

ACTIVITY SHEET - Paddy Works on the Railway

This traditional Irish American folk song has many versions and verses.

Source: E. Fowke and J. Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest* (Dover, 1973).

- 1- Why does Paddy put on "corduroy breeches"?
- 2- Why does Paddy tell us he is "more dead than alive"?
- 3- Why would someone attack Paddy with "stones and sticks"?
- 4- What happened to Paddy, Biddy, and their children?
- 5- In your opinion, can we rely on this song as a historical document? Explain.

In eighteen hundred and forty one, I put my corduroy breeches on, I put my corduroy breeches on, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty two, I left the old world for the new, bad cess (luck) to the luck that brought me through, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty three, 'twas then I met sweet Biddy McGee, an elegant wife she's been to me, while working upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty four, I landed on America's shore, I landed on America's shore, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty five, I found myself more dead than alive, I found myself more dead than alive, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty six, they pelted me with stones and sticks, and I was in one hell of a fix, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty seven, Sweet Biddy she died and went to heaven, if she left one child, she left eleven, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty eight, I found myself at heaven's gate, I found myself at heaven's gate, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

It's "Pat, do this!" and "Pat, do that!", without a stocking or cravat (scarf), and nothing but an old straw hat, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.