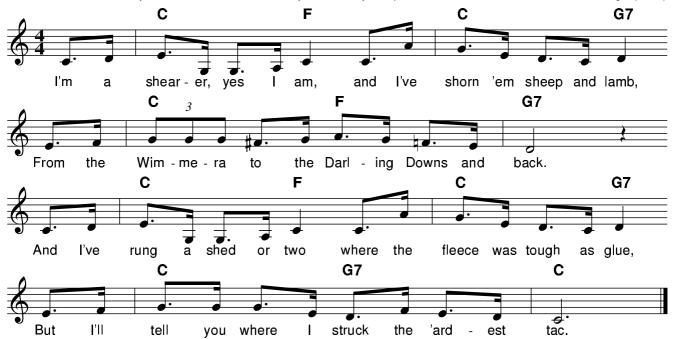
## **Hard Tack**

Text and melody collected from Jack Davies by John Lahey and published in his 'Great Australian Folk Songs' (1965)



I was down round Yenda way, killin' time from day to day, Till the big sheds started movin' further out; When I struck a bloke by chance that I summed up in a glance As a cocky from a vineyard round about.

Now it seems he picked me, too; well, it wasn't 'ard to do, I'd a pair o' tongs, a-hangin' at me hip.
"I've got a mob," he said, "of about two hundred head,
And I'd give a ten pound note to have the clip."

I said "Right. I'll take the stand"; it meant gettin' in me hand; And by nine o'clock we'd rounded up the mob In a shed in the ground— with them wine casks all around, That was where I started on me job.

I takes it easy for a bit while me hand was gettin' fit, And by dinner time I'd done some half a score, With the cocky pickin' up, and handing me a cup, Of pinkie after every sheep I shore.

The cocky had to go away about the seventh day, After showin' me the kind of casks to use; Then I'd do the pickin' up, and I'd manipulate the cup, Strollin' round them wine casks, just to pick and choose.

Then I'd stagger to the pen, grab a sheep and start again, With a noise between a hiccup and a sob, And sometimes I'd fall asleep with me arms around the sheep, Worn and weary from me over—arduous job.

Well, six long weeks went by, until one day with a sigh, I pushed the dear old cobbler through the door, Gathered in the cocky's pay, then staggered on me way, From the hardest bloody shed I ever shore.