

SEEKERS OF THE FLEECE

by
Bobby Bridger

Introduction

In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson sent American minister to Paris, Robert Livingston, and his trusted friend, James Monroe, to Paris in an attempt to buy the Spanish-controlled port of New Orleans. The French Emperor, Napoleon, had forced a secret agreement with Spain and suddenly closed the important trade center to American commerce. Discovering himself in a political firestorm over the situation, Jefferson hurried Livingston and Monroe to Paris to negotiate. In the midst of negotiations, however, Napoleon's minister, Talleyrand, flabbergasted Monroe and Livingston by suddenly offering to sell the United States the entire Louisiana Territory. Jefferson's minister doubted whether they had the legal power to make such a deal, yet they also knew Napoleon was given to rapidly changing his mind and this was a historic moment that must be decisively acted upon. They negotiated the contract; for \$2,000,000 in cash and the assumption of approximately \$13,000,000 of France's debt to Spain, Livingston and Monroe pulled off the greatest real estate deal in the history of the world.

On the maps America's new possession was a blank space with "unexplored territory" written over half a continent. In 1804, the year of Jim Bridger's birth, President Jefferson authorized the historic Lewis and Clark Expedition for the purpose of finding a water route across the continent to the Pacific and to establish peaceful commerce with the indigenous peoples they encountered. In 1806 Jefferson sent Zebulon Pike on a similar expedition into the southwest portion of the continent. Both expeditions -but particularly Pike's- essentially referred to the west as the "Great American Desert", uninhabitable by civilized, Christian people. Consequently, the majority of Americans, dwelling near the Atlantic coastal regions, came to perceive of the west as "the Great American Desert".

Not all Americans held this perspective; however; Lewis and Clark commented that upon descending the Missouri River, returning from their great exploratory adventure, they encountered free trappers and traders ascending the mighty river. Those rogue adventurers and fortune seekers who returned to St. Louis brought with them tales of a wondrous land peopled with fascinating people. Soon men like Manuel Lisa and Pierre Chouteau began to amass small fortunes as the fur trade grew in St. Louis. By 1822, when General William Ashley, the 44-year-old recently elected Lieutenant Governor of Missouri decided to enter the business, the fur trade was at a frenzy. The stovepipe hat -made from beaver pelts- had become the "rage" in the fashion capitals of Europe and America. Ashley, seeing the fur trade as a way to make a quick fortune to fuel his presidential aspirations, sought out an experienced partner and found him in

Major Andrew Henry.

Andrew Henry was one of those rogue's. He built the first fort west of the Rockies in 1812 and knew the Yellowstone Country. With the price of beaver pelts soaring in St. Louis tales of beaver so plentiful on the upper Missouri they could be clubbed rather than trapped soon began to spread through the city. Ashley was wise to find a man who knew the region well as his partner. The pair advertised in the Missouri Republican for "one-hundred enterprising young men" to ascend the Missouri River to the Yellowstone Country.

Jim Bridger celebrated his 18th birthday the day Ashley and Henry's advertisement appeared in the St. Louis newspapers. The milestone of his birthday freed him from being apprenticed to blacksmith, Phil Creamer, and he decided to join the expedition.

Characters

Jim Bridger

Jim is, at first, a naive boy, idealistically seeking his future in the unexplored territory. As the party ascends the Missouri Jim ages and matures. His career as a mountain man, explorer, guide, scout and community builder involved him personally in the most important historical periods of the 19th Century American West. Bridger was eyewitness and participant in the eras of Exploration, Discovery, Emigration, War and final settlement of the American West.

Jedediah Strong Smith

Jedediah Strong Smith was a rarity indeed, a Calvinist who applied the Puritan attitudes of his faith to the Pantheistic cathedrals of the Rocky Mountains. Jed, or Ole 'diah', as his fellow-trappers called him, rose quickly to importance with Ashley and Henry and within two years bought Ashley out of the partnership. Jed gave Jim Bridger his "mountain man name", "Ole Gabe", nicknaming the lad after the Angel Gabriel, because he said Bridger always looked so solemn he expected to hear Gabriel's horn at any moment.

