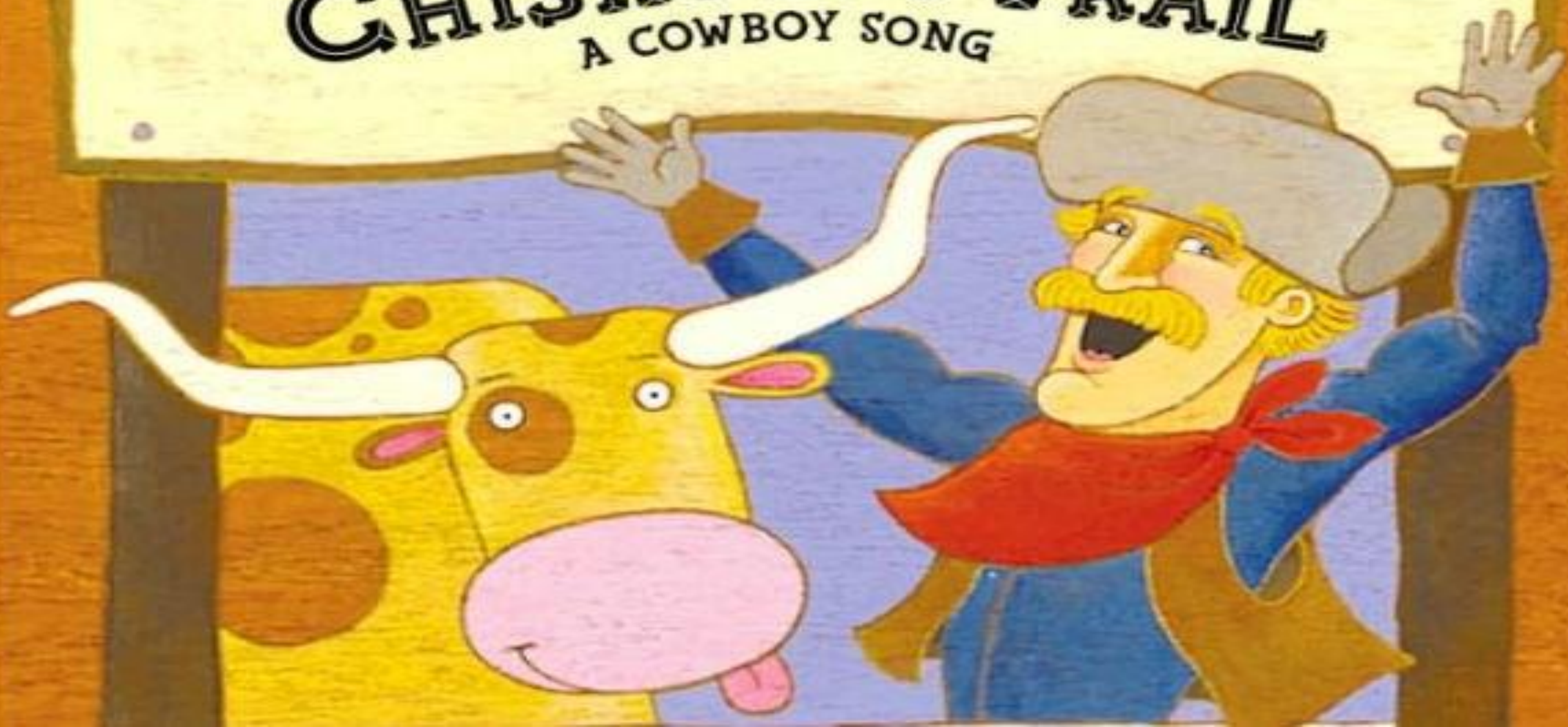



# THE OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL

A COWBOY SONG







**B**EGINNING IN 1867, millions of longhorn cattle made a perilous journey. Huge cattle drives lasting about a hundred days apiece ran up the Chisholm Trail all the way from Texas to the railroad trains of Abilene, Kansas. The longhorns were then shipped out in cattle cars to supply beef for a hungry market. This journey through scorching heat, swirling floods, and forbidden territory helped to create the myth of the heroic American cowboy.

