

THE GOLD RUSH MUSICAL!

Songbook



**Authentic Songs of the
California Gold Rush**

Oh! California

I sailed from Salem City with my washbowl on my knee.
I'm going to California the Gold Dust for to see.
It rained all night the day I left; the weather it was dry.
The sun so hot, I froze to death, oh brothers don't you cry.

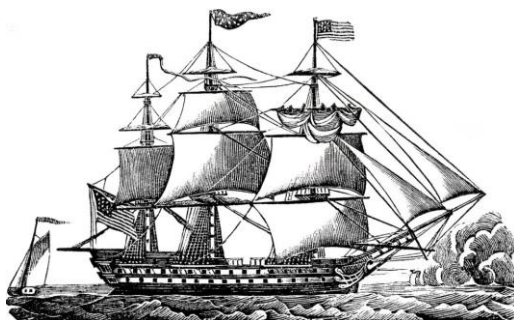
I jumped aboard the Liza ship and traveled on the sea,
And every time I thought of home I wished it wasn't me;
The vessel reared like any horse, that had of oats and wealth.
I found it wouldn't throw me, so I thought I'd throw myself.

Oh! California, that's the land for me!
I'm going to San Francisco with my washbowl on my knee.

I soon shall be in Frisco and there I'll look around,
and when I find the gold lumps there I'll pick them off the ground.
I'll scrape the mountains clean, my boys; I'll drain the rivers dry,
a pocket full of rocks bring home, oh brothers don't you cry.

I thought of all the pleasant times we've had together here.
I thought I ought to cry a bit but couldn't find a tear;
The pilot's bread was in my mouth, the gold dust in my eye.
And though I'm going far away, dear brothers don't you cry.

Oh! California, that's the land for me!
I'm going to San Francisco with my washbowl on my knee.
Oh! California, that's the land for me!
I'm going to San Francisco with my washbowl on my knee.



The Days of '49

I'm old Tom Moore from the bummers' shore in the good old golden days.
They call me a bummers and a ginsot too, but what cares I for praise?
I wander around from town to town just like a roving sign.
And all the people say, "There goes Tom Moore in the days of '49."
My comrades they all loved me well, a jolly saucy crew.
A few hard cases I will recall though they all were brave and true.
Whatever the pitch, they never would flinch, they never would fret or whine.
Like good old bricks, they stood the kicks in the days of '49.

In the days of old, in the days of gold— How oft'times I repine
for the days of old when we dug up the gold in the days of '49.

There was Poker Joe, one of the boys, who was always in a game.
Whether he lost or whether he won, to him it was always the same.
He would ante up and draw his cards and call a hatful blind.
In the game with death, Bill lost his breath in the days of '49.
There was Ragshag Bill from Buffalo; I never will forget.
He'd roar all day and roar all night, and I guess he's roaring yet.
One day he fell in a prospect hole in a roaring bad design.
And in that hole he roared out his soul in the days of '49.

In the days of old, in the days of gold— How oft'times I repine
for the days of old when we dug up the gold in the days of '49.

Of all the comrades I have had, there's none that's left to boast.
I'm left alone in my misery like some poor wandering ghost.
And I pass by from town to town, they call me a rambling sign.
"There goes Tom Moore, from the bummers' shore in the days of '49."

In the days of old, in the days of gold— How oft'times I repine
for the days of old when we dug up the gold in the days of '49.
In the days of old, in the days of gold— How oft'times I repine
for the days of old when we dug up the gold in the days of '49.

Clementine

In a cavern, in a canyon, excavating for a mine,
dwelt a miner, forty-niner, and his daughter, Clementine.
Light she was and like a fairy, and her shoes were number nine.
Herring boxes, without topses, sandals were for Clementine.

Oh my darling, oh my darling, oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever—dreadful sorry, Clementine.

Drove she ducklings to the water every morning just at nine,
Hit her foot against a splinter, fell into the foaming brine.

Oh my darling, oh my darling, oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever—dreadful sorry, Clementine.
Ruby lips above the water, blowing bubbles, soft and fine,
But, alas, I was no swimmer, so I lost my Clementine.

Oh my darling, oh my darling, oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever—dreadful sorry, Clementine.

How I missed her! How I missed her, how I missed my Clementine,
But I kissed her little sister; I forgot my Clementine.

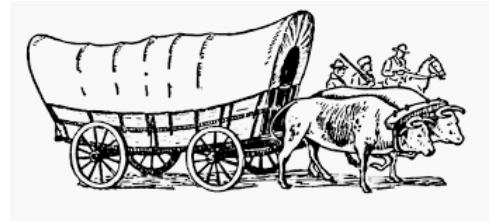
Oh my darling, oh my darling, oh my darling, Clementine,
You are lost and gone forever—dreadful sorry, Clementine.