By 1831, when he was killed by Comanches on the Cimarron River as he pioneered a route across the Texas Panhandle, Jedediah Strong Smith, had traveled more of the American West than any man -red or white. He was the first white man to cross the continent by land pioneering not one, but two routes to the Pacific; he first crossed the Mojave Desert into Southern California and then crossed the High Sierras back into the Yellowstone Country. Obsessed with map-making, Jed chronicled the western landscape only to lose his charts that fateful day in north Texas. Nine years later, when John Fremont began his historic mapping of the American west, the region was still considered "unexplored territory."

Hugh Glass

Earliest accounts of Hugh Glass maintain he had been a captain in the American Navy during the War of 1812. Sometime around 1817, however, Glass lost his ship to Jean Lafitte's pirates in the Gulf of Mexico. He was a pirate for two years before announcing to his captors that he was a gentleman and could no longer rob and pillage. This announcement meant he would be taken to Lafitte's stronghold at Campeachy (modern-day Galveston, Texas) and hanged. Glass was not bound as the pirates ship pulled into Galveston Bay for everyone knew it would be foolhardy to jump ship and attempt the two-mile swim to Campeachy; if anyone managed to survive the swim to shore and escape the pirates, the northern boundaries of the compound were vast swamp forests inhabited by venomous snakes, alligators and the cannibalistic Karankawa Indians. In spite of the odds, Glass convinced a companion that they should take their chances and attempt to make it to shore.

Glass and his companion survived the swim, eluded the pirates and, using his navigational skills, headed north through the swamps. They managed to elude capture by the Karankawa and many other tribes in their trek north, but were finally taken prisoner by the Pawnee. Hugh's companion was promptly put to death, but as Glass was facing certain death, he instinctively offered a piece of red cloth to his executor and halted his spear. The Pawnee chief was so thrilled with the "gift" that he not only spared Hugh's life, but also adopted him. Not long thereafter, accompanying the chief on a trading mission into St. Louis, Hugh decided he had lived long enough with the Pawnee and abandoned the Indians. Then, seeing the advertisement in the Missouri Republican, he signed on with the Ashley-Henry Fur Expedition.

Glass was an important addition to Major Henry's crew. He was an experienced military man, literate and possessing organizational skills. But Glass also had unique wilderness skills which would be priceless on the upper Missouri. He was promptly hired as the expedition's hunter.

The hunter lived a solitary life, always out several miles ahead of the main party searching for fresh game and preparing camp for the expedition. It is believed that "Ole Glass" and Jim Bridger became friends after a skirmish with the Arikara Indians in which the young boy saved the old man's life. Whatever the source of the friendship, the pair were hunting together on the Grand River in South Dakota one August morning when Glass was mauled by a female Great Plains grizzly bear.

As Henry's expedition hurried to the scene of the mauling they discovered Glass in horrible shape. His throat was torn open from the bear's initial attack and his back and thigh had endured deep wounds from the bear's mouth and claws. All assumed he would not live another hour, but the old man lived through the night. With the morning Major Henry decided that since the expedition was being closely followed by hostile Arikara Indians, he could not jeopardize the safety of all the group to wait for Glass' eminent death. He asked for volunteers to wait for

the old man to die and properly bury him.

Jim Bridger quickly volunteered. Major Henry recognized the boy was in a state of shock having witnessed the mauling. He suggested that everyone donate a sum to create a purse for someone to stay behind with Bridger and Glass. John "Nat" Fitzgerald volunteered and, leaving the pair with the fallen Glass, the expedition moved on.

Apparently Fitzgerald immediately began to try to convince Bridger that they should just wait a few hours and then leave the old man and catch the group. Bridger resisted, but Fitzgerald persisted. After several days, with hostile Arikara Indians adding to the pressure, Bridger agreed to join Fitzgerald and desert Glass. Before they could desert him, however, they had to rob him. If they had returned to the expedition without Glass' rifle and other valuables, Major Henry would have known something was not right. So the pair took everything Glass would need for survival, dug a grave and rolled the old man into it, and left him.