Legend has it that the song in this book originally had a thousand different verses, each followed by variations of the famous chorus, "**Come a Ki yi yippy yippy yay.**" Cowboys made up rhymes describing every grueling mile of their journey, and they passed different versions along to be sung as they rode. I reworded and pieced together original verses and added a few of my own to make a story that tells what the real journey might have been like.

—R. S.







**W**ell, come along boys and listen to my tale,  
And I'll tell you of my troubles on the Old Chisholm Trail.

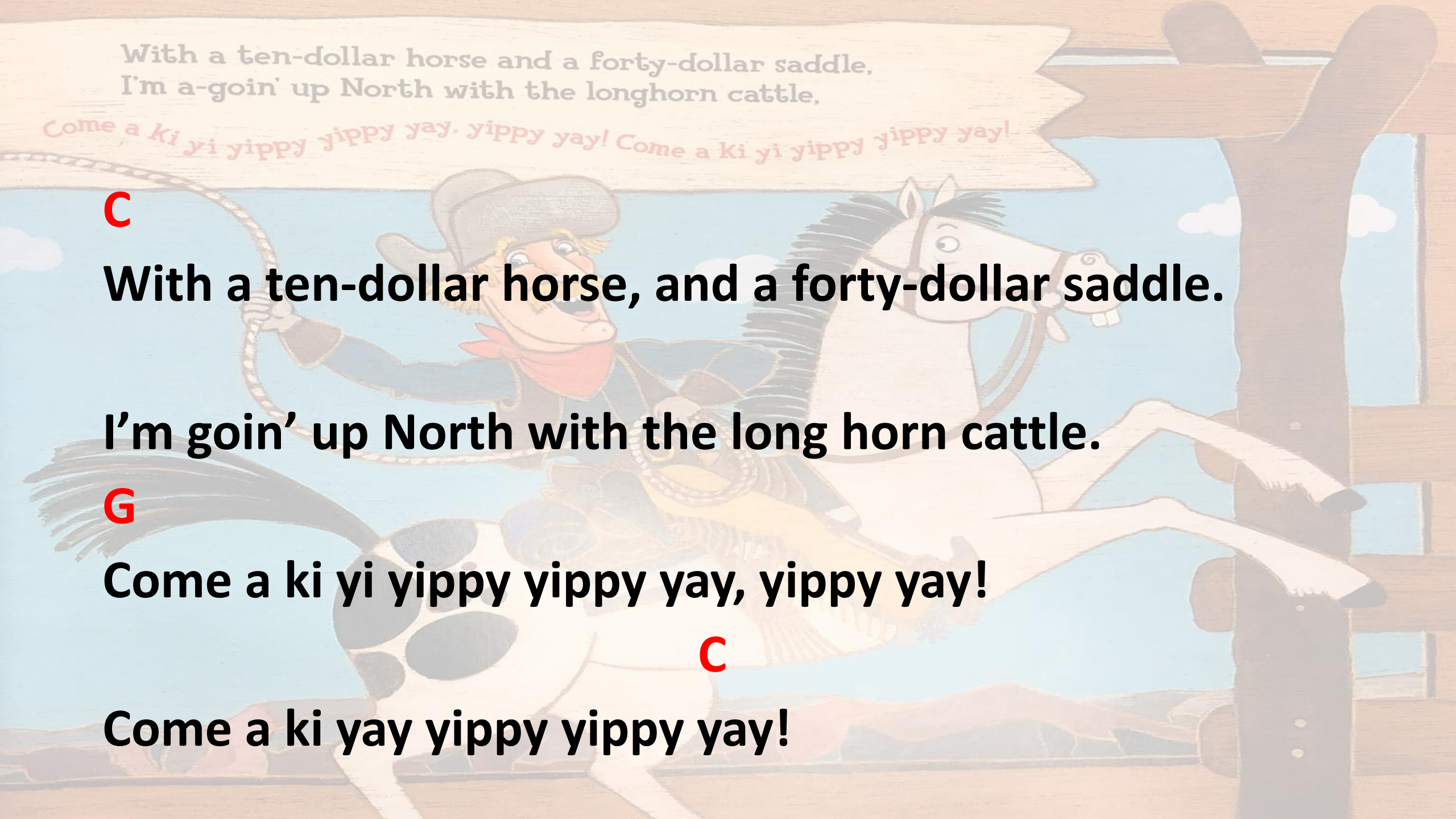
*Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay! Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay!*

