

John Henry #1

Source:
Eileen Southern
The Music of Black Americans
New York: W.W. Norton, 1971

John____ Hen - ry told____ his cap - tain

That a man was a natch' - al____ man:

And be - fore he'd let that steam - drill beat him down,

He'd fall dead with his ham - mer in his hand,

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2. Captain says to John Henry,
"Going to bring me a steam-drill round,
Take that steam-drill out upon the job,
Going to whip that steam-drill down,
Going to whip that old steam-drill down."
3. John Henry says to his Captain
"Send me a twelve pound hammer around,
A twelve pound with a four-foot handle,
And I beat your steam-drill down,
And I beat your steam-drill down."
4. John Henry went down on the railroad
With a twelve pound hammer by his side.
He walked down the track but he never come back,
'Cause he laid down his hammer and he died,
Yes, he laid down his hammer and he died.