

Cowboy Songs

Collected by
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Cowboy Songs

Table of Contents

<i>Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie</i>	3
<i>Back In The Saddle Again</i>	3
<i>Boots And Saddles</i>	4
<i>Buttons And Bows</i>	5
<i>Cool Water</i>	6
<i>The Cottonwood</i>	7
<i>El Paso</i>	8
<i>Home on the Range</i>	10
<i>Red River Valley</i>	10
<i>I Ride An Old Paint</i>	11
<i>Jesse James</i>	12
<i>The Ballad of Jessie James (Version 2)</i>	13
<i>John Henry</i>	14
<i>Frankie and Johnny</i>	15
<i>The Battle of New Orleans</i>	16
<i>The Wild, Rippling Water</i>	17
<i>Tumblin' Tumbleweeds</i>	18
<i>Whoopee Ti Yi Yo (Git along little Doggies)</i>	18
<i>The Wreck of the Old '97</i>	19
<i>Wabash Cannonball</i>	20
<i>On Top of Old Smoky</i>	21
<i>You Are My Sunshine</i>	22
<i>Big Rock Candy Mountain</i>	23
<i>So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh</i>	24
<i>I'm Thinking Tonight of my Blues Eyes</i>	25
<i>Don't Fence Me In</i>	26
<i>Deep in the Heart of Texas</i>	26
<i>Sweet Betsy From Pike</i>	27
<i>Ghost Riders in the Sky</i>	28
<i>I'm an Old Cowhand</i>	29
<i>Be Honest With Me</i>	30
<i>Pistol Packin' Mama</i>	30
<i>The Streets of Laredo</i>	31

Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie

Tex Ritter

“Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie”
These words came low and mournfully
From the pallid lips of a youth who lay
On his dying bed at the close of day

“Oh, bury me not” and his voice failed there
But we took not heed to his dying prayer
In a narrow grave just six by three
We buried him there on the lone prairie

Yes, we buried him there on the lone prairie
Where the owl all night hoots mournfully
And the buzzard beats and the wind blows free
O'er his lonely grave on the lone prairie

And the cowboys now as they roam the plains
For to mark the spot where his bones were laid
Fling a handful of roses o'er his grave
With a prayer to Him who will save.

Back In The Saddle Again

Gene Autry

I'm back in the saddle again - Out where a friend is a friend
Where the longhorn cattle feed
on the lowly gymsum weed - I'm back in the saddle again

Riding the range once more - Toting my old .44
Where you sleep out every night
and the only law is right - Back in saddle again

Whoppee - ty - yi - yo ... Rockin' to and fro
Back in the saddle again
Whoppee - ty - yi - yay - I go my way
Back in the saddle again.

Boots And Saddles

Gene Autry

Take me back to my boots and saddle
Oo - oo - oooo, oo - oo - oo - ooooooo
Let me see that general store
Let me ride the range once more
Give me my boots and saddle

Let me ramble around the prairie
Oo - oo - oooo, oo - oo - oo - ooooooo
Roping steers on old Bar X
With my buddies Slim and Tex
Give me my boots and saddle

Got a hankerin' to be with a banjo on my knee
Strummin' a pretty western tune
There's a gal in Cherokee she's waitin' there for me
Waitin' beneath the Texas moon

Take me back to my boots and saddle
Oo - oo - oooo, oo - oo - oo - ooooooo
Let me be each blazing morn
On the ranch where I was born
Give me my boots and saddle

Got a hankerin' to be with a banjo on my knee
Strummin' a pretty western tune
There's a gal in Cherokee she's waitin' there for me
Waitin' beneath the Texas moon

Take me back to my boots and saddle
Oo - oo - oooo, oo - oo - oo - ooooooo
Let me be each blazing morn
On the ranch where I was born
Give me my boots and saddle

Oo - oo - oooo, oo - oo - oo - ooooooo

Buttons And Bows

Gene Autry

East is east and West is West and the wrong on I have chose
Let's go where you;ll keep on wearing those
Frills and flowers and buttons and bows
And rings and things and buttons and bows

Don't bury me on the lone prairie take me where the cement grows
Let's move down to some big town
Where they love the gal by the cut of her clothes
And you'll stand out in your buttons and bows

I love you in buckskin or skirts that you've home spun
But I love you longer, stronger where your friends don't tote a gun
My bones denounce the buckboard bounce and the cactus hurts my toes
Let's vamoose where the gals keep using the
silks and satins and linens that show
And you're all mine in your buttons and bows.

