

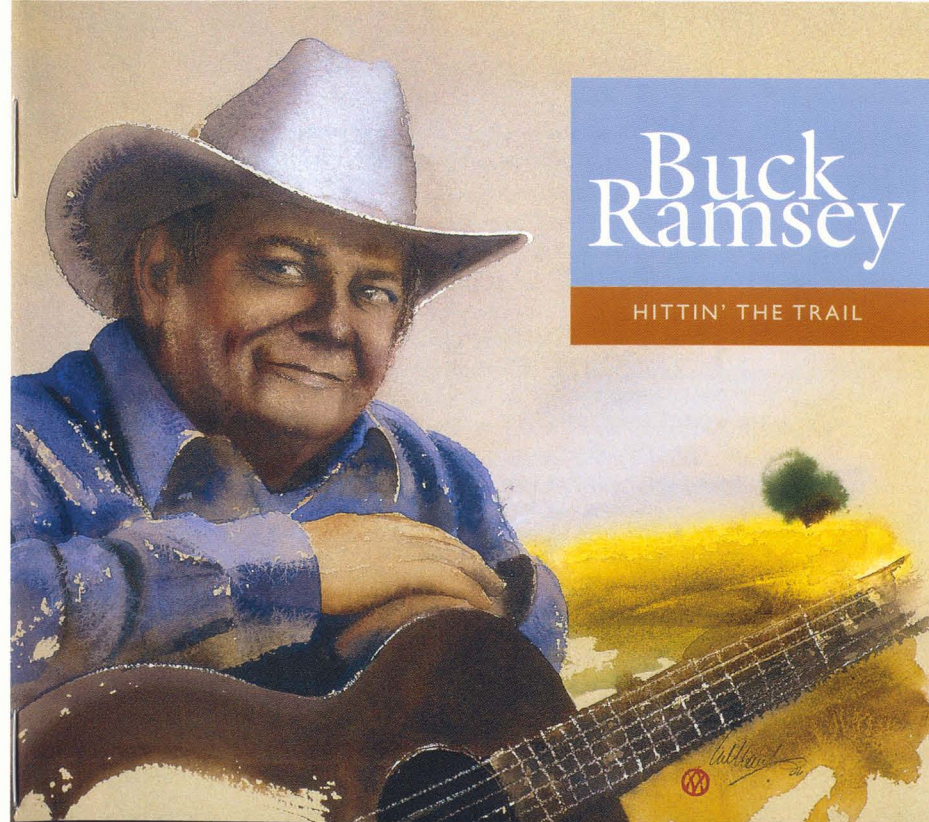
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Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

DISC 1

1. THE TRAIL TO MEXICO 3:51
2. A COWBOY'S MEDITATION 3:10
3. THE HIGH-TONED DANCE 3:47
4. DANNY BOY 2:20
5. GOOD BYE, OLD PAINT 4:23
(arr. Jess Morris)
6. WINDY BILL 2:00
7. GIT ALONG LITTLE DOGGIES 2:40
8. THE LAST WAGON 3:12
(Bennett Foster — Slim Critchlow/
Tradition Music Co., admin. by Bug, BMI)
9. THE BRAZOS RIVER SONG 3:21
10. CHRISTMAS WALTZ 3:13
11. THE GRAND ROUNDUP 4:14
12. ALONGSIDE THE
SANTA FE TRAIL 3:26

