

Hunter's Corner

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years ago. He formed a local Jack Miner League and tried to emulate the man in whose memory National Wildlife Week is set aside with a

few improvements of his own thrown in for good measure... he didn't believe in killing any form of predator whether it be a house cat gone wild, a skunk, crow, horned owl or what have you. The farm he owned was ideal

for the purpose. The farm buildings were set out a mile from the main highway and were surrounded by trees and shrubs of all descriptions. A large sheltered orchard with a southern exposure fronted on the Hillsboro River. It was a natural habitat for birds

and when he set out an array of bird houses and kept a steady supply of tempting food available during the late fall, winter and early spring birds of all kinds made this site their headquarters. Scores of robins, wrens, warblers, finches, tree swallows, woodpeckers, flickers, and others I never saw before, flocked to this haven and nested there.

It was a real Garden of Eden until serpents, in the form of cats, crows, hawks, etc., moved into this peaceful setting. Half dozen tom cats well fed, fat and sleepy looking, prowled the orchard glades; red squirrels drove woodpeckers and flickers from their nest holes in gnarled apple trees and pulled down the tiny hammock-like nests that swung from limbs and crows raided the robin nests in broad daylight as bold as brass. I fought the temptation to sally forth with my trusty B. S. A. 22 cal. rifle for I knew it would mean a break in Diplomatic relations.

The pay-off came one evening as we stood together in mid orchard. A sharpshin hawk darted in with the speed of an arrow and picked a singing Goldfinch off its perch. I watched helplessly as the hawk and its prey disappeared eastward toward the wood that flanked Crosby's Creek with a number of swallows in pursuit.

I remarked: "What have you to say about that?" His comment was brief: "It has to eat" (He was referring to the hawk).

My own comment was equally terse and to the point: "This is not conservation... it's systematic murder of innocent wildlife." He didn't know it but that hawk had signed its own death warrant. I got both it and its mate near their nest site a few days later.

It was only natural that predators should gather where their natural prey was abundant and this wildlife "House of Dreams" was doomed to failure from the beginning... it was founded on the sands. As the pathetic piles of white feathers grew more abundant the joyful song of the birds lessened and was replaced by the funeral dirge of survivors crying for lost mates or young.

It's passing strange, or is it so strange, that the housecat, a product of man, next to man himself is the deadliest predator on four feet or with wings. Here was a man who could have gone places in the conservation realm, he possessed many of the qualifications if he had not held blindly to the fetish: let Nature take its course.

We have one man in the province, Harvey Moore, Milltown, Cross, in King's County who bids fair to duplicate Jack Miner in many respects. He is a natural outdoorsman and possesses a fund of knowledge in respect to wildlife.

Nine years ago he began to cultivate the acquaintance of a few black ducks that wintered regularly in an open spring near his home. After several years their numbers grew until it was necessary to build a dam on the stream that flowed past his door. I called on him during the cold snap in early March and found over 300 ducks, mostly black, partaking of his food and hospitality. Those were birds of the wild but he could walk among them like a farmer with a flock of hens at feed time.

He has a banding permit but doesn't need a wire cage to drive them into first... just walks along and picks them up off the ice. They don't seem to mind in the least - on the contrary appear to enjoy the experience. He doesn't rush things and only bands 10 or 12 at one time. A few will hop on my knee and eat grain out of my hand but the big majority shy clear of strangers. Mr. Moore has no illusions in respect to what predators can do and we betide the great horned owl that gets any "free lunch" ideas into his, or her, head. Mr. Moore's sanctuary is a result of the conservation work done in the past by the man whose memory we are honouring by National Wildlife Week.

The late Jack Miner was the first to band wildgeese with aluminum bands in order to establish their migration routes, etc. Now authorities at Washington and Ottawa are banding thousands of birds of all species with instructions on the band to notify Washington Biological Survey. The abbreviation reads: "Wash. Biol. Surv." Recently a letter from an angry taxpayer complained: "Sir - I shot one of your pet crows and followed the instructions. I washed it, boiled it and served it, but it was terrible. Stop fooling the people." That what I call following instructions to the letter.

Back Stretch

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Stable, New York, after winning the Hambletonian.

Elope, outstanding French trotting colt of the past three years and the holder of the French four-year-old record for trotters both to harness and saddle, has been purchased by the French Ministry of Agriculture and will be stationed at one of the racing stables in the province. He has been the winner of nearly \$50,000 during his career. The price paid - hold your breath - was 11,000,000 francs (approximately \$38,000) and it is the highest ever paid by the French Government for a trotting stallion. Elope is the son of Quel Veinard, now owned and standing at Two Galls Farm, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Charlottetown Driving Park and Provincial Exhibition Association has published a list of its early closing events which will be raced from June 27th to August 7th, 1953. Their closing date will be May 1st. Stakes range from a 225 Pace to a Free For All Pace with purses from \$500 to \$1,200, and two Free For All Trots, each

purse \$600. Altogether there are 16 stakes. The first will be raced June 27th, the 221 pace conditioned, purse \$600. There is a Three Year Old Pace raced July 21st for a purse of \$500 and a Two Year Old Pace August 7th, purse \$500. The announcement states that opening races will be held on June 2nd and continue through to Thanksgiving Day. All early closing events will be two dashes at one mile except the Free For All No. 6, which will be three dashes. Money divisions are 36, 27, 18, 12 and 5 per cent. We are glad that the races are almost altogether on the two-dash plan as under our present training conditions a three dash race may give a horse a setback.