I love you in buckskin or skirts that you've home spun
But I love you longer, stronger where your friends don't tote a gun
My bones denounce the buckboard bounce and the cactus hurts my toes
Let's vamoose where the gals keep using the
silks and satins and linens that show
And you're all mine in your buttons and bows.

Cool Water

Sons of the Pioneers

Water - water

All day I face the barren waste
Without a taste of water
Cool water

Oh Dan and I with throats burned dry
And thoughts that cry
for water (water)
Cool, clear water (water)

Keep on moving Dan
Don't you listen to him Dan
He a devil not a man
and he spreads the burning sand with water.

Dan can you see that big green tree
Where the water's running free
and it's waiting there for me an you

The nights are cool and I'm a fool
Each star's a pool of water
Cool water

But with the dawn I'll wake and yawn
and carry on - to water
Cool clear water.

The Cottonwood

By John Lowell

The young wind is chilly and the moon is shining down
Along the lonely cottonwood the leaves are dried and brown
Carved into the weathered bark so that the letters show
A heart with two initials there so many years ago

It was put there by a young man in the springtime of his life
It was there the day his sweetheart said that she would be his wife
They were married in the springtime and as they exchanged their vows
Underneath the cottonwood, beneath the spreading boughs

Chorus

*He said I promise that I'll hold you in my heart
And what God has joined together, let no man tear apart
And if you ever have to leave, when you return to me
I'll still be waiting for you underneath the same old tree*

The years they spent together were as happy as could be
Until the day that he was called to fight across the sea
He held her as he said goodbye and she promised she would write
A letter to him every day that he would be denied

Chorus

*She said I promise that I'll hold you in my heart
And what God has joined together, let no man tear apart
Now that you have had to leave, when you return to me
I'll still be waiting for you underneath the same old tree*

When the war was over he came sailing back to her
But he only heard the words his family told him in a blur
She had died the week before of fever and the chill
She's buried 'neath the cottonwood upon the rolling hill

Chorus

*He said I promise that I'll hold you in my heart
And what God has joined together, let no man tear apart
And now that I have had to leave, when you return to me
I'll still be waiting for you underneath the same old tree*

*Now that I have had to leave, when you return to me
I'll still be waiting for you underneath the same old tree*

El Paso

Marty Robbins

Out in the west Texas town of El Paso
I fell in love with a Mexican girl
Night time would find me in Rose's Cantina
Music would play and Falina would whirl

Blacker than night were the eyes of Falina
Wicked and evil while casting a spell
My love was deep for this Mexican maiden
I was in love but in vain I could tell

One night a wild young cowboy came in
Wild as the west Texas wind.....
Dancing and daring a drink he was sharing
With wicked Falina the girl that I loved

So in anger I challenged his right for the love of this maiden
Down went his hand for the gun that he wore
My challenge was answered in less than a heartbeat
The handsome young stranger lay dead on the floor
Out through the back door of Rose's I ran
Out where the horses were tied.....
I caught a good one, it looked like it could run
Up on its back and away I did ride

Just as fast as I could from the west Texas town of El Paso
Out to the badlands of New Mexico
Back in El Paso my life would be worthless
Every thing's gone in life, nothing is left

It's been so long since I've seen the young lady
My love is stronger than my fear of death

I saddled up and away I did go
Riding alone in the dark....
Maybe tomorrow a bullet may find me
Tonight nothing's worse than this pain in my heart

And at last ... here I am on the hill overlooking El Paso
I can see Rose's Cantina below
My love is strong and it pushes me onward
Down off the hill to Falina I go

Off to my right I see five mounted cowboys
Off to my left ride a dozen or more
Shouting and shooting I can't let them catch me
I have to make it to Rose's back door

Something is dreadfully wrong for I feel
A deep burning pain in my side.....
Though I am trying to stay in the saddle
I'm getting weary, unable to ride

But my love for Falina is strong and I rise where I've fallen
Though I am weary I can't stop to rest
I see the white puff of smoke from the rifle
I feel the bullet go deep in my chest

From out of nowhere Falina has found me
Kissing my cheek as she kneels by my side
Cradled by two loving arms that I'll die for
One little kiss and Falina, Good bye.