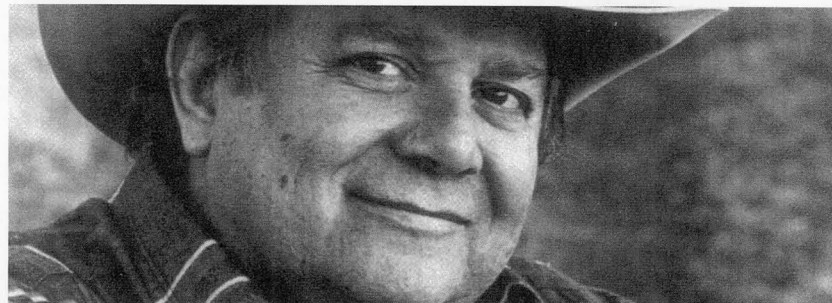
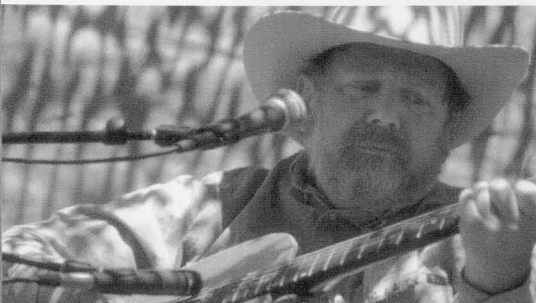
DISC 2

1. WILD RIPPLING WATERS 2:53
2. THE GOODNIGHT-LOVING TRAIL 3:37
(Utah Phillips/On Strike Music, BMI)
3. BLUE MOUNTAIN 4:16
(Judge F.W. Keller/Fantasy Inc. dba
Kicking Music Publishing, BMI)
4. HITTING THE TRAIL TONIGHT 3:10
(Bruce Kiskaddon — Hal Cannon)
5. THE TENDERFOOT 2:43
6. STREETS OF LAREDO 3:18
7. PALO DURO FAREWELL 3:12
(Andy Wilkinson/Cain't Quit Music Inc., BMI)
8. COWBOY LETTER FROM HOME 2:59
9. THE COWBOY'S SOLILOQUY 2:34
10. DONEY GAL 3:57
11. I'D LIKE TO BE IN TEXAS FOR
THE ROUNDUP IN THE SPRING 4:09
12. ANTHEM 5:06

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BUCK RAMSEY

KENNETH MELVIN RAMSEY WAS BORN IN NEW HOME, TEXAS, on January 9, 1938. His father nicknamed him “Buckskin Tarbox,” and the name Buck stuck with him for life. Buck’s parents, David Melvin Ramsey and Pearl Lee Ramsey, reared a family of seven children, five girls and two boys. The children were raised in the Primitive Baptist Church, where they learned shaped note singing and harmony. The entire family was musical, and they frequently sang together at family gatherings. Four of Buck’s sisters formed a gospel quartet and performed all over the Texas Panhandle. Buck was born with perfect pitch, and he sang in the school choirs. By the time he was in high school, Buck had become quite a crooner and was singing with a local band called the Sandie Swingsters, performing pop and jazz standards. According to Bette, his wife of 35 years, he was “making the girls swoon and the boys all jealous.” Bette said:



In high school, I had a terrible crush on Buck the first time I laid eyes on him. I loved those big, beautiful blue eyes and that sweet, magnetic smile of his — I never got over it! At 15, I knew that we were going to be best friends, at 19 I knew we would be lovers someday, and at 21, I knew we would be partners until the end of our days. I was right; it all came to pass.

Buck received his early education in a two-room schoolhouse in Middlewell, Texas, and graduated from Amarillo High School in 1956. He took a stab at college at Texas Tech, but left to hitchhike around the country for a couple of years, eventually reentering college at West Texas State. He joined the Marines in 1960 and did a six-month stint of active duty, then remained in the reserves until being medically discharged. While in college he started working as a cowboy on ranches along the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle, and continued to cowboy until he was paralyzed in a horse accident in 1962 at age 25. A “sorry, spoiled” horse named Cinnamon “came undone” on him, some bad ranch tack “got tore up,” and Buck suffered a broken back and damaged spinal cord that put him in a wheelchair for the remainder of his life. Of that time, Buck said:

For some years back there I rode among the princes of the earth full of health and hell and thinking punching cows was the one big show in the world. A horse tougher than me ended all that, and I have since been a stove-up cowpuncher trying to figure out how to write about the cowboy life.

