

Chairman Hickman, Chairperson Supica and distinguished members of Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

My name is Mike Cushing. I am a resident of Farmington, a third generation horseman and I represent the nearly 400 men and women that are the Maine Harness Horsemen's Association, as their president. I grew up in East Wilton on a farm that was home to roughly 40 head of milking cows and a half dozen or so standardbred horses. You could say I've been ankle deep in "agriculture" my entire life.

I spent my youth falling in love with the caring for, training, and eventually driving of harness horses. My Summers were spent working side by side with my father at Bangor Raceway. At the same time, now Chief Kirk Francis, could be seen there with his father Miles. He was a prominent owner of standardbreds from that era. I'm sure both of our dad's would be proud to know, that after all of these years, later we're reconnecting for such a just cause.

For going on nearly two centuries, harness racing has been not only a sport enjoyed by fans, but a part of the northeast's cultural heritage. We had Red Snapper hot dogs, while others had some brown version. Maine and the Canadian Maritimes had candlepin instead of ten pin bowling. And proudly we had harness racing, instead of the thoroughbred version preferred in other areas of the country. And of course we had Moxie, which we still celebrate annually in Lisbon.

The question today is whether you care if we lose that cultural heritage, that is Maine. If you are fine with losing it, vote against LD 1838. But if you think this history is worth preserving, and want to bring a new day forward, we'd ask that you vote for LD 1838.

The "why" you should be in favor, is a topic this committee has talked about in previous sessions. And that is, for this sport to continue, this industry needs a new track.

As everyone knows, Scarborough Downs was Southern Maine's track for decades. In the 2010's the facility challenges continued to stack up. It was sold to Scarborough developers that did not have racing in its plans. Fortunately for the sport, a Maine family with ties to harness racing stepped in, and helped pull together to keep racing

alive at the old Cumberland Fairgrounds. That took building a team quickly, and working closely with the Cumberland Farmers Club.

There have been plenty of naysayers around during this period. And I don't mean horses whinnying "neigh" either. But other than throwing stones, no one else has offered a solution for our sport. So we have one. LD 1838 is that solution, and it isn't a hypothetical.

The State of Kentucky added Historical Horse Racing years ago, and it has been credited with the resurgence of harness racing in that state. And in an apparent alignment of the stars, it helped lead to a new racetrack. Ironically the name of the track is actually Cumberland, Cumberland Run. I have attached a before and after of that project in my packet. It is not an imaginary outcome. For Kentucky, H.H.R. has rejuvenated an existing track, and erected a new one. LD 1838 can do the exact same for Maine.

LD 1838 is a merger of LD 1992 and LD 2213 from the last Legislature, both bills this committee supported. LD 1992 passed the House, and LD 2213 passed both bodies, but died before the Legislature adjourned. We'd ask that you put forward the effort once more to help Historic horse racing support Maine's racing future.

Thank you for this opportunity

Michael Cushing

President

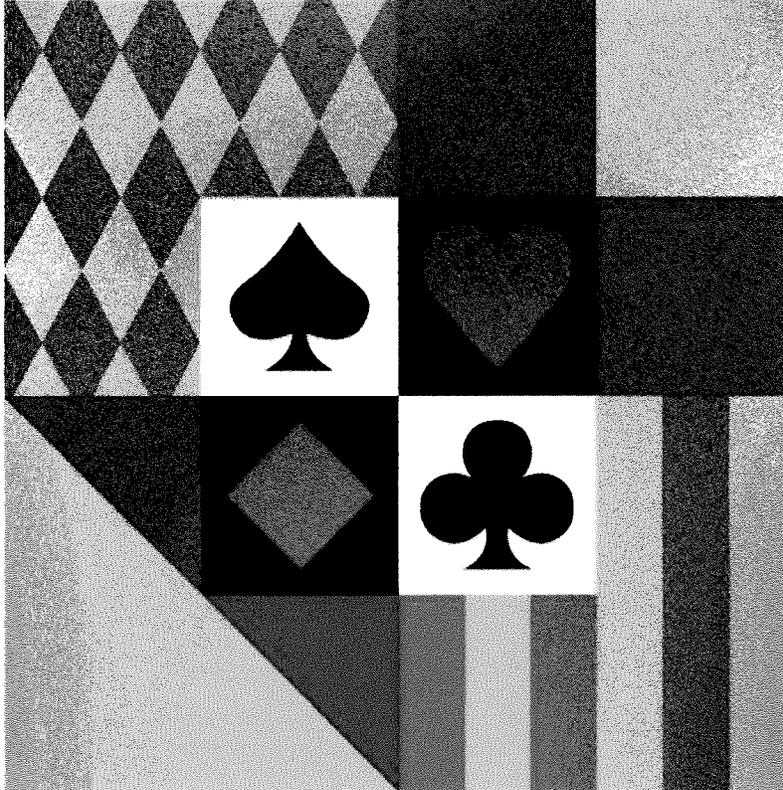
Maine Harness Horsemen's Association

# Cumberland Run Corbin, KY



guru

## Penn Entertainment Jumps on JPMorgan Upgrade, 30% Upside Predicted



Muslim Farooque

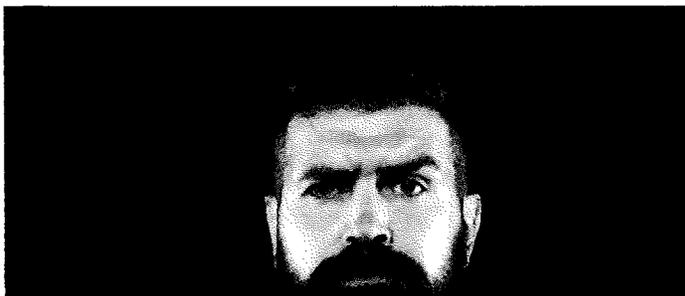
December 13, 2024 • 1 min read



### In This Article:

● StockStory Top Pick  **PENN** -2.24% ☆

Penn Entertainment (NASDAQ:PENN) shares rose 4% Friday after JPMorgan changed the casino operator to "overweight" from "neutral," pointing to the possibility for notable expansion as new investments to kickstart a rebound. From the intraday price of \$20.81, the company also increased its price target on the stock to \$27 from \$19, reflecting a possible upside of around 30%.



## 7 Things Not to Do When Selecting a Financial Advisor

With projections of double-digit cash-on-cash returns starting in the later part of 2025 and running into 2026, JPMorgan analysts said in a note to clients that Penn's retail investments are beginning to "bear fruit." They also observed a favorable view of the company's free cash flow, which they hope to get better when land-based capital expenditure drops drastically by 2026. The analysts stressed Penn's capacity to direct this cash flow toward debt reduction and interest expense lowering.

- Warning! GuruFocus has detected 5 Warning Signs with PENN.

Another element supporting their optimistic view was the declining interactive gaming losses, according to the paper. Penn's stock is down around 20% year-to-date despite Friday's gain, which reflects more general difficulties in the gaming industry. But JPMorgan's upgrade and the new price target point to hope for the company's longer-term financial recovery and expansion possibilities.

This article first appeared on [GuruFocus](#).

 [View Comments \(1\)](#)

[Terms and Privacy Policy](#) [Privacy Dashboard](#)

## 10 Warren Buffett dividend stocks for passive income investors

**Brian Baker, CFA**

Mon, May 5, 2025 at 3:32 PM EDT • 5 min read



Dividend stocks can be a great way to generate passive income as an investor, and what better way to find dividend stock ideas than by sifting through the holdings of arguably the world's greatest investor, Warren Buffett?

Berkshire Hathaway's portfolio is filled with dividend stocks, which should come as no surprise to Buffett followers. Buffett invests in companies with strong profitability, sensible capital allocation and competitive advantages, all of which often translate into stocks with solid dividends.

(A financial advisor can also help you generate ideas and steer you in the right direction for your individual

# Maine History

Volume 47  
Number 1 *The Maine Borderlands*

Article 6

1-1-2013

## **"Yankees" and "Bluenosers" at the Races: Harness Racing, Group Identity, and the Creation of a Maine-New Brunswick Sporting Region, 1870-1930**

Leah Grandy  
*University of New Brunswick Harriet Irving Library*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal>

 Part of the Social History Commons, and the United States History Commons

### **Recommended Citation**

Grandy, Leah. "'Yankees' and 'Bluenosers' at the Races: Harness Racing, Group Identity, and the Creation of a Maine-New Brunswick Sporting Region, 1870-1930." *Maine History* 47, 1 (2013): 94-110.  
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol47/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Maine History* by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).



