

To Alta California

Words and Music by Don Garate

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music. Above the first line are chords C, C, C, G. Above the second line are G, G, G, C. Above the third line are C, C, C, F. Above the fourth line are F, C, G, C. The lyrics are: 1. We found all the poor that we were looking for a - round old Cu - lia - cán. Then on to Hor - ca - si - tas where oth - ers could meet us and we kept mo - ving a - long We arrived at Tu - bac eve - ry thing was ve - ry black; A - pa - ches had been there be - fore With an "Ay ay ay" their pier - cing war cry, they had run all of our hor - ses off.

2. Continuing undaunted while the Apache taunted, we struggled on doing our best.
At La Canoa the next night, beneath the starlight, we got our worst test.
A new baby was born, but left the family to mourn over their dear Mother's death.
There was sadness in the air at San Xavier when we laid Manuela to rest.

3. Then on to Casa Grande and Agua Caliente down the Rio Gila we went,
to the Colorado, en el este lado, with Chief Palma we pitched our tents.
We crossed that icy river the last day of November, and heard the most complaining we'd heard yet.
Padre Garcés was fine, but Padre Font cried and whined when we got some of Holy Vestments wet.

4. With Padres Eixarch and Garcés, we camped there a few more days, then rode off and left them there
alone, divided into four bands to cross the desert badlands and not deplete the water holes.
Then something that was unforeseen: on December 13th, it clouded up and soon began to snow.
That was something few had seen; the wind blew fierce and keen, and the people had never been so cold.

5. The children were crying; the animals were dying; the suffering was grievous to be borne.
Huddled by the firelight, four days and five nights, snuggled close to keep each other warm.
When the storm had finally passed, the Fandango we did dance, beneath the gaze of Padre Font's scorn.
Some excesses we bandied, we drank a keg of brandy and On Christmas Eve another child was born.

6. We left the snow behind at last, traveling through San Carlos Pass, then we stopped at San Gabriel.
The emigrants now could see what their future life would be; everything was going to be well.
After resting there awhile, we broke camp with hugs and smiles, spent another three weeks on our way.
In 80 days we had one death, and three new babies drawing breath when on that 10th of March we came
to Monterey.