

Tales from the Cornish Miners in Wisconsin

The collection from Southwestern Wisconsin is *Cousin Jack Stories* by Charles E. Brown, the Wisconsin Folklore Society in 1940. Cousin Jack was a nickname for Cornish miners.

COUSIN JACK AND THE DOG

A Cornish miner was trudging to town with a bag over his shoulder to buy some supplies. In walking past the home of a settler he was suddenly set upon by a dog who growled and showed his teeth. While he was trying to defend himself by swinging the bag about, the owner of the dog called out "That dorg won't bite, e's waggin' 'es tail!"

"I knoaw that," replied Cousin Jack, "E's waggin' 'es tail at one hend and barkin' at the hother. I doan't know which of 'es hends to believe."

CATS

A miner living in a shanty in a holler near Hazel Green, had several cats. For their convenience in entering and leaving the house he had several holes cut in the bottom of the door, small holes for the kittens and large holes for the full-grown cats. A stranger visiting this home asked about the holes and was told that they were for the cats. The visitor then asked why there were so many holes. He thought that one opening should be enough for all the cats. "Well," said Cousin Jack, "thee doesn't understand. When I say scat, I mean **SCAT!**"

The Cornish sometimes added the "H" sound to some words that started with a vowel and then dropped the "H" sound off other words.

THE HAMMER HANDLE

Mr. Howe, a farmer living near Mineral Point had a broken handle on his hammer. He told his hired man, a young Cornishman, to make a new one. The young man took the hammer to the woodshed, but soon returned and asked his employer; "What's best, hash, hoak, hor helm to make an 'ammer 'andle?"