

****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.**

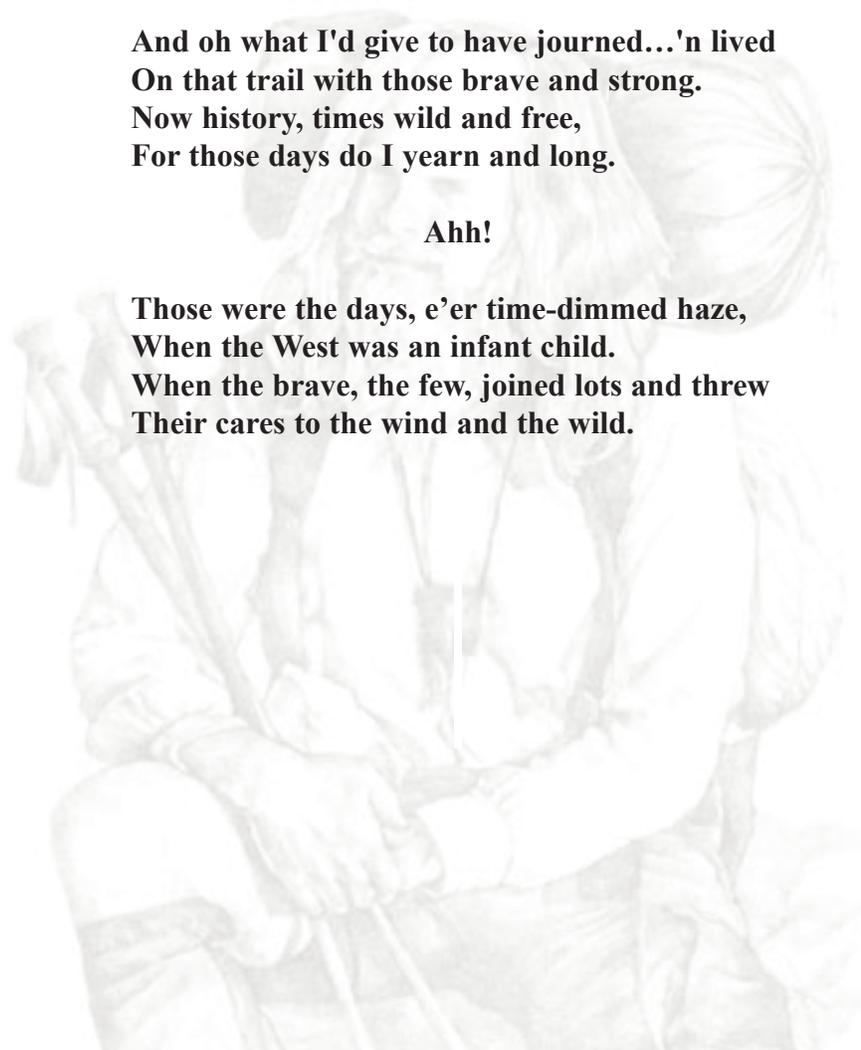
**Through bone-weary pain, through mud and rain,
They traveled, a-trustin' God.
As dear-loved kin and many a friend
Were set to rest in the sod.**

**“On to Californ’”, “On to Oregon,”
Through ruts worn weary and long.
'cross rivers deep, scant rest or sleep,
Passed this destined, fateful throng.**

**On mules, in prairie schooners;
On buckboards 'n walkin' tall;
Through Indian lands, their fate in the hands
Of the wagonmaster's call.**

**Through prairie grass, up mountain pass,
They journeyed toward 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,
Toward the western sky, with dream-filled eye,
On the trail to a brand new dawn.**



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

**And oh what I'd give to have journeyed... '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, e'er time-dimmed 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!