

****HOW THE WEST WAS WON [12-99]***

**I yearn for the days of the dust-blown haze,
When the West was an infant child.
When the brave, the few, joined lots and threw
Their cares to the wind and the wild.**

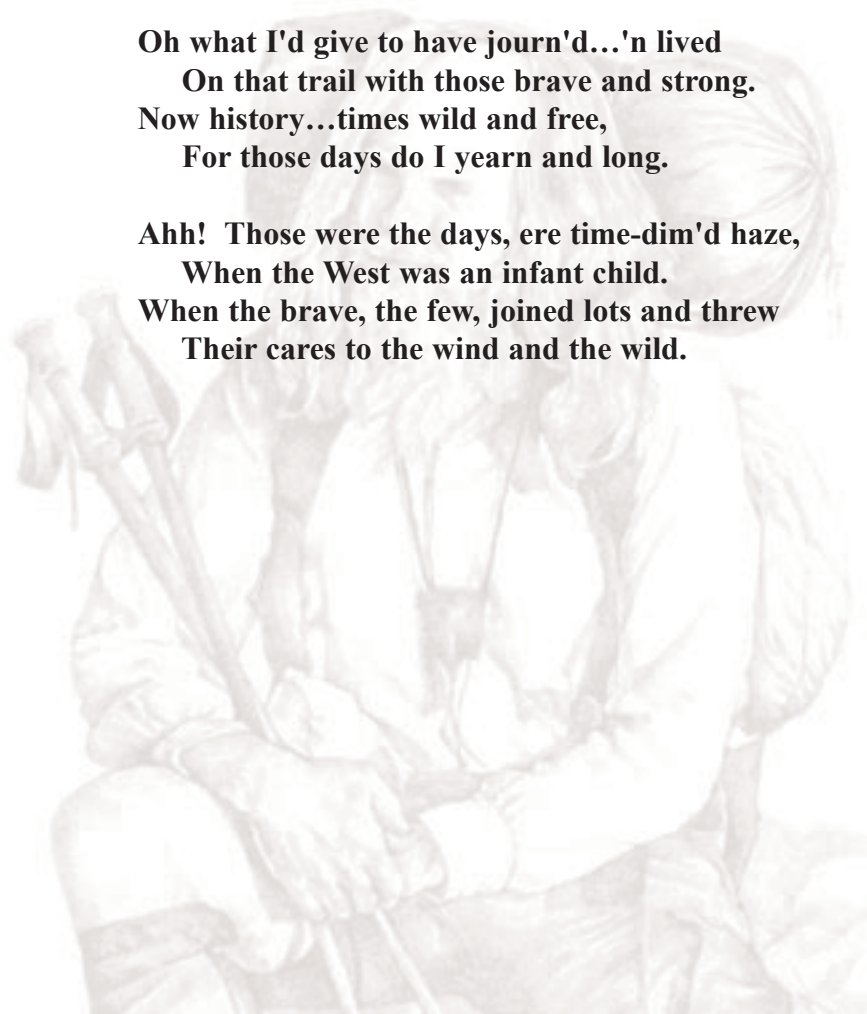
**Thru bone-weary pain, thru mud and rain,
They traveled, a-trustin' God.
As dear-loved kin and many a friend
Were set to rest in the sod.**

**On the Oregon Trail, o'er the Santa Fe,
Thru ruts worn weary and long.
'cross rivers deep, scant rest or sleep,
Pas'd this destined, fateful throng.**

**On mules-in prairie schooners;
On buckboards 'n walkin' tall;
Thru Indian lands, their fate in the hands
Of the wagon master's call.**

**Thru prairie grass, up mountain pass,
They journ'd to'rd the Promised Land.
'n along the way, set adrift, they lay
Their past in the shifting sand.**

**No turning back, thru rut and track,
The wagon trains moved on,
To'rd the western sky, with dream-filled eye,
On the trail to a brand new dawn.**



**And to this day, do the brave there stay!
Born anew from the pioneer age.
A dream fulfilled, as God had willed,
In the land of the purple sage.**

**Oh what I'd give to have journ'd...'n lived
On that trail with those brave and strong.
Now history...times wild and free,
For those days do I yearn and long.**

**Ahh! Those were the days, ere time-dim'd haze,
When the West was an infant child.
When the brave, the few, joined lots and threw
Their cares to the wind and the wild.**

*I was raised in the Ozarks Highlands of Missouri, near that grand "Big Muddy". A spur, one of many in the overland trails system, once passed by our place. I can remember dad oft showing me, with a far away glint, an old rock post that was part of a hitching rail along that historic old trail. Ahh! When he would talk about those bygone days, would I long for them. That was as a child, and in the mind's eye of a child. That childhood memory still resides and is alive and well in the mind's eye of this old man, and here, finally, after all these years, is the humbling proof of it!