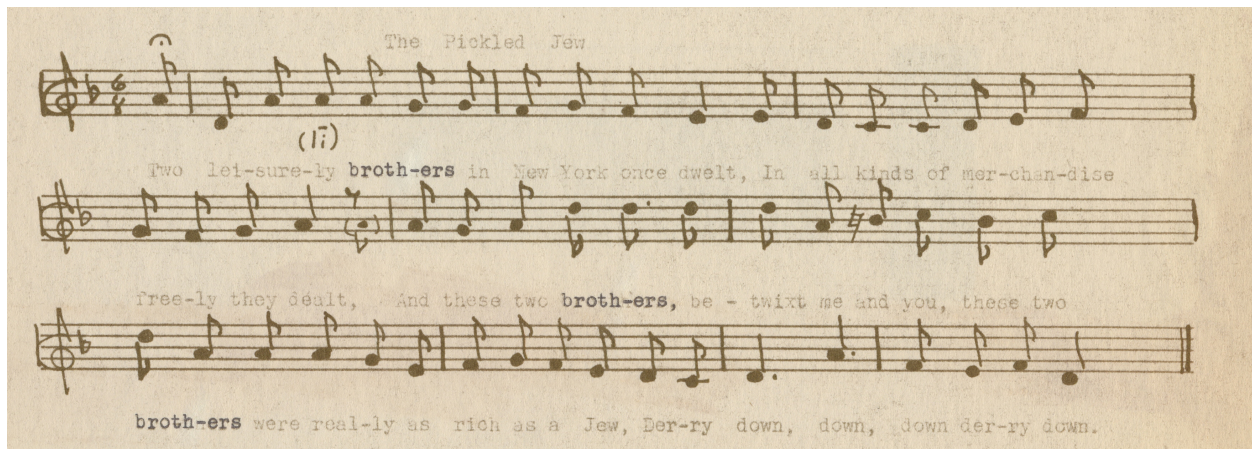


Pickled Jew

As sung by
Robert Walker
1941 Crandon, WI



Verse 1.

Two leisurely brothers in New York once dwelt,
In all kinds of merchandise freely they dwelt
And these two brothers, betwixt me and you,
These two brothers were really as rich as a Jew.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 2.

Now Moses and Isaac, I'll call them by name,
For making sharp bargains they were justly
famed.
If people wanted money, it always was lent,
And they never would charge over ninety per
cent.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 3.

One day says Moses, his days they were o'er,
For the Lord called on Moses to settle his score.
No mortal on earth can reserve his last call,
For now Moses lies taking his last sleep of all.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 4.

"What is this," said Isaac, with a voice like an elf,
"All his money and riches I'll have for myself.
But here is his will, and I'll read it right thru',
And find out what poor Moses would have me to
do."
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 5.

He picked up the will and as sure as you live,
All his money and riches "to my brother I'll give.
But for these money and riches I'd have him to
toil,
And to bury my body on good English soil."
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 6.

He went to the captain, but he could not prevail,
For no one with his body would agree to set sail.
And not to be beaten he went right to work,
And embargoed him boar as a barrel of salt-pork.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 7.

Then Moses was cut up with a carver and knife,
The way he had never been slashed in his life.
And he wrote to his agent and told him the plank,
And bid him to bury the poor pickled man.
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 8.

One day as Isaac was walking on the wharf,
He there met with the captain, a swurly-faced
dwarf.
Said he to the captain looking steadfast and
down,
"I hope you delivered my pork safe and sound."
Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 9.

“Oh, no,” said the captain, “that I cannot say,
As in sight of the land, we were near cast away.
Drawing near to old England we had a revolt,
And provisions got short, and we had to break
boat.”

Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 10.

“Break boat,” said bold Isaac, “you’re worse than
a Turk,

You haven’t disturbed my barrel of salt pork?”

“Oh, yes,” said the captain, speaking up very
gruff,

“We at up your pork and ‘twas damnable tough.”

Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 11.

“Lord God,” said bold Isaac, “you’re worse than
a sinner,

You have eat up my poor brother Moses for
dinner.”

“Lord God,” said the captain, “has me and my
crew,

Been living three weeks on a barrel of tough
Jew?”

Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 12.

“But now,” said the captain, “to finish the joke,
I will pay you for Moses as though he were
pork.”

“Oh, no,” said bold Isaac, “we’ll cheat one
another

But the Lord won’t allow us to sell our own
brother.”

Derry down, down, down derry down.

Verse 13.

But as Isaac ‘served the captain putting back his
gold,

He then said to the captain, “Dear captain, please
hold,

Now it’s seeing you can’t pay for that brother of
mine,

You might at least pay for the barrel of brine.”

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcriptions by Peters, p. 290, and HST.

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

Sung by Robert Walker, age 58, Crandon, 1941.

Not all of the songs of the lumber camps were about lumbering. Robert Walker has been working in the lumber camps most of his life and his list of songs included many strange yarns. He said he learned The Pickled Jew from an Irishman in the camps and that it must have been an Irishman who thought it up.

Sources:

Peters, Harry B., ed. *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin: An Illustrated Compendium of Words and Music*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977.

K.G.