

MUSIC

Cape Breton's Diversity in Unity

Plain Ole Miner Boy

Words by Nell Campbell

Tune: "Plain Old Country Boy"

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1. I've been a miner all my life, I work in Caledonia.
I had nine kids from a good kind wife, but one died of pneumonia.
Now we've only got the eight, some big and some are little.
It takes most ev'ry cent I make to buy them milk and vittles.

Chorus:

I'm a plain ole miner boy, a tough hard-workin' miner boy.
I have a few on Saturday night and I sleep all day on Sunday.
Sunday nights we go to town to hear our preacher, Parson Brown;
I'll be going down that ole mine shaft when the whistle blows on Monday.

2. Sixteen feet to keep in shoes and sixteen hands in mittens.
Maw gives them all a dose of oil whenever she sees fitting.
Maw makes their clothes from flour sacks and things she can mend over
And you can see ole Robin Hood sometimes when they bend over.

Chorus:

I'm a plain ole miner boy, a tough hard-workin' miner boy.
I have a few on Saturday night and I sleep all day on Sunday.
I lead a very simple life, but I love my kids and I love my wife;
I'll be going down that ole mine shaft when the whistle blows on Monday.

3. Sometimes I'd like to stay at home, and have myself a heyday,
But then I'd have to get a loan to meet my bills on payday.
Most folks take in the hockey game, for their favourite team a-rootin'
But I work night shift in the pit, down at the face a-shootin'.

Chorus:

I'm a plain ole miner boy, a tough hard-workin' miner boy.
I have a few on Saturday night and I sleep all day on Sunday.

My hands are hard and rough from work, but my job I'll never shirk.
I'll be going down that ole mine shaft when the whistle blows on Monday.

4. We can't afford no fancy clothes and we're not stuck up or classy,
And sometimes when the going's rough, we eat our bread with 'lassie;
Now some folks may think I'm a jerk or some more names I won't mention,
But I've just got ten more years to work and I'll retire on pension.

Chorus:

I'm a plain ole miner boy, a tough hard-workin' miner boy.
I have a few on Saturday night and I sleep all day on Sunday.
As soon as the pay comes in it's spent; I ain't got much but I'm content.
I'll be going down that ole mine shaft when the whistle blows on Monday.

Recording:

[Plain Ole Miner Boy](#). Willie Odo. John C. O'Donnell Tape Collection. Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University.