

Brennan On The Moor

Words & Music:
Traditional

Many thanks to correspondent Tom Loomis, who introduced me to this song. According to the scotsindependent.org site: "...Willie Brennan was an Irish Robin Hood/Rob Roy figure in the late 1700s. He was a Waterford man, but carried out most of his exploits in either the Kilworth Mountains, Cork or in Co. Tipperary. He was betrayed by a comrade for the price on his head. Willie was executed in Clonmel Gaol and buried in Kilcrumper between Kilworth and Fermoy. His grave was not marked..." It is believed that he was hanged in 1804

C G7 C
'Tis of a brave young highwayman, this story I will tell.
C F C
His name was Willie Brennan and in Ireland he did dwell.
Am F C
It was on the Kilwood Mountain he commenced his wild career.
F C Em
And many a wealthy nobleman before him shook with fear.

CHORUS:

C Em
Brennan on the moor, Brennan on the moor.
F C G7 C
Bold, brave undaunted was young Brennan on the moor.

A brace of loaded pistols, he carried night and day.
He never robb'd a poor man upon the King's highway.
But what he's taken from the rich, like Turpin and Black Bess,
He always did divide it with the widow in distress.

CHORUS:

One night, he robbed a packman, his name was Pedlar Bawn.
They travelled on together, 'til day began to dawn.
The pedlar, seeing his money gone, likewise his watch and chain,
He at once encountered Brennan and robbed him back again.

CHORUS:

When Brennan saw the pedlar was as good a man as he,
He took him on the highway, his companion for to be.
The pedlar threw away his pack without any more delay,
And proved a faithful comrade until his dying day.

CHORUS:

One day upon the highway, as young Willie, he went down,
He met the mayor of Cashiell a mile outside of town.
The mayor he knew his features and he said, "Young man," said he,
"Your name is Willie Brennan & you must come along with me."

CHORUS:

Now, Brennan's wife had gone to town, provisions for to buy.
And when she saw her Willie, she commenced to weep and cry;
He said, "Hand to me that tenpence," and as soon as Willie spoke,
She handed him a blunderbuss from underneath her cloak.

CHORUS:

Now, with this loaded blunderbuss - the truth I will unfold -
He made the mayor tremble and he robbed him of his gold.
One hundred pounds was offered for his apprehension there.
So, he, with horse and saddle to the mountains did repair.

CHORUS:

Now, Brennan being an outlaw upon the mountains high.
With cavalry and infantry to take him they did try.
He laughed at them with scorn until at last 'twas said
By a false-hearted young man he was cruelly betrayed.

CHORUS:

In the County of Tipperary, in a place they call Clonmore,
Willie Brennan and his comrade that day did suffer sore.
He lay among the fern which was thick upon the field,
And nine wounds he had received before that they did yield.

CHORUS:

Then Brennan and his companion knowing they were betrayed,
He with the mounted cavalry a noble battle made.
He lost his foremost finger, which was shot off by a ball;
So, Brennan and his comrades they were taken after all.

CHORUS:

So, they were taken prisoners, in irons they were bound
And conveyed to Clonmel jail, strong walls did them surround.
They were tried and found guilty, the judge made this reply.
"For robbing on the King's Highway you are both condemned to die."

CHORUS:

"Farewell unto my wife, and to my children three,
Likewise my ged father, he may shed tears for me.
And to my loving mother, who tore her gray locks and cried,
Saying 'I wish, Willie Brennan, in your cradle you had died'."

CHORUS: