

# Songs of the West sung by Dave Fredrickson / Folkways Records FH 5259



SONGS OF THE WEST SUNG BY DAVE FREDRICKSON / FOLKWAYS FH 5259

## SIDE I

Band 1: FRENCHMAN'S RANCH  
Band 2: LONE STAR TRAIL  
Band 3: FAREWELL, FAIR LADIES  
Band 4: BILLY THE KID  
Band 5: PRETTY BOY FLOYD  
Band 6: MOLE IN THE GROUND  
Band 7: HANG ME  
Band 8: GEORGE CAMPBELL (Child #210)  
Band 9: MORE PRETTY GIRLS THAN ONE

## SIDE II

Band 1: JACK OF DIAMONDS  
Band 2: AUSTIN'S FAIR CITY  
Band 3: GYPSY DAVEY (Child #200)  
Band 4: BONNIE BLUE EYES  
Band 5: THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND  
Band 6: THE FAIR MAID FROM THE PLAINS  
Band 7: LETTER EDGED IN BLACK  
Band 8: COWBOY'S LIFE IS A VERY DREARY LIFE  
Band 9: BIG CITY JAIL

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

Songs of the West



# SONGS OF THE WEST

## sung by Dave Fredrickson

by ROGER ABRAHAMS

Dave Fredrickson is a unique folksinger in that he is half real folk and half urban folksinger. He brings to his songs the style of the old cowboy singers such as Ken Maynard and a repertoire that includes songs learned from traditional singers, including some in his own family, from old cowboy records, from recent Folkways and Library of Congress releases and from books. This kind of variety is what characterizes Frederickson's life, but on this score, he shall speak for himself. Recently, he wrote of himself in a letter:

"I was born in Berkeley, California in 1927 but moved to Redwood city, a suburb of San Francisco, when I was about 5 or 6. Moved back to Berkeley in 1944 to start college and except for a year in the Navy and 3 or 4 in Walnut Creek (a suburb of Oakland) have been in Berkeley ever since. My father ran and still runs a small one-man business repairing typewriters and my mother is a registered nurse. Both however come from rural backgrounds, my father from Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada where he was a cowboy and agricultural worker until he joined the Navy in WW I, my mother from the San Joaquin Valley in California where her family was one of the early settlers. As a boy my primary social ties were with my mother's extended family (I had dozens of cousins) and I spent just about every vacation period, summer, winter, spring, since I was old enough to be away from home by myself on a farm of one of my uncles. I ended up learning a little bit about dairy farming, but much more about music, for the San Joaquin Valley was one of the areas settled by the migrants from the dust bowl regions in the 30's, hence the music was all around me and I was singing since very young. I sang unaccompanied most of the time, until about 1947 when I hauled out my father's old mail-order guitar (as a young man he played guitar, mandolin, and fiddle at country dances) and learned a few chords. When I started college in 1944, I learned that "Okie" music as it was called, was not much in favor, and I turned to folk music, starting with Burl Ives, naturally. Suddenly I discovered Woody Guthrie on record and went back to my "Okie" and "hillbilly" and "cowboy" singing, but equipped, I believe, with more taste and discrimination. I do not consider myself to be a folk-singer; more I am a singer of old-time songs. They were the songs I grew up with (some even old-time then) and as time passed they have become old-time. New songs I learn (new for me) are almost all from the older days (the songs and days aren't actually so old, but no longer as popular as they once were.) I graduated in anthropology in 1948, did a year or two of graduate work, quit school, drove a taxi-cab for five years, drove trucks off and on for three, alternating with being a helper for a fellow who sprayed insecticide, shrubs and plants and weed-killer on weeds (he was a pacifist). For the past couple of years I have been self-employed, doing odd jobs, modelling for art classes, giving guitar lessons and occasionally singing a job for pay. I am married and have two girls ages five and seven and a half. I have been singing for my own pleasure for twenty-five years or more, and some of these years I like to believe that some other people got some pleasure from it. But regardless of who listens, it is highly probable that twenty-five years from now, granted the physical possibility, I'll still be singing for my own pleasure."

