

Home on the Range

Growing up, I was a huge fan of Westerns on the radio and in the movies – dramas like *The Lone Ranger* and *Gunsmoke*, among others. And I still like movies of that era in our nation's history.

One of the popular ditties, then and even now, is this one, which is the state song of Kansas and the unofficial anthem of the American West:

Home on the Range

*Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play;
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the sky is not cloudy all day.*

Originally written as a poem called *My Western Home* by Dr. Brewster M. Higley in the early 1870s, it paints a picturesque view of homestead life on the open prairie. Just imagine sitting in front of your soddy house, sipping your morning coffee as the dew glistens on the prairie grass where deer and buffalo graze quietly. What a great mental image!



Finally, someone had put into words the mental image that sent hundreds of thousands of pioneering Americans westward.

But try to imagine this picture instead:

- Leaving all familiarity – home, family, possessions – only keeping what was vitally necessary and would fit in a 4-foot-by-10-foot covered wagon.
- Traveling months over rough terrain with no roads.
- Making camp every night and repacking every morning.
- Having no contact with anyone outside of your traveling party.
- Finally arriving at your staked claim and still having to sleep in the same covered wagon for a month or more while you built a sod hut to live in.
- Digging your own well – by hand, and carrying all your water in a bucket.
- Turning soil for the first time – by hand behind the same team that pulled your wagon for months (and the view still hasn't changed).
- Hunting and gathering food every day.

(more)

Yet somehow the hardships of pioneer life didn't make the song. Why? It was that picturesque image that kept the early pioneers going. They were packing for it, driving for it, working toward it – every day.

That mental image of what can be is what Proverbs calls vision. The Apostle Paul pressed toward “the mark,” or target, at which he was aiming his life. Abraham sojourned through the land because, he, too, had a mental picture of a city built by God Himself.



What vision is keeping you going? What dream drives you to persevere? Do you have one?

Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18 KJV).

– Beecher Hunter