Starving to Death on My Government Claim (Lane County Bachelor)

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My name is Frank Bolar, an old bach'lor I am
I'm keeping old batch on an elegant plan,
You'll find me out west in the County of Lane
Starving to death on my government claim.
My house it is built of the national soil
The walls are erected according to Hoyle,
The roof has no pitch, but is level and plane
And I never get wet till it happens to rain.

Then hurrah for Lane County, the land of the free
The home of the bedbug, mosquito and flea,
I'll sing loud her praises and never complain
While starving to death on my government claim.

My clothes they are ragged, my language is rough,
My bread is case-hardened, both solid and tough;
The dough it is scattered all over the room
And the floor would take fright at the sight of a broom.
My dishes are dirty, and some in the bed
Are covered with sorghum and government bread;
But I have a good time and I live at my ease
On common-sop sorghum, old bacon and grease.

Then hurrah for Lane County, the land of the West
Where the farmers and laborers are always at rest;
Where you've nothing to do but sweetly remain
And starve like a man on your government claim.

How happy am I when I crawl into bed
And a rattlesnake rattles a tune at my head;
And the gay little centipede, void of all fear
Crawls over my pillow ind into my ear.
And the nice little bedbug, so cheerful and bright
Keeps me a-scratching full half of the night,
And the gay little flea with toes sharp as a tack
Plays "why don't you catch me?" all over my back.

But hurrah for Lane County, where blizzards arise
Where the winds never cease and the flea never dies;
Where the sun is so hot if in it you remain,
'Twill burn you quite black on your government claim.

How happy am I on my government claim,
Where I've nothing to lose and nothing to gain;
Nothing to eat and nothing to wear,
Nothing from nothing is honest and square.
    But here I am stuck, and here I must stay
    My money's all gone, and I can't get away;
    There's nothing to make a man hard and profane
    Like starving to death on a government claim.

Then come to Lane County, there's room for you all
Where the winds never cease and the rains never fall.
Come join in the chorus, and boast of her fame
While starving to death on your government claim.
    Now don't get discouraged, you poor hungry men,
    We're all here as free as a pig in a pen;
    Just stick to your homestead and battle your fleas
    And pray to your Maker to send you a breeze.

Now a word to claim holders who are bound for to stay
You may chew on your hardtack till you're toothless and gray;
But as for me, I'll no longer remain
And starve like a dog on my government claim.
    Then farewell to Lane County, farewell to the West
    I'll travel back East to the girl I love best;
    I'll stop in Missouri and get me a wife
    And live on corn dodgers the rest of my life.

recorded by Ives

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