Anything else of importance, Fredrickson's singing will be able to tell you. I first heard Dave on a week-end junket he made to sing at a club in Aspen, Colorado. The quiet warmth of his personality, the almost other-worldly moral core, the integrity of the man, all these strike one on meeting him, and it is some of these qualities that infest his singing. Consistently, comments on his songs when complimented upon them, would be, "You should hear Ken Maynard sing that one" or "Have you heard Woodie's version of that one." Dave, I think you will agree, quietly takes his place beside anyone with whom you might compare him.

In the notes references will be made to the following books: Laws, Malcolm, Native American Balladry, Philadelphia, 1950. Laws, Malcolm, American Balladry from British Broad-sides, Philadelphia, 1957. Coffin, Tristram P., The British Traditional Ballad in North America, Philadelphia, 1950.

Lomax, John, Cowboy Songs, New York, 1930 edition  
Thorp, N. Howard, Songs of the Cowboys, Boston and N.Y., 1921.  
Randolph, Vance, Ozark Folksongs, Columbia, Mo., 1950.

### SIDE I, Band 1: FRENCHMAN'S RANCH

Learned from Eddie Wallace, a cousin by marriage, near Merced, California, several years ago. He had learned it from his mother, the family having come from Oklahoma in 1939.

While camping on a prairie, on a Frenchman's one  
night  
With heads upon the saddle and campfires burning  
bright

Someone telling stories, someone singing songs,  
And some were softly smoking as the hours rolled  
along.

And as they came to talking of their distant friends  
so dear  
This boy hung his head from his saddle and his eyes  
were filled with tears.

They asked this boy the reason why he was compelled  
to roam  
They also asked him the reason why he was at home  
no more.

He raised his head, brushed away the tears and he  
looked the vast crowd o'er  
Oh boys I'll tell you the reason why I am at home  
no more.

I fell in love with a neighbor girl her cheeks  
were soft and white  
Another fellow loved her too and it ended in a fight.

This fellow's name was Thomas Smith we had been  
friends from boys,  
We always shared each other's love and had each  
other's joys.



I remember the night Tom and I first fought I  
stabbed Tom with my knife,  
He fell to the ground, the crimson flood was flowin'  
from his side.

I could Tom say though in his dreams as he lay there  
on the ground,  
Oh boy you will be sorry of this when you see me  
lyin' dead.

Home, home, home sweet home, I'd give my pony and  
saddle to be at home sweet home.

#### SIDE I, Band 2: LONE STAR TRAIL

This is a lyric version of the song found in Lomax,  
310. Many of the verses are found in other songs  
describing cowboy life. Learned from the Ken  
Maynard Record. (Columbia 2310 D). (See Anthology  
of American Folk Music, Volume 3, #84, Folkways  
FP 253.)

I am a lonely cowboy I'm off on the Texas claim,  
My trade is cinching saddles and pulling bridle reins  
I can twist a lasso with the greatest skill and ease  
I can rope and ride a bronco most anywhere I please.

I love the rolling prairie that's on the trail and  
strife,  
Behind a bunch of longhorns I'll journey all my  
life,  
But if I had a stake boys married I would be  
The sweetest girl in this wide world has fell in  
love with me.

Now when we get on the trail boys and dusty billows  
rise,  
Fifteen miles from water the grass is scorchin' dry  
The boss is mad and rainy you often plainly see,  
I'll have to follow the longhorn I'm a cowboy here  
to be.

But when it comes to rain boys what of the gentle kind,  
When lakes are full of water the grass is wavin' fine,  
The boss will shed his frown then and a pleasant smile  
you'll see,  
I'll have to follow the longhorn I'm a cowboy here to  
be.

Now when we get them bedded, we think down for the  
night,  
Some horse 'll shake his saddle it'll give the herd  
a fright  
They'll bound to their feet boys and madly stampede  
away  
And then you'll know it's time boys you can hear the  
cowboys say:

Now when we get them bedded we feel most inclined  
When a cloud'll rise in the west boys and a fire'll  
play on their horns,  
The old boss rides around then your pay you'll get  
in gold,  
I'll have to follow the longhorn until I am too old.

#### SIDE I, Band 3: FAREWELL, FAIR LADIES

One of the many beautiful night-herding songs. This  
is closely related to "Doney Gal" and the many  
different versions of "Good-bye Old Paint", (see  
Thorpe, 118). Learned from the Library of Congress  
disk, AAFS L 28, as sung by Jess Morris at Dalhart,  
Texas.

