

The Good Old Time

The Year of '79

Incomplete text from "Snowy" Baker of NcCulleys Gap, NSW. Located by Shayne Kerr and edited and set to this tune by Brad Tate.

I'll _ sing you a rhyme of a good old time a-bout fort - y years a - go,
When we start - ed out on a shear - ing route for the coun - try down _ be - low.
We'd a fif - teen bob a hun - dred job and thought we were do _ ing fine,
But _ how we'd shear I'll tell you here In the year of sev - en - ty - nine.

For the squatters knew a thing or two to clip the men that shore,
And conditions of course were all enforced by the process of the law.
We'd be fined if we used a naughty word or run late for the morning bell,
But the boss could shout at the rouseabout and curse and swear like hell.

For the shearers then weren't Union men and the lone man had no say.
The boss was quick with his raddling-stick and decided what he'd pay.
As we travelled about we signed to cut out in spite of the rain and hail,
And if we quit not cutting our bit, we'd do the cut-out in jail.

When a shed was done we'd hump a drum on the tracks of the dusty west,
For to tramp and shear for most of the year was the life that we knew best.
Some, just a few, had homes to go to but most had nowhere to stay,
So the bulk of the band would mostly land at a shanty by the way.

They'd get some decks of cards, and their cheques would melt like snow in the sun,
Then they'd raffle their smokes, and the broken blokes would be off to the nearest run.
With a swag on their back on the wallaby track out west they'd have to remain
And work their way for six bob a day till the shearing came round again.