Glass did not die. Rather, he came out of his coma burning with vengeance for Bridger and Fitzgerald. He crawled nearly 200 miles back to the Missouri River, where he made his way downstream to Fort Kiowa and, using his trapper's credit there, re-supplied himself and headed upstream after Bridger and Fitzgerald. On New Year's Eve as 1823 faded into 1824 the ghost reappeared! Glass caught up with Henry's party and Bridger. He faced the young man and uttered six words, 'For your youth, I forgive you.'

He later went searching for and found Nat Fitzgerald, who had joined the Army to legal protect himself from Glass' wrath. He retrieved his rifle from the deserter and later, with black trapper, Edward Rose was killed and scalped by the Arikara Indians.

The Recording

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&
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**Produced by Jim and John Imon and Bobby Bridger
Engineered by Jim Inmon
Mixed by Jim Inmon and Bobby Bridger
Mastered by Jerry Tubb at Terra Nova Digital Studios, Austin, Texas
Website Layout and Design: Gil Bateman and Bobby Bridger**

The Players

**Narration: Slim Pickens
Lead vocals, background vocals, 6 and 12 string acoustic guitars: Bobby Bridger**

6 and 12 string acoustic guitars, banjo, dulcimer, mandolin, bass,
flute, autoharp and background vocals: John Inmon
Bass, piano, mandolin, dulcimer and background vocals: Bob Livingston
Piano, fiddle and background vocals: Gary P. Nunn
Drums and percussion: Donnie Dolan
"Mountain man choir": Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Timberjack Joe, Mike Williams,
Michael Burton,
Charles John Quarto, Jennifer and Jeffrey Johnson, Kenny Inmon, John Inmon,
Bob Livingston, Donnie Dolan, Gary P. Nunn and Bobby Bridger.

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Seekers of the Fleece

by
Bobby Bridger

(Narrator)

*"The year is 1822, Jim Bridger lives in Ole St. Lou,
He's learning 'bout the blacksmith trade
And filing him a dagger blade
To carry to the western land,
To help him be a mountain man."*

(Young Jim Bridger)

"A mountain man, A mountain man
To live up in the rocky land,
Kill a grizzly with my hand,
And be the first white man to stand,
On the Holy ground of the mountain land."

"Now I've heard tell there's a man in town
And he's a-carryin' a paper 'round
Asking for ambitious men
To make an X and to follow him
Up to the mouth of the Yallerstone
There to go and live alone
And trap the beaver for his 'har
And live up thar...forever."

"Well, forever's a long, long time,
But I am young and in my prime,
Besides, I've got a whole lifetime,
And not much time to be here."

(song)
(Jim Bridger)

Free My Spirit 'fore My Spirit's Dead

**"I want to open my window let the sun shine in
I've got to kick down my fences, let my freedom begin
I don't want nothing but blue sky up above my head
I've got to free my spirit, 'fore my spirit's dead."**

**"I want to do something that I ain't never done
And see how far it gets me -maybe to the sun.
And find that place where Heaven and Earth are wed
I've got to free my spirit 'fore my spirit's dead."**

(Chorus)

**"I want to see something no man has ever seen
Go somewhere no man has ever been
Find myself alive with every breath
So I will know life when I meet my death."**

**"The Rocky Mountains are as high as you go
And everything is up there that I want to know,
Nothing but heaven up above my head,
I've got to free my spirit, 'fore my spirit's dead."**

(Narration)

(Young Jim Bridger)

**"Well I put my X on yesterday,
No quitin' now, I'm on my way,
With Major Henry and his crew
They're the meanest men I ever knew
They come from riverboats and bars
And all look like ole grizzly 'bars
Just a-looking for some man to eat
Or something stronger they can beat.
Well, they don't have much to say at all,
These men that answered Henry's call
Just stare out at the west,
And now, I'm a-doing like the rest
And lookin' where I've never been
Gettin' used to buckskin
A-thinkin' 'bout the Injun...and a-wonderin' "**

**"Now Henry's our leader,
Hugh Glass, he's the hunter,
Fitzgerald, he's a liar,**

And Jedediah, well, he's a preacher,
Sometimes he's a teacher,
But most of all a reacher for the heavens up above.
They say he's just about my age, but God he looks much older
From a-carryin' that parsonage, so heavy on his shoulder."