Sweet Betsy from Pike

Oh, don't you remember Sweet Betsy from Pike?
She crossed the wide mountains with her lover Ike
With two yoke of oxen and a big yeller dog,
A tall Shanghai rooster and one spotted hog.

One evening quite early they camped on the flat,
down by the road on a green shady mat.
Where Betsy got tired and laid down to repose
and Ike, he just gazed at his Pike County rose.



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

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

One morning they climbed up a very high hill
And looked with great wonder at old Placerville.
Ike, he then said as he cast his eyes down,
"Sweet Betsy, my love, won't you come to Hangtown?"

Now, Ike and sweet Betsy attended a dance.
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?"

Ike and sweet Betsy got married of course,
But Ike, getting jealous, obtained a divorce.
And Betsy was pleased and so she did shout,
"Goodbye, you big lummo; I'm glad you backed out."

Seeing the Elephant

When I left the States for gold, everything I had I sold:
A stove and a bed, a fat old sow, Sixteen chickens and a cow.

Leave, you miners, leave. Oh, leave, you miners, leave.
Take my advice, kill off your lice, or else go up on the mountain.

Being brave, I cut and carved on the desert nearly starved.
My old mule lay down and died. I had no blanket, so I took his hide.
A poor coyote stole my meat, and I had naught but bread to eat.
It was not long 'til that gave out, then how I cursed the Truckee route.

Leave, you miners, leave. Oh, leave, you miners, leave.
Take my advice, kill off your lice, or else go up on the mountain.

Because I would not pay my bill, They kicked me out of Downeyville.
I stole on a mule and lost the trail, and then fetched up in Hangtown jail.
Canvas roof and paper walls, Twenty horse thieves in the stalls.
I did as I had done before, coyoteed out from beneath the floor.

Leave, you miners, leave. Oh, leave, you miners, leave.
Take my advice, kill off your lice, or else go up on the mountain.

The people threatened hard my life, because I stole a miner's wife.
They showed me a rope to give me signs, and off I went to the southern mines.
Fell in love with a California girl, her eyes were gray and her hair did curl,
her nose turned up to get rid of her chin. Says she, "You're a miner; you
can't come in!"

Leave, you miners, leave. Oh, leave, you miners, leave.
Take my advice, kill off your lice, or else go up on the mountain.

When the elephant I had seen, darned if I thought I was green.
Others say both night and morn, they saw him comin' 'round the Horn.

Leave, you miners, leave. Oh, leave, you miners, leave.
Take my advice, kill off your lice, or else go up on the mountain.

Joe Bowers

My name it is Joe Bowers; I've got a brother Ike.
I'm just here from Missouri and all the way from Pike;
I'll tell you why I left there and why I came to roam,
And leave my aged parents so far away from home.

I used to court a girl there; her name was Sally Black.
I asked her if she'd marry; she said it was a whack;
She says to me, "Joe Bowers, before we're hitched for life,
You ought to get a little home to keep your little wife."

"Oh my dearest Sally, oh Sally, for your sake,
I'll go to California and try and raise a stake."
Says she to me, "Joe Bowers, you're just the one to win."
She gave me a kiss to seal the deal and throwed a dozen in.

When I got to this country, I had nary a red.
I had such wolfish feelings, I wished myself most dead.
But the thoughts of my dear Sally soon made this feeling git,
And whispered hope to Bowers Lord, I wish I had 'em yet.

At last I went to mining, put in my biggest licks,
Come down upon the boulders just like a thousand bricks.
I worked both late and early, in rain, in sun and snow.
I was working for my Sally, 'twas all the same to Joe.

One day I got a letter from my dear brother Ike.
It came from old Missouri all the way from Pike.
It taught me the darndest news that ever you did hear,
My heart it is a-breaking, so please excuse this tear.

It said that Sal was false to me, that her love for me had fled,
That she had married a butcher whose hair was awful red.
It told me more than that; it's enough to make me swear.
That Sal had had a baby and the baby had red hair.



Ho! For California!

We've formed our band and are well manned to journey afar to the
promised land,
Where the golden ore is rich in store on the banks of the Sacramento.
Oh! don't you cry, nor heave a sigh, for we'll come back, bye-and-bye.
Don't breathe a fear, nor shed a tear, but patiently wait about two year.

Then, ho! Brothers ho! To California go.
There's plenty of gold so I've been told on the banks of the Sacramento.

