

The Men of the West

Verse

Chorus

1. While you honour in song and in story
The names of the patriot men
Whose valour has covered with glory
Full many a mountain and glen.
Forget not the boys of the heather
Who marshalled their bravest and best.
When Ireland was broken in Wexford
And looked for revenge in the West.

Chorus:

I give you the gallant old West, boys,
Where rallied our bravest and best.
When Ireland was broken and bleeding,
Hurrah for the men of the West!

2. The hilltops with glory were glowing
'Twas the eve of a bright harvest day
When the ships we'd been wearily waiting
Sailed into Killala's broad bay
And over the hill went the slogan
To waken in every breast
The fire that has never been quenched, boys,
Among the true hearts of the West.

Chorus

3. Killala was ours ere the midnight
And high over Ballina town
Our banners in triumph were waving
Before the next sun had gone down.
We gathered to speed the good work, boys,
The true men anear and afar
And history can tell how we routed
The redcoats through old Castlebar.

Chorus

4. And pledge me the stout sons of France, boys,
Bold Humbert and all his brave men,
Whose tramp, like the trumpet of battle
Brought hope to the drooping again.
Since Ireland has caught to her bosom
On many a mountain and hill
The gallants who fell, so they're here, boys
To cheer us to victory still

Chorus

5. Though all the bright dreamings we cherished
Went down in disaster and woe,
The spirit of old is still with us
That never would bend to the foe
And Connaught is ready whenever
The loud rolling tuck of the drum
Rings out to awaken the echoes
And tell us the morning has come.

Chorus

"The Men of the West" is a song from the Irish Rebellion of 1798 which was an uprising against British rule in Ireland. The United Irishmen, a republican revolutionary group, were the main organizing force behind the rebellion, led by Presbyterians angry at being shut out of power by the Anglican establishment and joined by Catholics, who made up the majority of the population.

Killala, in county Mayo in the northwest was the site of the first battle of the French force of General Humbert in the 1798 Rebellion. On August 22nd, 1798, Humbert landed at nearby Kilcummin Harbor with 1,109 troops with the objective of supporting the United Irishmen. The force quickly seized the town. Humbert advanced to Ballina, which he captured with little trouble. The force then moved further and on August 27th it won a battle in Castlebar against larger force commanded by General Lake.

The town was also the site of the last land battle of the rebellion on September 23rd, 1798 when the British army defeated a rebel Irish force in Killala.

The melody is "Rosin the Beau".

I learned this early in my college career when we formed the Ivyside Folklore Society and one of our faculty advisors was John McGreevy. He had a good repertoire of Irish rebellion songs and this was one of them.

It was printed in Galvin's **Irish Songs of Resistance**.

It was recorded by The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem.