

The Wisconsin Emigrant (early to mid-nineteenth century)

Since times are so hard, I've thought, my true heart
Of leaving my oxen, my plough, and my cart
And away to Wisconsin, a journey we'd go
To double our fortune as other folks do
While here I must labor each day in the field
And the winter consumes all the summer doth yield

Oh husband, I've noticed with sorrowful heart
You've neglected your oxen, your plough, and your cart
Your sheep are disordered; at random they run
And your new Sunday suit is now every day on
Oh, stay on the farm and you'll suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss

Oh wife, let's go; oh, don't let us wait
Oh, I long to be there; oh, I long to be great
While you some rich lady – and who knows but I
Some governor may be before that I die?
While here I must labor each day in the field
And the winter consumes all the summer doth yield

Oh husband, remember that land is to clear
Which will cost you the labor of many a year
Where horses, sheep, cattle, and hogs are to buy
And you'll scarcely get settled before you must die
Oh, stay on the farm and you'll suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss

Oh wife, let's go; oh, don't let us stay
I will buy me a farm that is cleared by the way
Where horses, sheep, cattle, and hogs are not dear
And we'll feast on fat buffalo half of the year
While here I must labor each day in the field
And the winter consumes all the summer doth yield

Oh husband, remember that land of delight
Is surrounded by Indians who murder by night
Your house they will plunder and burn to the ground
While your wife and your children lie murdered around
Oh, stay on the farm, and you'll suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss

Now wife, you've convinced me; I'll argue no more
I never had thought of your dying before
I love my dear children, although they are small
But you, my dear wife, are more precious than all
We'll stay on the farm, and suffer no loss
For the stone that keeps rolling will gather no moss