

Song: “Punchin’ the Dough”

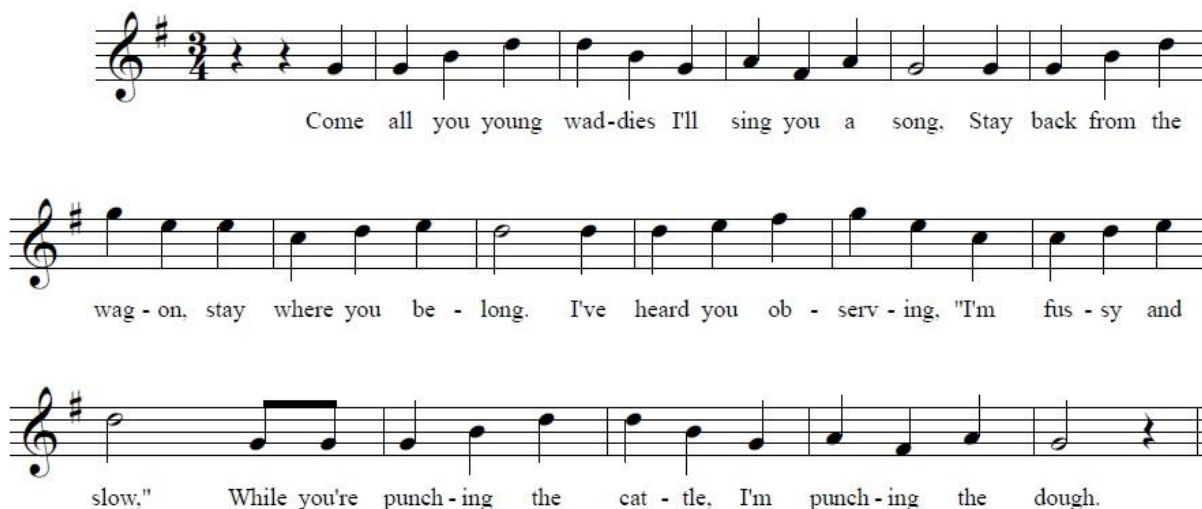
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“Punchin’ the Dough” is a traditional cowboy song told from the point of view of the cook. A regular trail outfit consisted of a chuckwagon, a horse wrangler, a boss or captain, about six riders for every thousand cattle, and a cook. The cook’s wagon, made popular in recent years by chuckwagon races, carried a ton or two of utensils and provisions for the camp. His importance often overlooked in song, the cook wielded immense power in the outfit; he could inflict

humiliation or starvation upon his enemies. “Punchin’ the Dough” was sung by Bev Bandur, who taught himself how to play guitar while harvesting in the district of Wetaskiwin, Alberta, in 1934, and can be found in the field recordings made by Leonora Mary Pauls for her thesis *The English Language Folk and Traditional Songs of Alberta* (University of Calgary, 1981).

Punchin' the Dough

Sung by Bev Bandur



Come all you young wad-dies I'll sing you a song, Stay back from the
wag - on, stay where you be - long. I've heard you ob - serv - ing, "I'm fus - sy and
slow," While you're punch - ing the cat - tle, I'm punch - ing the dough.

Come all you young waddies, I'll sing you a song;
Stay back from the wagon, stay where you belong;
I've heard you observing I'm fussy and slow;
While you're punching the cattle, I'm punching the dough.

I reckon your stomach would grow to your back,
If it wasn't for the cook who keeps filling the slack,
With the bacon and beans and the pork and the tough;
I'm wondering right now who would fill you with grub.

You think you're right handy with gun and with rope,
But I notice you're bashful when handling the soap;
When you're rolling the bull for your brown cigarette,
I've been rolling the dough for the biscuits you et. [eat]

When you're cutting the stock, I'm cutting the steak;
When you're wrangling the horses, I'm wrangling the cake;
When you're hazin' the dogies and battin' your eye,
I'm hazin' dried apples that aim to be pie.

You brag about shooting out windows and lights,
But try shooting biscuits for twelve appetites;
And when you crawl from your roll and the ground it is froze,
Then who boils the coffee that thaws out your nose?

In the old days the punchers just took what they got;
It was sowbelly beans and the old coffee pot;
Now you come a-howling for pie and for cake,
Then you cuss at the cook for a good bellyache.

You say that I'm old and my feet on the skid,
But I'm telling you right now, you are nothing but kids;
If you reckon your mounts are some snaky and raw,
Just try riding herd on a stove that won't draw.

When you look at my apron, you're reading my brand;
'Four X' is the sign for the best in the land;
On bottle or sack, it sure stands for good luck,
So line up, you waddies, and wrangle your chuck.

No use of your snortin' and fightin' your head;
If you like it with chili, just eat what I said,
For I am to be boss of this end of the show;
While you're punching the cattle, I'm punching the dough.



Fig. 1: The late Bev Bandur in his younger days.