in 1953 to study folk music Guy spent time at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. He had met Pete Seeger the year before in LA and, after learning of Guy's interest in folk music and politics, Seeger encouraged Guy to visit the school if he ever went to Kentucky. Because Zilphia Horton was a musician, she included music in Highlander's workshops, and had collected hundreds of songs from people who attended classes. Guy would later make good use of this archive, introducing workshop participants to songs Zilphia had preserved. For the next six years, he visited Highlander every time he was in the South. In 1959, Myles Horton asked him to become Highlander's volunteer music director. Zilphia had died in 1956, and the music program had perished with her. Guy's association with Highlander continues to this day.

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<sup>25</sup>Guy's mother was from Charleston and his father from North Carolina.

<sup>26</sup>Guy Carawan, interview by Ron Cohen, January 24, 1991, Transcript, p. 7, in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>27</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

In the years between the end of his formal education, and the beginning of his work with Highlander, Guy performed folk music and worked other jobs as he needed to, in order to make ends meet. He spent much of this time learning about folk music and forging connections with other musicians and scholars, which would become the basis for the rest of his life's work. He got to know and performed with Pete Seeger, Frank Hamilton and other folk musicians, and grew close to Bess Hawes, Alan Lomax's sister. She encouraged Guy and his first wife Noel<sup>28</sup> to go to the World Youth Conference in Moscow over the summer of 1957. On the way to Moscow, Guy and Noel spent a month with Alan Lomax in England. Lomax's ideas about music, the study of folklore and the possibilities of music's use in political work were of profound importance to Guy.<sup>29</sup> Lomax's notion that folk music could be used as a way to reshape a decadent American culture resonated with Guy's idealism. Familiar with the recordings Alan and his father John had deposited at the Smithsonian, Guy was later inspired to buy good recording equipment by their example.<sup>30</sup> As he described it later, "I learned so much by staying with Alan and it would have a big influence on me once I got back to the United States."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Guy got to know Noel through her father Bill Oliver, the music critic for the Los Angeles Times, who was also active in the People's Songs movement on the West Coast. It was through the Oliver family that Guy first got to know other folk singers, including Pete Seeger, and became interested in performing himself.

<sup>29</sup>For more information about Alan Lomax, please see John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* (New York: Viking, 2010). Guy and Lomax remained friends until Lomax's death in 2002. Lomax edited and produced a recording called *Freedom in the Air: A Documentary on Albany, Georgia* based on Guy's source recordings in 1962. They also visited each other throughout the 1960s, and Lomax supported the Carawans' work on Johns Island.

<sup>30</sup>Guy Carawan, "Remembrance of Alan Lomax, October 2002," Cultural Equity website, <http://bit.ly/i6kO9l>, (accessed March 29, 2011).

<sup>31</sup>Guy Carawan, interview by Ron Cohen, January 24, 1991, p. 9, Précis in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The trip to Moscow was eventful. He and Peggy Seeger started performing duets together and spent a month singing in Russia under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. Then he, Noel and about forty others went to China despite a ban against such travel by the United States government. When he returned home, after a hearing in which he refused to state categorically that he would never return to China, he was informed on December 24, 1958 that his passport had been revoked.<sup>32</sup> The trip was notorious enough that people remembered the incident even several years later. In a letter to Candie Carawan, soon after she met Guy in 1960, her friend Norma Wolff asked in a letter, “Is’nt [sic] he [Guy] one of the people who went to the Youth Festival in Russia and then went on into China?”<sup>33</sup> Newspaper articles about him, particularly in Charleston when he and Candie lived near there between 1963 and 1965, often referred to the trip to China in order to suggest that he was a Communist. This charge would be used to discredit him and Candie, and to buttress arguments in the popular press that Highlander, and by extension the Civil Rights Movement, were infiltrated by Communists and Communist sympathizers. However, according to Candie, neither she nor Guy ever considered themselves Communists. He was exposed to progressive and radical political ideas in the 1950s, and believed in racial equality and the end of segregation, but within the context of a true democratic government—one that was open to all of its citizens. Guy decided to go to China and Russia because he was curious about other people and places around the

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<sup>32</sup>Frances Knight to Guy Carawan, December 24, 1958 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>33</sup>Normal Wolff to Candie Carawan, May 22, 1960 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

world, and also because he did not believe that the government should be able to tell him where to travel.<sup>34</sup>

By 1959 Guy was becoming more committed to the Civil Rights Movement. He and Noel had divorced, and he decided to live in the South. Along with Septima Clark<sup>35</sup> and several others, Guy was arrested in the summer of 1959 at Highlander on trumped-up alcohol violations; charges that would become the basis of Tennessee's successful effort to close the Highlander Folk School, though the institution merely reorganized and opened under the name Highlander Research and Education Center.<sup>36</sup> This arrest, the first of several in his career, prompted Guy to write a letter to Moe Asch (the owner of Folkways Records), Irwin Silber (of *Sing Out!* Magazine) and Pete Seeger dated August 3, 1959 in which he not only described his arrest but also the music, which had helped to sustain him and everyone else at Highlander during the frightening raid and his subsequent night in jail. He writes movingly of hearing Clark singing "Michael Row the Boat Ashore" through the walls of his cell, and finally being able to fall asleep comforted by her voice.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Candie Carawan to Kristen Turner, April 3, 2011, private email communication.

<sup>35</sup>Septima Clark is one of the most important figures in the Civil Rights movement. She was a school teacher from Charleston, who came to Highlander after she was fired for her political activities. Her most important achievement was the organization, planning and administering of the Citizen Education Program (CEP). This adult education program taught students how to read and write enough so that they could pass the literacy tests in order to register to vote, eventually spread throughout the South. The CEP was later transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Council. The program was very successful. In 1964 alone 50,000 people registered to vote after going through the CEP. Many of the grassroots organizers in the Movement were graduates of the program.

<sup>36</sup>Highlander had long been under pressure from State officials because the school was integrated and, because of its association with both the Labor and Civil Rights Movements, widely believed to be a Communist front.

<sup>37</sup>Guy Carawan to Pete [Seeger], Moe [Asch], Irwin [Silber], et al, August 3 [1959] in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The letter shows that Guy had already formulated some ideas of how he could serve the Movement. He tells of plans to go to Montgomery to record songs and perhaps of Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking, which he hopes Asch will release as an LP. Guy also informs them of his plans to spend the winter on Johns Island helping Septima Clark with the Citizenship Education Program. He writes,

Of course I'll really learn a lot from these people and won't go there with any presumptions that I'm going to teach them to sing. They already know how to do that far better than I'll ever be able to I expect. But I do know now from my experience so far this summer that I can help bring people out and act as a coordinator, also teach them new songs.<sup>38</sup>

Guy sent out another letter in August to Highlander's mailing list in which he outlines his plans for the future and asks for help from Highlander's supporters. "We can revive that singing spirit at Highlander and spread it all over the South to help in the fight for integration." He goes on to suggest concrete ways this goal can be accomplished:

1. Put out a book of "songs for integration"
2. Hold workshops to train song leaders "who will go back and function in their own communities and organizations"
3. Put out records to go with the book to "help new song leaders (and the public in general) to learn these songs"
4. Organize a festival to bring together "different kinds of Negro and white music, song and dance, both old and new, that could and would be well attended and well integrated."
5. Plan "workshops for music educators and workers in schools and churches."
6. Hold workshops for folklorists
7. In a PS he adds "Another project that we have been discussing is that of a traveling performance group that would carry Highlander's message of brotherhood to

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<sup>38</sup>Guy Carawan to Pete [Seeger], Moe [Asch], Irwin [Silber], et al, August 3 [1959] in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

southern communities through dramas, singing, dancing and other kinds of performances.”<sup>39</sup>

In the next six years, Guy would meet each one of these goals. It is a testament to his determination and commitment that working with almost no resources he (and Candie after their marriage) was able to accomplish such an ambitious list of projects. Right from the start Guy had a vision for how he could be of use to the Movement, and though he did other things in this time period, this basic list would guide his actions for years to come.

The story of how Guy helped to introduce spirituals into the Movement has been told elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> I will cover only the basic highlights here. On April 1-3, 1960 Highlander held a workshop for college-age activists. Most had participated in the sit-ins that were sweeping the South, and had been handpicked by Septima Clark and Ella Baker to attend.<sup>41</sup> In his capacity as music director, Guy encouraged the participants to share the music they had been singing at meetings and in jail. A quartet from the American Baptist Seminary had adapted several popular songs, and written a few of their own. Guy taught the students “We Shall Overcome,” “We Shall Not Be Moved,” “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize,” “This Little Light of Mine” and others.<sup>42</sup> Candie, who attended this meeting,

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<sup>39</sup>Guy Carawan to Highlander supporters, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 339.

<sup>40</sup>Peter J. Ling, “Developing Freedom Songs: Guy Carawan and the African-American Traditions of the South Carolina Sea Islands,” *History Workshop Journal* 44 (1997): 199-213 and Chapter One in Joe Street, *The Culture War in the Civil Rights Movement* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007) are two sources for Guy’s work from 1959 to 1961.

<sup>41</sup>Katherine Charron, *Freedom’s Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 290. Ella Baker was running the SCLC at the time, and she and Clark were in constant contact looking for young activists who they could recruit into the Movement. Baker in particular became the most important adult mentor for SNCC’s members and helped to create the infrastructure that allowed the Movement to function in the South.

<sup>42</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 349.

remembers that everyone immediately recognized that “We Shall Overcome” was special.<sup>43</sup> Many of the same students, as well as Guy, traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina two weeks later for the meeting in which SNCC was founded. Once again, Guy sang “We Shall Overcome” and other songs.<sup>44</sup> Guy led all these pieces in a traditional “lined out” manner, in which he started the singing and then guided the audience through the verses using a call-and-response style, just as spirituals were often performed in rural churches.

Guy, who by this time was dating Candie, spent a lot of time in Nashville in the spring of 1960, singing and working on a documentary recording on the sit-ins. The activists he got to know there formed the core of SNCC’s active membership and they carried the songs Guy taught them throughout the South. In August 1960, Highlander held a Sing for Freedom Workshop for song leaders and musicians. Students talked about song leading methods, how to form singing groups and wrote their own freedom songs.<sup>45</sup> Candie (who was living at Highlander before returning to Pomona College in California for her senior year) remembers that Septima Clark pushed Guy to write a curriculum to teach new song leaders, which could be duplicated throughout the South. As a life-long educator, and the person who had written the Citizenship School curriculum, it makes

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<sup>43</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>44</sup>Each of the songs Guy introduced to the activists has long, often complex histories. For instance “We Shall Overcome” started as a hymn by Charles Tindley called “I’ll be All Right.” Black workers on strike against the American Tobacco Company modified the song to “We’ll Overcome” and later taught it to Zilphia Horton at Highlander. She, in turn, taught it to Pete Seeger (who changed the lyrics to We Shall Overcome), who taught it to Frank Hamilton, who taught it to Guy, who brought it back to Highlander when he taught it to the college activists in April 1960. The history of this song shows the complex interplay between activists, musicians, the folk revival, and the Labor and Civil Rights Movements in microcosm. Along its journey, new verses were added (and continued to be added after 1960), the tempo slowed down and different singers subtly modified the melody. For more information on “We Shall Overcome” please see Bernice Johnson Reagon, “Songs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1965,” PhD diss., Howard University, 1975.