Harness racing was an immensely popular sport in New England and the Maritimes in the late nineteenth century, and was often connected to local agricultural fairs. Here a horse and driver (in a sulky) are pictured at the Fryeburg Fair around the turn of the century. Courtesy of the Fryeburg Historical Society.

# “YANKEES” AND “BLUENOSERS” AT THE RACES: HARNESS RACING, GROUP IDENTITY, AND THE CREATION OF A MAINE-NEW BRUNSWICK SPORTING REGION, 1870-1930

BY LEAH GRANDY

*Borders, divisions, and connections can be physical or intellectual, and the borders and regions created by the sport of harness racing were large and small, geographical and social. The eastern North American origin and focus of the sport demonstrated the character of the region; the sport had grassroots origins in the region, and expanded to the level of a major spectator sport by the last decades of the nineteenth century. Harness racing in the Maritimes and New England in the nineteenth century demonstrated the social and economic cohesion of the region and helped to solidify group and personal identities. Maine and New Brunswick were an intellectual and physical region which was, in part, defined through harness racing. The author recently completed her doctoral dissertation at the University of New Brunswick. She currently works at the University of New Brunswick's Harriet Irving Library and is also employed as a stipend instructor.*

ON ANY given sunny afternoon in the late nineteenth century, in towns all over eastern North America, thousands of people gathered at harness racing tracks to experience the spectacle of highly trained horses vying to beat the clock, as they trotted or paced furiously around a dirt oval. Unlike flat racing, which utilizes a jockey and is run at the gallop, in harness racing the driver sits in a cart known as a “sulky” and the horse competes at the gait of pace or trot. By the end of the nineteenth century, the sport of harness racing reached a peak in popularity, capturing the interest of the public thanks to the expanding press and new developments in technology. Out of all the sports that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, harness racing

perhaps best illustrated the values and ideals of the Victorian middle class in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. Unlike many other popular North American sports, which were British imports, harness racing was a truly North American sport, arising in New England and New York during the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The sport quickly spread across New England and the Maritime Provinces in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Unlike the perceived elitism of flat (or thoroughbred) racing in Britain, harness racing was viewed as a more accessible sport of the people; this accessibility helped spur its popularity in eastern North America.

The sport had grassroots origins in the region, but expanded to the level of a major spectator sport by the last decades of the nineteenth century, sitting comfortably as an expression of middle-class goals in eastern North America.<sup>2</sup> Harness racing provided an outlet for the nostalgic longings for a rural past of a newly urban and industrial class, while at the same time acting as a symbol of industrial “progress.” Harness racing epitomized the popular bourgeois ideals of progress by utilizing a bureaucracy, layered organizational structure, set rules, and recent technology, as well as having an obsessive focus on time and statistics. The organization of the sport was many-layered with well established governing bodies, clubs, and race circuits. Regional participants in harness races followed specific forms and rules set by American national organizations, which meticulously kept statistics and timed records. Participants in the sport were quick to capitalize on modern innovations, such as in the manufacture of new equipment, veterinary medicine, and vehicular advances, in order to improve times. The many hallmarks of modern, industrial culture of New England and the Maritimes were central to the sport by the second half of the nineteenth century.

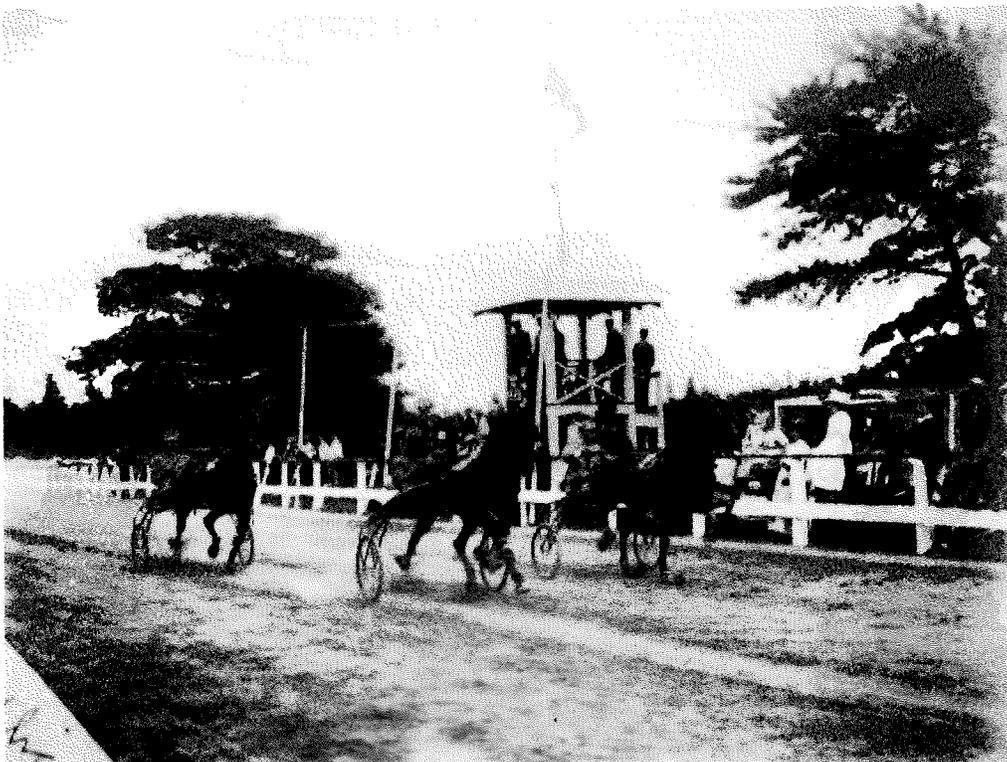
As borderlands historians have pointed out, the people of New England and the Maritimes have had a long history of interaction. Historian P.A. Buckner has written of the region’s special relationship noting that “the things people have in common regardless of which side of the border they live on are more important than the things that divide them and the border is therefore either meaningless or an undesirable barrier to the free flow of people, goods, and ideas.”<sup>3</sup> The interaction between people in the region dated to the colonial times with Natives and European settlers. The Maritimes, like all of New England, became a part of Boston’s mercantile network during the “Age of Sail” and were under its social and economic influence. Historian Graeme Wynn calls this the “Fundy-Atlantic Axis.”<sup>4</sup> Significant movement occurred during the eigh-

teenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly from the Maritimes to New England, due to economic and population pressure, allowing the cultures to intermingle. During the latter part of the nineteenth century the Maritimes suffered from mass out-migration, largely to New England, which further strengthened regional connections.<sup>5</sup> Maritimers and New Englanders had a similar cultural outlook and material culture, and were often described using the same stereotypes.<sup>6</sup> Although national borders were well established by the end of the nineteenth century and citizens showed an awareness of their respective nationality, cross-border interaction was quite common in various social, economic, and cultural areas. The sport of harness racing was among the many shared interests and activities of people in the Maritimes and New England.

The state of Maine and province of New Brunswick, in particular, formed a distinct sporting region. The sport of harness racing played a critical role in forging this cross-border sporting region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Harness racers from both Maine and New Brunswick often crossed the international boundary to compete in races in the other country. Railroads facilitated this cross-border competition. A spirit of camaraderie often developed between communities in Maine and New Brunswick, and people sometimes cheered for horses from the other side of the border as one of their "own." The sport of harness racing expressed a nineteenth-century New England mode of thinking, in that it exemplified the ideals of progress, speed, and efficiency, much like the region's industrial economy. Yet, it also helped the province of New Brunswick to form an identity unique from Central Canada and Britain, where flat racing often dominated. Harness racing grew as a sport in New England and the Maritimes due to shared economic, geographical, and social conditions.

