The State Of Arkansas

Tune: Joe Bowars

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   Em                G          Em
My name is Stamford Barnes, I come from Nobleville town,
                                 C
I've travelled this wide world over,
     G
I've travelled this wide world round;
     Em                C
I've met with ups and downs in life,
    G                  C
and better days I've saw;
      Em                G                     Em
But I never knew what mis'ry were, till I came to Arkansas.
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I landed in St. Louis with ten dollars and no more,
I read the daily papers until both my eyes were sore,
I read them evening papers until at last I saw,—
Ten thousand men were wanted in the state of Arkansas.

I wiped my eyes with great surprise
when I read this grateful news,
And straightway off I started to see the agent,
Billy Hughes;
He said, "Pitch me down five dollars
and ticket you shall draw
To ride upon the railroad to the state of Arkansas."

I started off one morning at a quarter after five,
I started from St. Louis, half dead and half alive,
I bought me a quart of whiskey, my misery to thaw,
I got drunk as a biled own when I left for Old Arkansas.

'Twas in the year of '82 in the merry month of June,
I landed in Ft. Smith one sultry afternoon;
Up stepped a walking skeleton and gave to me his paw
Invited me to his hotel, "The best in Arkansas."

I followed my conductor into his dwelling place,
Poverty were depictured in his melancholy face;
His bread it was corn dodger, his beef I could not chaw;
He charged me fifty cents for this in the state of Arkansas.

I started off next morning to catch the morning train,
He says to me, "You'd better work,
I have some land to drain.
I'll pay you fifty cents a day, your board and wash and all,
You'll find yourself a different man
when you leave old Arkansas."

I worked six weeks for this son-of-a-gun,
Jessie Herring was his name,
He was six foot seven in his stocking feet
and taller than any crane,
His hair hung down like rat tails
on his long and lantern jaw,
He was the photygraph of all the gents
who lived in Arkansas.
He fed me on corn dodgers, as hard as any rock,
Till my teeth began to loosen and my knees
began to knock,
I got so thin on sassafras tea, I could hide behind a straw

And, indeed I was a different man,
when I left old Arkansas.

Farewell to swamp-angels, canebrakes and chills,
Farewell to sage and sassafras and corn dodger pills,
If I ever see this land again, I'll give to you my paw,
It will be through a telescope—from here to Arkansas.