Farewell fair ladies I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Farewell fair ladies I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye my little donie, my ponie, hand-stand, old  
Paint  
Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye old Paint I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Old Paint's a good pony and he paces when he can.

In the middle of the ocean there grows a green tree  
I'll never prove false to the girl that loves me  
Old Paint, Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Old Paint's a good pony and he paces when he can.

We spread down our blankets on the green grassy  
ground  
The horses, the cattle they were grazin' all  
around  
Old Paint, Old Paint I'm a leavin' Cheyenne.

Old Paint had a colt down on the Rio Grande  
The colt couldn't pace so they called her Cheyenne  
Old Paint, Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Old Paint's a good pony and he paces when he can.

My foot in my stirrup, my bridle in my hand  
Good-bye my little donie, my pony can't stand  
Old Paint, Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Old Paint's a good pony and he paces when he can.

Now the last time I seen her t'was late in the  
fall  
She was riding Old Paint she was leading old Ball  
Old Paint, Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne.

Fair well fair ladies I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Fair well fair ladies I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye my little donie, my pony can't stand  
Old Paint, Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Good-bye Old Paint, I'm a leavin' Cheyenne  
Old Paint's a good pony and he paces when he can.

#### SIDE I, Band 4: BILLY THE KID

This is one of the vital impressionistic Western  
songs halfway between a lyric and a ballad. For  
its various printings see Laws (NAB), 263. Learned  
at an early age, perhaps from the radio.

I'll sing you a true song of Billy the Kid  
Sing of the desperate deeds that he did  
Way out in New Mexico long long ago  
Where man's only friend was his old 44.

When Billy the Kid was a very young lad  
In old Silver City he went to the bad  
Way out in the West with a gun in his hand  
At the age of 12 years he killed his first man.

Young Mexican maidens play guitars and sing  
Songs about Billy, their boy bandit king  
How there's a young man who had reached its sad end  
Had a notch on his pistol for 21 men.

It was on the same night when poor Billy died  
He said to his friends I'm not satisfied  
There are 21 men I have put bullets through  
Sheriff Pat Garritt must make 22.

Now this is how Billy the Kid met his fate  
The bright moon was shining the hour was late  
Shot down by Pat Garritt who once was his friend  
The young outlaw's life had now reached its sad end.

Now there's many a lad with a face fine and fair  
Who starts out in life with a chance to be square  
But just like poor Billy they wander astray  
They lose their life in the very same way.

#### SIDE I, Band 5: PRETTY BOY FLOYD

One of the most famous of recent ballads, written  
by Woody Guthrie, learned in this case from a tape  
of Bun Kinsey, of Dry Creek, Georgia.

Now Pretty Boy was born in the Oklahoma hills  
Where the beautiful flowers grow wild  
He was christened Charles Arthur by parents so proud  
Who thanked God for their beautiful child.

By the side of his cradle his mother would sing  
Never dreaming the sorrows he'd bring  
But a mother's heart is broke when a boy grows to  
man  
It's been ever true since time first began.

Now Pretty Boy was 20 when he married his young  
wife  
She was only 16 summers old  
Then he went to work in a bakery shop out there  
But he drifted away from the fold.



Left his young wife in Dixie in 1924  
Went to Kansas to try to earn more  
Then he went to St. Louis got in bad company  
And wound up in a penitentiary.

He served his time went to Ohio  
Killed a man and was sentenced again  
He didn't serve the time the jury gave to him  
For he jumped from a fast-speeding train.

Kansas City was the next he took it on the run  
Killed two brothers with his careless gun  
He killed Mr. Byrd and a man named Wilson  
And he left Kansas City on the run.

Ohio again, he killed Mr. Chestewart  
Spreading fear all along his crooked path  
Then he went back home got into another row  
Killed the sheriff who stirred up his wrath.

T'was the last trip to Ohio for that wicked fool  
He was shot dead 8 miles to Liverpool  
Pretty Boy will learn on that great Judgement Day  
That a life filled with crime does not pay.

#### SIDE I, Band 6: MOLE IN THE GROUND

Fredrickson's adaptation of the song as sung by  
Bascom Lamar Lunsford, (see Anthology of American  
Folk Song, Folkways FP 253, #63 and Smoky Mountain  
Ballads, FP 40).

I wish I wuz a mole in the ground  
Yes, I wish I wuz a mole in the ground  
If I wuz a mole in the ground, I'd rip that mountain  
down  
And I wish I wuz a mole in the ground.