### **Regional Sport: The Borderlands of New Brunswick and Maine**

Harness racing was a part of a sporting tradition that emphasized the connection between the Maritimes and New England during the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century and the unique outlook of borderlands in the formation of identity. Harness racing is not the only sport that demonstrates the solidarity of the region. Historian Colin Howell has noted that baseball, hunting, sailing, running, and rugby also tied the Maritimes and New England together as a sporting region in the interwar period.<sup>7</sup> Howell writes, "For



Horses from both Maine and New Brunswick often crossed the international boundary to compete in harness races. This race was part of the Bar Harbor Horse Show, c. 1910. Maine Historical Society Collections.

Maritimers, the sporting contact with New England seemed a continuing manifestation of the relatively benign relationship that had existed over the years, one characterized by economic interaction and the movement of peoples back and forth across the border.<sup>8</sup> Historian Gregory MacIntosh Ross has shown boxing also united the Maritimes and New England as a sporting region.<sup>9</sup> The social patterns exhibited by harness racing contestants and spectators in the late nineteenth century were similar to those exhibited by contestants and spectators at these other sporting events. What is important is how these sports spoke to issues of nationalism, regionalism, and identity.

Harness racing was one of the most popular sports in the region during the late nineteenth century, and there were several large harness racing tracks in both the province and the state. The abundance of quality racing venues allowed horses to travel around the region to compete, and a cross-border coordinated circuit of races formed. The Moosepath Driving Park outside Saint John was one of the most developed harness racing track in New Brunswick during the late nineteenth century,

boasting long race meets with top competitors from the region. The first race meeting of the Moosepath Driving Association was held August 23, 1871, the same day as the Great Anglo-Canadian rowing race between the Paris Crew and the Renforth Crew of England on the Kennebecasis River, making the opening a significant event. Horses attended the opening races from all three Maritime Provinces as well New England. Fredericton also had a large race track, the Fredericton Driving Park, which was built in 1887. Through the Moosepath and the Fredericton Driving Park, New Brunswick was able to offer world-class harness racing, thereby drawing competitors from around the Maritimes and New England.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Maine also had an established circuit of tracks and races, both large and small, with Bangor being the most important locale. Abraham Woodard opened a mile-long race track in Bangor in 1855. But ultimately the most important track in the area was Maplewood Park.<sup>10</sup> Maplewood Park was built on land donated by former mayor Joseph P. Bass to the city of Bangor and was later named Bass Park in his honor. The proximity to railroads and the popular press of the area helped promote the popularity of the sport in Bangor. Livestock came to the park via the Maine Central Railway, making good use of modern transportation. A "Press Row" for reporters covering the events was located at the entrance to the backstretch. Press coverage played an important role in the creation of harness racing as a mass sport.<sup>11</sup> Foot races, bicycle races, thoroughbred races, and baseball games were also held at Maplewood Park, in conjunction with harness races, something which was common among driving parks during this period. Maplewood hosted the largest race meets in Maine, and was amply supported by the people of Bangor, who "until the last race had been trotted . . . would eat, breathe and talk trotting and fair non stop."<sup>12</sup>

Reporting by daily newspapers allowed local enthusiasts to follow races around the New England-Maritimes region and further abroad in a timely manner without travelling to far-flung tracks. When the Bangor races were reviewed in a Fredericton newspaper, New Brunswick horses were often specifically discussed. For example, in 1890, Fredericton's *Daily Gleaner* reported, "Frank Nelson, a St. John horse, was distanced in the first heat. Speculation of St. John, Geo. Carvill's pet, won the 2:31 class. . . Sir Charles took first prize in the stallion competition."<sup>13</sup> New Brunswickers seem to have taken a special interest in their horses that competed across the border in Maine. Although Maine and New Brunswick formed a borderlands sporting region, local and state/

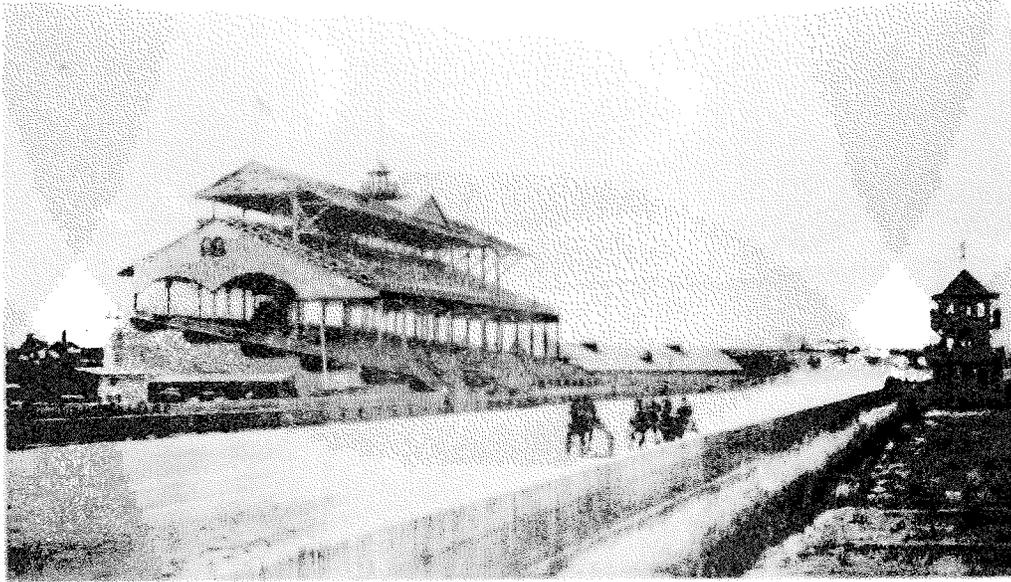
provincial rivalries could develop. Harness racing fans in Maine and New Brunswick could adopt different identities depending on the context. Depending on which horses were competing in the race, a fan might identify himself or herself by town, area, state/province, or the New England-Maritimes region.

Horses regularly crossed the international border to compete on foreign tracks, with the tracks nearest the Canadian-American border particularly showing exchange between competitors and officials. Although in different countries, communities located near the border often had closer ties to their cross-border neighbors than to the larger cities within their own borders. For example, in 1891, the Carleton County Agricultural Society held races at Woodstock, New Brunswick, and the judges included one man from Houlton, Maine, and one from Caribou, Maine. It was also noted that the "Farmer's race" was won by a horse from Fort Fairfield, Maine.<sup>14</sup>

### **On the Rail: New Modes of Transportation**

The international circuit was made possible by reliable, swift transportation in the form of railways. Harness racing always had a strong connection with transportation. The sport itself evolved from a form of transportation that flourished when roads improved in the region. The railway certainly had an influence on the development of the sport; spectator travel and attendance, horse and driver transport, and race track locations and meetings could all be affected by the railway. With the introduction of railways, longer meets were created, allowing for racing outside local circuits.<sup>15</sup> More horses could attend meets via the railway rather than hoof, allowing for larger racing cards. Reliable transportation also brought more spectators and with them entrance fees to contribute to purse money. In general, the development of a more sophisticated transportation network led to increased contact between Maritimers and New Englanders in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The growth of harness racing as a popular pastime in the Maritimes and New England was accelerated and aided by railway expansion. In this it differed from flat racing in Britain. Although it was often thought that the sport of horse racing and the railroad companies in Britain had a symbiotic relationship, historians John Tolston and Wray Vamplew have argued that the effect of the railway on horse racing was not as far-



The sport of harness racing grew in popularity as it became more accessible to a wider audience thanks to the railroads, which transported fans to races, and to the press, which allowed fans to read about the races at home. As the sport became more popular, larger venues were built. Pictured here is the Rigby Trotting Park in South Portland in the 1890s. Maine Historical Society Collections.

reaching as previously thought.<sup>16</sup> People were already going to the races in large numbers before trains made travel much easier and quicker in early-nineteenth-century England. Rail companies capitalized on an already popular activity with special trains and rates. Thus, in England, the connection between railways and horse racing emerged about fifty years after the birth of the sport, but they did eventually develop such a strong connection that many races were sponsored by railway companies.<sup>17</sup> In the Maritimes, railway development stimulated general economic development; economic expansion followed where the railway was laid. Communities vied for railway lines to come through their towns to expand their local business. The railway was more essential to the emergence of the racing industry in the northeastern part of North America than it was in Britain, as the size of population centers and distances between them required the owners to travel long distances to succeed in the industry. The rise of railway transportation, industry, and the sport of harness racing were inextricably linked.