<sup>45</sup>Report on the Sing for Freedom Workshop in August 1960 by Bernice Robinson, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 115.

sense that Clark would want a method that could be replicated in other places. Guy resisted this, however, and argued that song leading and song writing were not the sort of skills that could be taught in such a rigid way.<sup>46</sup>

The August 1960 workshop attendees also assembled a songbook, which Highlander duplicated and Guy began to distribute at every gathering he attended. In October 1960, after the annual Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) convention where he gave out 100 songbooks, Guy was arrested with Ralph Abernathy and others for riding in an integrated car and the songbooks he had with him were confiscated.<sup>47</sup> He also distributed songbooks at SNCC's first all-hands meeting also in October 1960.

By the end of 1961, music was firmly established in the Movement. The Freedom Riders who had spent the summer of 1961 in Parchman Prison in Mississippi had found music especially helpful in enduring the hardships there.<sup>48</sup> They emerged from prison with many new songs to teach others, and a deep appreciation for the power of music. Cordell Reagon and Charles Sherrod, both song leaders and members of SNCC, began to organize in Albany, Georgia in the fall of 1961. There they met two experienced local singers, Bernice Johnson (who later married Cordell) and Rutha Harris. Albany was a long, hard, and ultimately unsuccessful campaign, but it served as a proving ground for SNCC and lessons learned there were put to good use in other actions. The songs and

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<sup>46</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>47</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, 7, p. 335. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the President of the SCLC. Ralph Abernathy was one of his most trusted aides.

<sup>48</sup>The Freedom Rides were organized first by CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) then SNCC. The Riders were attempting to integrate interstate bus travel and bus stations. They were met with harsh, sometimes violent, resistance and many were arrested in Mississippi and held there over the summer.



musicians who emerged from Albany solidified the growing role music had in the Movement. The SNCC Freedom Singers, all Albany veterans, traveled all over the country giving concerts and singing at mass meetings.<sup>49</sup>

In 1965 Guy writes that after a SNCC meeting in Jackson, Mississippi in July 1961 he realized that “there were so many good experienced singers who knew how to get freedom singing going and could do it much better than I.”<sup>50</sup> Though he and Candie would sing when invited, his focus changed from teaching new Freedom Songs to collecting the songs that others could teach him. Together the Carawans would concentrate on transmitting the music and goals of the Movement to other activists and the wider public through recordings and songbooks.

In this early phase of the Movement, Guy’s role as a mediator between the spirituals and hymns largely sung by rural poor blacks, and the younger, more affluent activists is very important. Though he never denigrates the pop-song parodies and newly composed freedom songs he heard from the activists at the April 1960 workshop, he clearly thought that spirituals were the more powerful expression of resistance to oppression. As a folklorist, deeply influenced by Alan Lomax, he believed that only by taking advantage of the long tradition of resistance in black culture could the young protesters wage a successful battle against Jim Crow. For him, as for Lomax, the songs embodied that spirit of resistance in a way that nothing else could. Guy wrote that he realized people were comfortable singing because of their church experiences, but they weren’t taking advantage of the richness of their heritage. “So many great old spirituals

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<sup>49</sup>The original SNCC Freedom Singers were Rutha Harris, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Cordell Reagon and Charles Neblett.

<sup>50</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 350.

that express hatred of oppression and a longing for freedom were being left out.”<sup>51</sup> He presented the music as a powerful statement from the Christian tradition against oppression and part of a specifically black cultural heritage. As he worked to introduce those spirituals, he encountered significant opposition from the activists themselves. Most blacks in the Movement were unfamiliar with, or embarrassed by, roots music perhaps as the result of racism, or the prejudices of the black middle class, and Guy wanted to change that.

Resistance to the music Guy was teaching centered around the repertoire and the style of singing he was encouraging. For some people who were already song leaders, his use of guitar or banjo accompaniment was an issue. Many rural black churches only used *a capella* singing, while urban churches often had a Hammond organ or piano in the sanctuary. While the guitar was an unusual choice to accompany spirituals, the banjo was considered an unholy instrument and completely unacceptable in a church. Guy quickly stopped playing the banjo at mass meetings.<sup>52</sup> There were also older, rural people who did not like the new freedom lyrics to older spirituals thinking they were blasphemous, or at least disrespectful of the original religious meaning of the texts.<sup>53</sup>

For young people the fact that the music was associated with the lower classes or even slavery was what often made them uncomfortable. Guy wrote in a 1964 article that “They [young people] are the victims of a couple of generations of Negro educators who were trained in traditional white schools and taught to ignore or scorn all African and

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<sup>51</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 348.

<sup>52</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>53</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 347.

Negro folk culture. Genuine Negro music is discredited. It is no wonder that many of the older people are ashamed to sing the old songs in front of whites and more educated Negroes.”<sup>54</sup> In an interview with Sue Thrasher, Guy explained that students “particularly at Fisk or other places were trying to get a modern education” and were ambivalent about the music.<sup>55</sup> The Carawans write in *We Shall Overcome* that black teachers, trained in white schools, did not teach spirituals. Ministers and music directors at churches had substituted “citified” music similar to what was sung at white churches.<sup>56</sup> The students found the songs “old-fashioned and ‘down country,’”<sup>57</sup> At the end of one recording session in 1961, Candie remembers Angeline Butler (a young black activist) warning Guy, “Now, don’t make us sound like some down country niggers.”<sup>58</sup> They were used to singing or hearing spirituals and hymns the way the Fisk Jubilee Singers performed them. This style, which was designed to appeal to a concert audience, was quite different than the “shouting” style Guy learned on Johns Island.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Guy Carawan, “The Living Folk Heritage of the Sea Islands,” *Sing Out!* 14, no. 2 (April – May, 1964): 31.

<sup>55</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

<sup>56</sup>Guy Carawan and Candie Carawan, *We Shall Overcome: Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement* (New York: Oak Publications, 1963), 8.

<sup>57</sup>Josh Dunson, *Freedom in the Air: Song Movements of the Sixties* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 42.

<sup>58</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>59</sup>The style used by the Fisk Jubilee Singers was particularly important to the students from Fisk University who were some of the most important activists in Nashville. The Jubilee Singers are so revered at Fisk that since 1871 the entire institution honors the group with a school holiday celebrated on October 6, which features (among other festivities) a procession to the graveyard where some of the original singers are buried. I appreciate Sandra Graham informing me of this ritual in a private conversation.

Students at Fisk, many of whom were politically active and at the center of the Nashville campaign, were also indoctrinated in the uplift philosophy.<sup>60</sup> Guy singled out Fisk students as being particularly embarrassed by the new Freedom Songs, which were sung “with hand clapping and in a rural free-swinging style.”<sup>61</sup> Many middle class blacks sought to distance themselves from the rural lower class. By emulating respectable behaviors associated with mainstream middle class (white) values, blacks tried to insulate themselves from the worst aspects of racial oppression, and emphasize their own worthiness to have access to white society and the full benefits of United States citizenship.<sup>62</sup>

Guy was experiencing the same types of challenges Septima Clark did when she first organized the Citizenship Schools. She quickly learned that “many middle-class blacks were extremely hostile and prejudiced one to the other” and did not make good teachers because of their dismissive attitudes towards rural culture and people.<sup>63</sup> However, Guy’s interest in, and reverence for, music of the lower class fed directly into what would become one of SNCC’s most important projects. As SNCC field secretaries worked in the Deep South with rural blacks in Mississippi and Alabama, they became committed to abolishing class prejudice against poor blacks. Activists began to

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<sup>60</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>61</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 347.

<sup>62</sup>Marisa Chappell, Jenny Hutchinson and Brian Ward, “‘Dress Modestly, Neatly ... As if You Were Going to Church’: Respectability, Class and Gender in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Early Civil Rights Movement,” in *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 70-73.

<sup>63</sup>Jacqueline A. Rouse, “‘We seek to know ... in order to speak the truth:’ Nurturing the seeds of discontent – Septima P. Clark and Participatory Leadership,” in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, eds. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 105.

understand more fully what Guy had been arguing all along, that the music was not only an important organizing tool, but part of a culture which had become devalued as a result of racism.

**Candie Carawan in Nashville—“One of the best things about being in the South was all the Negro music I learned.”<sup>64</sup>**

Carolanne Anderson arrived in Nashville, Tennessee from Los Angeles, California in January 1961 to attend Fisk University for one semester.<sup>65</sup> She was in her junior year at Pomona College in California, and was participating in an exchange program between Pomona and Fisk. Black students from Fisk spent a semester at Pomona, while white students at Pomona went South. Carolanne (known as Candie) was from a politically progressive family, and had been interested in the Civil Rights Movement since high school.<sup>66</sup> During her sophomore year Candie roomed with Marietta Dockery, a student from Fisk who was involved with politics. An intensely curious person, Candie wanted to go to Fisk because she “was just really intrigued with the whole idea of nonviolent resistance and the fact that the South was segregated but that there were people willing to work on it.”<sup>67</sup> Her connection to Dockery facilitated her entry into a group of politically active students as soon as she arrived in Tennessee. She attended

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<sup>64</sup>Lecture given by Candie Carawan in 1961 (?) at Pomona College, FT-9578 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>65</sup>The exact date of her arrival is open to question. She says in the FT-9578 tape, which is the account closest to her time in Nashville, that she arrived at Fisk “one week before the sit-ins started.” If she is referring to the Greensboro sit-in on February 1, 1960, that would put her arrival at the end of January.

<sup>66</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all the information in this section comes from my interview with Candie and Guy Carawan on June 28, 2010

<sup>67</sup>Transcript of Guy and Candie Carawan oral history interview, Civil Rights Oral History Project, CROHPCarawanGC, Special Collections Division, Nashville Public Library, 2003, p. 9.

workshops run by Jim Lawson on nonviolence and participated in role-playing exercises designed to train students how to act during a demonstration.<sup>68</sup> Nashville's first sit ins were on February 13, 1960 at three downtown drugstore lunch counters so Candie had to decide whether or not to participate within weeks of her arrival in the city.<sup>69</sup> "I was worried that it might make people madder to see white participants ... On the other hand, I thought that this movement is about everybody. It's not just something that we're doing for black people. We're trying to create a more just society here, and I have a stake in that as well."<sup>70</sup> Candie ultimately decided to participate in the sit ins.

Students were first arrested on February 27, 1960, and Candie, along with another Pomona student, Barbara Biggers, were the only white women arrested at McClellan's. She and Barbara were placed locked up by themselves, and found solace in the singing of their fellow demonstrators who were held in nearby cells. Candie recalls that there were no Freedom Songs yet, so they sang whatever they knew—camp songs, rock n' roll, hymns. They were released very late that night. Barbara's mother came and took her home, but before Mrs. Biggers left she hired a lawyer named Louis Ferrell who represented both women. Ultimately the charges were dropped in January 1961<sup>71</sup> but not before Candie had her day in court, which she found profoundly disillusioning. She had thought, after growing up watching TV shows about the justice system like *Perry Mason*, that as soon as she and the others told their stories, it would become apparent they had done nothing wrong. However, unlike on TV, the judge was clearly biased and the police

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<sup>69</sup>The first sit ins were at Kress's, Woolworth's and McClellan's.

<sup>70</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>71</sup>Louis Ferrel to Candie Carawan, January 23, 1961 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

witnesses lied on the stand. Her confidence in the system shattered, Candie realized that justice would have to come from elsewhere, because the courts in the South would certainly not provide it.

