Thousands of pioneers faced insurmountable odds as they came to America to make a better life for themselves.

Dan Burr, painting from The White Ox (Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2009).

Immigrants

CARMA DE JONG ANDERSON

Carma de Jong Anderson (carmacostume@yahoo.com) is a historic clothing designer and textile consultant.

Musing on my Shaw ancestors from the Staffordshire Potteries in England, 1840s

How many west winds, tossing wild, drowned the cries of a pioneer child?

How many mothers in birthing travail, suffer on board under listless sail?

How many pieces of hardtack left, how much water before they’re bereft?
How many fathers, pacing the deck, plan and pray
for a merciful trek?

How many winsome girls brave the foam, crossing an ocean
for mountain home?

How many miles of song and shout does it take until
all the shoes wear out?

How many promises heaped with stone left against wayside wolves alone?

How many moonlights comforting boys, curling for sleep with rocks for toys?

How many couples shaping the clay with straw for adobes?
Determined to stay.