The railway certainly aided in the transport of harness horses for the purposes of racing, trade, and breeding. For example, Hampton, New Brunswick, harness racer breeder George Otty shipped his mare back from Truro, Nova Scotia, in 1882, a distance of approximately 300 kilo-

metres, after being bred to a stallion there, and the trip took just over seven hours.<sup>18</sup> Horses coming from farther afield often travelled by a combination of train and steamboat. Another New Brunswick breeder, Hugh McMonagle of Sussex Vale, imported a stallion called Greyling through Boston in 1881. The horse left Boston on February 1, then steamed to Falmouth, Nova Scotia, arriving February 7. The next day Greyling left by rail and arrived at Sussex on February 9.<sup>19</sup> The transportation of harness racers by train was very common in the late nineteenth century.

The regional railways of Maine and New Brunswick frequently offered special rates for horses and spectators attending harness racing events, showing their mutually beneficial relationship with harness racing. In the late nineteenth century, horses going to the Eastern Maine State Fair in Bangor were offered special rates through the various railroads which acted as an incentive for harness racers from around the region to attend the event. The transportation section of the 1914 regulations of the Bangor State Fair stated that "horses entered for racing only . . . will be transported over above Railroads at one fare for round trip, no refund of charges to the Fair being made and no charges assessed on the return from Fair to original point of shipment. Attendants or persons in charge, limited to one person for each shipment, will be entitled to free passage both ways. No attendant will be permitted with less carload shipments of live stocks other than horses."<sup>20</sup>

Spectators were also often offered special train ticket prices and routes to attend races, making it more affordable for people to travel to races. As early as 1868 a special train ran from Saint John to Sussex, New Brunswick, for the harness races, embarking at 8:30 in the morning and leaving Sussex at 7:00 pm.<sup>21</sup> Excursion tickets were offered to the Eastern Maine State Fair at Bangor from various locations in New Brunswick and Maine in 1890 at the following rates: "Edmundston \$6.50, St. Leonards \$6.00, Grand Falls \$5.75, Presque Isle \$6.00, Caribou \$5.75, Fort Fairfield \$5.50, Houlton \$4.50, Woodstock \$4.50, St. Stephen \$4.50, St. Andrews \$4.50, Fredericton \$4.50, Fairville, Carleton, St. John \$4.50." The railway ticket prices also included a discounted coupon for admission to the fair.<sup>22</sup> Harness racing provided business to both railways in the region and local suppliers of public transport such as omnibuses and hackney cabs. In turn, the modern and efficient transportation allowed the number of harness racing spectators in the region to swell.

Newspapers in New Brunswick and Maine were keen to report on attendance at harness races. As with other sports, the popular press helped

to create interest in harness racing. Races became not simply a sporting contest, but “events” that deserved coverage as “news” in newspapers. Just as the railroad made harness racing more accessible to spectators, newspapers made the sport accessible to anyone who could purchase a newspaper. The press coverage of sports like harness racing boosted both newspaper circulation and attendance numbers. The popularity of the sport among spectators was evident in the Maritimes and New England. At Saint John’s Moosepath Park on September 25, 1890, 2,000 people witnessed the harness races.<sup>23</sup> In July 1889, 200 people attended a race at Moosepath and that was considered “slim attendance” by the local newspaper.<sup>24</sup> However, in October 1890, a crowd of 200 at the Fredericton Driving Park was called “good attendance,” although the reporter complained that the races were unexciting and “poorly contested,” marking the smaller nature of the Fredericton track.<sup>25</sup> Yet, from such reports it appears that in Fredericton during the 1890s harness racing was the most popular spectator sport in the city, even above baseball, which often got second billing.

### **Going to the Fair: Harness Racing at Regional Fairs**

The expansion of transportation networks, the popularity of harness racing as a spectator sport, and the rise of the agricultural fair all came together in the late nineteenth century to create a significant cultural event. Once they realized the sport’s appeal, fair organizers often included harness races as part of the festivities, in order to draw in larger crowds to the fairs. Author W.H. Gocher noted, “in the [eighteen] fifties, when New England fairs began to add trotting races to their programs, a few objected until they saw the increased attendance and enthusiasm of the spectators.”<sup>26</sup> Bringing in harness racing did raise moral concerns in some areas because it supposedly encouraged vices, including gambling, consumption of alcohol, and unruly behaviour. Some agriculturalists also believed that the races distracted from the exhibits, and it was debatable as to whether harness racing had anything to do with agriculture.<sup>27</sup> Horses were often bred on rural farms, but much of the racing and training took place in towns and cities. The races were, therefore, often termed “trials of speed” and replaced the plowing matches that had been featured events at fairs.<sup>28</sup> Despite some criticism, agricultural fairs and trotting races served each other; the races drew an audience to the fair and the fair provided a venue for the sport.

Harness racing was a major feature of fairs held in Fredericton and Saint John, New Brunswick, and Lewiston and Bangor, Maine. Joseph Bass, the founder of Maplewood Park, was also the president of the Eastern Maine State Fair from 1883 to 1895. He was the owner/publisher of the *Bangor Daily Commercial* as well, demonstrating the connection between newspapermen and the sport of harness racing. All the major fairs in the New Brunswick-Maine region had strong connections to harness racing by 1890.

Harness racers often competed at fairs outside of their immediate location, including those on the other side of the border. In 1890, for example, the Eastern Maine State Fair offered sixteen races and followed the rules of the National Trotting Association, a U.S.-based harness racing organization. According to the *Bangor Daily Commercial*, the prize money was higher for horses from within the region. The "Association will add \$50 for colts and fillies owned in Maine and the Maritime Provinces" entered in particular races. Furthermore, three races were set aside for horses "owned in the New England States and Maritime Provinces."<sup>29</sup> Although the rules were set by a national organization from the United States, the idea of what constituted a regional horse did not recognize the international boundary. Maine and the Maritimes were seen as one region when it came to harness racing. A horse from Ohio or Tennessee would have been more of a "foreigner" at the Bangor fair than a horse from New Brunswick. The trend of cross-border competition continued into the twentieth century. At the 34th Eastern Maine State Fair in 1917, for example, horses from Fredericton and Sussex, New Brunswick, and Sydney, Nova Scotia, competed in the harness races.<sup>30</sup>

During festive occasions, harness racing could become an expression of nationalism. Harness races were frequently held on civic holidays in both Canada and the United States. Like older festivals, the modern civic holidays such as Victoria Day, celebrated in Canada in late May, became events in which social groups fought for cultural supremacy. Since the seventeenth century in England, royal and national holidays had replaced religious and saints' days as the most important holidays, and this pattern was continued in colonial Canada. Harness races were often held as part of the festivities, especially in New England and the Maritimes, where the sport was so popular. In New Brunswick, the sport helped New Brunswickers develop an identity separate from central Canada. Historian Nancy Bouchier examined harness racing and civic holiday celebrations in Woodstock, Ontario, and found that team sports domi-



Although harness races were most commonly held in the warmer months, races did sometimes occur in the winter, as pictured here in Poland Spring around the turn of the century. Maine Historical Society Collections.

nated civic holidays, and horse racing the agricultural fair.<sup>31</sup> She suggests that “although Woodstock’s urban population relied as heavily upon horses as their rural counterparts did, horses and horse interest ostensibly held no role in symbolic representations of the town leaders’ vision of their urban corporate community.”<sup>32</sup> Unlike what Bouchier found in Ontario, in Fredericton horse racing was featured alongside team sport competitions at holiday celebrations.