Sometime between her arrest and April 1, Candie adapted an old Wobbly song, whose tune she had learned from an old roommate, for the Civil Rights Movement that she titled “They Go Wild Over Me.” It is a humorous piece, which describes how the manager of the store she was trying to integrate could not stay away from her nor could the police and the judge after her arrest. In a letter to Candie dated May 22, 1960, her friend Norma Wolff jokes

You know, I almost feel as if I did my bit, teaching you the “Wobbly Song” last summer. I wonder if your new version is going to pass into oral tradition. Maybe in another fifty years some bright-eyed folklore student from Indiana University is going to collect twenty-three different variants [sic] of your song in Tennessee.<sup>72</sup>

On April 1-3, 1960, Highlander sponsored a workshop for college-age activists. It was the first time that students from throughout the South had come together to talk about the sit ins and how best to affect social change. Candie attended this workshop and met Guy there. Guy later reported that he heard Candie’s song, “They Go Wild Over Me,” during the Saturday night talent show.<sup>73</sup> James Bevel and Bernard Lafayette, along with other students sang their pop song parodies that night as well.

Candie remembers that the songs that participants were singing before the workshop were not very interesting, and though she found them of comfort during her

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<sup>72</sup>Norma Wolff to Candie Carawan, May 22, 1960 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>73</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 349.

time in jail, the pieces Guy taught them in April like “We Shall Overcome” and “Eyes on the Prize” were more meaningful and powerful than any that she had heard before.

For the remainder of her time in Nashville, Candie continued to be involved in the Movement. In a letter to her parents dated April 19, 1960, she described being present at the climactic march in Nashville protesting the bombing of Z. Alexander Looby’s house.<sup>74</sup> “Everyone was silent and well behaved,” she reported. The mayor spoke and “it was pretty much the same old bunk but he did manage to commit himself in front of the newspapers and all of us. He said that he thought the lunch counters should be integrated.”<sup>75</sup> Though she did not know it at the time it was this admission, forced by Diane Nash, that finally helped break the log jam in the negotiations between the store owners, the city government, and protest leaders over the desegregation of the downtown stores.

Candie was involved in the first Civil Rights recording Guy got on the market—“The Nashville Sit-in Story” which came out on Folkways records in 1960. A documentary-style recording with spoken commentary as well as songs, Guy recruited local activists to recreate demonstration and other scenes as well as to sing. Candie was and a friend sang “They Go Wild Over Me” and she acted as well.<sup>76</sup> Like all their recordings of the period, “The Nashville Sit-In Story” was sold by Civil Rights

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<sup>74</sup>Looby was a local lawyer and the first black city councilman in Nashville. He represented many of the students arrested in the sit ins, which led to the bombing of his house on April 19. Fortunately no one was hurt in the explosion. It happened early in the morning and the march was organized immediately and happened the same day.

<sup>75</sup>Candie Carawan to her parents, April 19, 1960 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>76</sup>*The Nashville Sit-in Story: Songs and Scenes of Nashville Lunch Counter Desegregation (by the Sit-In Participants)*, FH5590, 1960.



organizations and at Highlander, as well as being distributed by Folkways. Though presumably many of the people who purchased the LP were already committed to the Movement, the recording itself was also directed at those who were not on the inside. There would be no reason for an activist who had already been to jail to listen to a skit about what it was like to be arrested at a sit in. However, for people who were curious about the Movement and only knew what was presented in the mainstream media, a scene set in the Nashville jail might have humanized the demonstrators and presented the struggle from a different perspective.<sup>77</sup>

Though she considered dropping out of school to stay with Guy, she decided to finish her education at Pomona. Before she went back to California, she spent August with Guy at Highlander, and was there during the Sing for Freedom workshop. Guy and Candie were married in California in March 1961, walking down the aisle in the Unitarian Church where they were married to “We Shall Overcome.” The couple moved back to Highlander after she graduated.

Candie’s experiences in Nashville were similar, in many ways, to that of other young activists. She was not a leader, but a keen observer. Though frightened at times, and scared to be arrested, she was willing to put her body on the line during sit ins.<sup>78</sup> She understood that it would take a concentrated effort from many people in order for the goals of the Movement to be realized.

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<sup>77</sup>Though sales information for the records were unavailable to me, the audience for the recordings and books were presumably people already interested in folk music, and those curious about the Movement who were not directly involved.

<sup>78</sup>In a recording of a talk she gave at Pomona, Candie says “Gosh it was a terrible feeling but we sat down” when she told of sitting against police orders. She remembers being “overwhelmed” and “lonely” when she was in her jail cell. (FT-9578 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) She ends the April 19, 1960 letter to her parents with “don’t worry if you help it. I’m getting better on that last count myself.”

Her experiences in Nashville gave her, and by extension Guy, credibility with other activists in the subsequent years. In part because they never formally joined any of the Civil Rights organizations, Guy and Candie always worked on the periphery of the Movement. Though music was very important to the struggle, they needed an introduction to establish their credibility with people who did not know them, especially if the activists were not familiar with Highlander. Guy was “almost like a novelty to see this white guy with a guitar and a banjo who knew these songs” according to Candie.<sup>79</sup> It would have been very easy for people in the Movement to dismiss him if there was no one to vouch for him. When Guy first visited Albany, Bernice Johnson Reagon remembers Cordell Reagon saying “though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville.”<sup>80</sup> For activists, particularly in SNCC, it was working on the front lines, and especially time in prison, which was the ultimate source of credibility. Because Candie had been in one of the first cohorts to go to jail, she had cultural capital with the activists that helped both of them to be accepted.

Guy was invited to sing at a mass meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, on May 28, 1963. The tapes of mass meetings in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection show that he rarely sang more than one song by himself before inviting someone else to join him, often a local activist. By doing this he was not only sharing the spotlight with someone who might be more familiar with the audience, but he was also establishing his own standing by showing that he knew people in the Movement. During the May 28 mass

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<sup>79</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>80</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, *Ain't you Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island South Carolina. Their Faces, Their Words and Their Songs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 235.

meeting, Guy called Candie up to the stage and told the audience they had met in Nashville where she had been jailed with the students in the 1960 sit ins. Immediately, he established her credibility with the audience, and by extension, his as well. The crowd responded to her very enthusiastically and then laughed and clapped as the Carawans sang “They Go Wild Over Me.” When she started to sing about being in jail, the crowd erupted into thunderous applause.<sup>81</sup>

Then the jailer he went wild over me  
Well he locked me up and threw away the key  
In a segregated cage  
I’d be kept, it was the rage  
He went wild, simply wild, over me.

## **Working Together**

Candie gave up active participation in demonstrations after she married Guy, instead deciding to join in the work that he had already started. Together they integrated their individual strengths to create a working method. Guy was an experienced performer and had contacts outside of Nashville in the Movement and the folk song scene. Candie was the better writer, good at organization and was someone who easily connected with other people. Candie describes it this way, “Once we got married, and I—I didn’t know that much. What I knew about folk music was who would come around the colleges and perform ... So the first years we were married I was very much learning from him. And I

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<sup>81</sup>Recording of mass meeting on May 28, 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, FT-3645 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

guess I brought what skill I had.”<sup>82</sup> In another interview, Guy explains that Candie understood Nashville better and was a more skillful writer. He was happy to do the telephoning and the intellectual work prior to workshops.

I would say at that time ... that I had still been acting, you know, I was like a strong male leader, but I am aware that all that time Candie was working hard in all this stuff and working with me. I'd been more inclined to have this kind of vision or think these directions; but I would say, you know, that Candie and I were co-coordinators.<sup>83</sup>

Joan Browning describes the role that many women played in the Civil Rights Movement as “nurturing” because they cooked, cleaned, welcomed and took care of other activist. This unsung, but critical, organizational work in the background was often women’s work, while men spoke to the cameras and led the marches.<sup>84</sup> Especially in rural areas, women far outnumbered men in the rank-and-file. They created the trust between activists that was necessary for the Movement to function, behind the more public faces of male leaders.<sup>85</sup> Because so many of the leaders (such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy) came out of the rigidly hierarchical black church, which was also resistant to female management, women had little access to formal leadership roles in the Movement.<sup>86</sup> Ella Baker, in particular, was keenly aware that without a strong grass roots structure in place, the Civil Rights Movement could never succeed. She struggled against

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<sup>82</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>83</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

<sup>84</sup>Joan C. Browning, “Shiloh Witness,” in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* by Constance Curry and others (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 76.

<sup>85</sup>Payne, 275. Please see Chapter Nine of Payne’s book for more information on women and the Movement.

<sup>86</sup>Robnett, 19.

the male top-down hierarchy in the SCLC and the NAACP.<sup>87</sup> Candie calls Baker's contribution, which was so vital to the struggle yet almost completely overlooked by the mainstream media, an inspiration for many young women in the Movement (including herself) who understood their own work as a reflection of Baker's approach.

And another role that you will hear over and over if you talk to women in the Movement, is what an inspiration she was to women who entered the Civil Rights Movement, because she always valued the contribution they could make and, you know, you didn't have to be a charismatic out-front person with a golden tongue. There were so many jobs in the Movement, and women were often very good at those jobs, and Ella Baker was—I don't know, she just was the person that gave a lot of women the courage and strength to know, "We can be part of this. We can do this."<sup>88</sup>

In a letter to Moe Asch (and others) dated August 3, 1959, Guy confides that he's "not a very good writer."<sup>89</sup> Though he was in his early thirties when they married, Guy had published almost nothing before their wedding. Within seven years, they contributed articles to *Sing Out!* as well as other outlets, and published three books. Candie's writing abilities helped spur the two of them into areas that Guy might not have gone without her. He seems to have been only too happy to turn the writing duties over to Candie. While Guy was the upfront and obvious mediator between the music and the Movement, Candie was the more hidden mediator between the music and the mainstream through their

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<sup>87</sup>See Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003) for more information about Baker's work.

<sup>88</sup>Transcript of Guy and Candie Carawan oral history interview, Civil Rights Oral History Project, CROHPCarawanGC, Special Collections Division, Nashville Public Library, 2003, pp. 27-28.

<sup>89</sup>Guy Carawan to Pete [Seeger], Moe [Asch], Irwin [Silber], et al, August 3 [1959] in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

publications. When I spoke to her, Candie initially spoke modestly of her writing as if she was only typing out rough drafts, like a wife typing her husband's dissertation. But, as she described their working technique, it became clear that she was composed the first drafts of all their written work. "We would talk through ideas and then I'd do a draft and then he'd critique the draft and it was endless revising. And I wish I'd recognized early on that Guy should continue to do his own writing because I think everything changed once we moved into that."<sup>90</sup> Later, Candie clarified that she thought that Guy had a unique voice as a writer, which was suppressed because it was her voice that comes through in their publications.

The uncataloged material in the Southern Folklife Collection confirms Candie's account of their writing method. The Collection contains hundreds of pages of planning documents for various articles and books that the two published over the years in Candie's distinctive handwriting. While they may have planned out together what they were going to present, she is the one who actually wrote everything down. Then she composed a rough draft from which they worked during the editing process. These drafts show edits both in her and Guy's handwriting.

Candie's contributions to their writing projects might have gone unrecognized, however, if Guy had not insisted that her name be added as an author to their first book—*Sing for Freedom*, published in 1963. According to Candie, "Guy was the one that said both our names are going to be on this book, 'cause we worked on this together. And I said, 'Oh. Okay.' But thinking about it later that was very advanced of Guy to think of

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<sup>90</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

that.”<sup>91</sup> In every interview I have read, as well as in private correspondence and notes on documents in the Southern Folklife Collection, Guy consistently makes sure to call Candie his partner (not his helper) in everything he accomplished. Candie confesses that at the time she did not appreciate how important her contribution really was, but Guy did and tried to make sure that others knew it as well.

