

## Wagonmaster's Diary / Buffalo Stampede

Sheb Wooley

Gold in California the mighty lust for yellow gold  
Drove all reason from men's souls  
They left their homes and headed West

(Old California you're the land for me I'm off for Sacramento  
with my gold pan on my knee I am bound for the promised land)  
Left St Joseph the first of May Travelled about twelve miles  
this day Fifty-two wagons hundred and forty souls  
Bound for California to search for gold  
Folks finished their evening camp chores  
They pulled the tailgates together for dancin' floor

Blew up a storm just fore dawn Searched for the teams they's  
eight head gone Finally got rollin' lost half a day's time  
Had to leave two of our wagons behind  
Miss Martin's baby died today We stopped and dug a shallow grave  
Some Indians watched from a little knoll  
They hit us fore we could cover the hole  
No time to circle lost seven men  
Counted for only three redskins We'll try to reach the river  
fore day is done Dug eight graves instead of one

Crossed the Platte River high and wide Doubled the teams put logs  
alongside Supplies got soaked flour beans Had a safe crossin'  
' drowned one team Some of the folks are sick though they don't  
complain We sent out a party to hunt far game  
Saw some smoke signals in the hills to the right  
Have to double the guard tonight

Oh Lord today the Cheyenne dealt us a blow  
They drove a herd of buffalo through our wagon camp

The scout stepped from his lathered horse a shoutin' all around  
And as he spoke these fateful words we heard the rumblin' sound

Buffallo up comin' three thousand head running this way  
Thunder on the prairie the tremble (the tremble) this day

We pulled the wagons close together and made the circle tight  
And tried to bring the leaders down as they tipped the rise  
We roped the big ones in their tracks but on and on they came  
Till a path of destruction and death was on the plain

Buffallo up comin'...

And as the great herd trailed away we heard the anguished cries  
The Cheyenne braves who drove the herd were watching from the rise  
They surveyed the damage done then turned and rode away  
And these words I won't forget until my dying day

Buffallo up comin'...

We've reached the desert parchet and burned Past the paint of n  
o return Horses are droppin' in their tracks Folks carryin' the  
ir belongin's on their backs Children are cryin' for water and  
there's not a sip There's twenty-eight dead so far on this trip

Today we reached a desert spring And had a weddin' blacksmith m  
ade the ring Folks dancin' singin' just like they was glad They  
got more guts than I ever thought they had

They've been in these mountains for more'n a week With no trail  
s up these jagged peaks We bring the wagons up with a windlass  
lift The snow's fallin' early we have to shovel drifts The anim  
als are weak and we can't move fast We're on the east slope lea  
din' up to the pass And when a wagon breaks down in this hell a  
wful storm We burn it like a bonfire and try to get warm Night  
comes upon us and we don't dare stop We keep lashin' the teams  
but we've gotta reach the top

We left seven new graves back there on the slope But today we r  
eached the summit and now there's hope Well there's California  
stretched out below And all of that gold on the Sacramento