Buck played the piano by ear, and taught himself to play the guitar after his accident. Although Buck loved jazz and favored smooth singers like Sinatra, he



Buck and Bette courting, six months before their wedding in 1962.

grew up around cowboys and had heard cowboy songs his entire life. A particular influence was Buck’s uncle Ed Williams, his mother’s brother. Uncle Ed ran away from home in his early teens to work as a cowboy and had picked up a bunch of old cowboy songs. Buck said, “I knew a lot of the old songs — my Uncle Ed was a great old cowboy. He gave me a Jack Thorpe songbook, one of the first collections printed of the real old traditional songs.” After the accident Buck became progressively more interested in telling the story of what he always called his “cowboy tribe.” Although

he had started writing verse as a child, it was after his accident that he began seriously collecting and singing cowboy songs and writing poems. He had a number of day jobs as well, including working as a newspaper reporter for the *Amarillo Globe News* and writing pieces for the *Texas Monthly*. A self-described “yellow dog Democrat,” he also became involved in Texas politics and worked on several statewide campaigns, including those of Ann Richards, Sissy Farenthold, and Jim Hightower, for whom he was a speechwriter for a while.

Buck first came to the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, in 1989 at the suggestion of Carol Scott, a friend who had read some of Buck’s poetry. His poetry and music and his personal warmth and charm made him an instant favorite. Buck returned for every Gathering after that, including the two



Cowboy Music Gatherings held in 1993 and 1994. The cowboy poetry and music world adopted Buck, and he adopted it. The cowboy poetry and music “movement” was a great inspiration, and Buck dedicated the remainder of his life to writing and singing about the cowboy. In 1992 Buck’s first album, *Rolling Uphill from Texas*, issued by Fiel Publications, became an instant classic, and was awarded the Western Heritage Wrangler Award for Outstanding Traditional Western Music from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center. In 1993 his 63-page epic poem, *As I Rode Out on the Morning*, was published by Texas Tech University Press. It is considered by many to be

Buck at the Monastery of Christ in the Desert, Abiquiu, New Mexico, mid-1970s.

one of the finest pieces of western literature ever written. The prologue to the poem, “Anthem,” is included in this set. Buck’s second album, *My Home It Was in Texas*, was released on cassette in 1994 and garnered him a second Wrangler Award.

In 1995 Buck received a prestigious National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, the highest award the United States bestows on its traditional and folk artists. He received the award from First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at the White House. His performance of “The Brazos River Song” from the Heritage Awards concert at Lisner Auditorium of The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., is included in this set. In 1996 Peregrine Books published Buck’s poem “A Christmas Waltz.” It was set to music, and a performance by of it by Buck and his sisters and brothers is also included here. In 1996 he also received the Lifetime Achievement Award and Best Poetry Book awards from the Academy of Western Artists and the American Cowboy Culture Award for Western Music.

Buck also authored some fine essays about cowboys and cowboy poetry, such as “Cowboy Libraries and Lingo” in *Cowboy Poets and Cowboy Poetry*, edited by Stanley and Thatcher and published by the University of Illinois Press, and “A Revival Meeting and Its Missionaries: The Cowboy Poetry Gathering,” in *The Changing Faces of Tradition: A Report on the Folk and Traditional Arts in the United States* published by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Buck came to be considered by many “the spiritual leader of the cowboy poetry movement.” He was a real, honest-to-God cowboy, and he was also a man of great intellect. It was said that when he was cowboying he used to carry books by Albert Camus in his saddlebags. Buck was always dismayed at the

popular notion that cowboys were an illiterate lot. He said, "Ranching people are probably the readingest culture in the country. For every 100 cowboys, 25 of them were avid readers, and five of them, you could almost call them scholars in one field or another. There were lots of biblical scholars. I know of a cowboy in the bunkhouse who used to compare translations of Homer." The Academy of Western Artists presents an annual award for best poetry book named for Buck. In announcing the naming of the award they said:

Every now and then, a unique and very special person comes along who touches all of us in a memorable and lasting way. Buck was one of those rare individuals. Beside the considerable body of poetry and songs he left us, his quiet courage, his gentle friendship, his joyful sense of humor and his constant encouragement, both by example and by eloquent expression, left an indelible impression on those who knew him or ever saw him perform. The Academy of Western Artists is proud to announce, that to honor Buck's memory and keep it vital, the Poetry Book Award will hereafter be called "The Buck Ramsey Award."