### **Creating a Canon for the Civil Rights Movement**

Guy and Candie had their first child, Evan, in April 1962 and considered moving to New York so that Guy could pursue his singing career. After spending time in California visiting their families with the baby, they left to drive cross-country to New York. But in Tucson everything they owned was stolen out of the back of their car prompting them to change their plans and move to Atlanta instead. Candie remembers that something about the loss of their possessions made them re-evaluate their plans and they decided “we’re going to live in the South this year and just stay closer to the Movement and it had something to do with that dynamic... It’s crazy. I mean, when I think about it now, these are the kind of things you do when you are quite young.”<sup>92</sup> Both SNCC and SCLC were headquartered in Atlanta so it seemed a natural place to go to be in the midst of the action. Despite being untraditional SNCC volunteers (Guy was older, both were white, and they had a child), Candie remembers feeling welcome. They did not think of themselves as members of any one particular organization, instead feeling an allegiance to the larger Movement. Candie attributes this ecumenicalism to their

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<sup>91</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

association with Highlander, which also dealt with all the different Civil Rights groups active at the time.<sup>93</sup> In 1963, after Guy won a grant from the Newport Folk Foundation to plan music festivals on Johns Island, the family moved to South Carolina.

For the next three years the Carawans worked on two parallel, but related projects. First they collected Freedom Songs by interviewing activists and recording mass meetings. Using this raw material they produced a series of LPs about the Movement and two songbooks, the proceeds of which went to different Civil Rights groups. Secondly they organized three music festivals on Johns Island, and researched the music and culture of the people living there. They conducted interviews with residents and recorded songs. This material became the foundation for two recordings and one book—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?*

The recordings are an important audio representation of the Civil Rights Movement. Most contain spoken interviews as well as songs similar to the *Nashville Sit-in* LP. There were at least three goals for the recordings. They helped produce needed revenue for various Civil Rights groups. For instance *Freedom in the Air* raised at least \$8,000 for SNCC.<sup>94</sup> Because songs were being created all over the South by individual song leaders who may not have had access to each other, Guy and Candie saw one of their roles as making sure that songs were disseminated throughout the South. The workshops and recordings were designed, in part, to facilitate this communication. Finally the recordings were one avenue to explain the Movement and its goals to the wider public. Most of the LPs included spoken cuts in which activists and others

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<sup>93</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>94</sup>Unsigned review of *Freedom in the Air: A Documentary on Albany, Georgia 1961-2* SNCC-627 from *The Student Voice*, October 1962 found in Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 345.



explained what was happening or why they had become involved. Participants in the Movement would not need those accounts, but curious listeners without a direct connection to the struggle might have been influenced by the spoken material.

Through these recordings, Guy and Candie became mediators between the Movement and people outside of the struggle. Most people got their information about the Movement from the media. The Carawans were in the interesting position of being both activists, people that had experienced demonstrations and mass meetings and deeply believed in the goals of the Movement, but also observers standing on the outside looking in. Their credibility with the activists allowed them access to the Movement that a journalist might not have been able to gain. Candie remembers that speakers or singers rarely seemed to mind when Guy would just walk up and stick a microphone right in their face.<sup>95</sup>

The Carawans shaped the experience of the listener through the liner notes of the LPs, which explained the setting for each record and other information, but the actual contents of the recordings only use the participants' voices. There is no narrator. For example in *Story of Greenwood, Mississippi* spoken cuts of people who live and work in Greenwood talking about themselves and the Movement are interspersed with songs, providing some context for the music.<sup>96</sup> These records are quite unlike a media report in which a journalist might feel an obligation to seek the segregationist's side of the story, or might present a complete outsider's perspective allowing only formal leaders of the Movement (like Martin Luther King, Jr.) to have a voice. The Carawans' recordings tend

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<sup>95</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

<sup>96</sup>*The Story of Greenwood, Mississippi*, produced by Guy Carawan, Folkways Records, FW05593, 1965.

to be from the perspective of the grassroots activist, and the use of commentary by regular people, who would otherwise be completely unknown to the average listener, provides a different sort of statement on the need and reasons for the Civil Rights struggle than most news reports. Listening to an entire Freedom Song recorded during a mass meeting is a much more powerful representation of the music than just a quick clip during a report on the nightly news.<sup>97</sup>

The Carawans published two songbooks devoted to the music of the Movement. Quotations from their taped interviews, as well as information from other resources such as previously printed material or even private letters, provide context for the songs. *We Shall Overcome: Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement* was published in 1963 and *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Songs of the Freedom Movement* followed in 1968 both printed by Oak Publications.<sup>98</sup>

These two songbooks represent a formal attempt to codify, publicize, and canonize the music in the Civil Rights Movement. They fulfill one of Guy's goals in the 1959 letter when he announced that he wanted to publish a book containing "songs for integration."<sup>99</sup> Because of his training in folklore, Guy believed that folk music is easily lost and by recording and publishing it, he could preserve something that was vitally important to the Movement. Alan Lomax's ideas about the utility of folk music in

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<sup>97</sup>It is impossible to know how widely these records were actually consumed outside of the circle of people already involved in the Movement. Most of them were reviewed national publications and were distributed by Folkways.

<sup>98</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, eds. *We Shall Overcome! Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement* (New York: Oak Publications, 1963) and Guy and Candie Carawan, eds. *Freedom is a Constant Struggle; Songs of the Freedom Movement, with Documentary Photographs* (New York: Oak Publications, 1968).

<sup>99</sup>Guy Carawan to Friends of Highlander, August 1959, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, 0339.

modern political struggles also surely played an important role in Guy's thinking, as well as his contact in the early 1950s with the People's Songs organization in Los Angeles. All of Guy's early training and associations within the folk music world were within a context of using song to further a political cause, in this case the Labor Movement. He felt that other people might have attempted this work, but the activists were too busy and he was in a perfect position to provide this service. According to Candie, they tried to make sure they visited all the "hot spots" in order to tape meetings and interviews. Sometimes Guy would travel alone, but often Candie would join him. If they were concerned that it might be dangerous, the couple would leave Evan with friends or family to make sure he would be safe.<sup>100</sup>

Guy and Candie's activities became well known enough that people began to send them songs. In a letter dated April 4, 1964, Sandy Myers from the Syracuse chapter of CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality) sent him a piece they had written over Christmas of 1963. She writes, "As unofficial song leader of the freedom movement, we thought you might be interested in a copy of a Syracuse CORE freedom carol."<sup>101</sup>

One goal of the books, as well as the workshops, was to circulate the highly localized repertoire of Freedom Songs throughout the area, because songs were often known in a single region of the South, or even by only one song leader. In one typical interview, Guy asks his subjects what songs they had heard recently. What follows is a

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<sup>100</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010. In one particular instance, they brought Evan with them to Birmingham, Alabama in May 1963. As Guy and Candie tried to go into Pilgrim Baptist Church, Bull Conner arrested them for attempting to enter a black church. Evan stayed with a babysitter for the weekend, along with Diane Nash Bevel's daughter who was about the same age, while the Carawans were in jail.

<sup>101</sup>Andy Myers to Guy Carawan, April 4, 1964 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

wide-ranging discussion punctuated with singing. It is clear that the three people Guy with whom was speaking—Bernice Johnson Reagon, Dorothy Cotton and Andrew Young—had not heard all the songs with which Guy was familiar, and that they know songs he had not heard. Reagon and the others consistently identified songs based upon the location where they were first sung. For instance Dorothy Cotton tells the story of being in St. Augustine, Florida during the fight to integrate the beaches there, and how important “Wade in the Water” was to that effort.<sup>102</sup> By publishing the books, particularly the first one which was printed at the height of the struggle, Guy and Candie were not just serving as mediators of the Movement to outsiders, but also as mediators to Civil Rights insiders by allowing them access to songs they might not otherwise have the opportunity to hear.

While the music may have been in part directed at insiders, the text of the books is directed at outsiders. The contextual information before, and sometimes after, songs humanize the activists and provides a timeline for the stages of the Movement through 1963. Instead of being portrayed as troublemakers or radicals, as was so often the case in the media, the activists are shown to be regular people who are sometimes frightened but always determined to do what they believe to be right. After “We are Soldiers,” John Lewis is quoted “‘My mother wrote me a letter and said, ‘Get out of the movement,’ but I couldn’t and I wrote her, ‘I have acted according to my conviction and my Christian conscience. I can do no less.’”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Dorothy Cotton, interview by Guy Carawan, FT 3667 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>103</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, eds. *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through its Songs* (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2007), 11.

Guy is never directly quoted, but Candie does contribute several contextual statements to the first section of *We Shall Overcome*. Her comments are attributed using her maiden name, and are treated the same way as other activists. This is the one time in the three books I consider that she emerges from the anonymity that the Carawans tried to maintain. The books are constructed in such a way as to minimize the fact there is an author at all. The emphasis is on allowing the subjects to speak. However, the first section of *We Shall Overcome* contains songs from the sit ins, and Candie was a participant for that stage of the Movement. She is quoted from the perspective of a white female activist who is a bit nervous and overwhelmed, but is nevertheless resolute in her convictions. “My stomach always hurt a little on the way to a sit-in. I guess it’s the unexpected,” she confesses in the commentary after “They Go Wild Over Me.”<sup>104</sup>

The information conveyed by the contextual quotes betrays the nature of the Carawans’ mediation. They want to provide a basic history of the Movement, but more importantly construct a sympathetic image of the activists. Today the participants in the Movement are generally portrayed as heroes who were on the right side of the struggle to move the nation closer to the equality promised in its founding documents. But then the picture that the media painted was much different. Particularly in the South, Civil Rights activists were called communists, “outside agitators,” troublemakers, radicals, and sometimes even sex-crazed men lusting after white women. By portraying the activists sympathetically, and exposing their individual concerns and experiences, the Carawans seek to change the perception their reader’s might have had about the Movement. In the end, for many activists, the Movement was about human rights and by picking out

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<sup>104</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, *Sing for Freedom*, 15.

individual stories the Carawans emphasize the “human,” showing that the Civil Rights workers were decent, caring people who are working towards a worthy goal, not dangerous extremists.

The books came under the same kind of scrutiny that the Movement did. According to a 1965 *Washington Post, Times Herald* piece, the owner of a local music store even asked the FBI to examine folk music songbooks published by Oak because he was concerned about the contents, singling out *We Shall Overcome* the book is described as having been “compiled by Guy Carawan and his wife, both active in militant civil rights causes for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.” An employee of the store is quoted as saying that the book was “distasteful” and concerned “civil rights and then some.”<sup>105</sup>

By the time *Freedom is a Constant Struggle* was published in 1968, the Movement had already moved into a new phase. The Carawans do not provide any information or songs written after 1966 because they left the South in 1965 and lost access to their sources. In the opening essay, they write “Here is a book of Freedom songs—songs that have evolved since the 1963 March on Washington. Already many of them seem outdated in light of the new mood within the civil rights movement. The days of singing, ‘We love everybody ... we love George Wallace’ have passed.”<sup>106</sup> They go on to explain that Civil Rights organizations had moved North to Chicago and a “proud embracing of American folk heritage and its earlier African roots” had occurred.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Leroy F. Aarons, “FBI Goes for Folksongs—Then Mum’s Word,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, November 6, 1965.

<sup>106</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, *Sing for Freedom*, 103.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

Because it was not published until 1968, the book does not contain the sense of excitement about the possibilities of the Movement that fills the first book. By 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated, many inner cities had erupted into riots, and SNCC had rejected nonviolence. The nation had shifted its attention to the Vietnam War, and supporters of civil rights were talking about Black Power and Black Nationalism, not integration.