Harness racing was of such importance in Fredericton that it was an all-year concern besides being specially featured at fairs and civic holidays. Frederictonians regularly held a day of sport on Dominion Day (July 1). In 1891, the festivities included baseball and lacrosse games as well as harness races. “There will be two closely contested horse races, and perhaps a third,” the *Daily Gleaner* reported, “but the two now decided will bring the best horses in the city and vicinity, and prove very interesting to the lovers of this class of sport.”<sup>33</sup> Trains and steamers offered special excursion rates for those wishing to attend from other parts of the region. Many did attend; as noted in the *Daily Gleaner*, “the crowd was steadily increasing and when the first race was called, the grand

stand was full, a large number were sweltering near the ball grounds and the track fence was lined with all classes from the grand stand to the stable entrance.”<sup>34</sup> After the event, it was reported that, “all the streets were thronged yet it was a quiet crowd. There were no disturbances and few were drunk. The day was passed pleasantly and soberly,” emphasizing the importance of sobriety.<sup>35</sup> Harness races were again held the following year on Dominion Day, and the paper wrote, “it is hoped they may be successful as without some such sport as this Fredericton would have a dull Dominion Day.”<sup>36</sup> It is not surprising that harness racing would be key in Fredericton’s national celebrations, as it was an activity that aroused local pride and community spirit in the growing middle class.

The American counterpart to Dominion Day was the Fourth of July or Independence Day. Cross-border interaction even occurred on national holidays. For example, in July 1882, the people of Fredericton and Woodstock were invited to Fourth of July celebrations in Calais, Maine. The Independence Day celebration in Calais featured trotting races.<sup>37</sup> The seasonal schedule of the United States influenced the activities in New Brunswick in other ways; in 1890 the Fredericton Driving Park decided to follow the United States custom and open the harness racing season earlier in the spring with a free afternoon of music and other sports which had “now become a very popular method of opening up a season.”<sup>38</sup> New England and Maritime harness racing traditions influenced one another as ideas flowed easily back and forth across the border.

### Community Spirit and the Harness Racer

Community spirit evolves from regional and civic identity, and it found a strong expression in local sporting representatives of harness racing. Group identity could develop at the regional, state, provincial, town, or village level. In the broadest sense of community, New Brunswickers sometimes allied themselves with harness horses from Maine, and felt a sporting connection to the equine stars of the state. Local newspapers in New Brunswick frequently published information on Maine race horses. For example, a story on the front page of the Fredericton *Daily Gleaner* on September 11, 1890, stated, “interest in the pedigree of Allerton, the fast stallion, who has just beaten the time of our own Nelson, has increased considerably since his recent great performance.”<sup>39</sup> Nelson was a renowned race horse from Waterville, Maine, but was claimed as “our own” in the New Brunswick paper. The article also pointed out that the pedigree of the new champion, Allerton, traced to

Maine mares. The account suggested that Maine and New Brunswick were part of the same sporting region.

The definition of what "our" horse meant could change from race to race. Sometimes New Brunswickers supported Maine horses, while at other times they supported a New Brunswick horse, especially when they competed in the United States. But rivalries between cities and towns within New Brunswick also developed, especially between the cities of Fredericton and Saint John. When Fredericton horses competed at the Moosepath Park in Saint John, they were always mentioned in Fredericton's *Daily Gleaner*. For example, in September 1890, the harness racers Bessie Clay, Harry M., and Sporter, Jr. travelled to Saint John: "this is Fredericton's contribution to the Moosepath races, and it is believed that they will give a good account of themselves," reported the *Gleaner* on the Fredericton horses.<sup>40</sup> Insults directed toward Saint John also appeared in the paper. While watching harness racers on the ice, a reporter noted, "strangers present on the bank of the river dispersed with the opinion that the local flyers are good ones and not surrounded with fog like the flying in the sister St. John."<sup>41</sup>

The rivalry between Saint John and Fredericton could sometimes be heated. In 1880, following a sporting event, some Frederictonians claimed that Saint John men had "shown sporting misconduct and 'run on' Fredericton in sporting matters, [and] therefore will not be invited" to a sporting day in Fredericton. Details of the incident that merited this censure were not given in the newspaper report.<sup>42</sup> When Frederictonians proposed a day of sport featuring harness racing, the people of St. Stephen and Woodstock, New Brunswick, and Calais, Maine, were invited. Saint Johners seem to have been purposely excluded, although it may have been that towns from the immediate area only were invited. The comment made in the city newspaper at the time read:

Fredericton has been so far deprived of her day's sport. Her boating men, horsemen, walkers, runners and athletes generally are just spoiling for a chance to exhibit their prowess; and no one will deny that denuded of their demoralizing aspects manly sports should be encouraged.<sup>43</sup>

Thus even within the Maine-New Brunswick sporting region, the international boundary was sometimes ignored for the purposes of cheering and competing. In this example from 1880, at least, Frederictonians invited citizens from Calais, Maine, to the sporting day, but not their fellow New Brunswickers from Saint John.

Frederictonians were always eager to compare their horses to those of outsiders, the anthropological "other." New Brunswick cities contrasted their identities through sport. The *Daily Gleaner* described the spirited mood of the citizens in anticipation of an upcoming harness racing meet:

Already much speculation is rife respecting the entries for the race in this city. The purses are good sized ones, and it is expected that some good outside horses will be present. The best local horses will be in the races and some of them are now being fitted. It would add very much to the enjoyment if outside horses show up, as Fredericton horsemen think they can take the wind out of the sails of all that may come. A fair field and no favour, is the motto, and the races will be run on their merits.<sup>44</sup>

The sport of harness racing thus could help in the creation of identity on a community level. Racing horses created passion among spectators which sparked a sense of group identity.

## Conclusion

New Brunswick and Maine formed a sporting region with a similar outlook and goals with regards to harness racing. The newly established railway routes allowed for the easy travel of racers and spectators alike and helped connect the state of Maine and province of New Brunswick. It was the involvement of the spectator that made the sport of harness racing socially significant. The large number of spectators that attended races created a forum for social interaction and reinforcement of cultural values. The characteristics of harness racing expressed the idea of progress, yet at the same time allowed for nostalgia for a rural past. Besides expressing a modern, middle-class outlook, the sport was often featured in displays of national and local pride. Harness racing was important in defining region, community, and group identity in Maine and New Brunswick and reflected the societal changes of the late nineteenth century. The popularity of harness racing in the region continued through the first part of the twentieth century, and Maine and New Brunswick continued to be tied together as a sporting region. A combined Maine and New Brunswick Harness Racing Circuit was established officially between the years 1921 and 1930 and included races at tracks in Fredericton, Woodstock, Saint John, Moncton, Houlton, Presque Isle, Bangor, and Skowhegan.<sup>45</sup> The international boundary was

no barrier to the people of Maine and New Brunswick, who often came together, as both spectators and competitors, through the sport of harness racing.

## NOTES

1. The British origins of colonial sport are discussed by Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005); Robert D. Day, "The British Garrison at Halifax: Its Contribution to the Development of Sport in the Community" in Morris Mott ed., *Sports in Canada: Historical Readings* (Mississauga, Ontario: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1989).
2. Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 1-14.
3. P.A. Buckner, "The Borderlands Concept: A Critical Appraisal," in *The Northeastern Borderlands: Four Centuries of Interaction*, eds. Stephen J. Hornsby, Victor A. Konrad, and James J. Herlan (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1989), p. 156.
4. Graeme Wynn, "New England's Outpost in the Nineteenth Century," in Hornsby, Konrad, and Herlan, *The Northeastern Borderlands*, pp. 64-93.
5. Judith Fingard, "1880s," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1997). The phenomenon of out-migration in the Maritimes is ably discussed in the journal *Acadiensis* in such articles as Alan Brooks, "Out-Migration for the Maritimes Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations," *Acadiensis* 2 (Spring 1976); Betsey Beattie, "Going Up to Lynn': Single, Maritime-Born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930," *Acadiensis* 22 (Autumn 1992); and Patricia Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look," *Acadiensis* 15 (Autumn 1985).
6. Wynn, "New England's Outpost in the Nineteenth Century."
7. Colin Howell, "Borderlands, Baselines and Bearhunters: Conceptualizing the Northeast as a Sporting Region in the Interwar Period," *Journal of Sport History* 29 (Summer 2002): 251-270; Colin Howell and Daryl Leeworthy, "Borderlands" in *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, eds. S.W. Pope and John Nauright (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 71-84.
8. Howell, "Borderlands, Baselines and Bearhunters," p. 266.
9. Gregory MacIntosh Ross, "Beyond 'The Abysmal Brute': A Social History of Boxing in Interwar Nova Scotia" (M.A. Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 2008).
10. W.H. Gocher, *Trotalong* (Hartford: W.H. Gocher, 1928), pp. 70-73. The park is now known as Bangor Historic Track and is on the National Register of Historic Places.
11. Clark P. Thompson, *Walking Tour of Bangor Historic Track* (n.d.; pamphlet, Special Collections Department, Fogler Library, University of Maine, Orono, Maine).
12. Ken Ward, "Maplewood Park Fair became Agricultural Mecca," *Bangor Daily News*, June 28, 1983, Ephemera, Bangor Museum.
13. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 5, 1890.
14. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), June 26, 1891.
15. R.W. Tomlinson, "A Geography of Flat-racing in Great Britain," *Geography Journal of the Geological Association* 71.3 (1986): 228-239.
16. John Tolston and Wray Vamplew, "Derailed: Railways and Horse-Racing Revisited," *The Sports Historian* 18 (November 1998): 34-49.

