

The Sandy Hollow Line

Written by 'Duke' Tritton in 1937 based on his experience in the Depression. Set here to 'Lachlan Tigers'. Tritton (1886–1965) was an Australian poet, folk singer and shearer. He responded to an ad in the Bulletin for information on the old songs which then connected him with the Bush Music Club. He was an active member and he sang with The Bushwhackers.

Capo 2 **Am** **G**
Bm **A**

The sun was blaz - ing in the sky and waves of shim - mer - ing heat

G **Am**
A **Bm**

Glared down on the rail - way cut - ting, we were half dead on our feet,

Am **G**
Bm **A**

And the gang - er stood on the bank of the cut and snarled at the men be - low,

Am **E7** **Am**
Bm **F#7** **Bm**

"You'd bet - ter keep them shov - els full or all of you cows will go."

"I never saw such a useless mob, You'd make a feller sick.
As shovel men you're hopeless and you're no good with the pick."
There were men in the gang who could belt him with a hand tied at their back
But he had the power behind him and we daren't risk the sack.

So we took his insults in silence, for this was the period when
We lived in the great depression and nothing was cheaper than men,
And we drove the shovels and swung the picks and cursed the choking dust;
We'd wives and hungry kids to feed, so toil in the heat we must.

And as the sun rose higher the heat grew more intense,
The flies were in their millions, the air was thick and dense.
We found it very hard to breathe, our lungs were hot and tight
With the stink of sweating horses and the fumes of gelignite.

But still the ganger drove us on, we couldn't take much more,
We prayed for the day we'd get a chance to even up the score.
A man collapsed in the heat and dust, he was carried away to the side;
It didn't seem to matter a damn if the poor chap lived or died.

'He's only a loafer', the ganger said, 'A lazy useless cow.
I was going to sack him anyway, he's saved me the trouble now.'
He had no thoughts of the hungry kids, no thought of a woman's tears
As she struggled and fought to feed her brood all down the weary years.

But one of the Government horses fell down and died in the dray;
They hitched two horses to him and dragged his corpse away.
The ganger was a worried man and he said with a heavy sigh,
"It's a bloody terrible thing to see a good horse die."

"You chaps get back to your work, don't stand loafing there.
Get in and trim the batter down, I'll get the engineer."
The engineer came and looked around and said as he scratched his head,
"No horse could work in this dreadful heat or all of them will be dead."

"They're much too valuable to lose, they cost us quite a lot,
And I think it's a wicked shame to work them while it's hot.
So we will take them to the creek and spell them in the shade.
You men must all knock off at once. Of course you'll not be paid."

And so we plodded to our camps and it seemed to our weary brains
We were not better than convicts, though we didn't wear the chains.
And in those drear depression days we were unwanted men,
But we knew that when a war broke out we'd all be heroes then.

And we'd be handed a rifle and forced to fight for the swine
Who tortured us and starved us on the Sandy Hollow Line.