**C**  
**Well, come along boys and listen to my tale.**

**And I'll tell you all my troubles on the Old Chisom Trail.**

**G**  
**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

**C**  
**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**



With a ten-dollar horse and a forty-dollar saddle,  
I'm a-goin' up North with the longhorn cattle,

*Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay! Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay!*

**C**  
With a ten-dollar horse, and a forty-dollar saddle.

I'm goin' up North with the long horn cattle.

**G**  
Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!

**C**  
Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!



**C**

**From Texas up to Kansas in the heat and dust and rain.**

**Will we make up the trail to the railroad train?**

**G**

**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

**C**

**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**

From Texas up to Kansas in the heat and dust and rain,  
Will we make it up the trail to the railroad train?

An illustration of a scene from a children's book. Three cowboys are running across the backs of cows in a muddy river. It is raining heavily, with blue raindrops falling around them. The cowboys are dressed in traditional Western attire: hats, bandanas, and chaps. The cows are of various colors: red, brown, spotted, and black. The scene is set in a muddy river with blue waves. The background is a light brown color.

**C**  
**Red cows, brown cows, spotted steers and blacks.**

**We cross the muddy rivers by running on their backs**

**G**  
**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

**C**  
**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**

Red cows, brown cows, spotted steers and blacks.

We cross the muddy river by running on their backs!

A stylized illustration of a cowboy herding cattle. The cowboy, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a red bandana, is in the foreground. In the background, several black cattle are running across a field. A line of men, presumably the 'sneaky men' mentioned in the text, are visible in the distance, attempting to steal the cattle. The scene is set in a grassy field with a light blue sky.

