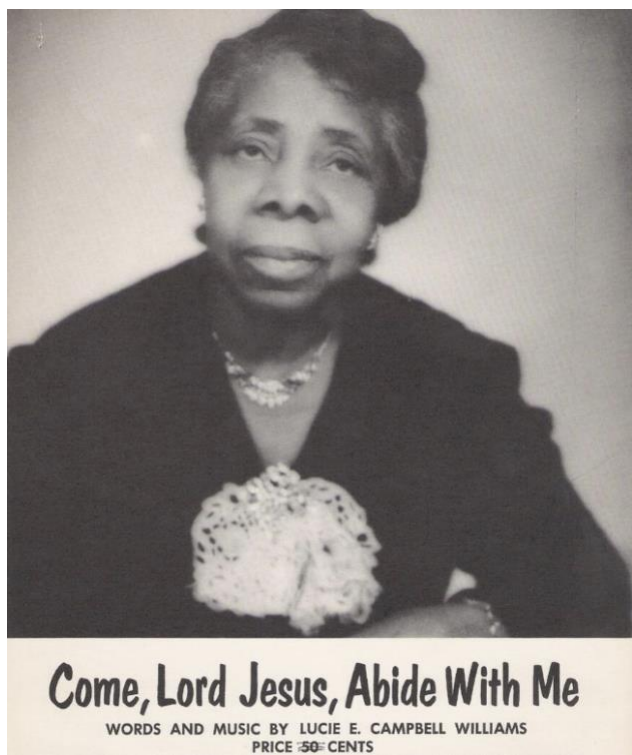


# Gospel Materialities Project

## Assignment Guidelines

CH 519 Black Christianity in North America  
Instructor: Nathan Jérémie-Brink, PhD



Title	Come, Lord Jesus, abide with me, 1962
Subject	Gospel Music (subject), Hymns (subject)
Place	Memphis (city or populated place), Shelby (county), South (region), Tennessee (state), USA (country)
Temporal Subject	1962
Type	images
Format	2 p. (aacr2), sheet music (aat), Traditional Gospel (style or genre)
Source	gmha-m1 (legacy collection record id), Gospel Music History Archive (collection), Indiana University (Bloomington) Archives of African American Music and Culture (subcollection)
Date Created	1962
Creator	Campbell, Lucie Eddie, 1885-1963 (composer)
Contributor	Holmes, Robert L., Jr. (arranger)
Publisher	Campbell and Williams (original), Nashville, Tenn. (original), University of Southern California. Libraries (digital)
Repository Email	aaamc@indiana.edu

### PART I – Select An Object and Write an Introduction

Choose an object related to Gospel as a musical tradition and cultural movement within the longer history of African American Christianity in North America. It is suggested that you chose an artifact, image, text, or other item that was created or used between 1850 and 1993 (that's when the first Kirk Franklin and the Family album dropped, and some, such as Professor Claudrena Harold, argue a lot changed in Gospel music).

What kind of object are we looking for? The artifact, image, text, or other item should be something that tells us about the music or culture of Gospel, or that provides a window into the faith practices or lived religion of those who used it, or that says something important about how that music and movement existed in connection to other social and political developments.

What are some examples and where might such an object be found?

It could be an album cover or the inscribed liner notes of an Aretha Franklin vinyl record that was a prized possession of your mother. It could be a VHS tape of a recorded church

service from your Grandfather's Pentecostal church that has sat in their basement untouched since 1987. It could be the meeting minutes of a women's literary circle or deacon board discussing worship style from the 1940s, that are some of the oldest documents held at your church. It could be a letter your church choir director saved, that was about an invitation to join John P. Kee's Victory in Praise Music and Arts Seminar Mass Choir in 1990. It could be journal entry in your great grandmother's notebook, reflecting on musical differences between her church in New York and the one she grew up in in North Carolina. It could be an online audio clip of a preacher your aunt always listened to on the radio. It could be your father's dress shoes that he always wore when he would travel to go to the Dorsey Convention, that have been sitting in your attic or the back of your closet. It could be a picture of you and a recording artist taken 40 years ago at a political rally or a gospel concert. It could be your first keyboard, on which your church choir director taught you how to play when you were a child accompanying the youth choir.

Where else could I look for a historical object, if I don't have anything personally or in my church or family "archives" that would fit this assignment?

No worries!! Please browse a reputable online source and select something that works.

I strongly recommend the Gospel Music History Archive. It can be accessed at:

<https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/archive/Gospel-Music-History-Archive-2A3BF1PoL9.html>

This digital archive features artifacts, images, printed texts and ephemera, and other items related to gospel, thanks to the collaboration of University of Southern California, Indiana University, and the African American Preservation Alliance, a coalition of more than 150 museums, archives, libraries, and historic societies across the nation.

Also, if you are running stuck and would like to reach out to our collaborators at the International African American Museum in Charleston, they would be happy to offer some possibilities that might be digitized through the IAAM or used in their exhibits.

In the first written part of the assignment, due Saturday, November 27, you will write a discussion thread post of about 500 words describing the object and its historical context as fully as possible. To get started, think about our discussion in class of material culture.

If you are running stuck, I encourage you to think about how you would answer the questions that Daniel Waugh [poses](#) for dealing with material objects. What is it? Who made it? How was it used? How did it get where it is? In other words, you should write—to borrow Waugh's term—a brief biography of the object.

Include in your blog post a brief discussion of the sources, whether online and print, that helped you better understand the item and the historical context, that you used to prepare the post. You should aim in Part I to identify two or three sources.

## Research Tips

You can use the following types of resources for your research on the material objects.