It is impossible to overstate the impact Buck Ramsey had on the cowboy cultural renaissance. Buck Ramsey passed away on January 3, 1998, at his home in Amarillo Texas, one week before his 60th birthday, leaving behind his wife Bette and their daughter Amanda. He had been scheduled to deliver the keynote address at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko later that month. A memorial was held in Amarillo, and later, on May 28, 1998, Buck's friends and family gathered for a traditional cowboy funeral. Buck's ashes were

scattered from horseback near Amarillo Creek in his beloved Canadian River Breaks in the Texas Panhandle.

Buck left a wonderful legacy of music and poetry. His renditions of traditional cowboy songs rank among the finest ever recorded. Hal Cannon, Founding Director of the Western Folklife Center and the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering said "...[H]is [Buck's] interpretation of traditional cowboy music is unsurpassed. He brought those songs to life, and that's very rare." The performances selected for this CD set are, with two exceptions, live recordings before audiences. Most were recorded at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering or Cowboy Music Gatherings in Elko, Nevada, plus a few from the Lowell Folk Festival in Lowell, Massachusetts, the concert for the National Heritage Awards in Washington, D.C., one home recording when Buck was a teenager, and one studio recording with his sisters and brothers. While many of these songs appear on his earlier two albums, these live performances offer an immediate warmth and personal presence often not found on studio recordings. His last public recitation of "Anthem" is particularly special. We felt it was important to make these treasures from the Western Folklife Center Archives and elsewhere available to Buck's many fans, many of who would have been present at some of these performances, as well as those for whom these recordings will be a wonderful new discovery.

Charlie Seemann, Executive Director, Western Folklife Center
Elko, Nevada

Bette Ramsey
Amarillo, Texas

SONG NOTES

1. **THE TRAIL TO MEXICO** (Laws B13) Recorded January 29 at the 1993 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Joe Stephenson, fiddle; Donna Stephenson, bass; David Ray, guitar; Chris Stangle and Rick Martinez. "The Trail to Mexico" is a cowboy adaptation of the old English ballad "Early, Early, in the Spring." The Americanized version is set in the Southwest, where A. J. Stinson, who was manager of the New Mexico Land and Livestock Company, drove cattle from west Texas, across the *llano estacado* into New Mexico, and eventually on to Arizona. The song was recorded for Victor by Carl T. Sprague in 1925 under the title "Follow the Cow Trail."

2. **A COWBOY'S MEDITATION** Recorded February 1 at the 1997 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal. There is a cluster of cowboy songs and variants that share the theme of sleeping out under the stars and cogitating on the great, universal questions of existence. In discussing these songs, cowboy music scholar Austin Fife said, "The solitude of the ranges gives the cowboy rare moments of communion with infinity." Perhaps most familiar is "The Cowboy's Dream," which is included here too, and is also known as "The Grand Roundup," "The Great Roundup," and "The Cowboy's Sweet Bye and Bye"; it begins "Last night as I lay on the prairie" and is traditionally sung to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean." "A Cowboy's Meditation" shares some floating verses with these other songs. Whatever you call it, it is one of the great classics of cowboy music. The text that Buck sings here seems to be basically the version that Austin and Alta Fife include as text B of "The Grand Roundup," titled "Cowboy's Meditation" in *Heaven on Horseback: Revivalist Songs and Verse in the Cowboy Idiom*. Buck learned this melody from Montana cowboy singer Duane Dickenson. He recorded it to a different melody on his 1994 album *My Home It Was in Texas*. (See track 11.)

3. **THE HIGH-TONED DANCE** Recorded June 25 at the 1993 Cowboy Music Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

Originally titled "At a Cowboy Dance," this poem was written by Denver newspaperman James Barton Adams and published in his 1889 book of poetry *Breezy Western Verse*. John Lomax included it in 1919 in *Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp* under the title "The Cowboy's Dance Song." Glenn Ohrlin recorded the song on his 1983 *Wild Buckaroo* album (Rounder 0158).