Home on the Range

Dr. Brewster Higley and Daniel Kelley
Kansas 1876

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam
and the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
and the skies are not cloudy all day

*Home, home on the range
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
and the skies are not cloudy al day*

The red man was pressed from this part of the West
It's not likely he'll ever return
To the banks of Red River where seldom, if ever,
His flickering campfires still burn
(chorus)

How often at night when the heavens are bright
with the light of the glittering stars
As I stood there amazed and asked as I gazed
If their glory exceeds that of ours
(chorus)

Red River Valley

*From this valley they say you are going
We will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile
For they say you are taking the sunshine
That has brightened our pathway awhile*

*Come and sit by side my side if you love me
Do not hasten to bid me adieu
But remember the Red River Valley
And the cowboy that loves you so true*

*Won't you think of this valley you're leaving
Oh, how lonely, how sad it will be
Oh, think of the fond heart you're breaking
And the grief you are causing me.*

I Ride An Old Paint

Cowboy Song

I ride an old paint, I lead an old Dan
I'm goin' to Montana to throw the houlihan
They feed in the coulees, they water in the draw
Their tails are all matted, their backs are all raw.

*Ride around little dogies,
Ride around them slow
For the fiery and snuffy are raring to go.*

I've worked in your ton, I've worked on your farm
And all I got to show is the mustle in my arm.
Blisters on my feet, and the callous on my hand
I'm going to Montana to throw the houlihan.

CHORUS

When I die, don't bury me at all
Put me on my pony and lead him from his stall
Tie my bones to his back, turn our faces to the west
And we'll ride the prairie that we love the best.

CHORUS

Jesse James

Traditional

Jesse James was a boy who killed many a man
He robbed the Glendale train;
He stole from the rich and he gave to the poor
He'd a hand and a heart and a brain.

Chorus:

Poor Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,
Three children, they were brave;
But that dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard
Has laid poor Jesse in his grave.

It was Robert Ford, that dirty little coward;
I wonder how he does feel
For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed
Then laid poor Jesse in his grave.

Jesse was a man, a friend to the poor
He never would see a man suffer pain,
And with his brother Frank he robbed the Chicago bank,
And stopped the Glendale train.

It was his brother Frank that robbed the Gallatin bank,
And carried the money from the town;
It was in this very place that they had a little race,
For they shot Captain Sheets to the ground.

They went to the crossing not very far from there,
And there they did the same;
With the agent on his knees, he delivered up the keys
To the outlaws, Frank and Jesse James.

It was on Saturday night, Jesse was at home
Talking with his family brave,
Robert Ford came along like a thief in the night
And laid poor Jesse in his grave.

The people held their breath when they heard of Jesse's death
And wondered how he ever came to die.
It was one of the gang called little Robert Ford
He shot poor Jesse on the sly.

The Ballad of Jessie James (Version 2)

Traditional

It was on a Wednesday night The sun shining bright
They robbed the Glendale train
And the people they did say For many miles away
Twas the outlaws Frank and Jesse James

*Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life
Three children they are brave.
'Twas a dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard
And laid poor Jesse in his grave*

It was Robert Ford, the dirty little coward
I wonder how he does feel,
For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed
Then he laid Jesse James in his grave
CHORUS

It was his brother Frank That robbed the Gallatin Bank
And carried the money from the town
It was in this very place that they had a little race
For they shot Captain Sheets to the ground

They went to the crossing Not very far from here
And there they did the same
And the agent on his knees He delivered up the keys
To the outlaws Frank and Jesse James
CHORUS

