

[Page 15 - Allen Gwinn: Horse Racing on the Ice](#)ISSUE : [Issue 19](#)

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Allen Gwinn: Horse Racing on the Ice Allen Gwinn, Aspy Bay: I guess they were ice racing before I was born. In my time it was generally on St. Patrick's Day, but we'd be driving and racing off and on all winter, keeping the horse in shape. You'd have to practice a little to get the horses in shape, out on the ice driving with one another. And then the fastest horses they had in Ingonish, New Haven and Neil's Harbour, they'd come down on St. Patrick's Day. They'd come down in their riding sleighs and tow their skeleton sleighs behind. They were the frames of a riding sleigh cut down some, with a seat for one man. And they they came down to sulkies after. They used sulkies last and they were better. Of course, the sleighs were very good. They ran an ice cutter on, to keep them from swinging aroxmd on the slippery ice too much. But the sulkies seemed to do better on the ice. I'd rather it. The shafts were higher and they'd come on all along the horse's side, see, and there wasn't much chance for it to slide. I had one in the last of it • Neil, my brother-in-law, had one first and then I got one and the fellows that came in, they all had sulkies. But when they came first they were trotting sleighs, they called them. They were quite high. The seat was up high. The ice went from the horse's feet under the seat. Eve? rything was open. A little ice would come onto you. Just chopped up ice, from the i 1 horse's cork, see. But it'd never come up to your face. We always seemed to strike a pretty good day on St. Patrick's, and the ice was gen? erally always good. There used to be a big turnout. They'd come from all over, men and women. Generally there'd be three horses but then one spring there were six and they made two different races of them and put three in each. The fastest one I had, Goldie, she took a lot of training before she'd come down to travelling. After a couple of years driv? ing on the ice, she got so she was fast. Fast enough for any of the other horses, only she'd fire herself very strong with her hind leg and it was hard to keep the shoes on. My brother was a blacksmith in Portland, Maine, and he made me a set of shoes • oh, they were light and the corks were all quite long. She used to flatten those corks, bend them right out. And she'd travel very low. But when she was travelling she'd fire herself wonderful with her hind feet, see. And I had those > corks cut down and made shorter and if the ice wasn't real hard she wouldn't get hold enough. She'd slip, see, and it threw her off her guard. I had to use hobbles on her for the first few years. But when I put her in races I didn't have to use hobbles. They went on Cape Breton's Magazine/15