4. **DANNY BOY** Recorded 1957. Buck Ramsey, vocal; unknown piano.

Cowboys have always sung popular songs as well as occupational cowboy songs. Buck was known as a fine singer in his youth. This home recording of "Danny Boy" was made when Buck was about 17. Even though the sound quality is poor, we wanted to include it because it demonstrates his tremendous vocal abilities as a young man. He continued to perform this song as part of his repertoire throughout his life. "Danny Boy" was written by an English lawyer named Frederic Edward Weatherly in 1910. The tune is the old Irish melody, "Londonderry Air." More than a hundred songs have been composed to this melody.

5. **GOOD BYE, OLD PAINT** Recorded February at the 1996 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Rooster Morris, fiddle.

This version of "Good Bye, Old Paint" comes from XIT ranch cowboy and fiddler Jess Morris. A black cowboy and ex-slave named Charley Willis worked for Morris's father after the Civil War, went up the trail to Wyoming, probably in 1871, learned "Old Paint" on that drive, and taught the song to Morris when he was only seven years old. Morris said later that after he learned to play the fiddle he worked out his own arrangement, creating this archaic-sounding version. John Lomax recorded Jess Morris performing the song for the Library of Congress in 1942. Buck is accompanied on fiddle by Jess Morris's great-nephew Rooster Morris, who is a working cowboy and ranch

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manager in the same territory his great-uncle worked many years earlier. Cowboy song scholars Austin and Alta Fife feel that the song is related in melody and verse to "The Wagoner's Lad," suggesting colonial origins.

6. **WINDY BILL** (Laws dB28) Recorded January 27 at the 1994 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, vocal.

"Windy Bill" is a song that takes a humorous look at the two different styles of roping used by cowboys: tying one's rope "hard and fast" to the saddle horn, and "dally" roping, in which turns are taken around the saddle horns with the rope. The term "dally" comes from Spanish term *dar las vueltas*, meaning "to take turns around an object." Cowboys Anglicized this to "dally welters" or simply "dally." Texas cowboys were known for tying hard and fast so their rope would not slip off the saddle horn. Cowboys in California, Oregon, Nevada, and other western areas preferred the Spanish-influenced dally, where the wraps around the horn provided a little give when something hit the end of the rope, and the rope was less likely to break. Cowboy singer Glenn Ohrlin thinks this song probably originated in Arizona, where there was a lot of contact between adherents of both schools.

7. **GIT ALONG LITTLE DOGGIES** Recorded January 29 at the 1993 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Joe Stephenson, fiddle; Donna Stephenson, bass; Lanny Fiel, mandolin; Rick Martinez, Chris Stangle, David Ray, guitars.

Usually known as "Whoopie-Ti-Yi-Yo Git Along Little Doggies," this is one of the oldest and best known cowboy songs. Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, wrote in one of his journal entries in 1893 that he had come across the song, and he transcribed the words as well as the tune. Cowboy author Andy Adams mentions the song in his 1903 book *Log of a Cowboy*. John Lomax included it in his 1910 *Cowboy Songs and Other Cowboy Ballads*, and Carl Sandburg also printed it in his *American Songbag* in 1927. The song seems to be derived from an old Irish lullaby, "The Old Man's Lament," about

an old man rocking a cradle, and an even earlier British broadside ballad, "I Father a Child That's None of My Own," dated 1672.

8. **THE LAST WAGON** Recorded July 24 at the "Boarding House Radio Show," 1993 Lowell Folk Festival, Lowell, Massachusetts. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

"The Last Wagon" is a poem written by western story author Bennett Foster, later put to music by the late cowboy singer Slim Critchlow. Critchlow, who was one of Buck's favorite singers, recorded it on his great 1969 album *Slim Critchlow Cowboy Songs: The Crooked Trail to Holbrook* (Arhoolie 5007), which has been reissued on CD.

