

Jack Miner And The Birds

By Jack Miner Himself—A History

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CAREER OF JACK JOHNSON

In the spring of 1907, after I had had these seven-winged tapers for three years, this old gander and his sweetheart started house-keeping near the west bank of the north pond, about two hundred feet north of the north door in our factory. The nest was built on the bare ground near the remnant of an old fall fence, giving me a good clear view of it from the door of the factory at an elevation of about seven feet. It was evident she was an old goose, for she laid six eggs. And many an interesting hour I spent in watching this pair of birds. I could keep one eye on the machinery at the same time. As this old gander would scarp any approaching enemy we called him Jack Johnson. He would stand about a rod from her, with his long black snipe that would put on a straight up for hours at a time; one would hardly notice a move; he looked more like a fixture than a living object. If a hawk or a crow was sighted, he would wait, I am sure, until it was within range of his wings, and then he would be flying flat, and any creature would almost touch him before it would see what it was up against. Remember, he was just the thing before it, it sees him; and only those who have seen one do it will believe how they can draw themselves down on the ground without being detected. When in the water it can bury its body under, leaving just the head and neck out and a few of the feathers along the back, and with the neck slightly curved one couldn't believe it anything but a long, wicked-looking snake. I never knew a creature that could put on a wickered or more poisonous look than these Canada geese can. One day as I was standing in the factory door with an eye turned towards the goose nest, I saw the old cart-horse, Charley, grazing leisurely and close to the nest, and a shudder came over me, fearing he might put a clumsy foot in it. But where is Jack Johnson, the fellow who is always watching; now an enemy is approaching and he is gone! The goose is lying flat on the nest and I can see plainly her black head stretched out on the ground, and her head curved towards the big horse that weighed over sixteen hundred pounds, and feet on him like pancake griddles. All at once the sight grows doubly interesting, for here is Jack Johnson stretched out flat, and pushing himself along with both hind feet until he is within four feet of Charley's heels. Charley is apparently unconscious of having an enemy on earth as he is quietly grazing closer and closer to the nest, his big knees bending for-

ward for fully a second before he makes a step. Finally when he gets within three feet of Mrs. Goose she slowly rises up, spreading her wings at him. His big ears so forward at once, and he gives a slight flinch backwards, with both eyes riveted on the goose. This instant Jack Johnson grabs him on the beak with his beak, and strikes him with both wings at once, while both geese seemed to hunk at the same time. Really I never saw a horse so nearly sweat into the air as he uttered a combination of loud snorts, and, with his four feet almost jarring the earth, he ran because he could not fly. Judging from his actions he did not know which end of the world was away from the nest. When he got about a hundred and fifty feet away he halted, and with his head erect and his tail bowed up, it added fully one hundred dollars to his appearance. But when he saw the goose flapping and jerking over his victory he started again, and if it had not been for the barn-yard fence possibly he would have been going yet.

As the nest had no protection, the old goose of course had to set in the sun, and she finally took sick and left the eggs. I believe she was sunstruck. At any rate she nearly died. So one day we men went and fought old Jack away and took the six eggs. I put them in warm water and found each contained life, so I made a nest in an old wash-tub and Plymouth Rock hen volunteered to act as step-mother. In four or five days all six of the eggs hatched, and I removed the cover and let the lights in, and the hen showed no signs of pecking them, but on the contrary started to teach them some chicken language. The next day we removed them in a pen near our back door where there was a nice growth of young clover and so forth. We fed them just a little bread as a coaxer, and these younglings were really tamer than their stepmother. And how they did grow! The rapid way in which young Canada geese grow is almost beyond human belief. At three days of age I have seen them run through two-inch-mesh poultry netting, and at six or seven weeks they are full grown and only experienced eyes will detect the young from the old at one hundred feet distance.

Now this family of geese never went five rods from our back door, but were continually gorging themselves on this clover. And of all the big babies I ever saw, young wild geese are the limit. After they were larger than their stepmother, I have often seen them huddle around her, putting their heads under her wings each raising her little higher until she would be completely off the ground, making herself into a portable home for the heads of these six geese. But the sad thing was to see this old gander, and to hear him continually giving those three screeching, and honks. We put blocks of wood and pieces of fence-rail in the nest, but this broken-hearted old fellow rolled them away. The sick goose stayed in the pond near by the nest, but he stayed all about the premises, constantly hunting for the six eggs or the geese that he evidently knew were in them, returning every few minutes to his sick sweetheart. He would bow and talk to her and nip a few blades of grass; then off again to the same beat, honking east, west, north and south. I never saw anything to equal it. If his honking was heard by the six geese it was of course all Latin to them, as they knew no other parent but this old hen.

