

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Santa Fe Trail

The Santa Fe Trail

(James Grafton Rogers, 1911)

Say, pard have ye sighted a schooner
A-hittin' the Santa Fe Trail?
They made it here Monday or sooner
With a water keg roped on the rail,
With Daddy and Ma on the mule-seat
And somewhere around on the way
A tow-headed gal on a pony
A-janglin' for old Santa Fe
Oh -- Ah - Oh --
A-janglin' for old Santa Fe.

I seen her ride down the arroyos
Way back in the Arkansas sand,
With a smile like an acre of sunflowers,
An' her little brown quirt in her hand
She straddled the pinto so airy
And rode like she carried the mail,
And her eyes near set fire to the prairie
'Long side of the Santa Fe Trail
Oh -- Ah - Oh --
Alongside of the Santa Fe Trail.

Oh, I know a gal down on the border
That I'd ride to El Paso to sight;
I'm acquaint with the high-steppin' order,
And I've sometimes kissed some gals goodnight;
But Lord, they're all ruffles and beadin'
Or afternoon tea by the pail,
Compared to the kind of stampedin'
That I get on the Santa Fe Trail
Oh -- Ah -- Oh --
That I get on the Santa Fe Trail.

I don't know her name, and the prairie
When it comes to a gal's pretty wide,
Or shorter from hell to hilary
Than it is on this Santa Fe ride,
But I guess I'll make Cedars by sundown
And campin' may be in a swale,
I'll come on a gall and a pinto
Alongside of the Santa Fe Trail

Oh -- Ah -- Oh --

Alongside of the Santa Fe Trail.

11/16/1821: William Becknell party reaches Santa Fe, N.M. - 1st use of Santa Fe Trail

"Yo-ho! Yo-ho!" is common - perhaps following Ed McCurdy

In the Peter Bellamy version (also Lisa Null, Finest Kind, etc.) the "Oh -- Ah-- Oh--" becomes "Yo-ho! Yo-ho!", and it and the final line repeat on each verse

Jules Allen recorded the song for Victor in Los Angeles 8 April 1929 under the title 'Longside the Santa Fe Trail'. With minor variations - for example 'fluffles' and 'when you're huntin' one girl it's some wide' - the lyrics are basically what is posted above. Jules sings 'Oh-oh oh, oh' for the first 2 stanzas and changes to 'yo-ho oh, oh' for the final two - maybe that's where the yo-ho originated. Allen's recording was reissued on LP in 1973 on Richard Weize's Folk Variety label. Weize had the following interesting note: Although Jules Allen appears not to have known it when he recorded this song and printed it in his 1933 volume 'Cowboy Lore', it was published in sheet music with the title 'The Santa Fe Trail' in 1911 by Comet Publishing Co of Denver Colorado. The words were by James Grafton Rogers, a prominent citizen of Colorado who had recently celebrated his 90th birthday; the melody and arrangement were by John H. Gower, a Denver church organist. When a very young man, Mr Rogers worked on a New York City newspaper and wrote numerous verses and songs that he hoped would qualify for Broadway shows. Later, he became a distinguished attorney, served as Dean of the University of Colorado Law School, and held many other important posts in his home state of Colorado and in the federal government in Washington DC ...

Allen's recording has been reissued recently on CD in Yazoo's wonderful 2000 series of compilations: Various Artists 'When I Was a Cowboy Vol 1