9. **THE BRAZOS RIVER SONG** Recorded at Lisner Auditorium, The George Washington University, 1995 National Heritage Awards Concert, Washington, D.C. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

In 1995 Buck Ramsey was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship. Only two other cowboy singers have been recognized with this award, Glenn Ohrlin and Hawaiian *paniolo* singer Kindy Sproat. We thought it would be appropriate to include one of the songs Buck performed during the National Heritage Awards concert in Washington, D.C. "The Brazos River Song," also known as the "Texas Rivers Song," is an old Texas favorite that mentions most of the rivers in Texas south of the Canadian.

10. **CHRISTMAS WALTZ** Recorded November 17, 1995, at the Audio Refinery Recording Studio, Amarillo Texas. Buck Ramsey, Wanda Ramsey, Sylvia Ramsey, Ellen Ramsey, and Charles Ramsey, vocals.

Buck's "Christmas Waltz" became an instant cowboy Christmas classic. Peregrine Smith Books published it in a small book format in 1996. Buck grew up in a singing family, and his sisters were well known for their gospel singing. We can hear the Primitive Baptist shaped note singing roots of the Ramsey family as Buck is joined on this beautiful recording by his sisters Wanda, Ellen, and Sylvia, and his younger brother Charles.

11. **THE GRAND ROUNDUP** Recorded June 25 at the 1994 Cowboy Music Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

"The Grand Roundup," also known as "The Cowboy's Sweet Bye and Bye" and "The Cowboy's Dream," first appeared in print in *Cosmopolitan* Magazine in 1895. The words, to be sung to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," were included in a short story by Will C. Barnes, who learned the song in Arizona in the late 1880s. (See track 2.) He rewrote some verses, added the "roll on, roll on" chorus, and shortened the song from ten verses to six. The song, which was apparently already in oral tradition, continued to grow in popularity as it was published and republished, with others adding their own verses over the years. Pioneer recording artist Charles Nabell recorded it for Okeh Records in 1924 as "The Great Round-up," and cowboy singer Jules Verne Allen recorded a version for Victor in 1929 under the title "The Cowboy's Dream."

12. **ALONGSIDE THE SANTA FE TRAIL** Recorded July 25 at the 1993 Lowell Folk Festival in Lowell, Massachusetts. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Lanny Fiel, mandolin; Joe Stephenson, fiddle; Donna Stephenson, bass.

This song was written by James Grafton Rogers, who was dean of the University of Colorado School of Law. Rogers also penned another song that entered oral tradition, "Old Dolores." "Alongside the Santa Fe Trail" was issued as sheet music, with music by J.H. Gower in 1911. It was made popular through its inclusion in cowboy singer Jules Verne Allen's 1933 book *Cowboy Lore*, and his recording of it for Victor in 1929.

DISC 2

1. **WILD RIPPLING WATERS** (Laws P14) Recorded January 31 at the 1992 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Joe Stephenson, fiddle; Lanny Fiel, mandolin.

Known variously as the "Soldier and the Lady," "The Bold Grenadier," "The Nightingale," "The Brave Volunteer," and "The Cowboy and the Lady,"

this venerable song of seduction can be traced back to a cluster of broadside ballads from the British Isles dating to the 1600s. In this Americanized version the soldier has become a cowboy. This cowboy version appeared in John Lomax's 1910 *Cowboy Songs*.

2. **THE GOODNIGHT-LOVING TRAIL** Recorded February 1 at the 1997 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

This song was composed by singer-songwriter Bruce U. "Utah" Phillips in 1973.

Buck said "The Goodnight-Loving Trail" was named for two pioneer cattlemen, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving, who blazed a cattle trail from Texas through New Mexico to Denver, and eventually on to Cheyenne, Wyoming, immediately after the Civil War.

3. **BLUE MOUNTAIN** Recorded January 26 at the 1994 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

Judge F. W. Keller, of Price, Utah, wrote this song as a remembrance of the time he spent as a youth cowboying in the country around Monticello, Utah. Folklorist Austin Fife collected the song from Keller in 1947.

4. **HITTIN' THE TRAIL TONIGHT** Recorded February 2 at the 1996 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Rooster Morris, fiddle.