Campy wants a 9 dollar shawl  
Campy wants a 9 dollar shawl  
When I come around that hill with a 40 dollar bill  
It's baby where you been so long?

I've been in the bin so long  
I've been in the bin so long  
I've been in the bin with the rough and rowdy men  
And it's baby where you been so long?

I wish I wuz a lizard in the spring  
Yes I wish I wuz a lizard in the spring  
If I see a lizard in the spring I would hear my Campy  
sing  
And I wish I wuz a lizard in the spring.

Oh Campy let your hair roll down  
Campy let your hair roll down  
Let your hair roll down and your bangs curl around  
Oh baby where you been so long.

Back to the first verse.

#### SIDE I, Band 7: HANG ME

Randolph (III, 261-2) reports this as a gypsy song.  
Learned originally from Randolph and changed with  
time.

My father was a gambler he taught me how to play  
My father was a gambler he taught me how to play  
Says "son don't go a beggin' while he's got that  
ace and trey."

#### CHORUS:

Hang me oh hang me and I'll be dead and gone  
Hang me oh hang me and I'll be dead and gone  
I wouldn't mind the hangin' it's layin' in  
the grave so long.  
Layin' in the grave so long.

I was down in old Missouri just as sick as I could  
be  
Down in old Missouri, sick as I could be  
Receiving all the letters says "Son come home to me."

#### (CHORUS)

Now if I had minded mama I would not be here today  
If I had minded mama I would not be here today  
But I was young and foolish and easy talked away.

#### (CHORUS)

My father and mother and sister make three  
Father and mother little sister make three  
Marchin' to the gallows to see the last of me,  
To see the last of me.

They threw the rope around his neck they drew  
him very high  
They threw the rope around his neck they drew  
him very high  
The last words they heard him say, "Won't be long  
now til I die."

#### (CHORUS)

#### SIDE I, Band 8: GEORGE CAMPBELL

This is Child ballad, 210 as reworked into an American setting by Harlan Kinsey of Berkeley, California. Learned almost the day it was composed. The melody is similar to "Hang Me." For a further history of the song in this country, see Coffin, 128.

George Campbell lived in Texas with his mother and  
his wife  
George Campbell lived in Texas with his mother and  
his wife  
Two little children to make a hard hard life.  
Two little children to make a hard hard life.

Well, Georgie left his mother, his children and his  
wife  
Georgie left his mother, his children and his wife  
For to get some money to find a pleasant life.  
For to get some money to find a pleasant life.

He rambled he gambled he rambled all around  
He rambled he gambled he rambled all around  
Til he met up with a gambler who shot the poor boy  
down.  
He met up with a gambler who shot the poor boy  
down.

Two women cryin' children walkin' 'round  
Two women cryin' children walkin' 'round  
Waitin' for the dead man to come from the town  
Waitin' for the dead man to come from the town.

Home come the saddle home come old Dan  
Home come the saddle home come old Dan  
Home come the saddle but never come the man  
Home come the saddle but never come the man

Who'll plough my meadow, who'll hoe my corn  
Who'll plough my meadow, who'll hoe my corn?  
Two little children and a baby yet unborn  
Two little children and a baby yet unborn.

Georgie's mother's weepin' his wife is the same  
Georgie's mother's weepin' his wife is the same  
Two little children to curse the gambler's game  
Two little children to curse the gambler's game.

#### SIDE I, Band 9: MORE PRETTY GIRLS THAN ONE

Another fine old cowboy lyric, with "floating"  
type verses. Learned from Library of Congress  
record AAFS L 28, as sung by Wayne Dinwiddie at  
Visalia, California.

There's more pretty girls than one  
There's more pretty girls than one  
In every town I've rambled around  
There's more pretty girls than one.

My mama told me last night  
She gave me good advice  
Says, "Quit your ramblin' around Pretty Boy  
And marry you a lovin' wife."

Look down that lonesome road  
Before you travel on  
I'll sing to you this lonesome song  
To hear before you're gone.

There's more pretty girls than one, etc.



Look down that lonesome road  
Hang down your little head and cry  
For thinking of those pretty little girls  
And hoping I never would die.

There's more pretty girls than one, etc.

