

# Tommyknocker Brewery

## Legend Old Oaked Brown Ale

Idaho Springs, CO  
tommyknocker.com



Mining is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Common hazards include injuries, suffocations, gas poisoning, explosions, structural collapse or even ailments like black-lung disease. It is, obviously, very difficult work and the last thing any miner needs is a Tommyknocker making it even harder.

Tommyknockers are legendary creatures that can supposedly be found living in mines all across the United States as well as around the world. They are described as small, green, gnome-like beings that



An artist's depiction of a Tommyknocker

wear traditional mining outfits and are something like a twisted cross between a mountain man and a leprechaun. Stories of Tommyknockers likely came to the U.S. with Cornish immigrants, a unique Celtic ethnic group native to Cornwall, England, and first developed in the coal mines of Pennsylvania in the 1820s. The California Gold Rush sent the Tommyknockers west, the Rocky Mountain Gold Rush brought them to Colorado, and it didn't take long for stories of the Tommyknockers to spread across the country.

Tommyknockers have been reported as both good and bad luck, depending on who is telling the story. They supposedly live inside the mines and can help miners discover riches and good fortune; however, some believe this is just a trick to cause miners to dig even deeper. More often than not, Tommyknockers are described as exceedingly mischievous. The "knockers"

part of the name comes from the knocking sound usually heard on the walls of a mine just before it caves in and many believe the Tommyknockers make the sound to try and warn miners of an imminent collapse, but others feel they are just toying with the miners' sanity. They are also said to steal tools and food, turn off lights or even knock a miner's cap off his head, all without ever being detected.

Legends surrounding the Tommyknockers developed along with the mining industry and miners eventually began to describe the mischievous creatures as the souls of miners who died on the job and had now returned to help protect the others. Tributes like tools and food were sometimes left as offerings and many believed that this would convince the Tommyknockers to guide the miners towards a large vein of gold. In fact, belief in the Tommyknockers was so great that after a large California mine was closed and sealed in 1956 many of the workers (most of them of Cornish descent) petitioned the mine's owners to unseal the mine and release the Tommyknockers so they could continue to work somewhere else. The owners obliged.

If Tommyknockers are real, they must be somewhere in Idaho Springs, CO and not just at Tommyknocker Brewery. Many miners, including Cornish miners, came to Colorado in the latter half of the 19th century to work in the gold and silver mines, including those in Idaho Springs. The discovery of gold by George Jackson in 1859, only a stone's throw away from where the Tommyknocker Brewery sits today, is often marked as the beginning of the Rocky Mountain Gold Rush that brought 3,000 people into Idaho Springs and nearly 100,000 into present-day Colorado. This huge increase in population ultimately leading to massive development throughout the region and the eventual acceptance of the "Centennial State" to the Union in 1876.

*From the Brewer: A small batch brew with toasted Hungarian Oak, along with Crystal, Munich, Chocolate, and Rye malts. A selection of American hops enhances the full bodied old world flavor profile. Notes of dark spiced vanilla and toasted oak, harmonizing hints of smoky biscuit aromas, meld into a beer worthy of celebrating the stories, the myths of an old mountain mining town...the legend of the Tommyknocker. ABV 10%, IBU 40*