Well, the novelty of having these pets near the back door soon grew a little unsanitary; and we found they were a week bigger every seven days; and my brother-in-law's oldest sister gave me to kindly understand in as pleasant a manner as the English language can possibly be rubbed in, that our back doorstep was not a wild goose roost and that these geese had to be removed immediately if not a little sooner. So I concluded to take her word for it. But at that time I had only the one big field away from the house. So one bright morning in June, as the sun was just high enough to be sparkling on the dewdrops that were apparently hanging on every blade of grass, I started from the house as usual to build a fire under the boiler at the factory. I called to the goose family and all followed me through the gate, really quieter than domestic fowl. As I passed through the backyard I kept on dropping a little seed, and they kept right after me until they came to a nice, clean dewy grass. There I left them and started on. But I hadn't got five rods away before my whole body and nerves were all shaking at seeing and hearing old Jack Johnson coming from the north pond, flapping and honking like a creature that had gone completely mad.

I turned and ran back, fearing he would kill every one. But he beat me there, and thank God he did. Instead of killing them at all, he feared he might, when he got within about six feet of them he stopped, and with his head and neck straight in the air, his beautiful chest just heaved, and I am not exaggerating in the least when I say that his honks could easily have been heard for a mile and a half. What he said I don't know, but each geese lay flat on the ground and he put his head on each, apparently caressing and loving them. In turn each got up and flapped its baby wings, and I looked at them. Just then I cast one eye to the north and here were the old, sick mother coming, falling down with weakness every rod she came. This was the first time I had ever seen her over the bank of the pond since the first time she left the nest, and the young

Department of Public Works and Highways

Tenders For Material

Sealed Tenders addressed to the undersigned, will be received at this office until noon of Saturday, February 24, 1934, from any person or persons willing to supply and deliver at the various sites, the following materials:—

PRINCE COUNTY

(1) Long Creek Bridge, Mill River, Lot 5
180 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
148 piles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
70 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
144 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
144 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.

(2) Canadian Bridge, Foxley River, Lot 11
65 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
50 piles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
24 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
68 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
46 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.
22 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(3) Tuplin's Bridge, Murray Road, Lot 11
60 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
40 piles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
20 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
40 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
40 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.

(4) Southwest Bridge, Poplar Grove, Lot 12
65 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
52 piles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
26 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
52 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
52 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.

(5) McKinnon's Bridge, Bayside, Lot 14
130 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
80 piles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
40 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
84 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
52 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.

(6) Darnley Bridge, Lot 18
150 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
150 piles in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
60 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
100 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
100 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.

(7) McIntyre's Bridge, New Annan, Lot 19
40 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
34 piles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 8 ins. at small end.
14 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
40 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
26 pieces 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.

(8) Division No. 1 (Tignish)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank not less than 7 ins. in width.

wer, now over five weeks old. Old Jack looked and saw her, and ran to pond with the eight geese until up and apparently told her all, for she cried in her weak way to come faster. This dear old father really made several trips back and forth to the young before she got there. The old mother goes got a little better towards fall, but when winter set in she took a change for the worse and one day in January I went back and picked her up and decided to bring her to the house near her, for the gander guarded her as one of his family from then on. When I opened the cow-stable door I found the old goose's struggle was over. She was dead. And while her faithful old mate was around-out of sight, still busily engaged with the cow. I took the goose out and buried her; therefore he never saw her afterwards. To be brief, he fought the cow, on and off for two or three weeks. Diana, a tigress recently presented to the London Zoo by her master in Chitra, India, was brought up as a household pet, enjoying riding, and sharing a room with her owner's three sons.

width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
128 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
20 pieces 8" x 8" in 20 ft. lengths.
128 cedar posts 8 ft. long not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(9) Division No. 2 (Alberton)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
200 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
200 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(10) Division No. 3 (Howlan)
3,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
20 pieces 8" x 8" in 20 ft. lengths.
200 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
200 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(11) Division No. 4 (O'Leary)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
32 pieces 8" x 8" in 20 ft. lengths.
200 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
200 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(12) Division No. 5 (Ellerslie)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
200 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
200 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(13) Division No. 6 (Wellington)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
125 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.

(14) Division No. 7 (Miscouche)
3,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.

(15) Division No. 8 (Kensington)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
50 pieces 8" x 8" in 20 ft. lengths.
200 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
200 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(16) Division No. 9. (Central Bedouque)
7,000 F. B. M. of 10" x 10", not less than 12 ft. in length.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank, not less than 7 ins. in width and not less than 12 ft. in length.
125 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
125 cedar posts 8 ft. long and not less than 6 ins. at small end.

QUEENS COUNTY

(17) French River Breastwork, Lot 21
100 cords of poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
60 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
60 cedar posts, 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.
25 cubic yards of field stone.

(18) Clifton Bridge, Lot 21
100 cords of poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
50 pieces of 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.
50 cedar posts 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.