The money conditions we consider much fairer for all concerned than those in effect at Roosevelt Raceway and many other tracks where the winner gets 50 per cent of the purses. By distributing the money more evenly better encouragement is given to more owners. The racing date of June 2nd brings us back to the long ago when races were staged on the King's birthday, June 3rd. The seasons were very early then and the track would be in perfect condition and the weather quite good. This year the track will be fit to work horses miles below 3.00 by the middle of April and we presume other tracks throughout the Maritimes will be equally early. An announcement regarding purses and programs for Old Home Week through to Thanksgiving Day will be released later. The total purses for the above program total over \$9,000. E. Frank Acorn will again be Race Secretary and will handle all the details in connection with entries, declarations, etc.

Brewer's Gallon 2:00 4/5, eight-year-old stallion by Bill Gallon 1:59 1/2, owned by B. C. Cruikshank of Halifax, N.S., is again in training at Truro Raceway, and according to reports is going sound and will be campaigned this season. He is in the hands of that master trainer, Johnny Conroy, and will of course get the very best of attention. He has total winnings of \$37,218.66 and with allowances is eligible to the 2:10 trot. He was bought by Mr. Cruikshank at the Harrisburg sale in the fall of 1947 and in 1948 as a three-year-old started 12 times, was 8 times first winning \$841. It was at Charlottetown Old Home Week, August 13th that he took his record that year of 2:16 and equalled it again at Bridgewater Sept. 6th. He was trained and driven in all his races by John MacMillan.

In 1948 he passed into the hands of Neil Campbell, who dropped him to a win, and then to Neil Campbell. He made 22 starts and only lost two heats. His fastest time was 2:10 1/5 at Charlottetown Old Home Week. He won the first two heats and the last was won by Neil Kalmuck. From there he was shipped to Joe O'Brien in New York and Joe took him to California where he started October 10th and was second. On October 21st at Hollywood Park, he won in 2:06 1/5 - a new record - and won again Nov. 24th in 2:07. In 1950 he started 18 times and won 17 firsts and increased his earnings to \$16,245, and at Lexington, Ky. took his present record of 2:00 4/5. He was trained and driven in these races by Joe O'Brien. In 1951 he showed signs of lameness while training in California, was shifted to the pace and it was thought that he would make good at that gait, but not so and he was changed back to the trot. He made 16 starts, was three times first, four times second and once third over a half-mile track. In 1952 he made 11 starts, was twice first, twice second and once third and he as was racing against the best trotters in America for large stakes his winnings amounted to \$10,081. There is no question that had Brewer's Gallon remained sound he would have beaten 2:00. All Maritimers will be pulling for Brewer this year and his popular owner, Mr. Cruikshank, and we hope that we will see him in action here and elsewhere in the Maritimes.

The new management of the Summerside track had an announcement in last Saturday's paper that was good news to many horsemen - a \$1,000 Free For All and two \$600 supporting classes for Dominion Day, July 1st. The Summerside track is one of the oldest tracks in this Province, if not the oldest. We have summaries of races held there in the early 1880's and it was in 1888 that the celebrated Black Pilot-Hernando match race took place there with what is said to be the greatest number of people ever brought together in Prince County. As a small boy I listened to Harry Brownell coming out on the Railway Station platform at Souris and reading telegrams of how the race was progressing. There were hundreds present. The same thing was going on all over the Province. Black Pilot won. He was the first horse ever bred in the Maritimes to trot a mile in 2:30 and he was the sire of one of the greatest trotters ever produced in the Maritimes, Special Blend, that years later held six track records including the then Charlottetown track record of 2:18 3/4 for a mile trotting.

In 1942 the Summerside track was rebuilt and such a good job was done that new records trotting and pacing were made over it that year. On July 7th the pace of Happy L. 2:03 3/4 by Bill L. 2:16 1/4 won the Free For All in 2:07 1/4. He was driven by Earle Semple, and on July 15th Squire Hanover, owned and driven by Tyndall Semple, and Watchin 2:06, owned by Alderman Frank Adams of Halifax and driven by Myron MacArthur, tied the record for a trotting record of 2:06. Now we understand the plant is being greatly improved and a large number of new stalls are being built in addition to those that were built last year, better accommodations for grand stand and a vastly improved track with lights installed for night racing, so the Summerside oval will certainly take its place with other top Maritime race tracks. Our best wishes to the enterprising management in their efforts to furnish

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a track for training and racing and good enjoyment to the people of Prince County and other parts of this Province.

We were delighted to have a post card from Dr. F.W. Christo-

pher of Boston, Mass., who is a native son of Tignish and who has been one of the best breeders and supporters of harness racing in the Maritimes for many years. The Doctor is having a very happy holiday at Orlando, Florida, where he will spend a few weeks and on March 22nd, the day he wrote us, he saw two-year-old trotters stepping miles in 2.20. Thanks, Doctor, and we will be looking forward to seeing you Old Home Week as usual.

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