The Jackladder: Tie Logging on the Whirlpool
Railways arrived in Jasper in 1910
3,400 ties per mile
2,100 per kilometer
Replacement Ties 8-10 years
August 1, 1927

Nine Million Ties Each Year for Canadian National Railway Lines

New lines and replacement ties
Railway Tie of the 1920s:
7 inches thick, 9 inches wide, 7 inch face, 8 feet long

Why Jasper Park?
James B. Harkin
Commissioner -- National Parks 1911-1936

Dual philosophy

• Economic – commercial
  Selling scenery to tourists

• Humanitarian – well-being, human spirit
Whirlpool Valley

Meanwhile --
Fire in 1740
Residual Lodgepole Pine

65 years old
David Thompson

About 260 years when logged
JASPER FOREST RESERVE

WHIRLPOOL RIVER TIMBER LIMITS

COMPASS SURVEY

Scale... 1000 ft. = 1 in.

Jasper, Alta.
30th June, 1919

Note. The estimated number of trees on the 5 square miles is approximately 1,200,000. The remarks on plan relative to no of trees per acre apply to only 75% of the area included, there being many intervening tracts of young growth in low ground and along the River Banks.
Whirlpool River Timber Limit
1919

About 6 miles long (10 km)
1919
Timber Berth
Tie Point:
Large Boulder
James McNiece
Austin
1866-1922

Highest Bidder
Whirlpool
Timber Berth
1919
AUSTIN & NICHOLSON
CHAPLEAU, ONTARIO

Largest Producers of Railroad Ties In the Dominion

Pine and Spruce—Lumber—Lath—Piling
Railroad Ties—Pulpwood

FIRST CLASS PLANING-MILL EQUIPMENT

Facilities for delivering Pulpwood to Michipicoten Harbour, Lake Superior
Splendid facilities for Dressing and Matching in straight car lots, one or more widths

Mills at NICHOLSON, ONTARIO, Main Line C.P.R.
George B. Nicholson – MP for Algoma East -- first term 1917 – 1921

MP for Algoma East --
First term
1917 – 1921
1925 – 1926
1930 - 1936
Contractors
James C. Gibson
David E. Conroy
Tom Stapley
Dennis (“Dinny”) Hogan
Jack, Bruce and Closson Otto
Otto brother’s team on Cavell Road construction
“Otto Bros is building a useful road to that [Whirlpool] area (of course at Austin’s expense) -- & we will have a good Motor Road – which will not have cost the Park one cent – which will be splendid for the park generally.”

Rogers envisages this as a permanent road to be extended south across the Whirlpool to Athabasca Falls.

November 12, 1920    S. Maynard Rogers
Warden J.M. Christie – eye on logging, control wolves
Astoria and Portal Creeks
Highway 93A in 1949
to Otto’s Cache – for pack horses
Aemilius Simpson: “ascended over pretty steep eminences ...”
S-Turn Rapids by Moab Lake
Only in Alberta!
Whirlpool Tie Camp Locations

Tie Camps on the Whirlpool River -- 1920s

(c. 15 km)
Camp 1 – Built January 1921

Photo looking south in 1925
Camp 1 – looking north
“... have arranged with Austin’s representative to erect ... a suitable log building for [Warden Christie’s] special accomodation so that he may ... keep an eye on the work being done ...”

Maynard Rogers – November 12th 1920
Whirlpool Cabin – Camp 1
First Camp
Camp 3
Simon Creek area
(second camp)
Camp 3 – “Wagon Wheel”
Camp 3 in 1925
Tom Stapley – came west in 1885 with Militia from Ontario response to the Riel Rebellion
Lethbridge Sawmill – Oldman River
Tom Stapley -- logger and steam engineer
Camp 3 Sawmill site

After 1924 Canadian Creosote
No slabs – used for fuel
Canadian Creosote Company, Edmonton  1924
Third Tie Camp – Camp 2
Whirlpool Tie Camp

2
Camp 2 – the largest
-- The cutting of logs --- extending high up the benches on both sides of the Whirlpool River, and apparently outside the Limit.

P. H. Goodair, Park Warden
May 31, 1925
Two more cabins found on Verdant Fan area
-- in the meantime --
Internal combustion engine – no slabs
Otto Brothers - logging contractors
Write for free samples

Canadian Milk Products Limited
347 Adelaide Street W. Toronto
366 St. Paul St. West,
Montreal, Que.
428 Main Street,
Winnipeg, Man.

British Columbia Distributors:
Kirkland & Rose, 130 Water St., Vancouver, B.C.
Broad Axe – tie hacking
Tie Hacking

FHS photo
Hacking a jackpine

FHS photo

30-40 per day
-- the slash in the woods is more than a man’s thigh, the tops and refuse lying in indescribable confusion, and -- constitutes a very serious fire menace.

P. H. Goodair, Warden, May 31, 1925
Sleigh-load of Railway Ties
Tie Landing site – Camp 1 area
Tie Landing
Watering Ties from a Jam
Log-driving Pointer – Camp 2

Tom Peterson photo 1987 – Roy Richards & Wally Butler

Curly Phillips built?
BODY RECOVERED IN BRIDGE PIER

Identified As Ernest J. Sorenson, a Tie Worker, Who Disappeared

Missing for more than a month, the body of Ernest J. Sorenson, who has been employed with Allen and Hogan, tie contractors, near Jasper, was found last week caught in the piers of the Whirlpool River bridge, a few miles from his place of employment. Sorenson, a Dane, only landed in this country on July 18.

A pike pole and cap were found on the banks of the Whirlpool River, a tributary of the Athabasca, on August 1, and it was presumed at that time that Sorenson had been drowned. The body, lying some feet underwater, was found by Dennis Hogan, the man’s employer, and although his clothing had been entirely washed away, identification was still possible.

The R.C.M.P. have had the matter in hand, and the dead man’s only known relative, a brother living in Illinois, has been notified.

Ernest J. Sorenson
Tie Driver
d. 1 August 1924
Rogers: “You will be held responsible for any damage occasioned by your drive – particular reference to Old Fort Point” – 25 May 1921
Jackladder

Rounding up the ties
Possible Jackladder Boom Layout
Boom Logs

Crib 14 feet square
Edd Neighbour

Hauling a sleigh-load of wood.
Remove bark 125 – 150 pounds 1.5 cents/400+/day
Boom Logs on the Delta – broken or discarded

Cold Sulphur Spring
Ties drifted into shallows in high water
Estimated location of Snaring Boom
1921
Privy Council Order No. 2816 of 8th November 1934 extended renewal of timber permits to 31st March 1937.

Evidently done on initiative of George Nicholson, M.P.

BUT -- Last logging was in 1927 – the pine timber had all been removed by then.
AND –

No mention of the Alberta operation in the Austin & Nicholson Papers

Nor any knowledge of it among the Austin Family descendants!
Tie Logging

Iconic Spruce
Val Delille
Display Designer
Job done –-
-- going down the road!