GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Go Tell It on the Mountain" is an African-American spiritual song, compiled by John Wesley Work, Jr., dating back to at least 1865, that has been sung and recorded by many gospel and secular performers. It is considered a Christmas carol because its lyrics celebrate the Nativity of Jesus.

Refrain:
Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. [Refrain]

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]

3 Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]

The Story Behind Go Tell It On The Mountain

John Wesley Work, Jr. can be credited for the fact that we still sing "Go Tell It On the Mountain" every Christmas, although he may not have originally created the Negro spiritual. Work grew up in Nashville loving music as the son of a church choir director. Even though he earned his Master's in Latin and went on to teach

ancient Latin and Greek, his first love continued to be music, and he went on to become the first African-American collector of Negro spirituals.

This actually was a difficult task for Work as they were passed down verbally, from plantation to plantation; very few were ever written down. But Work proved up to the challenge, publishing his first book, New Jubilee Songs as Sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, in Songs of the American Negro, six years later. It was in this second volume that "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" first appeared. The original singers of the song accomplished the same valued task the angels gave the shepherds on the first Christmas night outside of Bethlehem, proclaiming, "that Jesus Christ is born!" And now, thanks to publishings of John Wesley Work, so can we.