(Song)

(Jed Smith)

Jedediah Strong Smith

"Jedediah's what I answer, but Smith -'at's my name
And I preaches words on Jesus, while I trap fur-bearing game.
Now you listen to my question, and you listen very well.
Can you tell me yore ambition; is it Heaven or is it hell?"

"Are you ready son to travel to a land no man has seen?
Cast yore soul out to the forest, the mountain and the streams?
Let the winter freeze yore body 'til it learns never to feel?
Can you tell me yore ambition; is it Heaven or is it hell?"

(Chorus)

"Can you laugh when that ole grizzly tries to tear you limb from limb?
Knowing when he eats yore body, that yore soul lives on in him.
And yore soul then hunts the mountains 'til some hungry mountain man
Shoots you as that grizzly devil, and yore soul lives on in him."

"Jedediah's what I answer, but Smith 'at's my name.
And I preaches words on Jesus while I traps fur-bearing game.
Now you listen to my question and you listen very well.
Can you tell me yore ambition; is it Heaven, or is it hell?
Is it Heaven, or is it hell? Is it Heaven, or is it hell?"

(Narrator)

*"Indians, trappers, guns and beaver,
Rocky Mountain streams and rivers,
Lord, what a beautiful land,
Young Bridger grew to understand
His need to be a mountain man."*

(Young Jim Bridger)

"Hugh Glass has spent some time with me
He calls me 'Golden-Haired Jamie'.
I call him 'Graybeard Grizzly 'bar'.
He just laughs at me and looks out t'har,
And always turns his eyes to stare
westward."

**“Hugh taught me how to set a trap,
How to walk the woods without a map
And slip up on a feeding deer,
And be the first to volunteer,
Hugh’s kinda like a father.”**

**“Oh he talks about his young man’s dream
His vision no one’s ever seen.
He says he saw it long ago
When he was a-living with the Crow,
Some Injuns that don’t hate us now.
But Hugh swears that he made a vow
To live just like an Injun
And rise up to the sun
To die when his life’s done
To live forevermore.”**

**(Song)
(Hugh Glass)
I Had A Vision**

**“I had a vision, not so long ago
It answered my questions, as it showed me my soul.
Yes I had a vision,
You might call it a dream.
It was leading me homeward,
On a trail of sunbeams.”**

**“Yes, I had a vision, while I slept in my bed.
It came right out of nowhere, in a dream I was lead.
To the top of the mountain, to the earth’s highest shore.
Where I bathed in the sunshine and I sang for it all.”**

**(Chorus)
“Yes I had a vision, You might call it a dream
And I went to the mountain, and I came down so clean.”**

**“Now I will continue, remembering that day.
And my dream on the mountain, and the sunbeam highway.
How it came out of nowhere, and showed me my goals.
It was leading me homeward, pulling me by the soul.”**

**(Narrator)
(Young Jim Bridger)
“A good shot would have killed him clean,**

Now he's wounded -damn it's mean
To be the cause of anything dying very slow.
But Hugh said that he would track the deer,
Then he smiled and slowly disappeared.
Laughing under his graybeard,
He slipped into the willers."

"Was that a scream?!!!! I know it was!
My God! The grizzly's time for cubs!
Hang on Hugh! I'll hurry!"

"Is this a dream?!!! No, God! It's true!
This mangled, bloody mess is Hugh!
Oh Hugh...why you? Why you instead of
me?"

"Major Henry asked for two
To stay behind and wait on Hugh,
But he really only asked for one
Because he knew I'd stay until it's done.
Lord, if he could only die
But still he breathes, still he cries,
A man could hardly recognize
This bloody pile of buckskins."

"Days come in and days go out.
Fitzgerald's face is full of doubt,
And Hugh continues with his bout,
And Injuns -they just wait us out,
A-spying."

