

# CHARLIE MAGUIRE

MUSICIAN SONGWRITER



MELLO-JAMIN MUSIC • POST OFFICE BOX 580794, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55458-0794  
EMAIL MELLOJAM@VISI.COM • WEBSITE CHARLIEMAGUIRE.COM

## The Hinkley Fire

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The entire town of Hinkley, Minnesota burned in a giant forest fire in 1894. This song tells of James Root and his Afro-American fireman Jack McGowan in one episode of bravery that up until now was "unsung."

# # #

It was the first of September 1894  
Jim Root left the station bound for Saint Paul, Minnesota  
With his hand on the throttle of Engine 69  
Fireman Jack McGowan was by his side  
There was no warning come over the wire  
That they were heading into a raging fire  
Tom Dunn was dead at his telegraph key  
Before he could tap out what he did see

### CHORUS:

Jim Root said "We'd better roll it Jack  
The devil himself is burning up the track  
Shovel that coal, get some smoke in the stack  
Two-hundred people from Hinkley don't want to go back"

### ADDITIONAL VERSES:

Hinkley was burning like the end of the world  
In a forest fire that did jump and curl  
Over the housetops and the tall white pine  
Coming for Engine 69  
Near town the sky turned black as night  
Jack climbed the engine, and lit the big headlight  
The smoke made the sun shine like the moon  
At 4 O'clock in the afternoon (refrain)

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Then out of the woods and running fast  
Men, women, and children, stood in their path  
Saying "Hinkley is gone, the fire is just behind  
Let us on your train and spare our lives"  
They climbed aboard, Jim gave it all he had  
The skies above, turned flaming red  
He started rolling and he set the pace  
Back up the rails, in a deadly race (refrain)

They ran for miles to a shallow lake  
Stopped there by the waters cool and safe  
The passengers rushed into that stream  
The fire passed over them through the trees  
Jack carried his engineer from the cab  
Of that train that had run its last  
And there they all stayed through the night  
While the fire was burning bright