SIDE II, Band 1: JACK OF DIAMONDS

This common gambling lyric, in an uncommon form,  
as learned from an old record by Jules Verne  
Allen.

Jack of Diamonds, Jack of Diamonds, I know you of old  
You've robbed my poor pockets of silver and gold.

It's whiskey villain, you've been my down-fall  
You've kicked me, you've cuffed me but I love you  
for all.

Oh baby oh baby I've told you before  
You make me pallet I'll lay on the floor.

Your parents don't like me they say I'm too poor,  
They say I'm not worthy to enter your door.

They say I drink whiskey but my money's my own,  
And if they don't like me they can leave me alone.

It's beefsteak when I'm hungry rye whiskey when  
I'm dry  
Greenbacks when I'm hard-up and heaven when I die.

Rye whiskey, rye whiskey, rye whiskey I cry,  
If I can't get rye whiskey I surely will die.

Oh baby oh baby I've told you before  
To make me a pallet, I'll lay on the floor.

I'll build me a castle on yonder mountain high  
Where my true love can see me as she goes ridin'  
by.

Where my true love can see me and help me to mourn  
For I'm just a young cowboy and a long way from  
home.

If the ocean was whiskey and I was a duck  
I would dive to the bottom to get one sweet sup.

But the ocean ain't whiskey and I ain't no duck,  
So I'll play Jack of Diamonds and try to change  
my luck.

Oh baby oh baby I've told you before  
To make me a pallet I'll lay on the floor.

I've rambled I've gambled all my money away  
So it's on the old cow-trail now Molly I must stay.

It's on the old cow-trail now Molly I must roam  
For I'm just a young cowboy and a long way from  
home.

Jack of diamonds, Jack of diamonds, I know you  
of old,  
You've robbed my poor pockets of silver and gold.

Rye whiskey, rye whiskey, rye whiskey I cry  
If I don't get rye whiskey I know I must die.

Oh baby oh baby I've told you before,  
To make me a shake down I'll lay on the floor.

SIDE II, Band 2: AUSTIN'S FAIR CITY

This was learned from an old Ken Maynard record.

In Austin's fair city, Austin's fair city  
Austin's fair city, t'was early one day,  
I spied a young cowboy a handsome young cowboy  
All wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay.

I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy  
These words he did say as I boldly stepped by  
Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story  
For I'm shot in the breast and I know I must die.

Oh beat the drum slowly or play the fife lowly  
Oh play the dead march as you carry me along  
Carry me to the graveyard and throw the sod o'er me  
For I'm only a young cowboy, I know I've done wrong.

My friends and relations, they live in the nation  
They know not where their boy has gone,  
I first come to Texas, got hired to a ranch man  
Got shot in the breast and I know I've done wrong.

Someone write a letter to my gray-headed mother  
Then to my sister my sister so dear  
But there is another far dearer than mother  
Who would bitterly weep if she knew I was here.

Oh beat the drum slowly oh play the fife lowly  
Oh play the dead march as you carry me along  
Carry me to the graveyard and throw the sod o'er  
me  
For I'm only a young cowboy, and I know I've done  
wrong.

It was once in the saddle I used to go dashing  
It was once in the saddle I used to ride gay  
I first took to drinking and then to card-playing  
Got shot by a gambler, I'm dyin' today.

Someone go bring me a drink of cold water  
A drink of cold water the poor cowboy said  
But before we could get it his soul had departed  
His soul had departed the cowboy was dead.

Beat the drum slowly oh play the fife lowly  
Oh play the dead march as you carry me along  
Carry me to the graveyard and throw the sod o'er me  
For I'm only a young cowboy, I know I've done wrong.

SIDE II, Band 3: GYPSY DAVY

Child 200, as distilled through Woody Guthrie and  
Cliff Carlisle. For other U.S. versions, see  
Coffin, 120.

It was late last night when the boss come home  
Asking about his lady  
The only answer he received "She's gone with the  
Gypsy Davy  
Gone with the Gypsy Dave.

Go saddle for me my buckskin horse with the 100  
dollar saddle  
Point out to me their wagon tracks and after them  
I'll travel,  
After them I'll ride.

Well I had not rode til the midnight moon when I  
saw the campfire gleaming  
I heard the notes of the big guitar and the voice  
of the gypsy singing  
The song of the Gypsy Dave.

