

Sweet Betsy From Pike

US traditional

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One evening quite early
They camped on the Platte,
Twas near by the road
On a green shady flat.
Betsy, sore-footed,
Lay down to repose--
With wonder Ike gazed
On that Pike County rose.

The wagon broke down
With a terrible crash,
And out on the prairie
Rolled all sorts of trash.
A few little baby-clothes,
Done up with care,
Looked rather suspicious,
But all on the square.

The alkali desert was
Burning and bare,
And Isaac's soul shrank
From the death that lurked there.
"Dear old Pike County,
I'll go back to you"--
Says Betsy,
"You'll go by yourself if you do!"

They swam the wide rivers
And crossed the tall peaks,
And camped on the prairie
For weeks upon weeks.
Starvation and cholera,
Hard work and slaughter--
They reached California
'spite of hell and high water.

The Injuns came down
In a thundering horde,
And Betsy was scared
They would scalp her adored.
So under the wagon-bed
Betsy did crawl
And she fought off the
Injuns with musket and ball.

They stopped at Salt Lake
To inquire of the way,
When Brigham declared that
Sweet Betsy should stay.
Betsy got frightened
And ran like a deer,
While Brigham stood pawing
The ground like a steer.

They soon reached the desert,
Where Betsy gave out,
And down in the sand
She lay rolling about.
Ike in great wonder
Looked on in surprise,
Saying, "Betsy, get up,
You'll get sand in your eyes."

Sweet Betsy got up
In a great deal of pain.
She declared she'd go back
To Pike County again.
Ike gave a sigh,
And they fondly embraced,
And they traveled along
With his arm round her waist.

They suddenly stopped
On a very high hill,
With wonder looked down
Upon old Placerville.
Ike said to Betsy,
As he cast his eyes down,
"Sweet Betsy, my darling,
We've got to Hangtown."

A miner said,
"Betsy, will you dance with me?"
"I will that, old hoss,
If you don't make too free.
Don't dance me hard,
Do you want to know why?
Doggone you,
I'm chock-full of strong alkali."

The Shanghai ran off,
And the cattle all died,
That morning the last piece
Of bacon was fried.
Ike got discouraged,
Betsy got mad,
The dog drooped his tail
And looked wonderfully sad.

Long Ike and Sweet Betsy
Attended a dance.
Ike wore a pair of his
Pike County pants.
Betsy was covered
With ribbons and rings.
Says Ike, "You're an angel,
But where is your wings?"

This Pike County couple
Got married, of course,
But Ike became jealous,
And obtained a divorce.
Betsy, well-satisfied,
Said with a shout,
"Goodby, you big lummox,
I'm glad you backed out!"