17. Dean Jobb, "Sackville Promotes a Railway: The Politics of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Railway, 1872-1886" in *People and Place: Studies of Small Town Life in the Maritimes*, ed. Larry McCann (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 1987), pp. 31-56.
18. Otty fonds, #50, New Brunswick Museum Archives (hereafter NBMA).
19. McMonagle fonds, #63, NBMA.
20. Bangor Fair Programs, 1914, 1913 B Ag 2, H 791.974131, Bangor Museum.
21. McMonagle fonds, #125.
22. *Bangor Daily Commercial*, August 8, 1890.
23. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), Sept. 26, 1890.
24. Clipping from the McMonagle fonds, NBMA.
25. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), October 17, 1890.
26. Gocher, *Trotalong*, p. 245.
27. Curtis Miner, "And They're Off! Pennsylvania's Horse Racing Tradition," *Pennsylvania Heritage* 32 (Spring 2005): 26-35.
28. Miner, "And They're Off," pp. 26-35.
29. *Bangor Daily Commercial*, July 5, 1890.
30. Bangor Fair Programs, 1914, 1913 B Ag 2, H 791.974131, Bangor Museum.
31. Nancy Bouchier, "Strictly Honorable Races: Woodstock's Driving Park Association and Nineteenth-Century Small Town Civic Holidays," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport* 24 (1993): 29-51.
32. Bouchier, "Strictly Honorable Races," p. 41.
33. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), June 29, 1891.
34. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), July 2, 1891.
35. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), July 2, 1891.
36. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), June 9, 1892.
37. *New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), June 21, 1882.
38. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), May 28, 1890.
39. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 11, 1890.
40. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 21, 1890.
41. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), March 18, 1892.
42. *New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), July 28, 1880.
43. *New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), July 28, 1880.
44. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 18, 1890.
45. Fred H. Phillips, "Past Glories Haunt Fredericton Raceway," New Brunswick Sport Hall of Fame collections.

# Maine History

Volume 47  
Number 1 *The Maine Borderlands*

Article 6

1-1-2013

## **"Yankees" and "Bluenosers" at the Races: Harness Racing, Group Identity, and the Creation of a Maine-New Brunswick Sporting Region, 1870-1930**

Leah Grandy  
*University of New Brunswick Harriet Irving Library*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal>

 Part of the Social History Commons, and the United States History Commons

### **Recommended Citation**

Grandy, Leah. "'Yankees' and 'Bluenosers' at the Races: Harness Racing, Group Identity, and the Creation of a Maine-New Brunswick Sporting Region, 1870-1930." *Maine History* 47, 1 (2013): 94-110.  
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol47/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Maine History* by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).



Harness racing was an immensely popular sport in New England and the Maritimes in the late nineteenth century, and was often connected to local agricultural fairs. Here a horse and driver (in a sulky) are pictured at the Fryeburg Fair around the turn of the century. Courtesy of the Fryeburg Historical Society.

# “YANKEES” AND “BLUENOSERS” AT THE RACES: HARNESS RACING, GROUP IDENTITY, AND THE CREATION OF A MAINE-NEW BRUNSWICK SPORTING REGION, 1870-1930

BY LEAH GRANDY

*Borders, divisions, and connections can be physical or intellectual, and the borders and regions created by the sport of harness racing were large and small, geographical and social. The eastern North American origin and focus of the sport demonstrated the character of the region; the sport had grassroots origins in the region, and expanded to the level of a major spectator sport by the last decades of the nineteenth century. Harness racing in the Maritimes and New England in the nineteenth century demonstrated the social and economic cohesion of the region and helped to solidify group and personal identities. Maine and New Brunswick were an intellectual and physical region which was, in part, defined through harness racing. The author recently completed her doctoral dissertation at the University of New Brunswick. She currently works at the University of New Brunswick's Harriet Irving Library and is also employed as a stipend instructor.*

ON ANY given sunny afternoon in the late nineteenth century, in towns all over eastern North America, thousands of people gathered at harness racing tracks to experience the spectacle of highly trained horses vying to beat the clock, as they trotted or paced furiously around a dirt oval. Unlike flat racing, which utilizes a jockey and is run at the gallop, in harness racing the driver sits in a cart known as a “sulky” and the horse competes at the gait of pace or trot. By the end of the nineteenth century, the sport of harness racing reached a peak in popularity, capturing the interest of the public thanks to the expanding press and new developments in technology. Out of all the sports that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, harness racing

perhaps best illustrated the values and ideals of the Victorian middle class in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. Unlike many other popular North American sports, which were British imports, harness racing was a truly North American sport, arising in New England and New York during the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The sport quickly spread across New England and the Maritime Provinces in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Unlike the perceived elitism of flat (or thoroughbred) racing in Britain, harness racing was viewed as a more accessible sport of the people; this accessibility helped spur its popularity in eastern North America.

The sport had grassroots origins in the region, but expanded to the level of a major spectator sport by the last decades of the nineteenth century, sitting comfortably as an expression of middle-class goals in eastern North America.<sup>2</sup> Harness racing provided an outlet for the nostalgic longings for a rural past of a newly urban and industrial class, while at the same time acting as a symbol of industrial "progress." Harness racing epitomized the popular bourgeois ideals of progress by utilizing a bureaucracy, layered organizational structure, set rules, and recent technology, as well as having an obsessive focus on time and statistics. The organization of the sport was many-layered with well established governing bodies, clubs, and race circuits. Regional participants in harness races followed specific forms and rules set by American national organizations, which meticulously kept statistics and timed records. Participants in the sport were quick to capitalize on modern innovations, such as in the manufacture of new equipment, veterinary medicine, and vehicular advances, in order to improve times. The many hallmarks of modern, industrial culture of New England and the Maritimes were central to the sport by the second half of the nineteenth century.