This classic poem by Bruce Kiskaddon was put to music by Western Folklife Center Founding Director Hal Cannon and was first performed by the Bunkhouse Orchestra/Deseret String Band.

5. **THE TENDERFOOT** Recorded June 26 at the 1993 Cowboy Music Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, vocal.

Written by Montana cowboy poet D. J. O'Malley and originally known as "The 'D2' Horse Wrangler," this poem was published in the February 3, 1894, *Miles City* (Montana) *Stock Grower's Journal*, and was to be sung to the tune of "The Day I Played

Baseball,” an Irish-American vaudeville song from the 1880s. O’Malley, also known as “Kid” White, spent 19 years on Montana’s open range during the 1880s and 1890s. This is one of several classic poems by O’Malley that entered oral tradition and became classic cowboy songs, others include “When the Work’s All Done This Fall” and “Charlie Rutledge.”

6. THE STREETS OF LAREDO Recorded January 27 at the 1995 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

This song is derived from the old British broadside ballad, “The Unfortunate Rake,” about a young soldier dying of syphilis. That song was reworked into another broadside ballad entitled “The Bad Girl’s Lament,” also known as “St. James Hospital,” about a dying girl who had gone wrong. In this country it eventually became the classic cowboy song with the dying cowboy replacing the soldier and the bad girl.

7. PALO DURO FAREWELL Recorded January 28 at the 1995 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal; Peter Rowan, mandolin.

Buck’s close friend Andy Wilkinson wrote this beautiful ode to the Palo Duro Canyon for his 1994 *Charlie Goodnight* CD. Andy had a number of people, including Buck, sing on the album. Buck loved this song and began performing it. Buck punched cows in the Palo Duro in his youth, and the place was very special for him.

8. COWBOY LETTER FROM HOME Recorded June 25 at the 1993 Cowboy Music Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

There are several cowboy versions of “Home, Sweet Home.” The original melody was written in 1823 in England by romantic composer Sir Henry Rowley Bishop, and the lyrics by J. H. Payne. As with many old standards, it spawned numerous parodies. The best-known cowboy version is “Cowboy’s Home Sweet Home,” released on Victor 23718 by Jimmie Davis in 1932 (Laws B7, “The Wandering Cowboy”). In it a cowboy

recalls having to leave home after fatally wounding his boyhood friend in a quarrel over a girl’s affections. In this sentimental version the cowboy receives a letter from “home, sweet home” that he reads to his comrades in the cow camp.

9. THE COWBOY’S SOLILOQUY Recorded June 24 at the 1994 Cowboy Music Gathering, Elko, Nevada. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

Also known as “The Cowboy,” this song was originally a poem written by Texas Panhandle cowboy Alan McCandless sometime before 1885. The poem appeared in print in the *Trinidad* (Colorado) *Daily Advertiser* on April 9, 1885, as “The Cowboy’s Soliloquy.” Full of Shakespearean imagery and allusion, this song proves that cowboys were not an illiterate lot but often well read, and could draw upon their literary backgrounds to create new poetry that reflected their contemporary life and surroundings. Glenn Ohrlin considers it to be perhaps the finest of all cowboy songs.

10. DONEY GAL Recorded July 24 at the 1993 Lowell Folk Festival, Lowell, Massachusetts. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

John Lomax collected this rather melancholy cow horse song. He first got fragments of it from a Cherokee cowboy in Oklahoma, and in 1937 he recorded Louise Henson and the Jolly Bogtrotters performing it as “Dona Gal” in San Antonio for the Library of Congress. The term “doney” is an Anglicization of the Spanish *doña*. Buck said he knew three or four versions of this song, so he just took the verses he liked best and “put together a cowboy song.”

11. I’D LIKE TO BE IN TEXAS FOR THE ROUNDUP IN THE SPRING Recorded July 24 at the 1994 Lowell Folk Festival, Lowell, Massachusetts. Buck Ramsey, guitar and vocal.

