

1. Won't you help me to raise um boys?

Way-hay honey

Won't you help me to raise um boys?

Way-hay honey

Won't you help me to raise 'em boys?

See her when the sun goes down.

2. Well the weight's on the mate boys.

Way-hay honey

Well the weight's on the mate boys...

Way-hay honey

Well the weight's on the mate boys.

See her when the sun goes down.

3. The weight's on the pilot boat.

Way-hay honey ...

4. The weight's on the donkey boat.

Way-hay honey ...

5. I got me a yeller gal.

Way-hay honey ...

6. Her name is Emmelina, boys

Way-hay honey ...

7. Won't you help me to raise um boys?

Way-hay honey

Won't you help me to raise um boys?

Way-hay honey

Won't you help me to raise 'em boys?

See her when the sun goes down.

We'll sing along with Liz Miller Randall from CD

Notes:

A **net-pulling** and hauling shanty.

Alternative titles: Help me to raise 'em, Help me to raise um, Will you help..., Won't you help...

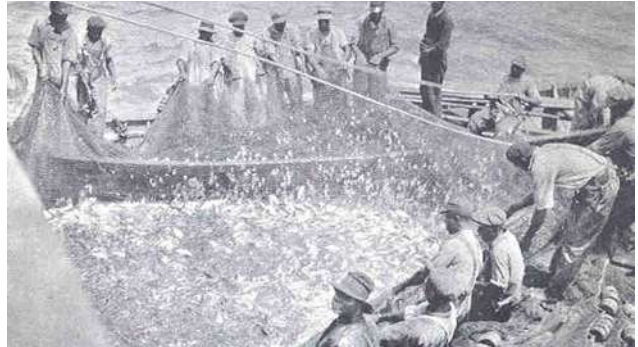
A hauling song used in Menhaden fishing. Compare the tune with Swing low sweet chariot.

Menhaden Fishing

Menhaden fish swim in the Western Atlantic, in schools so large they block the sun from penetrating the waters. They have always been valuable for their use as fertiliser, and when whale oil became difficult to come by after the US civil war, menhaden fish oil became very valuable as lubricant for US industry.

See the enthusiastic conservationist article at <https://www.southernfriedscience.com/six-reasons-why-menhaden-are-the-greatest-fish-we-ever-fished/>

Read more about menhaden fisheries (8 pages) at mdsg.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/MN18_1.PDF



Menhaden Fishery. Purse-Seine Catch Bunted Up for Transfer to Vessel's Hold

by Lewis **Radcliffe** (1923), US govt Printing Office: via [wikimedia commons](#)

Purse Seine fishing

The ship sends two motorized net-boats out, to surround the fish with the purse-seine net. The captain runs one boat, the mate runs the other.

"**The weight's on ...**" in the song refers to whose boat is carrying the weight of the fish. This will help the men to adjust their pulling appropriately.

When they've closed the purse, the men haul the fish up to the surface by hand with some help from the donkey engine on the main boat. Slow, hard work.

We can learn how to pull a purse-seine net at youtu.be/d5_lx_98vxU (8 minutes)

Barbara J, **GarrityBlake** writes in **The Fish Factory** (University of Tennessee, 1994):

Crewmen emphasized that singing or 'blowing' of chanteys was not simply helpful; the chanting was necessary to generate the collective power and euphoria for raising hundreds of pounds of fish. Fishermen described working shoulder to shoulder as one, singing to make "heaven and earth come together," while focused trance-like on the "money" in the net. While singing, crewmen lost all track of time, surroundings, and aching muscles" (pp 104-105).

"What make the chantey so beautiful, is the pretty harmony" a crewman told me. "One person can't do it. You gotta have bass, baritone, tenor, then lead voice, see. All them boys get hooked up together, you got something pretty. Make you feel good. Make you pull good" (p. 103).

Read more about how the singing helped the work at http://www.fresnostate.edu/folklore/ballads/FrGBHM_RT.html