It was on a Saturday night Jesse was at home
Talking to his family brave
When the thief and the coward The little Robert Ford,
Laid Jesse James in his grave

How people held there breath When they heard of Jesse's death
And wonder'd how he ever came to die
'Twas one of the gang, dirty Robert Ford
That shot Jesse James on the sly
CHORUS

Jesse went to rest with his hand on his breast
The devil was on his knee
He was born one day in the county of Clay
And came from a solitary race
CHORUS

John Henry

Traditional

When John Henry was a little bitty boy
No bigger than the palm of your hand
His mammy she looked down at Johnny and said,
My Johnny gonna be a steel-drivin' man, Lord, Lord
Johnny gonna be a steel-drivin' man.

When John Henry was a little bitty boy
Sittin' on his mammy's knees
Well, he picked up a hammer and a little piece of steel
And said, "This hammer a-gonna be the death, Lord, of me, Lord, Lord
This hammer a-gonna be the death of me"

Well, John Henry was a steel drivin' man
Drove steel all over the land
Said, "Before I let a steam hammer get me down.
I'm gonna die with my hammer in my hand, Lord, Lord
I'm gonna die with my hammer in my hand."

Well, Johnny went to the tunnel to drive,
A steam hammer by his side
He beat the steam hammer to the top of the hill
And then he laid down his hammer and he cried, "Lord, Lord"
Laid down his hammer and he cried.

Well, John Henry had a lovin' little wife
Her name was Polly Ann.
Well, Johnny got sick and he had to go to bed
And Polly drove steel like a man, Lord, Lord
Polly drove steel like a man.

Frankie and Johnny

Traditional

Frankie and Johnny were sweethearts
Oh Lord how they did love
Swore to be true to each other
True as the stars above
He was her man
He wouldn't do her no wrong

Frankie went down to the corner
Just for a bucket of beer
She said: "Mr. Bartender
Has my lovin' Johnny been here?"
He's my man
He wouldn't do me no wrong

"I don't want to cause you no trouble;
I aim to tell you no lie
I saw your lover an hour ago
With a girl name Nellie Bly
He was your man
But he's doin' you wrong

Frankie looked over the transom
She saw to her surprise
There on a cot sat Johnny
Makin' love to Nellie Bly
He's my an
And he's doin' me wrong

Frankie threw back her kimono
She took out her forty-four
Root-a-tee-toot, three times she shot

Right through that hardwood door
Shot her man;
He was doin' her wrong

"Bring out the rubber tired buggies;
Bring out the rubber-tired hack.
I'm taking my man to the graveyard
But I ain't goin' to bring him back
Lord, he was my man
And he done me wrong."

Bring out a thousand policemen
Bring 'em around today
Lock me down in that dungeon cell
And throw that key away
I shot my man
He was doin' me wrong

Frankie said to the warden
"What are they goin' to do?"
The warden he said to Frankie
"It's the electric chair for you.
'Cause you shot your man
He was doin' you wrong

This story has no moral
This story has no end
This story just goes to show
That there ain't no good in men
He was her man
And he done her wrong.

The Battle of New Orleans

Jimmy Driftwood

In 18 and 14 we took a little trip
Along with Col. Jackson down the mighty Mississip'
We took a little bacon and we took a little beans
And we met the bloody British near the town of New Orleans.

CHORUS

*We fired our guns and the British kept a-comin'
There wasn't nigh as many as there was a while ago.
We fired once more and they commenced a-running
On down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.*

Well, I'd see Marse Jackson a-walkin' down the street
And a-talkin' to a pirate by the name of Jean Lafitte
He gave Jen a drink that he'd brought from Tennessee
And the pirate said he'd help us drive the British in the sea.
Well, the French told Andrew, "You had better run,
Cuz Packenham's a-comin' with a bullet in his gun
Old Hickory said he didn't give a damn
He's gonna whip the britches off of Col. Peckenham'

CHORUS

We looked down the river and we seed the British come
There must have been a hundred of 'em beating on the drum
They stepped so high and they made their bugles ring
While we stood beside our cotton bales and didn't say a thing.
Old Hick'ry said we'd take them by surprise
If we didn't fire a musket till we looked them in the eye.
We held our fire til we sed their faces well,
The we opened up our squirrel guns and really gave them hell.