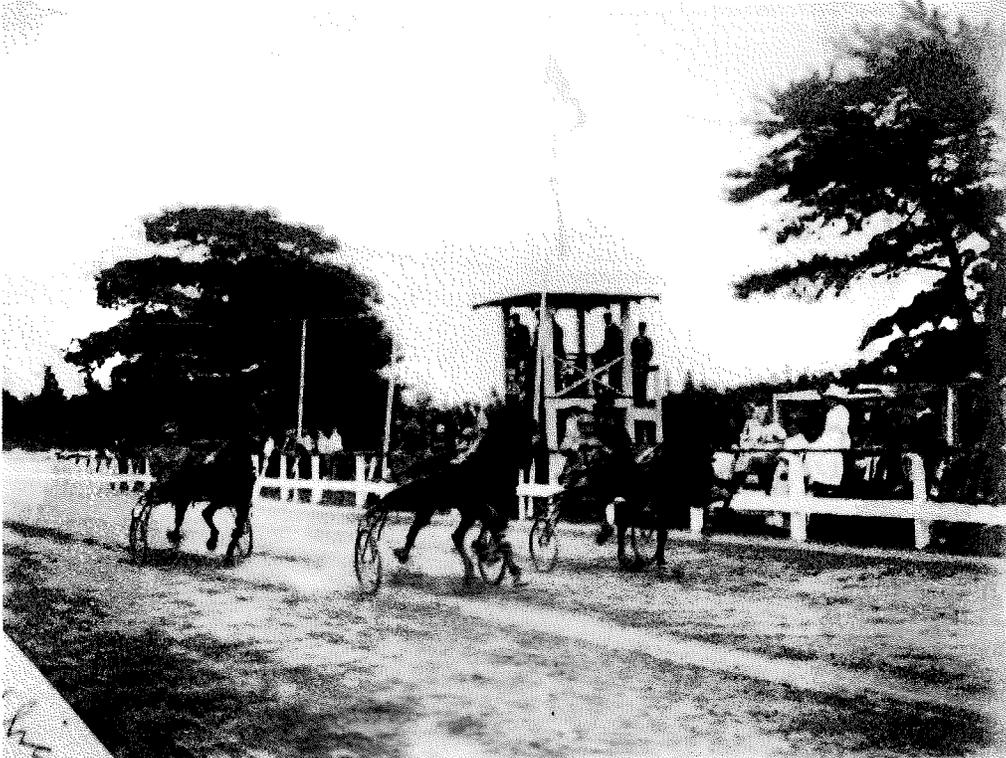
As borderlands historians have pointed out, the people of New England and the Maritimes have had a long history of interaction. Historian P.A. Buckner has written of the region's special relationship noting that "the things people have in common regardless of which side of the border they live on are more important than the things that divide them and the border is therefore either meaningless or an undesirable barrier to the free flow of people, goods, and ideas."<sup>3</sup> The interaction between people in the region dated to the colonial times with Natives and European settlers. The Maritimes, like all of New England, became a part of Boston's mercantile network during the "Age of Sail" and were under its social and economic influence. Historian Graeme Wynn calls this the "Fundy-Atlantic Axis."<sup>4</sup> Significant movement occurred during the eigh-

teenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly from the Maritimes to New England, due to economic and population pressure, allowing the cultures to intermingle. During the latter part of the nineteenth century the Maritimes suffered from mass out-migration, largely to New England, which further strengthened regional connections.<sup>5</sup> Maritimers and New Englanders had a similar cultural outlook and material culture, and were often described using the same stereotypes.<sup>6</sup> Although national borders were well established by the end of the nineteenth century and citizens showed an awareness of their respective nationality, cross-border interaction was quite common in various social, economic, and cultural areas. The sport of harness racing was among the many shared interests and activities of people in the Maritimes and New England.

The state of Maine and province of New Brunswick, in particular, formed a distinct sporting region. The sport of harness racing played a critical role in forging this cross-border sporting region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Harness racers from both Maine and New Brunswick often crossed the international boundary to compete in races in the other country. Railroads facilitated this cross-border competition. A spirit of camaraderie often developed between communities in Maine and New Brunswick, and people sometimes cheered for horses from the other side of the border as one of their "own." The sport of harness racing expressed a nineteenth-century New England mode of thinking, in that it exemplified the ideals of progress, speed, and efficiency, much like the region's industrial economy. Yet, it also helped the province of New Brunswick to form an identity unique from Central Canada and Britain, where flat racing often dominated. Harness racing grew as a sport in New England and the Maritimes due to shared economic, geographical, and social conditions.

### **Regional Sport: The Borderlands of New Brunswick and Maine**

Harness racing was a part of a sporting tradition that emphasized the connection between the Maritimes and New England during the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century and the unique outlook of borderlands in the formation of identity. Harness racing is not the only sport that demonstrates the solidarity of the region. Historian Colin Howell has noted that baseball, hunting, sailing, running, and rugby also tied the Maritimes and New England together as a sporting region in the interwar period.<sup>7</sup> Howell writes, "For



Horses from both Maine and New Brunswick often crossed the international boundary to compete in harness races. This race was part of the Bar Harbor Horse Show, c. 1910. Maine Historical Society Collections.

Maritimers, the sporting contact with New England seemed a continuing manifestation of the relatively benign relationship that had existed over the years, one characterized by economic interaction and the movement of peoples back and forth across the border.”<sup>8</sup> Historian Gregory MacIntosh Ross has shown boxing also united the Maritimes and New England as a sporting region.<sup>9</sup> The social patterns exhibited by harness racing contestants and spectators in the late nineteenth century were similar to those exhibited by contestants and spectators at these other sporting events. What is important is how these sports spoke to issues of nationalism, regionalism, and identity.

Harness racing was one of the most popular sports in the region during the late nineteenth century, and there were several large harness racing tracks in both the province and the state. The abundance of quality racing venues allowed horses to travel around the region to compete, and a cross-border coordinated circuit of races formed. The Moosepath Driving Park outside Saint John was one of the most developed harness racing track in New Brunswick during the late nineteenth century,

boasting long race meets with top competitors from the region. The first race meeting of the Moosepath Driving Association was held August 23, 1871, the same day as the Great Anglo-Canadian rowing race between the Paris Crew and the Renforth Crew of England on the Kennebecasis River, making the opening a significant event. Horses attended the opening races from all three Maritime Provinces as well New England. Fredericton also had a large race track, the Fredericton Driving Park, which was built in 1887. Through the Moosepath and the Fredericton Driving Park, New Brunswick was able to offer world-class harness racing, thereby drawing competitors from around the Maritimes and New England.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Maine also had an established circuit of tracks and races, both large and small, with Bangor being the most important locale. Abraham Woodard opened a mile-long race track in Bangor in 1855. But ultimately the most important track in the area was Maplewood Park.<sup>10</sup> Maplewood Park was built on land donated by former mayor Joseph P. Bass to the city of Bangor and was later named Bass Park in his honor. The proximity to railroads and the popular press of the area helped promote the popularity of the sport in Bangor. Livestock came to the park via the Maine Central Railway, making good use of modern transportation. A "Press Row" for reporters covering the events was located at the entrance to the backstretch. Press coverage played an important role in the creation of harness racing as a mass sport.<sup>11</sup> Foot races, bicycle races, thoroughbred races, and baseball games were also held at Maplewood Park, in conjunction with harness races, something which was common among driving parks during this period. Maplewood hosted the largest race meets in Maine, and was amply supported by the people of Bangor, who "until the last race had been trotted . . . would eat, breathe and talk trotting and fair non stop."<sup>12</sup>

Reporting by daily newspapers allowed local enthusiasts to follow races around the New England-Maritimes region and further abroad in a timely manner without travelling to far-flung tracks. When the Bangor races were reviewed in a Fredericton newspaper, New Brunswick horses were often specifically discussed. For example, in 1890, Fredericton's *Daily Gleaner* reported, "Frank Nelson, a St. John horse, was distanced in the first heat. Speculation of St. John, Geo. Carvill's pet, won the 2:31 class. . . Sir Charles took first prize in the stallion competition."<sup>13</sup> New Brunswickers seem to have taken a special interest in their horses that competed across the border in Maine. Although Maine and New Brunswick formed a borderlands sporting region, local and state/

provincial rivalries could develop. Harness racing fans in Maine and New Brunswick could adopt different identities depending on the context. Depending on which horses were competing in the race, a fan might identify himself or herself by town, area, state/province, or the New England-Maritimes region.