This song was copyrighted in 1916 by Jack C. Williams, who had an unpublished manuscript of it. It appeared in commercially published sheet music in 1927 as “I’d Like to Be in Texas When They Round Up in the Spring” and was copyrighted by

Lon Fishback, who attributed authorship to Williams and Carl Copeland. However, it is likely to have been song in oral tradition prior to this. Texas folklorist J. Frank Dobie determined that Andy Adams, author of *Log of a Cowboy*, was aware of the song, having learned fragments of it from an old Texas rancher. Apparently Adams cobbled together a complete second verse and wrote a third one. It has been recorded by both Slim Critchlow and Don Edwards.

12. **ANTHEM** Recorded December 19 or 20, 1997, at the Larry Chittenden Memorial Cowboy Celebration, Anson, Texas. Buck Ramsey, vocal.

Buck's epic poem, *As I Rode Out on the Morning*, was published in 1993 by Texas Tech University Press. "Anthem" is the prologue to this epic poem that tells of the apprenticeship of a young cowboy. Buck said, "I took the stanza scheme from Pushkin and the plot from a short story I wrote called *A beginning*." Western Folklife Center Founding Director Hal Cannon said "... 'Anthem' is probably thought of as the finest contemporary piece of writing in this tradition..." This recording was made during Buck's last public performance before his death.

SUGGESTED READING

Laws, G. Malcolm. 1964. *Native American Balladry*. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society.

Ramsey, Buck. 1993. *As I Rode Out on the Morning*. Texas Tech University Press.

_____. 1996. *Christmas Waltz*, Illustrated by Janet Hurley. Gibbs Smith Publisher.

_____. 2000. "Cowboy Libraries and Lingo," in *Cowboy Poetry and Cowboy Poets*, Edited by Stanley and Thatcher. University of Illinois Press.

_____. 1996. "A Revival Meeting and its Missionaries: The Cowboy Poetry Gathering," in *The Changing Faces of Tradition: A Report on the Folk and Traditional Arts in the United States*. Edited by Elizabeth Peterson. National Endowment for the Arts.

SUGGESTED LISTENING

Ramsey, Buck. 1992. *Rolling Uphill from Texas*. Fiel Publications.

_____. 1994. *My Home It Was in Texas*. Fiel Publications.

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The Buck Ramsey Memorial Fund was established at the Western Folklife Center to honor the late Buck Ramsey and to support projects furthering the preservation and presentation of cowboy poetry and music. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this CD goes to the Buck Ramsey Memorial Fund.



Buck in 1962.

COLLECTOR'S SERIES





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SEW CD 50002

DISC 1

1. THE TRAIL TO MEXICO 3:51
2. A COWBOY'S MEDITATION 3:10
3. THE HIGH-TONED DANCE 3:47
4. DANNY BOY 2:20
5. GOOD BYE, OLD PAINT 4:23
6. WINDY BILL 2:00
7. GIT ALONG LITTLE DOGGIES 2:40
8. THE LAST WAGON 3:12
9. THE BRAZOS RIVER SONG 3:21
10. CHRISTMAS WALTZ 3:13
11. THE GRAND ROUNDUP 4:14
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DISC 2

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3. BLUE MOUNTAIN 4:16
4. HITLIN' THE TRAIL TONIGHT 3:10
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6. STREETS OF LAREDO 3:18
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8. COWBOY LETTER FROM HOME 2:59
9. THE COWBOY'S SOLILOQUY 2:34
10. DONEY GAL 3:57
11. I'D LIKE TO BE IN TEXAS FOR THE ROUNDUP IN THE SPRING 4:09
12. ANTHEM 5:06

Buck Ramsey

HITTIN' THE TRAIL

Called the "spiritual leader of the cowboy poetry movement," Buck Ramsey was beloved by his fellow poets and musicians, his "cowboy tribe," and all who knew him. A National Cowboy Poetry Gathering favorite and recipient of the highest honor bestowed on traditional folk artists in America, the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, Ramsey brought traditional cowboy songs to life. This 2-CD set, mostly recorded in concert, shows his immediate warmth and personal presence. Ramsey's spiritual home was always on the range; close your eyes while listening, and you will find yourself transported to the Texas Panhandle.