CHORUS

The Wild, Rippling Water

Cowboy Song

As I was out walking and rambling one day
I spied a fair couple a-coming my way
One was a cowboy, a brave one was he
The other a lady and a beauty was she
The other a lady and a beauty was she

Say, "where are you going, my pretty fair maid?"
"Just down by the river, just down by the shade,
just down by the river, just down by the spring,
To see the wild, rippling water and hear the nightingale sing."
They hadn't been gone but an hour or so
When he drew from his satchel a fiddle and bow
He tuned up his fiddle all on a high string
and played a tune over and over again
and played a tune over and over again

"Now," says the cowboy, "I should have been gone."
"No, no," says the maid, "just play one more song.
I'd rather hear the fiddle played on one string
Than to see the wild water and hear the nightingale sing
Than to see the wild water and hear the nightingale sing

He tuned up his fiddle and rosined his bow
And he played her a lecture, he played it all low
He played her a lecture all on the high string
"Hark, hark," said the maid, "hear the nightingale sing.
Hark, hark," said the maid, "hear the nightingale sing."
She says, "Dear cowboy, will you marry me?"
"No, no pretty maid, that never can be.
I've a wife in Arizona, a lady is she,
One wife and one ranch are plenty for me.
One wife and one ranch are plenty for me.

I'll go to Mexico and I'll stay there one year,
I'll drink a lot of wine, I'll drink a lot of beer
If I ever come back it will be in the Spring
To see the wild water and hear the nightingale sing
See the wild, rippling water, hear the nightingale sing.
Come all you young ladies, take warning to me,
Never place your affections in a cowboy so free;
He'll go away and leave you as mine left me,
Leaving you rocking the cradle, singing, "bye, oh baby,"
Leaving you rocking the cradle, singing, "bye, oh baby."

Tumblin' Tumbleweeds

Bob Nolan (1934)

See them tumbling down
Pledging their love to the ground
Lonely but free I'll be found
Drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds

Cares of the past are behind
Nowhere to go, but I'll find
Just where the trail will wind
Drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds

I know when night has gone
That a new world's born at dawn

I'll keep rolling along
Deep in my heart is a song
Here on the range I belong
Drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds

Whoopee Ti Yi Yo (Git along little Doggies)

Traditional (1956)

As I was out walking one morning for pleasure
I spied a cow puncher a-riding along
His hat was thrown back, and his spurs were a-jingling
And as he approached, he was singing this song

*Whoopee ti-yi-yo, git along little doggies
It's your misfortune and none of my own
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along little doggies
You know that Wyoming will be your new home*

It's early in the spring when we round up the doggies
We mark 'em and brand 'em and bob off their tails
Round up the horses and load the chuck wagon
Then throw the dogies out on the long trail
CHORUS

Your mother was raised away down in Texas
Where the jimsonweed and the sand spurs grow
We'll fill you up on prickly-pear cholla
Till your are ready for Idaho
CHORUS

The Wreck of the Old '97

Whitter-Noell-Lewey (1924)

They gave him his orders at Monroe, Virginia
Saying, "Steve, you're away behind time,
This is not the Thiry-Eight, but it's Old Ninety-Seven;
Yo must put her in Spencer on time."

He looked round and said to his greasy black fireman
"Just shovel in a little more coal,
And when we cross that White Oak Mountain,
You can watch Old Ninety-Seven roll.