"Fitzgerald, stop yore whining!
Stop yore blessed pining!
I know the Injuns want our h' ar.
Let 'em have it! I don't care,
I'm a-staying here and waitin' "

"Waitin'
Waitin'
Waitin' on this Albatross
This mean ole graybeard, grizzly *ghost*.
I'll wait for his resignin'
But he just lies there a-sighin'
For two weeks he's been dyin'
While savages are eyin'
The h 'ar upon my head."
"Fitzgerald says, '*He's dead!*'
How many times he's said,

***“Let’s leave him. Let’s leave him!
Damn it boy! Let’s leave him!”***

***“Damn my eyes, my courage dies,
His spirit cries and cries...‘deserter!’
Damn my eyes, my courage dies,
His spirit cries and cries...‘deserter!’***

***“He never died; we ran and lied.
And now I see his staring eyes
Calling me...‘deserter!’ ”***

***“Fitzgerald and Bridger then withdrew
And started after Henry’s crew
And told them that they’d buried Old Hugh,
And had his gun to prove it.”
“But Glass swore that he would live instead
And track the cowards who left him for dead,
And then he rose from his deathbed,
And made his crawl to prove
it.”***

**(Song)
(Hugh Glass)
The Crawl**

***“Oh, Darkness all around me,
Oh, Hurt and fear surround me,
Oh, Sundown you have found me,
Oh!!!!”***

***“Oh! I can’t believe I’m breathing,
Oh! Life, Please don’t be leaving,
Oh! One last chance I’m asking,
Oh!!!”***

***“Oh sweet breath, giving life,
I’m not dead; I am alive!
And I’ll crawl, ’til I run,
And I’ll end this thing undone.
And I’ll find that hated thing.
That left me alone and dying
And he’ll look me in the eye
And he’ll pray to God to die.”***

***“Rocky Mountain waters flow
To the valley down below.***

Healing water, melted snow,
Life comes here only to go.
And the mountains always stand
Giving not one thought to man
And the earth will turn again
Making love to the heavens.”

“And the boy, he must grow
To a man so he can know
Of the spirit in this land.
Now I’ll make a mountainman
He remembers lessons well
So he’ll live to tell my tale.
I’m the mountain man who fell
And then crawled right out of hell.”

(Narrator)

*“ ‘For your youth I forgive you’ rang in Bridger’s ears
‘For your youth, I forgive you,’ would follow him for years.
Hugh Glass had made his mountain man, for crawling on the rocky land
Taught Hugh what few understand
Compassion for his fellow-man.”*

*“Jim Bridger learned his lesson too,
He always learned alot from Hugh,
And the mean-ole graybeard grizzly bear
Would always seem to re-appear
When other men were full of fear
Jim Bridger always volunteered
Because Hugh’s words sang in his ear
‘For your youth, I forgive you.’ ”*

*“I ain’t a-feared of anything”
“Became the song Jim Bridger sang.
And then he stepped on virgin land
Not walked upon by many men
And witnessed what no man had seen;
Standing silent, serene
A silent singing soul stood weaving out a scheme.”*

*“The eagle screamed and started flight
And cried to man you’ve won the fight.
The wilderness was now awake,
The silence sounded one last ache,
And the white man flowed to the Great Salt Lake.”*

(Song)
(Jim Bridger)
Life Is A River

**“I once was frightened, feeling insecure.
Worried 'bout my problems, of myself I was unsure.
I was so young then, my friend I did not know
Life is a river, and with it you must go,
Life is a river, with it you must flow.”**

**“We're born like a raindrop, gently we all fall
Into life's rapid mainstream, to answer nature's call.
We're all meant for something as through our lives we go.
Life is a river and with it you must go.
Life is a river, and with it you must flow.**

(Chorus)

**Life is a river and with it you must flow,
Wherever it wants you, it's there that you must go.
We all try to fight it, but deep inside we know
Life is a river and with it you must flow
Life is a river and with it you must flow.**

**Where is the wind when it's playing in the trees?
Catch it in your hands, there's nothing there to see.
For it to live you have to let it be free to blow
Life is a river and with it you must flow
Life is a river and with it you must flow.**

(Narrator)

***“The silent, sleeping mountain land
Was awakened with the steps of man
And never would the peace return
For man, it seems, can never learn.
And still he sought more virgin land
Shouting all the time ‘Expand!
America's growing man!’
And everyplace he put his brand
He marked a headstone for the land
With his boundaries,
Falling trees,
Dying game,
All from some misguided urge to tame.
He couldn't hear the eagle cry,
Soaring upward to the sky,
A last, long piercing, futile scream,***

The victim of a dying dream.”

