

# Riders in the Sky

Music and Lyrics by Stan Jones © all rights reserved, June 5, 1948

CAPO in the 2nd FRET = KEY  
OF Bm = red chords in  
(parentheses).

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
An old cowboy went riding out one dark and windy day.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
Upon a ridge he rested as he went along his way.

When all at once a mighty herd of red-eyed cows he saw,

*F(G)* *A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
Plowing through the ragged skies and up a cloudy draw.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
Their brands were still on fire and their hooves were made of steel.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
Their horns were black and shiny and their hot breath he could feel.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
A bolt of fear went through him as they thundered through the sky,

*F(G)* *A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
For he saw the riders coming hard and he heard their mournful cry.

## CHORUS

*C(D)* *A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *F(G)* *A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
Yippee-i-oh Yippee-i-ay ghost riders in the sky.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
Their faces gaunt their eyes were blurred, their shirts all soaked with sweat.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
They're riding hard to catch that herd but they ain't caught 'em yet.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
Cause they've got to ride forever on that range up in the sky,

*F(G)* *A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
On horses snorting fire as they ride on hear their cry.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
As the riders loped on by him he heard one call his name.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)* *C(D)*  
If you want to save your soul from hell a riding on this range.

*A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
Then cowboy change your ways today or with us you will ride,

*F(G)* *A<sup>m</sup>(B<sup>m</sup>)*  
Trying to catch the devil's herd across these endless skies.

## CHORUS

*Cowboy Songs as you go*

# History

Stanley Davis "Stan" Jones was born in Douglas AZ, and grew up on a ranch. When his father died, his mother moved the family to Los Angeles. He attended UC Berkley, competing in rodeos to make money. However, he dropped out in 1934 to join the US Navy. After his discharge, he worked at many jobs, including as a miner, a fire fighter, and a park ranger. In his free time he wrote songs, and eventually more than 100 were recorded. His most famous,



"Riders in the Sky", was written in 1948 when he worked for the National Park Service in Death Valley. Jones wrote almost entirely Western music. He composed songs for several Western movies by Ford and others producers, including *The Searchers* and *Rio Grand*. He also played small parts in several westerns.

In 1955 Jones began writing for Disney Studios. He was co-writer of the theme song for the television series *Cheyenne*. Jones wrote again for John Ford's Civil War film *The Horse Soldiers*, in which he made an uncredited appearance as US Grant. The following year, he returned to working for Disney Studios. One major role for him was in playing the part of Wilson Brown, a Union soldier and locomotive engineer who was a member of the Andrews Raid depicted in Disney's film *The Great Locomotive Chase*.

Wikipedia

*Cowboy Songs as you go*