CHORUS:

*He was going downgrade making ninety mile an hour
When his whistle began to scream
He was found in the wreck with his hand on the throttle
And was scalded to death by the steam*

It's a mighty rough road from Lynchburg to Danville
Ad the line is on a three mile grade
It was on this grade that he lost his air brakes
And you see what a jump he made

CHORUS

So, come you ladies, you must take warning
From this time on and learn
Never speak harsh words to your true, loving husband
He may leave you and never return

Wabash Cannonball

Carter (sung by Hank Snow)

From the great Atlantic Ocean
To the wild Pacific shore
From the banks of the sweet Maryland
To the icebound Labrador
It's a scene of magic splendor
That is known by one and all
She's a modern combination
Called the Wabash Cannonball

CHORUS:

*Listen to the jingle, to the rumble and the roar
As she dances through the woodland that steals along the shore
She's a mighty rushing engine
You can hear them hobos call
As they ride the rods and the brake beams
On the Wabash Cannonball*

Your cities may be fairer, as you can plainly see
From St. Paul to Minneapolis and the famous Albany
Then back to old Niagara where the laughing waters fall
You can here them hobos singing
On the Wabash Cannonball

CHORUS

Here's to health of Daddy Claxton
May his name forever stand
And always be respected by folks throughout the land
And when his mortal race is run and the curtains 'round him fall
We'll carry him home to glory
On the Wabash Cannonball

CHORUS

On Top of Old Smoky

Traditional

On top of old Smoky All covered with snow
I lost my true lover Come a-courtin' too slow

For meeting is pleasure And parting is grief
And a false-hearted lover Is worse than a thief

They'll tell you they love you To give your heart ease
And as soon as your back's turned They'll court whom they please

They'll hug you and kiss you And tell you more lies
Than crossies on a railroad Or stars in the skies

It's raining, it's hailing The moon gives no light
My horses can't travel This dark, lonesome night

Well, my horses ain't hungry And can't eat your hay
Farewell little darling I'll feed on the way

On top of old Smoky All covered with snow
I lost my true love Come a-courting too slow.

Down in the Valley
Traditional

Down in the valley - The valley so low
Late in the evening - Hear the train blow
Hear the train blow, love - Hear the train blo-o-o-o-o-ow
Late in the evening - Hear the train blow

Write me, my darlin' - Write me one line
Answer my question - Will you be mine?
Will you be mine, love? - Will you be mi-I-I-I-I-ine?
Write me one question, - Will you be mine?

Down in the valley - The valley so low
Late in the evening - Hear the train blow
The train is gone, love - And out of si-I-I-I-I-ight
Good night, my darling - Good night, good night

You Are My Sunshine

Jimmie Davis (1940)

The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping
I dreamed I held you in my arms
But when I awoke dear
I was mistaken
So I hung my head and cried

CHORUS:

*You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are gray
You'll never know dear
How much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away.*

I'll always love you and make you happy
If you will only say the same
But if you leave me to love another
You'll regret it all some day

CHORUS

You told me once, dear, that you really loved me
That nothing else could come between
But now you've left me and love another
You have shattered all my dreams

CHORUS

Big Rock Candy Mountain

Traditional hobo song

One evening as the sun went down
And the circus sit was over
The tent came down and the funny old clown
Said, "Boys, I'm now in clover
I'm headed for a land that's a-far away
Beside the popcorn fountain;
I'll see you all this coming fall
In the Big Rock Candy Mountain

In the Big Rock Candy mountain
There's a land that's bright and fair
Where the doughnuts grow on bushes
And there's lots of cookies there
Where the dogs and cats are happy
And the sun shines every day
There are birds and bees in the bubble-gum trees
By the lemonade springs where the whippoorwill sings
In the Big Rock Candy Mountain

In the Big Rock Candy Mountain
The houses are built of blocks
And the little streams of soda pop
Come a-trickling down the rocks
The soldiers there are made of lead
And they are very brave
There's a lake of stew and ice cream too
You can paddle all around in a paper canoe
In the Big Rock Candy Mountain

In the Big Rock Candy Mountain
The frogs have wooden legs
And the bullfrogs all have rubber teeth
And the hens lay hardboiled eggs
There's chocolate pie in all the trees
And jam in all the lakes
Oh, I'm goin' where the wind don't blow
There's a big free show and candy snow
In the Big Rock Candy Mountain

So come with me and you're gonna see
The Big Rock Candy Mountain

So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh

Woody Guthrie (1940)