*“Rendezvous at Green River men!
Bring yore pelts and beaver skins’
ar’s lots a whiskey a-comin’ in
Some Cheyenne tradin’ off women
To make yore winter’s
warmer.”*

*“It’s the biggest one ’ats ever been!
A Rendezvous of mountain men!
Lot’s of tales about yore friends,
What they’ve done and where they’ve been,
And where they’ll be a-
trappin’!”*

**(Song)
(Jim Bridger)
Rendezvous**

**“At the Rendezvous,
White men and the Sioux,
Smoked the pipe, traded hair,
For the maidens fair.”**

**“To the Rendezvous
Men came from St. Lou.
Wanting beaver and mink.
Bringing whiskey to drink.”**

**(Chorus)
“Oh the Rendezvous
1832
On the Green River side,
Where I took my first bride,
A black-eyed Shoshone,
Daughter of Eagle-man.”**

**“At the Rendezvous
White man and the Sioux
Raced their ponies for fun
Traded fur for their guns
And with Rendezvous done
Mountain men were one.”**

(Narrator)

*“The virgin lost her maidenhood
And readied now for motherhood,
As the ragged, jagged rocky land
Gave herself to the mountain man,
The redman held an empty, uplifted hand
To prove he still was friendly.”*

*“U-ment-ucken-Tak-utse, the mountain lamb
Daughter of the mighty ram,
U-ment-ucken-Tak-utse, was her name,
The mountain lamb -a fragile frame,
But to Bridger’s life this maiden came
And set the mountain man aflame
With love for his young
princess.”*

*“So the chief emptied his strong right hand
And showed it to the mountain man
Then passed his pipe of peace around
And said, ‘I share my trapping ground,
I share my metal hunting knife,
I share my lodge; I share my life.”*

*“ ‘ I am the eagle and the ram.
And now you have my mountain lamb.
So now you fill her with your life
Jim Bridger, take your Shoshone wife.’ ”*

(Song)
(Jim Bridger)
People Carry On

*“Loving you is very simple
Easily I’m drawn.
Problem’s always work out simple
Just turn around they’re gone.
Now I know that love’s the reason
The people carry on.”*

*“Coming to me when I need you
Singing loving songs.
You take me on a distant journey,*

When you're bringing me back home.
Showing me that love's the reason
The people carry on."

(Chorus)

"I was lost and I was lonely
And I didn't understand.
Now your special love is all around me.
You took me by the hand.
Lead me through my darkest hours
Showed me clear, blue sky
Showed me how to climb the mountain
Spread my wings and fly."

"Love is found in gentle people.
And strength from love is drawn.
And loving you is very simple.
It's knowing I belong.
When you're showing me that love's the reason
The people carry on."

(Narrator)

*"The land began to fill with whites
And talk of ownership and rights,
Talk of hopes and dreams and schools.
'Why these red-men are just savage fools
To question this progressive land
We have the will of God -Expand!' "*

(Jim Bridger)

"Back in 1822,
I signed up with Ole Henry's crew,
We were the first to find the Crow's
mysterious Yallerstone."
"This land was just a baby then,
Most all the red-men were my friends
Before this land was filled with men,
And broken bison bones."
"Folks ask me why I built this fort
And why the trapper's are all a-leaving.
Why I rent myself and scout
You know my heart's a-grieving.
I'm a-grieving for the red-man
It's the white savages don't understand.
We took his sacred, Holy land,
And fenced up all the promised land

So's he had to fill his empty hand
With weapons of destruction."

"I didn't come to steal no home.
"I just come to hunt and roam
And to set my damned ole spirit free
And to answer to no one but me."

"But now they come to rob and steal
And leave ruts from their wagon wheels.
Hunt for gold and preach to heal
The red-man's hell-bound
soul."