The types of songs included in the book are different than in 1963. Though spirituals are included, the book contains a section of roots music with dance music, work and children's songs reflecting the Carawans' efforts to introduce that music in workshops in 1964 and 1965. It also preserves music that had been professionally recorded like "Mississippi Goddam" by Nina Simone, as well as several songs by Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions. Though Guy and Candie were personally more invested in the folk music of the Movement, they were also committed to including all the music to which the activists were listening, not just what might have satisfied their own interests. Before the publication of the 1963 book, it was very rare for a black popular musician to record music that overtly referenced the Civil Rights Movement, however this had changed by 1965 when Guy and Candie were researching *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, for many reasons including pressure from listeners who wanted popular music to reflect current events, and a greater willingness on the part of recording companies to allow musicians to release topical songs.<sup>108</sup>

While the activists are still sympathetically portrayed in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, there is more emphasis on explaining events, and the commentary sections are

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<sup>108</sup> Please see Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness and Race Relations* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998) for more information on this complex topic.

much longer than in *We Shall Overcome*. Though the riots that had rocked the inner cities are rarely mentioned, many of the quotations describe horrible conditions in the housing projects, perhaps to help explain the violence of the previous few years.

Today these books represent the canon of the Freedom Song repertoire. Since the books document a tradition in flux, one in which every song leader was free to improvise new lyrics or tunes during every performance, it is not definitive. But for researchers, they are the easiest way to find out if a song was used during the Movement since the contents are based upon primary research. Thus, the Carawans achieved one of Guy's goals—to document the Movement on behalf of all the people that were too busy *living* the Movement to worry about the needs of history.<sup>109</sup>

Guy believed that if a folk song was not written down or recorded it would eventually disappear or at least change so much as to be unrecognizable. Of course he understood and appreciated that folk songs were constantly evolving and by their very nature could not be represented in all their complexity through notation or a recording. However, like Alan Lomax and other early folklorists, he was also felt that folk music and the way of life that produced it was under threat and he and Candie both wanted to preserve a snapshot of what they were hearing. As they explained to their readers in the Johns Island book, "Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another. Each transcription represents only one performance of a song."<sup>110</sup> Later researchers have

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<sup>109</sup>Guy Carawan, interview by Josh Dunson, December 11, 1964, FS-7389 in the Ronald D. Cohen Collection Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>110</sup>Carawan, Guy and Candie Carawan, *Ain't you Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island South Carolina. Their Faces, Their Words and Their Songs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 235.



acknowledged the importance of this documentary work. In a review in *Ethnomusicology*, Elaine Bradtke notes “We are fortunate that Guy Carawan was in the thick of things with his tape recorder. Otherwise the musical soul of the civil rights movement might have been lost to future generations.”<sup>111</sup> She is right of course, but the Carawans were doing more than just recording the music, they were also looking for ways to reinforce not only a core repertoire of spirituals, but also to introduce new types of rural music into the Civil Rights struggle. In their work with activists in the mid-1960s, Guy and Candie introduced work, prison and children’s songs that were even more associated with poverty and slavery than the spirituals.

**1964-1965 Workshops—“I was basically just giving back people what was already theirs or had been part of their own culture.”<sup>112</sup>**

Though the Carawans were living on Johns Island after 1963, they continued to work with Highlander and others to organize workshops for song leaders. Though the 1960 classes have been studied by other scholars, three later workshops held in May 1964 in Atlanta, May 1965 in Mississippi and October 1965 in Knoxville have been overlooked. By examining these workshops, we can see not only the Carawans continued mediation between rural music and the activists, but also how their activities altered in response to changes in the Movement. In addition to teaching Freedom Songs, the couple introduced other types of roots music and brought in folk musicians to talk to the activists.

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<sup>111</sup>Elaine Bradtke, review of *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Through its Songs*, produced by Guy Carawan, Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 400032, *Ethnomusicology* 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 454.

<sup>112</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

Though they were still working together, by 1964 there was considerable friction between SNCC and SCLC over tactics and the direction of the Movement. Planning for Freedom Summer (or the Mississippi Summer Project as it was known inside the Movement) was well under way and would launch in June. The violence in Birmingham, including the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church bombing in September 1963 was a recent and traumatic memory. There were signs of governmental action though, and in fact Lyndon Johnson would sign the Civil Rights Act in July 1964. It was in this atmosphere that Guy and Candie organized a “Sing for Freedom Festival and Workshop” in Atlanta, which took place May 7-10, 1964.

In a report to the Newport Folk Foundation, Guy credits a visit by the SNCC Freedom Singers to a Johns Island Festival he organized in December 1963 for inspiring the 1964 workshop. The Freedom Singers learned several “shouts” while they were on Johns Island, and subsequently incorporated the songs into their concert programs. Guy set out to enrich the music being used in the Movement by presenting “the full range of Negro folk music and freedom songs to young freedom workers.”<sup>113</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon and Ruby Doris Smith-Robinson of SNCC, as well as Andrew Young and Dorothy Cotton from SCLC helped Guy and Candie with the organization and planning for the meeting.<sup>114</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon was a member of the SNCC Freedom Singers and the most musically knowledgeable of the organizing committee. Ruby Doris Smith-Robinson was revered within SNCC and worked in the front office in Atlanta, eventually becoming the only female executive secretary of the group. She probably

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<sup>113</sup>Guy Carawan, report to the Newport Folk Foundation, undated, in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>114</sup>Application to the 1964 Sing for Freedom Festival and Workshop, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 126.

served as an administrative liaison to SNCC. Andy Young and Dorothy Cotton both worked on the Citizenship Education Program for the SCLC. The fact that they were assigned to help Guy indicates that the SCLC saw the workshop as educational outreach. Highlander, the Newport Folk Foundation, SNCC and SCLC all helped with the funding.<sup>115</sup> Fifty singers from seven southern states attended. Because of their limited contact with Southern activists, Northern singer-songwriters were invited. Phil Ochs, Len Chandler, Tom Paxton and Theo Bikel all attended the workshop.<sup>116</sup>

One goal of the workshop was to give song leaders a chance to hear and learn basic Freedom Song repertoire. In a report to Highlander, Guy explains that he taught about 20 of the 50 songs published in *We Shall Overcome* to the participants.<sup>117</sup> Here we see that Guy is reinforcing the canonical status of certain songs. Though he and Candie collected the songs for the book because they were being used in the Movement, by teaching them, using his own songbook, he further reinforces the canon so that it becomes a self-perpetuating circle. (*See Appendix 2 for a list of the songs Guy taught*)

The 1964 gathering was intended to continue, but subtly change, the work accomplished at earlier workshops. Each class built upon the successes and failures of the meeting before. “And each one [workshop] as we move through ’60 to ’65 is probably going to add some element that’s becoming clear to us since the last one,” explains

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<sup>115</sup>Expense record for the 1964 Sing for Freedom Festival and Workshop, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p.145. Highlander gave the most at \$2000, the Newport Folk Foundation gave \$400 to fund the Sea Island Singers and Doc Reese’s fee and expense, SNCC and SCLC donated in kind administrative costs like mailings and printing.

<sup>116</sup>Attendance record for the 1964 Sing for Freedom Workshop and Festival, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 143.

<sup>117</sup>Report on the 1964 Sing for Freedom Workshop and Festival, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, pp. 127-129.

Candie. “The Highlander process is thinking who’s coming together and what are the experiences they have that need to be shared with the rest of the group so that some kind of leap of understanding or skill can be made?”<sup>118</sup> In the workshops after 1963 Guy was purposely working on “how to deal with black heritage.”<sup>119</sup> To that end he invited the Sea Island Singers and Doc Reese<sup>120</sup> to perform and lead sessions, which proved to be a controversial decision. While he might not have expected work songs to be performed at a mass meeting, Guy and Candie were pushing the activists to consider new types of cultural expressions, even if they had negative connotations.

As is clear from Guy’s own reports, as well as articles for *Sing Out!* And *Broadside* written by Josh Dunson who attended the event, some of the participants were profoundly uncomfortable with the music that Bessie Jones of the Sea Island Singers and Doc Reese introduced to the group. The raw, shouting style of singing that Bessie Jones used, and Doc Reese’s prison and work songs were the kind of music that many activists associated with the poverty and oppression they were working to abolish. The Highlander archives contain a copy of Dunson’s *Broadside* article, which goes into some detail about a contentious Saturday morning session where a discussion took place about the merits of the older music. In keeping with the Highlander ethos, Guy and Candie did not see such debates as negative, but rather as a positive development—an important conversation which needed to happen. The main objection to the roots music came from young people

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<sup>118</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>119</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

<sup>120</sup>Doc Reese was a traditional folk singer from Texas.

who were “ashamed of the ‘down home’ and ‘old time’ music.”<sup>121</sup> To a significant number, though by no means to all, the slave songs seemed out of place at a “Sing for Freedom” event. One woman from a rural area objected that she could hear those songs at home, she wanted to learn something new. Activists Charles Sherrod and Cleo Kennedy did not understand the need for such songs in a modern world. Bessie Jones of the Sea Island Singers countered by arguing that it was important to understand that the slave songs were “the only place where we could say that we did not like slavery, say it for ourselves to hear.”<sup>122</sup> In the 1960s many black people felt ashamed of slavery and refused to discuss it, believing that it was a sign of weakness that their ancestors had been enslaved. For middle-class activists, the music challenged their self-image as modern, successful, “uplifted” people. For the rural participants, the music was an uncomfortable reminder of the conditions at home. But Jones’ interpretation of the songs as coded signs of resistance would become more popular over the next few years. Guy had been making this argument since at least 1959, just as Alan Lomax had for many decades.

Other students in the workshop embraced the roots music. Len Chandler spoke of the emasculation of black culture, which had occurred when black music was altered to fit white tastes. For activists like Chandler, the “whiting” of black music was one method whites used to wield political and social control over the minority population by stripping black culture of its inherent power and dignity. Throughout the Civil Rights period, black men and women were acutely aware of the degrading treatment received by men at the hands of whites. They lived under restrictive Jim Crow laws, and the with the constant

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<sup>121</sup>Josh Dunson, “Slave Songs at the ‘Sing for Freedom’” *Broadside* 49 (May 30, 1964) found in Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 130.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.

threat of violence if whites thought they had threatened a white woman's virtue in any way, which forced them to act in an overly submissive manner around whites—a profoundly frightening, degrading and emasculating experience. By extending this language to music, Lester is making a connection between male status and folk songs. Like black men, the music is oppressed, degraded and deprived of its natural power by being forced to conform to white expectations. His rhetoric is very similar to the kind of language that people like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, both SNCC leaders in the Black Power period, would use several years later.

Tom Paxton followed up Chandler's comments by proposing that blacks should reject white cultural traditions in order to get to the roots of their own culture—what he termed “solid” culture. Amanda Bowen argued that she wanted to “understand her parents’ generations.” “What these songs are, is what most of this [the struggle] means.”<sup>123</sup> In this interpretation the music has become a symbol, not just of resistance, but of reclaiming black identity from the effects of white racism, whether the music had been diluted by whites (à la Chandler) or undervalued by blacks negatively influenced by racist ideas.

Finally Andy Young voiced the pragmatic approach that many field organizers took to roots music. He related that CORE had been unable to make headway in Plaquemine, Louisiana because they did not know how to relate to the people there, but SCLC was able to start a vibrant organization there because “we learned how to sing in the old church way.”<sup>124</sup> Young does not express an opinion about the music's cultural

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<sup>123</sup>Josh Dunson, “Slave Songs at the ‘Sing for Freedom’” *Broadside* 49 (May 30, 1964) found in Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 131.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*

value for him, but rather acknowledges its importance to the older rural people that needed to be convinced to register to vote and join the struggle if the Movement was to succeed. Dunson's reading of the situation was that some were convinced, while others left the workshop thinking about the issues.<sup>125</sup>

The range of reactions at the Saturday morning session is telling. At that stage in the Movement, some people had overcome old prejudices against roots music and embraced it. For these activists, roots music was one component of black identity. Others had not yet made this leap. The Movement eventually became to many activists (especially in SNCC) as much about self-transformation as it was a struggle for legal rights. The harm of racism to the collective self-image of black people was so corrosive that for many trying to heal that injury became their top priority, especially as legislative victories were won with the passage of Civil Rights laws in 1964 and 1965. Many activists regarded the new laws as pyrrhic victories, however. Having the right to vote or use a lunch counter seemed a small victory in the face of the damage done by centuries of oppression. Bernice Johnson Reagon explains that the struggle became about the "transformation of Blacks in terms of their own identity and expectations."<sup>126</sup> In May 1964, though, there were still activists who were not thinking about these issues yet. Many had been working single-mindedly towards the end of legal segregation for years, and larger issues of cultural pride were not yet of importance. This workshop does provide more evidence supporting Ruth Feldstein's argument that "black power" did not

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<sup>125</sup>Josh Dunson, "Slave Songs at the 'Sing for Freedom'" *Broadside* 49 (May 30, 1964) found in Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 131.