As the gold is thar, most any whar, they dig it out with an iron bar,
And where 'tis thick, with a spade or pick, they can take out lumps as heavy
as brick.

As we explore the distant shore, we'll fill our pockets with the shining ore,
And how 'twill sound, as the word goes round, of our picking up gold by
the dozen pound.

Then, ho! Brothers ho! To California go.
There's plenty of gold so I've been told on the banks of the Sacramento.

We expect our share of the coarsest fare and sometimes sleep in the open air.
Upon the cold ground we all sleep sound except when the wolves are
howling round.

As off we roam over the dark sea foam, we'll never forget our friends at home.
Our memories will bring to mind the thoughts of those we leave behind.

Then, ho! Brothers ho! To California go.
There's plenty of gold so I've been told on the banks of the Sacramento.

In the days of old, the Prophets told of the city to come, all framed in gold,
When they foresaw the day to come, now dawning in California.
Oh! the land we'll save, for the bold and brave in a land where never will
breathe a slave.

Let foes recoil, for the sons of toil shall make California God's FREE SOIL.

Then, ho! Brothers ho! To California go.
There's plenty of gold so I've been told on the banks of the Sacramento.

A Rippin' Trip (to the tune of Pop Goes the Weasel)

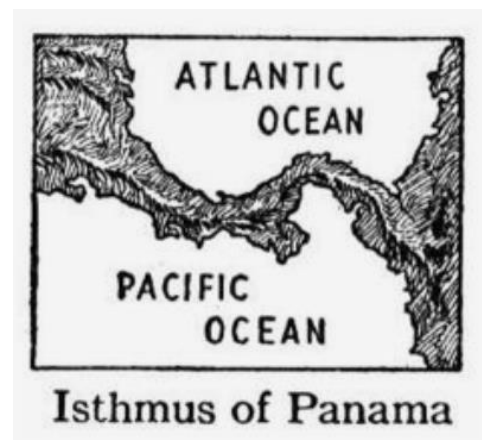
You go aboard a leaky boat and sail for San Francisco.
You've got to pump to keep her afloat; you have that, by jingo!
The engine soon begins to squeak, nary thing to oil her,
Impossible to stop the leak. Rip, goes the boiler.

The captain on the promenade, looking very savage;
Steward and the cabin maid, fightin' 'bout the cabbage.
All about the cabin floor passengers are sea-sick;
Steamer bound to go ashore. Rip, goes the physic.

Pork and beans they can't afford for second cabin passage.
The cook has tumbled overboard, much to our advantage.
The engineer's a little tight, draggin' on the main line,
Finally gets in a fight. Rip goes the engine.

Cholera begins to rage; a few have got the scurvy;
Chickens dying in their cage; steerage topsy-turvy.
You finally get to Panama; boatman want a back-load.
Officers begin to jaw. Rip goes the railroad.

When home you'll tell an awful tale and always will be thinking
How long you had to pump and bail to keep the tub from sinking.
You came back from Californ' with less than you had takin';
Some city sharp will rope you in. Rip goes the money.



Life in California

I lived way up in Maine, where I heard about the diggings,
So I shipped aboard a boat, commanded by Joe Higgins.
I sold my little farm, from wife and children parted,
And off to California sailed and left 'em broken hearted.

When I got to San Francisco, I saw heap of money,
And the way the folks at monte played, I thought the game quite funny.
So I took my little pile, and on the table tossed it,
And the chap who dealt me out the cards, says, "My friend you have lost it!"

Well, I'm a used up man, a perfect used up man.
And if ever I get home again, I'll stay there if I can.

I got into a steamboat and started up the river,
Where I thought the mosquitos would have taken out my liver.
When I got to Sacramento, I buckled on this rigging,
And soon I found a decent place, and so I went to digging.

Well, I'm a used up man, a perfect used up man.
And if ever I get home again, I'll stay there if I can.

I got into the water; the "fever-n-ager" took me,
And after I was froze to death, it turned around and shook me.
But still I kept to work, a hopin' 'twould be better,
But the water wouldn't fall a bit, and kept a getting wetter.

Well, I'm a used up man, a perfect used up man.
And if ever I get home again, I'll stay there if I can.

I'd got up to the "Woodcock," to see if Tom will stake me,
For Tom has got too good a heart, I'm sure, to try to bust me.
But if they don't know me there, or say I can't be trusted,
Why then, kind friends, without your help, this poor old miner's busted.

Well, I'm a used up man, a perfect used up man.
And if ever I get home again, I'll stay there if I can.



Skip to my Lou

Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Lou, lou, skip to my lou.
Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Skip to my lou, my darling.

