



### **No Rooms**

By the time he was 32 years old, Sam Cooke was already wealthy and famous. He was a singer and songwriter with five big hits.

In 1963, he traveled to Louisiana for a concert. Sam, his wife, and his brother had a reservation at a hotel there. But when they tried to check into the hotel, the clerk at the front desk told them, “I’m sorry—the hotel is full.”

“But we have a reservation,” Sam said.

“I’m sorry,” the clerk said again. “The hotel is full. We don’t have any rooms.”

Sam knew that wasn’t true. There were rooms at the hotel, but not for him and his family. In 1963, hotels in the Southern United States were segregated—there were separate hotels for whites and blacks. Sam and his family were African-American, and the hotel was for whites only. They had to find a different hotel.

Two months after his experience in Louisiana, Sam wrote the song “A Change Is Gonna Come.” It is a song about injustice, and a song about hope.

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