

O It's Nine Years Ago

As sung by
Noble B. Brown

Originally in Bb
11-17-1946 Millford, WI

Verse

4 Oh, it's nine years ago I was dig - ging in the land, — me brogues on me feet and me
spade in me hand. — Said I, what a pi - ty — it 'tis for to see — such a
7 Refrain
gen - ius as I dig-ging turf by the lee. Mish-en darn, darn tu - ra - na - dy mish-en
11 darn — ter nan, — A right - tu - ra - na - dy mish - en darn — ter - nan.

Verse 1.

Oh, it's nine years ago I was digging in the land,
Me brogues on me feet and me spade in me hand.
Said I, what a pity it 'tis for to see
Such a genius as I digging turf by the lee;

Refrain

Mishen darn,
Darn turanady mishen darn ternan,
A right turanady mishen darn ternan.

Verse 2.

So I pulled off me brogues, shook hands with me spade,
And off to the war like a dashing Irish blade.
The Sergeant and the Captain, they asked me to enlist,
By the the great [grafy grief] give me hold of your fist.
(Refrain)

Verse 3.

Oh, the first thing they gave me, it was an old gun,
Under the trigger I placed me thumb.
The gun being rusty, went off with a shock,
Gave my poor shoulder 'most a darn dev'lish knock.
(Refrain)

Verse 4.

The next thing they gave me, it 'twas an old horse,
All saddled and bridled and two legs across.
He kicked up his heels and I held him a level,
And the stiff-necked [galley-gim,] he ran to the devil.
(Refrain)

Verse 5.

Oh, it's nine years ago, thank God it ain't ten,
I'm back in Ireland digging murphies again.
Success to the land, may God save the Queen,
And when the war is ended, I'll enlist again.
(Refrain)

Critical Commentary

Transcriptions by MB and HST.

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

In the Lomax volume this is called The True Paddy's Song.

Version A sung by Noble B. Brown, age 61, Millville, 1946.

Mr. Brown learned this song from his mother.

Version B sung by Lewis Winfield Moody, age 75, Plainfield, 1940.

Mr. Moody called this a Civil War marching song. His version places the time at "about" three years ago.

[Notes from *Our Singing Country* - Lomax. MacMillan Co. N.Y. 1941]:

p. 200 "The True Paddy's Song" (from singing of Mason Palmer, [place], 1938). Comparison: Different melody - general rhythmic pattern similar - 11 (4l) verses - expansion of general thought of Moody's narrative. Further reference to Sharp and Campbell

Alternate titles/related songs: "'Twas Nine Years Ago," "The Kerry Recruit," "The True Paddy's Song."

Sources:

Lomax, John A., and Alan Lomax, colls. and comps. *Our Singing Country; A Second Volume of American Ballads and Folk Songs*. Ruth Crawford Seeger, music ed. New York: Macmillan, 1941. "The True Paddy's Song."

Randolph, Vance, coll. and ed. *Ozark Folksongs*. Vol. III. Columbia, Mo.: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-50. "'Twas nine years ago," text only.

Tillett, Beverly, ed. *Jerry Silverman's Folk song Encyclopedia*. Vol. II. New York: Chappell Music Co., 1975. "The Kerry Recruit."

K.G.