CHORUS:

*So long, it's been good to know yuh,
So long, it's been good to know yuh,
So long, it's been good to know yuh,
What a long time since I've been home
And I've gotta be driftin' along.*

I've sung this song, but I'll sing it again
Of the people I've met and the places I've been
Some of the troubles that bothered my mind
And a lot of good people that I've left behind, singing...
CHORUS

The sweethearts they sat in the dark and they sparked
They hugged and they kissed in that dusty old dark
They sighed and they cried, and they hugged and they kissed
But instead of marriage, they talked like this: Honey...
CHORUS

I went to your family; I asked them for you
They all said: "Take her, oh, take her, please do"
She can't cook or sew and she won't scrub your floor
So I put on my coat, tiptoed out the door, singing...
CHORUS

I walked down the street to the grocery store
I was crowded with people both rich and both poor
I asked the man how his butter was sold,
He said, "One pound of butter for two pounds of gold"; I said,
CHORUS

My telephone rang and it jumped off the wall
That was the preacher a-making a call
He said, "We're waiting to tie the knot;
You're getting married, believe it or not"

Well, the church was jammed, the church it was packed,
The pews were crowded from the front to the back
A thousand friends waited to kiss my new bride
But I was so anxious, I rushed her outside, Told them,
CHORUS

I'm Thinking Tonight of my Blues Eyes

A.P. Carter (1929)

'Twould be better for us both had we never
In this wide and wicked world had never met;
For the pleasures we've both seen together,
I am sure, love, I'll never forget.

CHORUS:

*Oh, I'm thinking tonight of my blue eyes,
Who is sailing far over the seas,
Oh, I'm thinking tonight of her only
And I wonder if she ever thinks of me.*

Oh, you told me once, dear, that you loved me,
And you said that we never would part,
But a link in the chain has been broken
Leaving me with a sad and aching heart.

CHORUS

When the cold, cold grave shall enclose me
Won't you come, dear, and shed one more tear?
And say to the strangers around you
A poor heart you have broken lies here.

CHORUS

Don't Fence Me In

Cole Porter (1944)

Oh, give me land, lots of land under starry skies above,
Don't fence me in.
Let me ride through the wide open spaces that I love
Don't fence me in
Let me be by myself in the evenin' breeze
Listening to the murmur of the cottonwood trees
Send me off forever but I ask you please
Don't fence me in.

Just turn me loose
Let me straddle my old saddle underneath the Western sky
On my cayuse,
Let me wander over yonder till I see the mountains rise.

I want to ride to the ridge where the West commences,
Gaze at the moon until I lose my senses
Can't look at hobbles and I can't stand fences
Don't fence me in.

Deep in the Heart of Texas

Hershey-Swander (1941)

The stars at night are big and bright
Deep in the heart of Texas
The prairie sky is wide and high
Deep in the heart of Texas
The sage in bloom is like perfume
Deep in the heart of Texas
Reminds me of the one I love
Deep in the heart of Texas

Sweet Betsy From Pike

Traditional (1849)

Oh, don't you remember Sweet Betsy from Pike
Who crossed yonder mountain with her lover, Ike
With two yoke of cattle and one spotted hog,
A tall Shanghai rooster and an old yeller dog.

One evening quite early they camped on the plat
Laid down there blankets on a green shady flat
Where Betsy quite tired lay down to repose
While with wonder Ike gazed on this Pike County rose

Well, the Indians came down in a wild yelling horde
And Betsy was scared they would scalp her adored
Behind the front wagon wheel Betsy did crawl
And fought off the Indians with musket and ball

Well, they soon reached the desert where Betsy gave out
And down in the sand she lay rolling about
While Ike in great terror looked on in surprise
Saying, "Betsy, get up, you'll get sand in your eyes."

Well, the Shanghai ran off and the cattle all died
The last piece of bacon that morning got fried
Poor Ike got discouraged and Betsy got mad
The dog wagged his tail and looked wonderfully sad.

Once Ike and Sweet Betsy attended a dance
Where Ike wore a pair of his Pike County pants
Sweet Betsy was covered with ribbons and rings,
Said Ike, "You're an angel, but where are your wings?"

