

The Last Battle

An east wind blew in the storms of time, where the Métis
lived on the wind-ing riv - er, For on a steel rail, the sett-lers
came, to the South Sas-kat-che-wan and the land they claimed. Then three
Mé - tis and Gab - ri - el rode like the wind to wild Mon
-tan - a, And on the sweet grass, in a church of stone, They found their
sav - i - our, and they took him home. Saying, "Come Ri - el, we'll make a
stand, Here at Bat - oche, be - side the riv - er, O nev - er
mind their Gatt-ling guns, If we lose this time, we've lost for
ev - er".

An east wind blew in the storms of time, where the Métis lived, on the winding river.
For on a steel rail, the settlers came to the South Saskatchewan, and the land they claimed.
Then three Métis and Gabriel rode like the wind to wild Montana,
And on the sweet grass in a church of stone, they found their saviour and they took him home.
CHORUS: Saying, "Come Riel, we'll make a stand, here at Batoche, beside the river,
O never mind their Gatling guns, if we lose this time, we've lost forever.

Then the bullets flew and the cannons roared, and the Métis blood flowed like a river,
Into the coulees, where they ran to hide, it washed their dreams away and their spirit died.
Then a silence stole across the land, the drums of war were gone forever,
But in the starlight, on the barren plains, the cry of Gabriel flies on the wind. CHORUS.

Jerry Potts

We've come from the east in our red un - i - forms,
 Come to face the crime and the fight-ing and the storms, Now we're all so wear - y and
 need to be fed, Most of our hors - es are dy - ing or dead. And
 with win - ter on - ly a few weeks at hand, How can we ex - pect to
 bring law to this land? Send - ing to Mon - tan - a we look for a guide,
 Some - one to help us learn how to sur - vive. And look at what they find us -
 this half - breed, Well none of us be - lieve he's ev-en close to what we need, And we
 pay him nine-ty doll - ars a month, and all we've got is this strange man called
 Jer - ry..... Jerry Potts.

We've come from the east in our red uniforms,
 Come to face the crime and the fighting and the storms,
 Now we're all so weary and need to be fed,
 Most of our horses are dying or dead.
 And with winter only a few weeks at hand,
 How can we expect to bring law to this land?
 Sending to Montana, we look for a guide,
 Someone to help us to learn to survive.

And look at what they find us – this half-breed,
 Well none of us believe he's even close to what we need,

And we pay him ninety dollars a month, and all we've got
 Is this strange man called Jerry – Jerry Potts.

But the first day on and what a surprise,
 Well he's killed a buffalo for us right before our eyes,
 We're eating well again and we owe him thanks
 For now we're no longer starving, tired ranks.
 But there's whiskey traders to catch and we move on
 Even though he tells us that they have long since gone,
 When we reach the fort we see it's true,

We trust him now to tell us exactly what to do.

So look at what we've found us – this half-breed,
None of us believed he was close to what we'd need,
But a ninety dollar saviour is what we've got
In this seldom speaking man called Jerry – Jerry Potts.

And it's early October and we need a site,
To build us a fort that will suit us just right,
An island on a river is doing us proud,
Potts picked the perfect place – Fort Macleod.

And here with the Blackfoot there must be peace
If we're to do our jobs as police,
The chiefs of all the tribes Potts makes our friends,
And to drinking and fighting they'll be glad to see an end.

So look at how he helps us – this half-breed,
Now we all are sure he's exactly what we need,
And we pay him ninety dollars but he's worth all we've got,
This hero of a man called Jerry – Jerry Potts.

Know Ye the Land

The musical score for 'Know Ye the Land' is written in a single system with six staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The lyrics are: 'Know ye the land where the bare rocks and old pines, Are the emblems of deeds that are done in their clime? Where the last hopes of thousands dissolved by the gold mines, to many bring sorrow, drive others to crime? 'Tis the land of adventurers, gleaned from all nations, English, French, Yankee, Italian and Jew, Uncared for all former distinctions and stations, All find the same level, who seek Car-i-boo.'

Know ye the land where the bare rocks and old pines
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the last hopes of thousands dissolved by the gold mines,
To many bring sorrow, drive others to crime?
'Tis the land of adventurers, gleaned from all nations,
English, French, Yankee, Italian and Jew,
Uncared for, all former distinctions and stations,
All find the same level, who seek Cariboo.

'Tis the land of the gambler, the thief and the debtor,
Of the storekeeper ruined through trusting to "jaw",
Where the sentence of Begbie loads those with a fetter
Whom he should hang in justice, but cannot by law.
'Tis the land of log cabins, bedrock, flumes and ditches,
Hydraulics and sluices, of tunnels and shafts,

Where in keen strike to accumulate riches,
All friendship's forgotten, and hardened all hearts.

'Tis the land of false swearing, of cursing, blaspheming,
Where the sharper by poker or monte gain wealth,
Where he who is cute can live easy in scheming,
While the miner's soon bankrupt in pocket and health.
It is here that the almighty dollar is rated
A god in this Anglo-American land,
Where the greatest of blackguards, if lucky, is fe[as]ted,
While the poor man, though honest, may starve and be damned.

Know ye the land where the bare rocks and old pines
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the last hopes of thousands dissolved by the gold mines
To many bring sorrow, drive others to crime?
Oh, how happy I'll be when on board of the steamer!
How joyful I cannot find language to tell,
When wishing each miner and loafer and schemer,
Cariboo and its horrors a final farewell!

[Words by J. Lawrence, MS in Public Archives of British Columbia. Tune adapted by P.J. Thomas from a German hymn tune first printed 1835.]

“The Last Battle” © Bill Gallaher (SOCAN). “Jerry Potts” © Richard Harrow (SOCAN)

John Worrall, 1945-2004

When I arrived in Calgary in 1974, I soon found the Calgary Folk Club, which was already two years old. Amazingly, 30 years later the club still thrives. Even more amazingly, until February 23 of this year, four original members of the houseband, The Wild Colonial Boys (more recently The Wild Colonials), were still part of the group. Now only three remain, as John Worrall passed away suddenly on that date.

John was the front man of the band, the entertainer who could rouse any audience. A fine singer and rhythm guitar player, he played off against percussionist Gordie Black, bassist John Martland and multi-instrumentalist and singer Mansell Davies, all of whom played straight man in their own ways. Together with various other group members over the years, they warmed up audiences for the top folk music performers of the era.

Mansell Davies says of Johnny, "Behind the facade, there was a real, huge talent... he had the ability to touch people." Johnny would do whatever it took to sell a song, donning costumes, gyrating in his famous Elvis impersonation, drawing on his drama background to mimic accents, even once riding a horse into the folk club premises. He was "the spark and sparkle of the Calgary Folk Club," said the club's newsletter. "He loved an audience and loved to perform, and the audience loved him back."

Born in Sheffield, England, John was a teacher and assistant principal in Calgary for 33 years; after retirement, his love of children prompted him to drive a school bus for his last years.

St. Pius X Church in Calgary overflowed for the funeral. A slide show of various stages of John's life was followed by some of his favourite songs and tunes played by friends. Afterward, musical friends took part in a session/reception at the club.

The Wild Colonials' future is uncertain, but the Calgary Folk Club carries on into the future; however, the void where Johnny Worrall used to be will not be easily filled.

John Leeder, Calgary, Alberta

Lost Soul

The member listed below has moved without sending us a new address. If you know of her new whereabouts, please inform us at <prescotj@telusplanet.net> and/or <leeders@nucleus.com>.

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