There in the line of the cracklin' fire I saw her  
fair face beaming  
Her heart in tune with the big guitar and the  
voice of the gypsy singing  
The song of the Gypsy Dave.

Have you forsaken your husband dear, have you  
forsaken your baby?  
Have you forsaken your fine fine home to go with  
the Gypsy Davie  
To sing with the Gypsy Dave?

Yes I've forsaken my husband dear to go with the  
Gypsy Davie  
I've forsaken my mansions high but not my blue-  
eyed baby  
My pretty little blue-eyed babe.

She smiled to leave her husband dear to go with  
the Gypsy Davie  
But the tears come a tricklin' down her cheek when  
she thought of the blue-eyed baby,  
Pretty little blue-eyed babe.

Take off take off your buck-skin gloves, made of  
Spanish leather  
Give to me your lily-white hand, we'll ride back  
home together,  
We'll ride home again.



No, I won't take off my buckskin gloves made of  
Spanish leather  
I'll go my way from day to day and I'll ride with  
the Gypsy Dave  
Sing with the Gypsy Dave.

Last night she slept on a fine feather bed by the  
side of her husband and baby  
Tonight she'll sleep on the cold cold ground by  
the side of the Gypsy Dave  
By the side of the Gypsy Dave,  
Singin' with the Gypsy Dave,  
The song of the Gypsy Dave.

#### SIDE II, Band 4: BONNIE BLUE EYES

Learned from the Randolph Collection (IV, 209-10)  
with verses added from "My Last Gold Dollar" (IV,  
114.)

Good-bye little bonnie blue eyes  
Good-bye little bonnie blue eyes  
I'll see you again but God knows when  
Good-bye little bonnie blue eyes.

I'm leavin' on the railroad train  
I'm leavin' on the railroad train  
Oh I love you God knows I do  
But I'm leavin' on the railroad train.

I'm goin' out west this fall  
I'm goin' out west this fall  
I'm goin' out west I'll leave the one that I love  
best,  
Little bonnie don't ya weep for me.

I'll sail on the ocean blue  
I'll sail on the ocean blue  
On the ocean blue I'll think about you  
But I'll sail on the ocean blue.

Good-bye little bonnie blue eyes  
Good-bye little bonnie blue eyes  
I'll see you again but God knows when  
Good-bye little bonnie blue eyes.

I must travel on down the line  
I must travel on down the line  
I love you my dear and I want you near  
But I must travel on down the line.

Put your hand in mine  
Just put your little hand in mine  
If you love me like I love you  
Just put your little hand in mine.

My last gold dollar is gone  
My last gold dollar is gone  
My board bill's due and my whiskey bill is too  
But my last gold dollar is gone.

Back to first verse.

#### SIDE II, Band 5: GIRL I LEFT BEHIND

This is the cowboy version of this old broadside  
ballad. Learned from the Dick Reinhart record,  
(Brunswick BL 59001, a reprint). For versions  
collected throughout this country, see Laws  
(Broad-sides), P. 1B.

There was a wealthy old farmer  
Who lived in the country near-by  
He had a lovely daughter  
On whom I cast an eye.  
She was lovely, fair, the fairest one  
Indeed so very fair  
There was no other girl in the county  
With her I could compare.

I asked her if she would be willin'  
For me to cross over the plain  
She said would make no difference  
If I returned again.  
She said, she would prove true to me  
Til death should prove unkind  
We kissed, shook hands, we parted  
I left that girl behind.

Out in a western city boys, a town we all know well  
Where everyone was friendly and to show me all around  
Where work and money was plentiful and the girls to  
me proved kind  
But the only object on my mind was the girl that I  
left behind.

As I was rambling around one day all down at the  
public square  
The mail coach had arrived and I met the mail boy  
there  
He handed to me a letter which gave me to understand  
That the girl I left in Texas had married another  
man.

I turned myself all around and vowed not knowing  
what else to do  
I read on down a piece further to see if those  
words proved true  
It's drinking I throw over, card-playing I resign  
For the only girl that I ever loved was the girl  
that I left behind.

Come all you rambling gambling boys and listen  
while I tell  
Does you no good kind friends I'm sure it will do  
you no harm  
If ever you court a fair young girl just marry her  
while you can  
For if ever you cross over the plain, she'll marry  
some other man.