Ghost Riders in the Sky

Stan Jones (1949)

An old cowpoke was riding out one dark and windy day
Upon a ridge he rested as he went along his way;
When all at once a mighty herd of red-eyed cows he saw
A-ploughing through the ragged skies
And up the cloudy draw,
Ai-ay, yippee-yi-o
Ghost herd in the sky.

Their brands were still on fire, and their hooves were made of steel
Their horns were black and shiny, and their hot breath he could feel
A bolt of fear went through him as they thundered through the sky
For he saw the riders coming hard ...
And he heard their mournful cry
Ai-ay, Yippee-ai-o
Ghost riders in the sky

As the riders loped on by him, he heard one call his name
“If you want to save you soul from hell a-ridin’ on our range
Then, cowboy, change your ways today or with us you will ride
A-tryin’ to catch the devil’s herd
Across these endless skies.
Ai-ay, Yippee-ai-o
Ghost riders in the sky

I'm an Old Cowhand

Johnny Mercer (1936)

I'm an old cowhand - From the Rio Grande
But my legs ain't bowed - And my cheeks ain't tanned
I'm a cowboy who never saw a cow
Never roped a steer 'cause I don't know how
And I sure ain't fixin' to start in now
Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay - Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay

I'm an old cowhand - from the Rio Grande
And I learned to ride - before I learned to stand
I'm a ridin' fool who is up to date
I know every trail in the Lone Star State
'Cause I ride the range in my Ford V-8
Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay - Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay

We're old cowhands - from the Rio Grande
And we've come to town - just to hear the bands
We know all the songs that the cowboys know
About the big corrals where the dogies go
We learned them all on the radio
Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay - Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay

I'm just an old cowhand - down from the Rio Grande
Where the West is wild - all around the Borderland
Where the buffalo roam around the zoo
And the Injuns run up a rug or two
And the Old Bar X is just a barbeque
Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay - Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay

I'm a pioneer - who began from scratch
I don't bat an eye in a shooting match
They don't call me Elmer
They call me Satch
Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay - Yippee-ai-o-ki-ay

Be Honest With Me

Gene Autry – Fred Rose (1941)

CHORUS:

*Be honest with me, dear, Whatever you do
Remember that you're mine, dear,
So always be true.*

Wherever you wander - On land or on sea
If you really love me - Be honest with me

My poor heart would break, dear
If you were untrue
Asleep or awake, dear, I'll dream about you

For you my darlin' - You're all that I see
If you really love me - Be honest with me.

CHORUS

Pistol Packin' Mama

Al Dexter (1943)

Drinkin' beer in a cabaret And was I havin' fun
Until one night she caught me right And now I'm on the run.

CHORUS

*Lay that pistol down, babe Lay that pistol down
Pistol packin' mama - Lay that pistol down.*

She kicked me out my windshield She hit me over the head
She cussed and cried and said I'd lied And wished that I was dead

CHORUS

Drinkin' beer in a cabaret And dancin' with a blonde
Until one night she shot out the light Bang! That blonde was gone.

CHORUS

I'll see you every night babe I'll woo you every day
I'll be your regular daddy If you'll put your gun away

CHORUS

Now I went home this morning The clock was ticking four
Gun in her and, says you're my man But I don't need you no more

CHORUS

The Streets of Laredo

Traditional

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo
As I walked out in Laredo one day
I spied a poor cowboy wrapped up in white linen
Wrapped up 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
I was shot in the breast and I know I must die

Oh, beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly
Play the dead march as you carry me along
Take me to the green valley; there lay the sod o'er me
For I'm a young cowboy; I know I've done wrong

Oh, fetch me a cup, a cup of cold water
To cool my parched lips, the poor cowboy said
Before I returned, the spirit had left him
And goes to his maker, the cowboy was dead

We beat the drum slowly and played the fife lowly
And bitterly wept as we bore him along
For we all loved our comrade, so brave, young and handsome
We all loved our comrade although he'd done wrong.