Buffalo Skinners


Come, all ye jolly skinners, and listen to my song,
And do not go outrageous, for the length it won't be long.
'Twas all in the spring of eighty-three, I happened in Jacksboro;
There I met with a fellow called Ira Crago by name.

It's "how do you do, young fellow, and how would you like to go
And spend the summer pleasantly among the buffalo?
If you will stay one summer through, then return to Jacksboro,
I'll pay all transportation from the range of the buffalo."

And me, being without employment, and this that I did say,
"For me to go out on the buffalo range, it depends upon the pay.
If you pay to me good wages and transportation too,
I'll go and spend one summer through on the range of the buffalo."

"I'll pay to you good wages, fine transportation too,
And I have six jolly fellows; I'm sure that they will go.
But if you get homesick and return to Jacksboro,
t'll pay no transportation from the range of the buffalo."

I's now our pleasures are over, our troubles have begun;
But with many six and buffalo guns, we thought our troubles fun.
Our lives they were in danger, but this we did all know,
the Indians watched to scalp us, while skinning the buffalo.

It's now we're 'cross the Wichita, and homeward we are bound;
And in this God-forsaken country, I'll never more be found.
We'll go back to our wives and sweethearts, to tell others not to go
To that God-forsaken country among the buffalo.

Our water was salty as damnation, both gypsum and alkali, too,
Our meat it was old buffalo hump, our bread it was a sight,
And mosquitoes by the millions; the Indians I'd rather fight,
For they sucked the blood from every pore on the range of buffalo.

We slept in the prairie-dog towns, rattlesnakes and vinegarroons. (sic)
Our beds were made of buffalo hides, I'll have you all to know,
And the way the graybacks bit us, you bet it was not slow
In that God-forsaken country among the buffalo.

Our man, being extravagant, he was in debt that day,
And when we came to settle up, he swore he would not pay.
We set a resolution, bankruptcy should not go;
And we left old Crago's bones to bleach on the range of the buffalo.