

[Page 15 - Dr. Austin MacDonald, Down North](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 39](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/6/1

I Dr. Austin MacDonald, caretaker Theo Bird, and the horse, Harry road winds down around these bluffs like that. Well, the road at that time was nar? row, compared to today. And in the winter? time, with frost and thaws, the rocks would fall out of the cliffs and they'd fall down right on the road. So we were coming down. We got to the top of the moun? tain and we were getting pretty tired, any? way. And the driver, he was standing on the runners of the dog sleigh behind. He said, "You get on there." And the third fellow, he was just running alongside. They were used to running. They were the mail couriers from Cheticamp to Pleasant Bay in the winter, and I don't think they ever tired out, those birds. (On snow- shoes?) Sometimes. They didn't have snow- shoes that night--there was crust that you could walk on. Anyway, we came around one of these bluffs. And here were two deer came up from below, crossed the road, and started up a little ravine on the other side. And the dogs went nuts. See, these dogs hadn't been fed, then, for over 40 hours. You can't feed dogs if you're going to work them--they won't work then. They've got to wait and sleep till they digest their food. So dogs are always worked hungry. And these fel? lows were getting ravenous. So they went for the deer. And they came down, they didn't pay any attention to the driver, who had a long line on the lead dog, and he just couldn't stop him at all. This sharp rock came up out of the crust like that in the middle of the road. And I came up when I saw we were going to hit it--I got my rear off the sleigh. But the sleigh hit, and it went in a thousand pieces. These sleighs were built very small and light, see. And the driver and I just went head over heels down over the side, and away down the ravine below, bump? ing off the little birch trees as we went. And my three bags of equipment, they were scattered hell west and crooked all over the side of that hill. But you could see everything with the (moon). Well, we examined each other when we got to the bottom. We had a lot of bruises but no broken bones, Which was a very for? tunate thing, because we got some rough handling going down that hill. And the oth? er fellow, I thought was worse off than me, 'cause he seemed to me to be hitting the trees in a worse way than I. He was per? haps 50 feet up the ravine from me. Any- way--gathered up all the stuff. It took us a long time to get it up this mountainside to the road again. By that time the other fellow had captured the dogs. But we had no sleigh. They tied the dogs. And we went on down to Murdock MacGregor's, which was about two more miles, I suppose. And it was the longest two miles of my life. I was getting dead tired. Got into Murdock's, anyway, and we got a big breakfast, started for home. They started back over the moutain for Pleasant Bay. But you know, a fellow should have got killed in an accident like that, but we didn't. Another night, Murdock MacLeod was the driver, who got very expert, as I said, with the chloroform bottle. And Murdock was a brave, tough man--nothing ever both? ered him very much. But have you ever been down into White Point? You know, how you come off a ridge and you go down a steep crooked hill to the bottom. Well, in the middle of the night one time, we had to go down there. And I was at Cape North when I got the call. Murdock had a big red mare-- Sherwood Restaurants



Specializing in: Seafood, Char-Broiled Red Branti Steaks, Pork Chops, Etc.
Licensed Dining Room OPEN YEAR ROUND (902)285-2747 SUMMER
HOURS (MAY TO OCTOBER) 7 A.M. TO 11 P.M. WINTER HOURS 11 A.M. TO 10 P.M. I
North Ingonish Passport Photographs While You Wait 'Ahhass Studla Ltd. ONE
HOUR FILM PROCESSING) 5"x 7" Enlargements or Reprints in Only 20 Minutes!
Weddings * Commercial & Industrial ' Family Groups * Graduation ABBASS
STUDIO LTD. 170 Townsend St., Sydney * 564-8234 or 564-6491 40 YEARS OF
SERVICE TO CAPE BRETON