Lost my partner, what'll I do? Lost my partner, what'll I do?
Lost my partner, what'll I do? Skip to my Lou, my darling.
She's gone again, skip to my lou. She's gone again, skip to my lou.
She's gone again, skip to my lou. Skip to my lou, my darling.

Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Lou, lou, skip to my lou.
Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Skip to my lou, my darling.

I'll get another one, pretty and new. I'll get another one, pretty and new.
I'll get another one, pretty and new. Skip to my lou, my darling.
Little red wagon painted blue. Little red wagon painted blue.
Little red wagon painted blue. Skip to my lou, my darling.

Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Lou, lou, skip to my lou.
Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Skip to my lou, my darling.

Flies in the buttermilk, two by two. Flies in the buttermilk, two by two.
Flies in the buttermilk, two by two. Skip to my lou, my darling.
Flies in the sugar bowl, shoo, shoo, shoo! Flies in the sugar bowl, shoo, shoo, shoo!
Flies in the sugar bowl, shoo, shoo, shoo! Skip to my lou, my darling.

Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Lou, lou, skip to my lou.
Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Skip to my lou, my darling.
Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Lou, lou, skip to my lou.
Lou, lou, skip to my lou. Skip to my lou, my darling.



Bronco Charlie and the Pony Express ©Mark Pennington 2024 All Rights Reserved



Well, they call me “Bronco Charlie,” and I have a story to tell.
Now, some of it’s a tall tale, but some is true, as well.

Way back in 1861, I was eleven years old,
when a pony with no rider raced into Sacramento.

That pony was carrying mail, sent by the Pony Express,
in locked mochila pouches to join the East and West.

When the station keeper caught the reins, a crowd around him grew.
He said, “I have no rider to take the mail on through.”
But, the Pony Express motto is “The mail must go through.”
So I shouted, “Give me half a chance to show what I can do.”

Well, “The mail must go through”; “The mail must go through”;
It’s the motto of the Pony Express: “The mail must go through.”

“I’ve ridden the route to Hangtown; I know the Placerville trail.”
“No, you’re much too young,” said some in the crowd, “to carry the U.S. mail.”
The station keeper had no choice, so he saddled me up to go
off to ride the 45 miles east from Sacramento.

Well, “The mail must go through”; “The mail must go through”;
It’s the motto of the Pony Express: “The mail must go through.”

I rode all day and through the night, got lost, then found the station.
A new rider strapped on the mail to a fresh pony waiting.
The next day at the station, the eastern rider arrived;
but he couldn’t finish up his route with an arrow in his side.

Well, “The mail must go through”; “The mail must go through”;
It’s the motto of the Pony Express: “The mail must go through.”

Then the station keeper told me, “Now you work for the Pony Express.”
So I took the oath and delivered the mail in record time, no less.
As the youngest of hundreds of riders, I rode 5 months, but then
the telegraph was completed, and the Pony Express did end.

Well, “The mail must go through”; “The mail must go through”;
It’s the motto of the Pony Express: “The mail must go through.”
From Missouri to California-mail must go through.

Big Jean Claire ©Mark Pennington 2024 All Rights Reserved

Jean Luc Clair was ‘a trappin’ somewhere up in Canada in forty-nine
But when he heard tell of the Gold Rush, well, he set off for the southern mines.

He was five-foot ten, nearly three hundred pounds—wider than tall they’d say.
From Mariposa, Coulterville, to Poker Flat, no one got in his way.

They called him “Big Jean Clair”—stronger than a grizzly bear.
Meaner than a wolverine and the terror of the southern mines.

Well, Clair had no fear of God, nor man. He was a bully and a murderin’ thief.
He’d take your stake, steal your claim, and eat up all your beans and beef.

They called him “Big Jean Clair”—stronger than a grizzly bear.
Meaner than a wolverine and the terror of the southern mines.

Joaquin Murietta road into camp with his sidekick Three-Finger Jack.
Claire lassoed those sons, took their money and guns; those outlaws never came back.

They called him “Big Jean Clair”—stronger than a grizzly bear.
Meaner than a wolverine and the terror of the southern mines.

One day a painter strolled into camp and created quite a hullabaloo.
When the cat crept closer, Clair threw his ax and split that painter’s head in two.

They called him “Big Jean Clair”—stronger than a grizzly bear.
Meaner than a wolverine and the terror of the southern mines.

The miners stage a fight ‘tween a bull and a bear in a deep, wide pit they dug.
But the bull never showed, so Clair jumped in and won himself a bearskin rug.

They called him “Big Jean Clair”—stronger than a grizzly bear.
Meaner than a wolverine and the terror of the southern mines.