" 'Save the savage soul!
Bring him to the fold!
"His soul was safe before they came
With their talks of 'hell in flames'
They got him drunk, made their claims
And raped him while they played their games,
Of taking all he
owned."

(Song)
(A Blackfeet warrior)
Blackfeet

"Great-grandfather was a brave.
Hunting bear and buffalo.
And he told me of the day
Blackfeet saw mountains made of snow.
From the wide and rolling plains
Where the wind sings oh so clear
Blackfeet wandered to the west
Before any man was here."

"Great-grandmother sang me songs
Of the mountains and the trees
Climbing upward to the sun
Higher than the eagle sees
Standing mighty they were God
As they silently appeared.
Blackfeet wandered to the west
Before any man was here."

(Chorus)

**“Now a blue-eyed crazy man
One I’ll never understand.
He walks upon my Holy Land.
Calls himself American...
American...
American.”**

**“I am just a Blackfeet man
And my people must not fall
So I’ll take his yellow-hair
And I’ll hang it on my wall
Or I’ll die upon this land
But I’ll never disappear.
Blackfeet wandered to the west
Before any man was here.”**

**(Narrator)
(Old Jim Bridger)**

**“You know my eyesight’s nearly gone
But they let me ride each day alone.
Except for that ole flea-bit hound
That leads my buckskin mare around
And tours us ’round the tailored ground
A-scoutin’...in the yard.”**

**“When I get lost he runs and tells
That four-legged, flea-bit infidel
He’s a tame coyote, yappin’ mongrel...
He knows, he knows, I’m headed westward.”**

**“When I was young I left my home
And I headed westward -all alone.
And I was blinder then than I am now
But still...I made it work somehow.
I wonder what Ole Hugh Glass would do
Or any of that buckskinned crew
If they had lived to see old age
To witness this internal rage
Of a-dyin’ in a bed.**

**(Song)
(Old Jim Bridger)**

Free Me Like An Eagle Once Again

“My thoughts begin to wander

Way out yonder
I can see.
The sky is wide and open
Yeah, I know it's calling me.
To be free.
And lift my body
From its resting place
And go floating on the breezes with the wind
And follow currents falling up through space
And go free me like an eagle once again."

"The Rocky Mountains and the cliffs steep ledge
Hang to dare me to adventure on the sky.
Stretched out before I can see the edge
Of the earth and I know I have to try
To throw my soul out on the blue-sky plains
Reaching out to touch the sun with my hands
Feeling the healing in its dancing flames
Helps to free me like an eagle once again."
"They say a man is tied down, that I should lie down
On the ground...tightly bound.
They say that flying's dreaming,
And what goes up must come down.
But I know people learn to spread their dreams
By believing that they will ascend
Finding my freedom in the song I sing
Helps to free me like an eagle once again.

(Narrator)

*"Jim Bridger was a mountain man
He walked out into unknown land
And discovered the Great Salt Lake
And lived just long enough to ache
While watching freedom lose the fight
When man pretended he was right
To hate the love of freedom."*

*"The mountains were the battleground
Their beauty heard the crying sound
Of red-men trampled in the ground
Of buffalo falling down
Of boundaries meant to surround
All free things
everywhere."*

"The eagle flew away that day

*And waited in her patient way
Praying man would change is mind
And tear town all the border-lines
And learn that wisdom is to care
For free things living everywhere.”*

(Song)
(Jim Bridger)

**Free My Spirit, 'fore My Spirit's Dead
(Reprise)**

“I want to open my window let the sun shine in
I want to kick down my fences let my freedom begin
I don't want nothing but blue skies up above my head
I've got to free my spirit, 'fore my spirit's dead.

“I want to do something that I ain't never done
And see how far it gets me -maybe to the sun
And find that place where Heaven and Earth are wed
I've got to free my spirit, 'fore my spirit's dead.”

(Chorus)

“I've want to see something no man has ever seen.
Go some place no man has ever been.
Find myself alive with every breath
So I will know life when I meet my death.”

“The Rocky Mountains are as high as you go
And everything is up there that I want to know
Nothing but Heaven up above my head.
I've got to free my spirit, 'fore my spirit's dead.”

THE END