#### SIDE II, Band 6: THE FAIR MAID FROM THE PLAINS

Another version of "Ranger's Command" learned from  
the Bun Kinsey, Dry Creek, Georgia tapes.

There once lived a maiden far out on the plain  
She'd help herd the cattle through cold stormy  
rain  
She'd help herd the cattle through the long  
round up  
She'd take a drink with me from the cold bitter  
cup.

She'd drink the red liquor that affects a man so  
She's fair as the lily and as white as the snow  
I taught her the comrade the cowboy's command  
To use a 6 shooter in each of her hands.

To use a 6 shooter and never to run  
While there was a load left in each of her guns  
We camped in a canyon in the fall of the year  
The season to stay with a herd of the steers.

The Indians broke upon us they did every night  
We rose from our warm beds a battle to fight.  
We rose from our warm beds oh how she cry  
Come all you brave cowboys fight here for your  
life.

Come all you brave cowboys fight here for your  
life  
The Redskins have murdered my dear little  
wife,  
I jumped to my saddle a gun in each hand  
Come all you brave cowboys let's win this fair  
land.

I'm far from my comrades I'm far from my home  
Far out on the prairie I'm dying alone,  
No father to cheer me no sweetheart to sigh  
No mother to weep o'er the place where I lie.

#### SIDE II, Band 7: LETTER EDGED IN BLACK

Though many folklorists would like to overlook the  
fact, this song may be the one most commonly known  
to the folk. It has managed to creep into many  
collections, usually found in practically the same  
form. Fredrickson probably learned this by word-of-  
mouth, he thinks.

I was standin' by my window yesterday mornin'  
Without a thought of worry or of care  
When I saw the postman coming up the pathway  
With such a happy face and carefree air.



He rang the bell and whistled as he waited  
Then he said, "Good morning to you Jack"  
But he little knew the sorrow that he brought me  
When he handed me that letter edged in black.

With trembling hands I took that letter from him  
I broke the seal and this is what it said:  
"Come home my boy your dear old father wants you,  
Come home my boy your dear old mother's dead."

"The last words your mother ever uttered  
Were 'Tell my boy I want him to come back,'  
My eyes are dimmed my poor old heart is broken  
As I write to you this letter edged in black."

"Those angry words I wish I'd never spoken  
You know I did not mean them don't you Jack?  
May the angels bear me witness I am asking  
Your forgiveness in this letter edged in black."

I bowed my head in sorrow and in sadness  
The sunshine of my life it all had fled  
Since the postman brought that letter yesterday  
mornin'  
Sayin' "Come home my boy your mother dear is dead."

I could hear the postman whistlin' yesterday mornin'  
Coming up the pathway with his pack  
But he little knew the sorrow that he brought me  
As he handed me that letter edged in black.

#### SIDE II, Band 8: COWBOY'S LIFE IS A VERY DREARY LIFE

The most popular of the cowboy's complaint songs,  
learned from Library of Congress disc, AAFS L 28,  
as sung by Sloan Matthews of Alpine, Texas.

You can talk about your farms and your Chinamen's  
charms  
Talk about your silver and your gold  
But a cowboy's life is a very dreary life  
Ridin' through the heat and the cold.

Early in the mornin' you can hear the boss say,  
"Get up boys the breakin' of the day."  
It's now for to rise with our little sleepy eyes,  
The bright dreamy night's passed away.

When springtime comes then the hardships began  
The rain is so fresh and so cold  
We almost freeze with the water on our clothes  
And the cattle we can scarcely hold.

You can talk about your farms and your Chinamen's  
charms  
But cowboys take my advice  
Settin' out for to roam but you'd better stay at  
home  
With your kind and your lovin' little wife.

#### SIDE II, Band 9: BIG CITY JAIL

A typical type of "goodnight" song, learned by the  
singer from the old Conqueror disc, sung by Billy  
Vest.

They got me on the corner of Fifth Street and Main  
Take me to the big jail they bound me in chains  
Down come the jailer, 'round 10 o'clock  
With that big bunch of keys and he opened that lock.

Now the judge found me guilty, said I had to pay  
Now for ten long years behind bars I stay  
They put me on board of that train Cannonball  
And when it pulled out I waved to them all.

I've traveled this country 100 times or more  
And now for 10 long years I'll travel no more  
If I'd a listened to mother I wouldn't be here today  
But when you do a crime you sure have to pay.