<sup>126</sup>Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Songs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1965: A Study in Culture History" (PhD diss., Howard University, 1975), 23.

emerge fully formed in 1966, but rather was an idea that slowly gained traction beginning in the early 1960s.<sup>127</sup>

In December 1964 Bob Moses<sup>128</sup> and some other activists attended a folk festival organized by the Carawans on the Sea Islands. The funding for the festival came from the Newport Folk Foundation grant that Guy had received in 1963. While there, Moses decided that the roots music he was hearing would be a good tool in his project to convince the beaten-down people of Mississippi of their “validity as people.”<sup>129</sup> As Candie explained it, “I think he recognized that one of the things that can make you, empower you, and make you feel stronger is how you feel about yourself, which is wrapped in your culture.”<sup>130</sup> He invited the Carawans to plan a workshop for Freedom Corps volunteers (Mississippi natives between ages 18 and 25 who had agreed to work for Civil Rights in the state for one year), which was held May 6-9, 1965 in Edwards, Mississippi. The Newport Folk Foundation paid for the Moving Star Singers, Ed Young, Alan Lomax and Ralph Rinzler to attend.<sup>131</sup>

A tape of one of the sessions held in the Southern Folklife Collection shows the participants to be more open to the idea of using roots music in political work than those who attended the meeting in 1964. They also seem more accepting of the validity of the

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<sup>127</sup>See Ruth Feldstein, “‘I Don’t Trust You Anymore’: Nina Simone, Culture and Black Activism in the 1960s,” *The Journal of American History* (March 2005): 1349-1379.

<sup>128</sup>Bob Moses was the most important SNCC organizer in Mississippi. He started working there in 1960, and was a legendary figure to SNCC members by 1965 because of his courage and compassion.

<sup>129</sup>Guy Carawan memo to Myles Horton, 1965, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 7, p. 353.

<sup>130</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

<sup>131</sup>The Moving Star Hall Singers were from Johns Island, Ed Young was a fife player from Mississippi and Ralph Rinzler was a folklorist who worked for the Newport Folk Foundation.



music itself.<sup>132</sup> Guy asks the students about their experience of roots music. None had heard a shout before, and they agreed that younger individuals often laughed at older people if they sang using the roots style. Several participants were glad to know more about their own culture, and said that it was good to understand that the music was really a demonstration of resistance by people who did not have freedom of expression. In his typically humble fashion, and in keeping with Highlander's practice of suggesting but never mandating, Guy says that he was trying to introduce music they might not have heard before, that they might have been ashamed of, or might not have learned about in school. "We think it has value, but maybe some don't" he concludes before asking for comments.<sup>133</sup>

Guy's approach to the activists shows his commitment to Highlander's educational ideas. While he did make clear that he saw value in this music, not only by scheduling the people that would present to the participants, but also in his comments to the group, he did give them space to reject what he was teaching. The most important thing was for the activists themselves to decide what would work for them. Guy's light touch can be contrasted with the long speech Alan Lomax made to the group, which was transcribed and added to the Highlander archives. In his speech he forcefully tells the audience that black folk heritage was dying out and it was their responsibility to revitalize it, not only because it had artistic value, but because it could be a powerful tool in the Civil Rights struggle. He says "They [blacks] must not be ashamed of their fore-fathers, but proud of them for the courage, the wit and the beauty that they continually expressed,

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<sup>132</sup>Statement by Alan Lomax, 1965 Sing for Freedom Festival and Workshop, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 151.

<sup>133</sup>Sing for Freedom Festival and Workshop, FT-3666, Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

even though they were for a time in bondage.”<sup>134</sup> This message, coming from a white man with a southern accent, was not well received by the young activists. Candie remembers their reaction being, “‘who is this guy and why is he trying to tell us what to do?’”<sup>135</sup>

In an article published in 1999, the Carawans wrote that some activists were open to roots music in 1965, while others were skeptical, particularly when Doc Reese, who represented an older generation that was excessively submissive to white authority, spoke to them.<sup>136</sup> Doc Reese’s music was a symbol for these young activists of the frustration they felt particularly with the older men, who were trained never to look a white person in the eye and step into the street to allow whites to pass on the sidewalk.

Activists had also become much more suspicious of white authority figures. When Guy and Candie first started working in Civil Rights, black protesters were much less sensitized to white expressions of leadership. Though Guy might have seemed a rather strange figure (a white man teaching them songs from black culture), no one questioned his motives or his right to be a song leader in 1960. By 1965 the atmosphere had begun to change. Freedom Summer had brought home just how much more the press and the American public valued white lives over black ones. The intense press coverage of white activists, while ignoring the fact that SNCC’s black volunteers had been in Mississippi since 1961, was galling. The betrayal by the Democratic Party who refused to seat the

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<sup>134</sup>Statement by Alan Lomax, 1965 Sing for Freedom Festival and Workshop, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 152.

<sup>135</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>136</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, “Carry It On: Roots of the Singing Civil Rights Movement,” in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: An Anthology of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Susie Erenrich (Montgomery, AL: Black Belt Press, 1999), 149-150.

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation instead of the segregated Mississippi Democratic Party representatives at the Atlantic City Convention, was also devastating.<sup>137</sup> Candie says Bob Moses explained to her that even if she and Guy were right and older black music was important to the culture, black people did not want white people telling them that. Black people needed to figure it out for themselves because culture is *the* most important piece to the black experience.<sup>138</sup>

Even white people who had worked in the Movement for years found their relationships with black friends changing. Penny Patch, a white activist who joined SNCC in 1961, described how the mounting tension manifested itself in her experience:

At a SNCC gathering in late 1964 or early 1965, I walked delightedly up to an old friend I had not seen for many months. She stood with a group of friends, head high, sunglasses on. She looked through me, around me, anywhere but at me. She did not acknowledge my presence. Shaking inside I walked away.<sup>139</sup>

Perhaps Elaine DeLott Baker described it best when she wrote, “We destroy each other, but mostly offer each other no comfort.”<sup>140</sup> The reaction to Alan Lomax must be measured against the growing perception within the Movement (particularly SNCC), that whites would always be paternalistic and could never shed the stench of racism. This

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<sup>137</sup>For more information on the Freedom Summer 1964 and its aftermath see Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995) and Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). For a contemporary account see Julius Lester, “The Angry Children of Malcolm X,” *Sing Out!* 16, no. 6 (November 1966): 20-25.

<sup>138</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Sue Thrasher, January 28, 1982, Transcript in the Highlander Research and Education Center Archive, New Market, Tennessee.

<sup>139</sup>Penny Patch, “Sweet Teat at Shoney’s,” in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* by Constance Curry and others (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 159.

<sup>140</sup>Elaine DeLott Baker, “They Sent us this White Girl,” *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* by Constance Curry and others (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 278.

attitude would culminate in the expulsion of whites from SNCC in late 1966, and CORE in 1967.

The last workshop that addressed issues of music, race, and culture, organized by Bernice Johnson Reagon who was studying history at Spelman College in Atlanta, was held at Highlander on October 1-3, 1965. It was not designed for activists, but for people who were involved in folk studies or were folk performers. The Conference for Southern Community Cultural Revival brought together white and black scholars and performers, including the Carawans, Alan Lomax, Ralph Rinzler, Dr. Willis James (one of Reagon's professors at Spelman), performers Mable Hillery and Bessie Jones, as well as activists like Esau Jenkins and Charles Sherrod among others.<sup>141</sup>

The group issued a declaration at the end of the Conference detailing their plans for preserving roots cultures. The Statement of Intent asserts that while all rural cultures were under threat from modernity, black roots culture was in the most danger, but could also be the most helpful in instilling pride and national identity for black people throughout the country. Among their goals were to organize festivals on Johns Island (under local leadership rather than the Carawans'), and other places throughout the South—particularly in Mississippi—as well as to encourage black churches to use traditional *a capella* congregational spiritual singing, along with the newer styles of worship, with its use of choral gospel music and organ or piano accompaniment. The Statement points out that music provides a space where poor black and white southerners could meet and seek reconciliation and understanding. The participants recognized they still faced resistance against their ideas. They write, "In developing our projects we must

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<sup>141</sup>Report on The Conference for Southern Community Cultural Revival, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 156.

face the fact that the Negro has been brainwashed, turned against his cultural heritage because of white-dominated teaching in the schools and in churches and because of the distorted way in which this music has been presented by the mass communications industry.”<sup>142</sup>

The integrationist goals of the conference were out of step with the times. By late 1965, SNCC and CORE had lost interest in projects that promoted integration, and in less than eighteen months both organizations would expel their remaining white members. However, at the time, the changing mood within the Movement might not have been clear to the workshop participants. Bernice Johnson Reagon and Anne Romaine organized the Southern Folk Revival Project as a direct result of the meeting.<sup>143</sup> The two singers, at times aided by others, including Guy, gave concerts throughout the South of grassroots music from both the white and black traditions. While the concerts were individually successful, and the project sponsored performances from 1966 until the late 1980s, they never sparked the sort of grassroots reconciliation through music that the workshop participants envisioned.

Reagon was also unable to organize a black music festival in Atlanta in 1966 because of opposition to roots music and white participation in the festival by local activists. She wrote a letter to C. Conrad Browne of Highlander in 1966 reporting that she had been unable to use the funds Highlander had committed to a music festival in Atlanta. She explains that she has been stymied by a “strong feeling in SNCC that anti-

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<sup>142</sup>Report on The Conference for Southern Community Cultural Revival, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 158.

<sup>143</sup>Reagon is African-American, while Anne Romaine was white.

white means or leans Black Consciousness.”<sup>144</sup> She reports that fellow activist Julius Lester had suggested that it would be unfair to put people in a situation where they were not going to be welcomed. She says she agrees with Lester that “being anti-white is narrow, destructive, a waste of time and that anybody who spends their time holding and hating other people have to stay down themselves.”<sup>145</sup> Though she does not write this to a representative of Highlander, I wonder if part of the resistance she encountered was because the financing was coming from the school because it was a white institution. The SNCC chapter in Atlanta was the most radical in the country, and its members would lead the initiative to make the organization all-black just a few months later. They thought that a white-led organization like Highlander should only work in the white community, despite the school’s long association with Civil Rights in the past.

The three workshops of 1964 and 1965 show the Carawans involved in presenting roots music to activists as a way to foster Black Pride, as well as to help in organizing older rural people. The evidence suggests that at the two conferences they coordinated, some people were convinced by their arguments, while others were unimpressed. True racial integration was an important goal for the Carawans, but as the aftermath of the 1965 October conference shows, the Movement developed in another direction. While they presented roots music as an important cultural component of black identity, the Carawans were still committed to an integrationist vision of the future. But for many

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<sup>144</sup>Bernice Johnson Reagon to Conrad Browne, May 23, 1966, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 184. SNCC members in Atlanta were probably the most radical in the organization, and later led the effort to expel whites from the group.