- Websites (as long as they are academic and reputable) – e-mail me if not sure.
- Sabe Library/Digital Theological Library Catalogs and Databases
- Google Books
- Books and articles we have read in this class.
- If you find a source that might be helpful but you are not sure whether it is appropriate, please contact me.
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## **PART II - The Gospel Materialities Write-Up and Presentation**

For the second portion of the project, due Saturday, December 11, you will share a research write-up and presentation concerning the object. The write-up will be posted to the discussion board thread, consisting of around 500 words. The brief presentation will take place in class via Zoom on Monday, December 13, 6:30-9 pm.

How might you explain and present this object, to help us better understand it, and think with it about the history? Your presentation of no more than 10 minutes should use at least two visuals (at least one must give us a visual of the object, and at least one must have questions for our discussion). The material you present should draw upon your preliminary research for the object, and consult at least two more additional sources. You will briefly present to the class your thesis about the object, or what you feel it offers us, and how that relates to the field of scholarship or the themes or readings we have explored in the class.

In addition to your 10 minute brief presentation, pose questions for course discussion of the object. What research questions are left unanswered? What areas for further exploration exist but are not feasible in this timeframe and for this type of research? What other kinds of sources might be connected that you can't access easily online or in this geographic region but that you would pursue if you would undertake an in-depth project? To put it bluntly, how does the object make you want to learn more about the history of Gospel or of African American Christianity more broadly?

The write-up post should include a few specific elements.

- A tentative thesis or historical argument about the object;
- The research questions that guided your exploration;
- How those questions fit with the broader issues and themes we are discussing during the semester;
- Other primary sources you might have found;
- Secondary sources you consulted.

Please do not hesitate to ask before this part of the assignment is due if you need help thinking through some of these pieces, how to find library resources, etc.

## **Assessment/Grading**

The project will earn up to 30 points, assessed according to this rubric:

Points	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Object Identification</b>	The student identified all relevant information for the object with a high level of specificity. The student made clear notes in cases where detailed information is not available.	The student identified most of the relevant information for the object with at least some specificity. If information was not available, the student noted it.	The student identified some information about the object, but key details may have been missing. It was not always clear why information was not provided in a description.	The object description includes major flaws and gaps. The reasons for not providing information are unclear, and it is difficult to determine when information is missing or unavailable.	The student made limited or insufficient identifications of the characteristics of the object.
<b>Grammar and Mechanics</b>	Presents ideas in well-crafted, varied, engaging, virtually error-free sentences. Distinctive word choice; appropriate attitude; word choice and attitude appropriate to assignment.	Conveys ideas with effective and varied sentence structure. Few errors at word and sentence level mar structure. Satisfactory word choice and attitude. Awareness of general audience.	Clear but basic expression of ideas – little variation in sentence form, some common errors at word and sentence level. Inconsistent choice of words and attitude toward work.	Many basic errors at word and sentence level, but sense of ideas conveyed. Shows almost no awareness of audience; reveals little grasp of appropriate word choice or attitude.	Multiple errors in word choice, arrangement, punctuation, and sentence structure undermine sense; incoherent. No evidence of word choice or appropriate attitude to assignment.
<b>Historical Context</b>	Excellent grasp of relevant event(s) and/or issues; clear and accurate depiction of historical evidence and trends.	Good grasp of relevant event(s) and/or issues; depiction of historical evidence and trends is basically accurate although imprecise	Adequate understanding of event(s) and/or issue(s); depiction of relevant historical evidence and trends contains minor inaccuracies.	Minimal understanding of event(s) and/or issue(s); depiction of relevant historical evidence and trends contains multiple or significant inaccuracies.	Little understanding of event(s) and/or issue(s); depiction of relevant historical evidence and trends is fundamentally flawed.
<b>Research Process and Sources</b>	The explanation of the research process is lucid and detailed, contains a range of interesting and informative works on subjects relating to the object, drawing from books, articles, and the web.	The explanation of the research process is mostly clear, has some depth, and provides most of the relevant context and uses interesting and informative works, but there may be some limitations.	The explanation is not entirely clear or does not fully show how research on the object was conducted. Some sources are cited, but may not directly relate to the topic, and do not offer breadth among media.	There is only a limited description of the research process used to learn about the object, with minimal reference to context and sources (two or fewer sources, or drawn exclusively from one medium).	Little or no research process is evident, no relevant sources consulted.
<b>Research Thesis and Interpretive Questions</b>	The discussion includes a detailed thesis probing a research question(s) to pursue that relate the object and its context to Gospel and to broader issues and themes in African American Religious history.	The discussion includes a plausible idea or some conceptual questions that relate the object and its context to Gospel and to broader issues and themes in African American Religious history.	The discussion includes some idea or inquiry but in a somewhat ineffective manner, or does not take into account the appropriate context.	The discussion may include a question, but it does not directly relate to the object, or does not integrate discussion of the object in context or with the broader themes and issues of the course.	No interpretive ideas or questions provided or reflections provided not relevant to the object.
<b>Presentation</b>	The presentation made excellent use of time, succinctly offered a thesis, considered sources, and raised interpretive questions, to stimulate discussion.	Presentation offered a thesis, gave sources, raised decent interpretive questions, and offered some time for discussion	The presentation offered thoughts on the object, but either avoided a thesis or failed to offer sources, and featured limited discussion	The presentation was poorly prepared, lacked required visuals or scholarly sources, featured little discussion.	Little or no substance offered or did not follow guidelines for visuals, gave only anecdotes or personal stories.

This assignment is adapted from Professor Joseph M. Adelman's Material Culture Assignment, Native American History, 1500–1800 at Framingham State University.