(19) North River Bridge, Lot 32
35,000 F. B. M. of 10" x 10" lumber, hemlock, not less than 12 ft. in length.
10 piles, 18 ft. long, not less than 8" at small end.
40 piles, 14 ft. long, not less than 8" at small end.

(20) Mt. Stewart Bridge, Lot 37
3000 F. B. M. of 2" plank.

(21) Ferguson's Creek, Fairview, Lot 65
35 cords of poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.

(22) Glenfinnan Bridge, Lot 35
40 cords of poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.

(23) Cascoigne Bridge, Lot 50
25 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.

(24) Pinetts Bridge, Lot 58
70,000 F. B. M. of 10" x 10" lumber, hemlock, not less than 12 ft. in length.
100 pieces of 4" x 5" in 6 ft. lengths.
100 pieces of 2" x 5" in 16 1/2 ft. lengths.

50 piles 15 ft. long, not less than 8" at small end.
50 piles 12 ft. long, not less than 8" at small end.

KINGS COUNTY

(25) Wharf Road, Fortune, Lot 43
45 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.

(26) Breastwork, Murray Harbor South, Lot 64
15 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
20 pieces 2" x 5" in 17 ft. lengths.
10 spruce piles 16 ft. long, not less than 7 ins. at small end.

(27) Richardson's Bridge, Murray Harbor South, Lot 64
7 pieces spruce 6" x 12" in 18 ft. lengths.
1500 F. B. M. of 3" plank in 17 ft. lengths, not less than 7 inches in width.
24 pieces 2" x 5" in 17 ft. lengths.

(28) Hayden's Bridge, Upton, Lot 53
4 pieces 8" x 8" in 15 ft. lengths.
2 pieces 8" x 8" in 20 ft. lengths.
14 pieces 8" x 8" in 9 ft. length.
7 pieces spruce 4" x 12" in 17 ft. lengths.
7 pieces 6" x 6" in 16 ft. lengths.
1500 F. B. M. of 3" plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
4 cords poles 16 ft. long, not less than 4 ins. at small end.

(29) St. Peter's Bridge, Lot 41
20 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.

(30) Newport Wharf, Newport, Lot 54
16 spruce piles 25 ft. long, not less than 7 ins. at small end.
10 pieces 8" x 8" in 17 ft. lengths.
25 pieces spruce 3" x 12" in 17 ft. lengths.
20 pieces hardwood 8" thick in 14 ft. lengths.
1000 F. B. M. of 3" plank in 15 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.

(31) Surrey Road, Milltown Cross, Lot 61
4 pieces 8" x 8" in 18 ft. lengths.
5 pieces 8" x 8" in 12 ft. lengths.
7 pieces spruce 4" x 12" in 18 ft. lengths.
1200 F. B. M. of 3" plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.

(32) Division No. 21 (Montague)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
15 pieces spruce 4" x 12" in 18 ft. lengths.
12 pieces hardwood 3" x 10" in 8 ft. lengths, yellow birch or rock maple.
30 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 ft. lengths.

(33) Division No. 24. (Annandale, Lot 56)
5,000 F. B. M. of 3 inch plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
20 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 ft. lengths.
14 pieces spruce 4" x 12" in 16 ft. lengths.

(34) Wood's Bridge, Hazel Green Road, Lot 52
4 pieces 8" x 8" in 20 ft. lengths.
14 pieces 8" x 8" in 12 ft. lengths.
7 pieces spruce 4" x 12" in 16 ft. lengths.
1000 F. B. M. of 3" spruce plank in 18 ft. lengths, not less than 7 ins. in width.
4 cords poles in 16 ft. lengths, not less than 4 ins. at small end.
20 Juniper posts, 8 ft. long, not less than 6 ins. at small end.
20 pieces 2" x 5" in 16 ft. lengths.

Material for Lots Nos. 1 to 7; Nos. 17 to 31 and Number 34 to be delivered at the site.

Material for Lots Nos. 8 to 16 and Nos. 32 and 33 to be delivered in care of the Highway Superintendent of the Division, at the places named or at a central point in the Division.

Parties tendering shall tender SEPARATELY for the material for each bridge and may tender for the whole or any portion thereof. Tenders to be marked "Tenders for Material."

Poles shall be of spruce or fir, straight and sound. Lumber, except where specified, shall be spruce or hemlock, all square edged and sawn to the exact size specified, perfectly sound and free from wane and shaken.

All Poles shall be delivered on or before the 30th day of April, 1934.

All other material shall be delivered on or before the 15th day of May, 1934.

Parties tendering shall submit a price PER CORD for poles, a price EACH for piles and posts, a price per M. B. M. for sawn lumber and a price per CUBIC YARD for field stones.

All material shall be carefully inspected and measured before delivery is taken by the Department or payment made.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender.

L. B. McMILLAN, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Highways

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Send all information regarding her over the bank of the pond since the first time she left the nest, and the young