**C**

**Seven sneaky men aim to rustle our cattle.**

**We give a big shout and have a royal battle!**

**G**

**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

**C**

**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**



**C**

**With my feet in the stirrups and my seat in the sky.**

**I chase the cattle thieves to the sweet bye-and-bye!**

**G**

**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

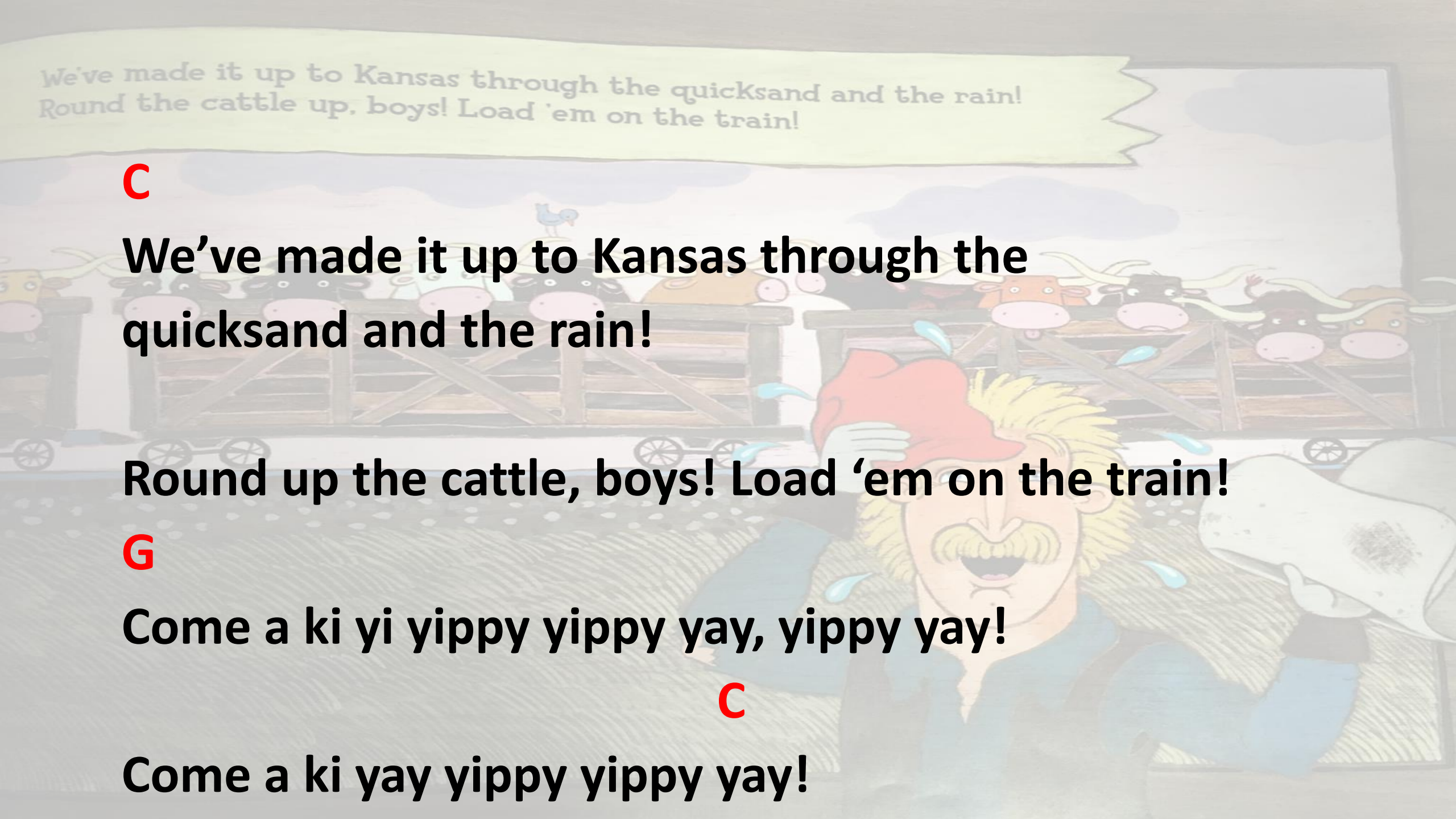
**C**

**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**

With my feet in the stirrups  
and my seat in the sky,  
I chase the cattle thieves  
to the sweet bye-and-bye!







We've made it up to Kansas through the quicksand and the rain!  
Round the cattle up, boys! Load 'em on the train!

**C**

**We've made it up to Kansas through the  
quicksand and the rain!**

**Round up the cattle, boys! Load 'em on the train!**

**G**

**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

**C**

**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**



**C**

**Oh, Abilene City is a mighty fine town.**

**I meet a purty gal and I twirl her all around.**

**G**

**Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!**

**C**

**Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!**

Oh, Abilene City is a mighty fine town.  
I meet a purty gal and I twirl her all around.  
Come a Ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!  
Come a Ki yi yippy yippy yay!





C

I'm a-gonna sell my saddle and buy me a plow.

Gonna marry that gal, never rope another cow.

G

Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!

C

Come a ki yay yippy yippy yay!

I'm a-gonna sell my saddle and buy me a plow.  
Gonna marry that gal, never rope another cow!  
Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay, yippy yay!  
Come a ki yi yippy yippy yay!