<sup>145</sup>Bernice Johnson Reagon to Conrad Browne, May 23, 1966, Records of the Highlander Folk School and Highlander Research and Education Center, microfilm, reel 31, p. 185.

black Civil Rights workers, Black Pride became intertwined with the separatist vision of Black Nationalism. Julius Lester, in a 1966 article, expresses the sentiment this way:

Now the Negro is beginning to study his past, to learn those things that have been lost, to recreate what the white man destroyed in him and to destroy that which the white man put in its stead. He has stopped being a Negro and has become a black man in recognition of his new identity, his real identity.<sup>146</sup>

As we shall see the Carawans were able to introduce and educate activists about roots music, but their larger project of encouraging a revitalization of the culture was less successful.

**The Sea Islands—“This highly developed folk form of worship, body of songs, and style of singing are in danger of complete extinction in another generation or so”<sup>147</sup>**

Guy’s involvement with the Sea Islands dates back to the winter of 1959-60. When Highlander sponsored the first Citizenship Education School there, administered by Septima Clark. Guy was sent to be her driver and to contribute music to the classes as he could. He has written that the experience “really changed my life.”<sup>148</sup> Though a letter to Moe Asch written in August 1959 shows that Guy was already aware that music could be put to good use in the Civil Rights struggle, it was not until he heard the singing in the Moving Star Hall on Johns Island that he realized that roots music could play an important role. He returned to Johns Island the following winter to help again with the

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<sup>146</sup>Julius Lester, “The Angry Children of Malcolm X,” *Sing Out!* 16, no. 6 (November 1966): 24.

<sup>147</sup>Guy Carawan, “The Living Folk Heritage of the Sea Islands,” *Sing Out!* 14, no. 2(April-May 1964): 29.

<sup>148</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, “Singing and Shouting in Moving Star Hall,” *Black Music Research Journal* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 17.

Citizen Education classes, and then along with Candie and their son Evan, moved there in 1963.<sup>149</sup>

For the Carawans, moving to Johns Island and organizing the folk festivals were part of their contribution to the Movement. Candie said “I consider the work on Johns Island very much part of the Movement too, even though it’s quite different.”<sup>150</sup> The festivals, and later the book and LPs they would also produce, were part of their larger project to promote roots music and black pride. As we have seen with the 1964 and 1965 workshops, Guy was actively introducing this repertoire, and the people who were engaged in the music, to the activist community framing the music to activists as an example of where black culture (and thus American culture) came from, but also as a tool for organizing. Because he was an active participant in the Movement, and his audience was as well, it naturally meant that his presentation of the material would be slanted towards the usefulness of the music.

Guy and Candie’s work on Johns Island was geared around providing outlets for the music and folk culture on the island to flourish. The couple arranged three festivals on Johns Island to showcase local singing. Though roots music was popular in the folk revival, it lacked an audience at home. The Carawans tried to rectify this through the festivals, which Guy believed were the first roots music performances in the South to use

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<sup>149</sup>The Citizen Education Classes were only held in the winter to allow the students to farm the rest of the year.

<sup>150</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.



local musicians singing their own music near their own homes.<sup>151</sup> Guy is quoted in a *New York Times* article published on August 1, 1964 saying:

The purpose of these regional festivals is to help these people realize the value of their cultural tradition and to preserve it. These local folk festivals could play an important role in the war on poverty. Aside from the need to teach skills and create jobs for people, psychological needs must be met. For people who have been conditioned to be ashamed of the way they express themselves, these festivals and gatherings begin to create pride in the parts of their heritage that are beautiful.<sup>152</sup>

Guy constructs the music as not just an artistic commodity, but also as something with economic and psychological benefits. His mediation of the music to the *New York Times* readers is through a very particular view point, one that values the music for more than just its sonic properties, but also for its tangible uses.<sup>153</sup>

The Carawans also decided to write a book about the people of Johns Island. They conducted numerous interviews, and in 1965 invited a photographer to come to the island to take pictures for the monograph. Tapes of the interviews in the Southern Folklife Collection show that Guy generally took the lead in the discussions, but Candie did ask questions as well. They tended to pursue different interests. In one tape Candie follows a line of questioning centering on why so many children were being raised by grandparents on the island. Guy did not participate in the conversation, and returned to musical matters

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<sup>151</sup>There had been other concerts in the South similar to the festivals on Johns Island, but based on the information in the Guy and Candie Collection in the Southern Folklife Center, Guy does not seem to have been aware of them.

<sup>152</sup>Robert Shelton, "Beneath the Festival's Razzle-Dazzle," *New York Times* August 1, 1964.

<sup>153</sup>Alan Lomax also advocated these ideas and, according to Guy, was a strong supporter of their work on Johns Island. See Guy Carawan, "Remembrance of Alan Lomax, October 2002," Cultural Equity website, <http://bit.ly/i6kO9l>, for more information.

once Candie had exhausted her investigation.<sup>154</sup> Evan, who was a toddler at the time, can be heard in the background of many of the recordings. Whenever he starts to disrupt the conversation, it is always Candie who leaves to take care of him. This division of labor is typical of how the Carawans worked. While Candie was involved in the collection of data (whether it was interviewing or recording music), it was Guy who took the lead.

*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life* uses the same design as the songbooks. It is made up of contextual quotations culled from their interviews, paired with evocative pictures taken by Robert Yellin and transcriptions of songs. In the introduction Guy and Candie declare:

We believe that these people—misunderstood, underestimated, neglected, virtually unknown to most Americans—have something enriching to offer us. The material in this book is a testimony to the richness of Negro folk culture and the human value to be found in a folk community.<sup>155</sup>

The introduction to any work necessarily shapes our understanding of the subsequent material. In *Ain't You Got a Right*, we are encouraged to interpret the book as a tribute to a special people who have been ignored for too long because of their race and socio-economic status.<sup>156</sup> Though they don't refer to earlier work on the Sea Islands in *Ain't You Got a Right*, in a 1979 interview Guy and Candie make it clear that one of the motivations for writing the book was to correct the racist work that had been published

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<sup>154</sup>Bill Saunders, interview by Guy and Candie Carawan, FT 3612, in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>155</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island, South Carolina—Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 9.

<sup>156</sup>Alan Lomax had first visited the island in 1935 and had maintained a long relationship with Bessie Jones, something the Carawans must have known, but they don't refer to Lomax in their preface.

by some folklorists in the past. One example of the rhetoric they found distasteful and prejudiced is,

Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of some of the wealthier Colonists, wrapped their clumsy tongues around it as well as they could, and, enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses and thick lips as so workable a form of speech that it was gradually adopted by other slaves and became in time the accepted Negro speech of the lower districts of South Carolina and Georgia.<sup>157</sup>

In the 1979 interview, Candie talks about how distressing it was to read about the music and people in ways that had been filtered through a white racist point of view. They wanted “to just let people say things themselves” she explains.<sup>158</sup>

Even in subtle ways the Carawans emphasize the position that their subjects are worthy of respect. The attribution for each quotation uses an honorific, Mr. Esau Jenkins or Mrs. Janie Hunter for example. In a world where black people, no matter their age or station would probably be addressed by their first name or as “boy,” just using “Mr.” or “Miss” emphasizes a level of respect not often accorded these people.

The Carawans’ outlook is overtly political. Guy and Candie write about the Civil Rights Movement throughout the Introduction, and the last section of the book is a profile of Esau Jenkins, a key figure in the struggle on Johns Island who had close ties with Highlander. He attended many Highlander workshops, was Septima Clark’s closest ally

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<sup>157</sup> Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stores of the Carolina Coast* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1922), 10 found in in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>158</sup> Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by John Sundale, “Collecting Material, Gullah Books” digital file from an audio cassette held at Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC. Accessed from the Digital Library of Appalachia, <http://bit.ly/gU5tns> (Accessed June 3, 2010).

on the island, and the Citizen Education Program was his idea. Highlander is singled out in the text as an organization that helped with the CEP, and the resulting rise both in adult literacy and black voter registration in the area. “So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light,” Esau Jenkins is quoted.<sup>159</sup> Jenkins’ efforts to bring more economic prosperity to the island are also made clear. By overtly placing the book within a political context, the Carawans create a connection between economic and legal empowerment and roots culture. No matter how uneducated the people may be, they imply, the residents on Johns Island are working, with the help of Highlander, to better their situation using all the tools of the Movement. Though certainly many of the quotations have no particular political significance and are about the culture and life style on the island, by literally framing the book with an introduction and a final section containing an overtly political message, it is hard not to read the rest of the book without considering the Civil Rights implications of the text.

The format of the book is an effort on the Carawans’ part to remove themselves and allow their subjects to speak. Yet there is no way for them to completely absent themselves from the process. The Carawans’ beliefs must inform their editorial choices. While Guy and Candie’s efforts are benign and more positive, their egalitarian and respectful point of view enlightens the book, just as much as the dismissive and racist points of view of earlier authors distorted their work. Just as in their Civil Rights work, Guy and Candie frame the roots culture as artistically and socially valuable as well as fundamental to black culture. The problematic aspect of this position is that people on the island were generally not trying to preserve the music and way of life presented in the book. The lack of economic opportunity on the island meant that most young people left

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<sup>159</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, *Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?*, 1966, 168.

the area looking for work, leaving few who were interested in learning the songs and stories necessary to perpetuate the Gullah culture.

The reception of the Johns Island book is emblematic of the times. The vast majority of reviews were positive. Critics gushed over the pictures, liked the new approach of allowing the subjects to speak for themselves, and appreciated a look into the lives of people that had not been studied in a constructive way before. The book was published in 1966, so by this time the value of roots music was more established than it had been even a few years earlier, and there was an acknowledgement in both the academic and the popular press that there was a real lack of sympathetic and dignified portraits of black, rural people. A typical review in the *New York Times* dated June 11, 1967 says the Carawans had captured the “wisdom and spirit of the Johns Islands” and “the courage and hope with which they prepare to meet the future.”<sup>160</sup> However, there were some negative reviews, all of which had political biases, though the writers could not have come from more different perspectives.

The local Charleston papers had red baited the Carawans the entire time they lived in the area. Articles about the couple invariably included a reference to Guy’s trip to China, or his association with Highlander, with the strong implication (sometimes explicitly stated) that Guy was a Communist. Candie is rarely mentioned. The review of *Ain’t You Got a Right* carried by the Charleston paper says that it is good to have a publication about black culture, but proceeds to slam the book for trivial errors. Owen Daugh, the reviewer, ends the first paragraph of the article with “It is a pity that glaring

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<sup>160</sup>Unsigned review of *Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island, South Carolina—Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs* by Guy and Candie Carawan, *New York Times*, June 11, 1967.

errors in fact make one wonder about the ‘truth’ the author is touted as telling in a ‘new way.’” For instance he writes that the Carawans misstated the year when the first bridge from Charleston to Johns Island was built.<sup>161</sup> Daugh also denies Esau Jenkins’ contention that the segregated school was painted black to let people know the color of the children educated in the building. Daugh reports that, “Guy Carawan and his wife are controversial figures in the Charleston area where their Highlander Folk School background caused many to question their motives when they moved here and lived with and among the Negroes of Johns Island.”<sup>162</sup> Though the review purports to be positive, with the author praising the idea of writing about the people of Johns Island, it is clear that the real message of the article is that the Carawans are Communist liars with suspicious ulterior motives. In case anyone missed the point, M.P. Lelong’s long letter to the editor (headlined “The Curious Background of Guy Carawan”) accusing Guy of being a Communist was printed in the paper in May 1967.<sup>163</sup>

The factual errors (though whether the school was painted black is impossible to verify) that Daugh points out are both designed to minimize the severity of the white neglect of the island. If the bridge was actually built earlier, then it seems that Charleston reached out to the nearby island sooner. If the school really was not painted black then it

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<sup>161</sup> Actually, they were both wrong. The first bridge from the mainland to Johns Island was built in 1921, not 1913 as Daugh states (that was the first bridge to James Island), and not the 1930s as the Carawans write.

<sup>162</sup> Owen Daugh, review of *Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island, South Carolina—Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs* by Guy and Candie Carawan, *News and Courier of Charleston*, March 26, 1967 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Evidently someone did not like the review because in blue ink “chicken fink” is written with an arrow pointing to Daugh’s byline.

<sup>163</sup> “The Curious Background of Guy Carawan,” letter to the editor from M.P. Lelong, *News and Courier of Charleston*, May 9, 1967 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

implies that education on the island was somehow more equitable than it was. More damning passages of the book, such as when Bill Saunders accuses whites of trying to intimidate blacks in order to discourage them from participating in the Movement, are not challenged however.

The other negative review was far more hurtful to the Carawans because it was written by a good friend—Julius Lester. In his review of the book, he faults the Carawans for exploiting the people on Johns Island to produce a boring book. Lester suggests that the text and pictures are “flat” and represent only the kind of people who will talk to whites—old people and children. The book would be better, he says, if it had included the voices of more different ages, middle class and white people. As it is, the book distorts Johns Island by making it seem that the only people who live there are elderly, poor and religious. Fundamentally Lester does not think that white people can ever really know or understand a black community. He ends the article with,

To understand the music of a people it is necessary to understand their lives, to intimately know their lives. The folklorist must begin to see himself as nothing less than a metaphysician employing every tool available to him, because he is dealing with the most precious raw material available—people and the ways in which they express themselves. A diamond cannot be cut with a nail file.<sup>164</sup>

Taken in context with Lester’s other work published in 1967, it is clear that his main problem is that he has come to believe that white people should not be writing about black culture.

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<sup>164</sup>Julius Lester, review of *Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life? The People of Johns Island, South Carolina—Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs* by Guy and Candie Carawan, *Sing Out!* 17, no. 3 (June/July 1967): 41.

Lester's review is unfair. The couple makes it clear in the introduction that the book is meant to document Gullah culture and people—a group that is overwhelming poor and completely black. In any case, most white people were convinced that the Carawans were Communists and would never have spoken to them even if they had been approached. Lester's review did mirror in some ways the reception of the book on the Island itself. Bill Saunders, one of their main sources, wrote the Carawans on June 15, 1967. He reports that overall the local reaction to the book is favorable but “there are some people that have resentments about the pictures and that the book is only showing one side of the Island, but we (Frankie and Bill) think it's beautiful.”<sup>165</sup> Mary Twining, another folklorist, complained in a 1973 article that the reaction to the Carawans' book was limiting her own research because people do not want her to take their picture. She writes that,

the subjects of the book and their immediate neighbors are not at all charmed with its beauty [of the pictures]. They are insulted, aggrieved, and thoroughly disillusioned with the authors who had lived for a period of years among them. Their protest and hurt feelings were centered mainly around the pictures, which not only concentrated on one limited section of the population but on their appearance in working clothes as well ... they fear that people would laugh at them.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup>Bill Saunders to Guy and Candie Carawan, June 15, 1967 in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>166</sup>Mary Arnold Twining, “Field Notes on Reactions to ‘Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life’ by Guy and Candie Carawan” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 10, no. 3 (December 1973): 214.



One woman told Twining that she would only allow her picture to be taken if she was dressed in her Sunday best and that she felt that poverty in the area was not as deep as the Carawans' suggested.<sup>167</sup>

Though it is unclear in the Twining article if the objections to the book originated with Carawans' informants or other people, Candie feels the hostility to the book was initiated from

other people particularly people from John's Island who had moved away, become more middle class, (maybe moved up North or something) jumped on it, too. Like "what are you showing a raggedy grandparent sitting on their doorsteps, and that's not John's Island. Look at us!" We've—all of that was really painful ...<sup>168</sup>

She believed that the people who moved away had then convinced their parents or grandparents that they should not have participated in the project.<sup>169</sup>

In both Lester's review and the backlash against the book on Johns Island, no one actually disputed the accuracy of the information on the Gullah culture the Carawans' presented. Instead, the problem was that the image they had created was unpalatable. Middle class blacks, and even activists like Lester, were deeply ambivalent about poor, rural culture. Even framed in a positive, respectful way, images portraying obviously poverty-stricken people were not what many blacks wanted to see. They wanted an "uplifted" image of a people who had worked their way out of poverty and had achieved the American dream despite racism.

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<sup>167</sup>Twining, 215.

<sup>168</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>169</sup>Though Guy and Candie don't refer explicitly to the reaction to the book on Johns Island in the 1989 revision of *Ain't You Got a Right*, they did include a section that highlighted work done by Bill Saunders and others, who are presented as being well educated and in the middle class.

When Candie spoke of Lester's criticisms in my interview with her, it clearly upset her forty years later. "I mean stuff like that hurts. And especially because we felt like we were doing it very respectfully and for good reasons."<sup>170</sup> She and Guy did not feel betrayed when whites were expelled from SNCC because they were not members of the organization. Many white activists who had been involved with SNCC for years write of being devastated when they had to leave the group; some drifted for years before finding their way again.<sup>171</sup> For the Carawans, though, the moment of personal betrayal came when Lester (who had been a close friend for years) wrote that because they were white they were not qualified to write about black culture.

The Carawans left Johns Island in 1965 and were living in New York when Lester's review was published. No one asked Guy and Candie to leave the island, and up to that point no one had been unpleasant to them or made them feel unwelcome. However, the political climate had changed enough in the two years the Carawans had been on Johns Island that they felt uncomfortable living in an all-black area. After several years in New York, and five years in California when Guy taught at Pitzer College, the Carawans returned to Highlander for good in 1975. The mission of the school has not changed, though they have worked with activists involved in areas as diverse as environmental justice and immigration. The Carawans live there still in a log house built next to the Highlander facility.

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<sup>170</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>171</sup>For examples of reaction to the expulsion of white activists from SNCC see accounts by Penny Patch, Emmy Adams and Casey Haydn in *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* by Constance Curry and others (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000).

## Conclusion

Guy Carawan's contributions to the development of the Freedom Song repertoire have been well documented. However, he and Candie's role in the music of the Civil Rights Movement goes well beyond simply encouraging activists to adapt spirituals for the struggle. Together they presented music to activists, and to the general public, as a vehicle for social and political enlightenment. They framed roots music as a way to encourage, even create, pride in black cultural heritage. Particularly in the later workshops and *Ain't You Got a Right*, the Carawans encouraged their listeners and readers to overcome any lingering discomfort they might have about rural black culture and to hear what the Carawans hear—beautiful music that eloquently expresses resistance against oppression and poverty, racism and despair. By taking this stance, the Carawans confronted many of the preconceptions that the black middle-class had about rural poverty and cultural reminders of slavery. At every step, while they may have convinced some people of their position, they always encountered resistance as well. As whites talking about black culture, they could never have complete credibility. While this did not matter as much in 1960, by 1966 it was quite damaging and contributed to the negative reception of their work by some people.

Their own partnership mirrors the gender roles of the 1960s, and the way that Civil Rights organizations functioned as well. Guy was the up-front leader, while Candie the background organizer and writer. It is as much a reflection on her own humility as it is scholarly preconceptions that it has taken until 2011 for someone to explore why Candie was included in all their authorial bylines. The work on the Carawans in the Civil Rights era has always focused on Guy, even when discussing projects they worked on

together. Though Candie began their marriage as a “helper” (in her words) over the years, she grew in confidence and experience to become a true partner in everything they did.

The Carawans worked for an integrated society in which music could be a safe space for blacks and whites to recognize and capitalize on their similarities and common humanity, but many black activists moved in a different direction. They came to be suspicious of white involvement in black cultural matters. The Carawans’ message that roots culture could be an important component of black identity was largely accepted, but the couple’s authority to make such a claim was rejected. They, along with all whites, were told to leave the struggle and work in the white community, leaving blacks to concentrate on themselves. Highlander began working with white miners in Kentucky on labor and mine safety concerns as well as environmental issues, and the Carawans turned their attention to mountain music as part of that effort.<sup>172</sup>

Guy and Candie hoped that by creating more publicity about the music of the Sea Islands through festivals and the book, there would be more economic opportunities for musicians, and more incentive for local residents to preserve and revitalize the Gullah culture. While the book accurately represented what they found on the island, the portrait of the area was difficult for some people to accept. The Carawans’ wish that the Gullah culture would be preserved has not come to pass. However, the hard feelings about *Ain’t You Got a Right* faded enough that in 1989 the couple were able to write an extensive revision of the book, which reprinted the original text along with information about what had happened on the island over the 25 years since it was first published. The book

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<sup>172</sup>The Carawans went on to publish articles and songbooks on mountain music, and tried to replicate many of the approaches they used in the Civil Rights era in other political arenas.

details the increased economic vitality of the area, as well as the continued weakness of the Gullah culture.

“I’ve often said to people you just have to live long enough to weather all that,”<sup>173</sup> Candie told me and, in fact the couple has outlived much of the backlash they experienced in the late 1960s. In a recent 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, they were welcomed on stage during a Freedom Song concert with genuine affection. Black activists once again talk about white allies and look for interracial partnerships, though many are still wary of anything smacking of paternalism. The Gullah culture is all but gone, but people there are glad to have something that documents it according to Candie. Perhaps it is best to end this study with a statement from Matt (almost certainly folk singer Matthew Jones) in an undated, handwritten letter. He writes,

Your participation in both performing and preserving the music of the struggle is the most important single force from the white folk world. You never tried to become rich off of the creative talents of Black or Mountain people. You should be commended and for that fact alone you will always have my respect.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Guy and Candie Carawan, interview by Kristen Turner, June 28, 2010.

<sup>174</sup>Matt [Jones] to Guy Carawan, undated, in the Guy and Candie Carawan Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## **Appendix 1 – Carawan Bibliography and Discography (Civil Rights material published in the 1960s only)**

### **Books**

*We Shall Overcome: Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement.* New York: Oak Publications, 1963.

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*We Shall Overcome: Songs of the Freedom Riders and the Sit-Ins Performed by Guy Carawan.* 1961. Folkways Records. FW 05591.

*Freedom in the Air: A Documentary on Albany, Georgia.* Produced by Alan Lomax and Guy Carawan. 1962. Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. SNCC-627.

*Sea Island Folk Festival: Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax.* 1964. Folkways Records. FW03841.

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*Birmingham, Alabama, 1963 Mass Meeting.* 1980. Folkways Records. FD 5487. (source material recorded in 1963)

*Sing for Freedom: Workshop 1964 with the Freedom Singers, Birmingham Movement Choir, Georgia Sea Island Singers, Doc Reese, Phil Ochs, Len Chandler.* 1980. Folkways Records. FD 5488. (source material recorded May 7-10, 1964)

## **Appendix 2 – Basic Song Repertoire for the 1964 Sing for Freedom Workshop and Festival**

We shall overcome  
We are soldiers  
I'm gonna sit at the welcome table  
Everybody sing freedom  
We shall not be moved  
This little light of mine  
Which side are you on  
Freedom's comin' and it won't be long  
If you miss me from the back of the bus  
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round  
Come and go with me to that land  
Certainly, Lord  
I'm on my way to freedom land  
Oh freedom  
Over my head  
Woke up this morning with my mind on freedom  
The hammer song

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