Horses regularly crossed the international border to compete on foreign tracks, with the tracks nearest the Canadian-American border particularly showing exchange between competitors and officials. Although in different countries, communities located near the border often had closer ties to their cross-border neighbors than to the larger cities within their own borders. For example, in 1891, the Carleton County Agricultural Society held races at Woodstock, New Brunswick, and the judges included one man from Houlton, Maine, and one from Caribou, Maine. It was also noted that the "Farmer's race" was won by a horse from Fort Fairfield, Maine.<sup>14</sup>

### **On the Rail: New Modes of Transportation**

The international circuit was made possible by reliable, swift transportation in the form of railways. Harness racing always had a strong connection with transportation. The sport itself evolved from a form of transportation that flourished when roads improved in the region. The railway certainly had an influence on the development of the sport; spectator travel and attendance, horse and driver transport, and race track locations and meetings could all be affected by the railway. With the introduction of railways, longer meets were created, allowing for racing outside local circuits.<sup>15</sup> More horses could attend meets via the railway rather than hoof, allowing for larger racing cards. Reliable transportation also brought more spectators and with them entrance fees to contribute to purse money. In general, the development of a more sophisticated transportation network led to increased contact between Maritimers and New Englanders in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The growth of harness racing as a popular pastime in the Maritimes and New England was accelerated and aided by railway expansion. In this it differed from flat racing in Britain. Although it was often thought that the sport of horse racing and the railroad companies in Britain had a symbiotic relationship, historians John Tolston and Wray Vamplew have argued that the effect of the railway on horse racing was not as far-



The sport of harness racing grew in popularity as it became more accessible to a wider audience thanks to the railroads, which transported fans to races, and to the press, which allowed fans to read about the races at home. As the sport became more popular, larger venues were built. Pictured here is the Rigby Trotting Park in South Portland in the 1890s. Maine Historical Society Collections.

reaching as previously thought.<sup>16</sup> People were already going to the races in large numbers before trains made travel much easier and quicker in early-nineteenth-century England. Rail companies capitalized on an already popular activity with special trains and rates. Thus, in England, the connection between railways and horse racing emerged about fifty years after the birth of the sport, but they did eventually develop such a strong connection that many races were sponsored by railway companies.<sup>17</sup> In the Maritimes, railway development stimulated general economic development; economic expansion followed where the railway was laid. Communities vied for railway lines to come through their towns to expand their local business. The railway was more essential to the emergence of the racing industry in the northeastern part of North America than it was in Britain, as the size of population centers and distances between them required the owners to travel long distances to succeed in the industry. The rise of railway transportation, industry, and the sport of harness racing were inextricably linked.

The railway certainly aided in the transport of harness horses for the purposes of racing, trade, and breeding. For example, Hampton, New Brunswick, harness racer breeder George Otty shipped his mare back from Truro, Nova Scotia, in 1882, a distance of approximately 300 kilo-

metres, after being bred to a stallion there, and the trip took just over seven hours.<sup>18</sup> Horses coming from farther afield often travelled by a combination of train and steamboat. Another New Brunswick breeder, Hugh McMonagle of Sussex Vale, imported a stallion called Greyling through Boston in 1881. The horse left Boston on February 1, then steamed to Falmouth, Nova Scotia, arriving February 7. The next day Greyling left by rail and arrived at Sussex on February 9.<sup>19</sup> The transportation of harness racers by train was very common in the late nineteenth century.

The regional railways of Maine and New Brunswick frequently offered special rates for horses and spectators attending harness racing events, showing their mutually beneficial relationship with harness racing. In the late nineteenth century, horses going to the Eastern Maine State Fair in Bangor were offered special rates through the various railroads which acted as an incentive for harness racers from around the region to attend the event. The transportation section of the 1914 regulations of the Bangor State Fair stated that "horses entered for racing only . . . will be transported over above Railroads at one fare for round trip, no refund of charges to the Fair being made and no charges assessed on the return from Fair to original point of shipment. Attendants or persons in charge, limited to one person for each shipment, will be entitled to free passage both ways. No attendant will be permitted with less carload shipments of live stocks other than horses."<sup>20</sup>

Spectators were also often offered special train ticket prices and routes to attend races, making it more affordable for people to travel to races. As early as 1868 a special train ran from Saint John to Sussex, New Brunswick, for the harness races, embarking at 8:30 in the morning and leaving Sussex at 7:00 pm.<sup>21</sup> Excursion tickets were offered to the Eastern Maine State Fair at Bangor from various locations in New Brunswick and Maine in 1890 at the following rates: "Edmundston \$6.50, St. Leonards \$6.00, Grand Falls \$5.75, Presque Isle \$6.00, Caribou \$5.75, Fort Fairfield \$5.50, Houlton \$4.50, Woodstock \$4.50, St. Stephen \$4.50, St. Andrews \$4.50, Fredericton \$4.50, Fairville, Carleton, St. John \$4.50." The railway ticket prices also included a discounted coupon for admission to the fair.<sup>22</sup> Harness racing provided business to both railways in the region and local suppliers of public transport such as omnibuses and hackney cabs. In turn, the modern and efficient transportation allowed the number of harness racing spectators in the region to swell.

Newspapers in New Brunswick and Maine were keen to report on attendance at harness races. As with other sports, the popular press helped

to create interest in harness racing. Races became not simply a sporting contest, but “events” that deserved coverage as “news” in newspapers. Just as the railroad made harness racing more accessible to spectators, newspapers made the sport accessible to anyone who could purchase a newspaper. The press coverage of sports like harness racing boosted both newspaper circulation and attendance numbers. The popularity of the sport among spectators was evident in the Maritimes and New England. At Saint John’s Moosepath Park on September 25, 1890, 2,000 people witnessed the harness races.<sup>23</sup> In July 1889, 200 people attended a race at Moosepath and that was considered “slim attendance” by the local newspaper.<sup>24</sup> However, in October 1890, a crowd of 200 at the Fredericton Driving Park was called “good attendance,” although the reporter complained that the races were unexciting and “poorly contested,” marking the smaller nature of the Fredericton track.<sup>25</sup> Yet, from such reports it appears that in Fredericton during the 1890s harness racing was the most popular spectator sport in the city, even above baseball, which often got second billing.

### **Going to the Fair: Harness Racing at Regional Fairs**

The expansion of transportation networks, the popularity of harness racing as a spectator sport, and the rise of the agricultural fair all came together in the late nineteenth century to create a significant cultural event. Once they realized the sport’s appeal, fair organizers often included harness races as part of the festivities, in order to draw in larger crowds to the fairs. Author W.H. Gocher noted, “in the [eighteen] fifties, when New England fairs began to add trotting races to their programs, a few objected until they saw the increased attendance and enthusiasm of the spectators.”<sup>26</sup> Bringing in harness racing did raise moral concerns in some areas because it supposedly encouraged vices, including gambling, consumption of alcohol, and unruly behaviour. Some agriculturalists also believed that the races distracted from the exhibits, and it was debatable as to whether harness racing had anything to do with agriculture.<sup>27</sup> Horses were often bred on rural farms, but much of the racing and training took place in towns and cities. The races were, therefore, often termed “trials of speed” and replaced the plowing matches that had been featured events at fairs.<sup>28</sup> Despite some criticism, agricultural fairs and trotting races served each other; the races drew an audience to the fair and the fair provided a venue for the sport.

Harness racing was a major feature of fairs held in Fredericton and Saint John, New Brunswick, and Lewiston and Bangor, Maine. Joseph Bass, the founder of Maplewood Park, was also the president of the Eastern Maine State Fair from 1883 to 1895. He was the owner/ publisher of the *Bangor Daily Commercial* as well, demonstrating the connection between newspapermen and the sport of harness racing. All the major fairs in the New Brunswick-Maine region had strong connections to harness racing by 1890.

Harness racers often competed at fairs outside of their immediate location, including those on the other side of the border. In 1890, for example, the Eastern Maine State Fair offered sixteen races and followed the rules of the National Trotting Association, a U.S.-based harness racing organization. According to the *Bangor Daily Commercial*, the prize money was higher for horses from within the region. The "Association will add \$50 for colts and fillies owned in Maine and the Maritime Provinces" entered in particular races. Furthermore, three races were set aside for horses "owned in the New England States and Maritime Provinces."<sup>29</sup> Although the rules were set by a national organization from the United States, the idea of what constituted a regional horse did not recognize the international boundary. Maine and the Maritimes were seen as one region when it came to harness racing. A horse from Ohio or Tennessee would have been more of a "foreigner" at the Bangor fair than a horse from New Brunswick. The trend of cross-border competition continued into the twentieth century. At the 34th Eastern Maine State Fair in 1917, for example, horses from Fredericton and Sussex, New Brunswick, and Sydney, Nova Scotia, competed in the harness races.<sup>30</sup>

During festive occasions, harness racing could become an expression of nationalism. Harness races were frequently held on civic holidays in both Canada and the United States. Like older festivals, the modern civic holidays such as Victoria Day, celebrated in Canada in late May, became events in which social groups fought for cultural supremacy. Since the seventeenth century in England, royal and national holidays had replaced religious and saints' days as the most important holidays, and this pattern was continued in colonial Canada. Harness races were often held as part of the festivities, especially in New England and the Maritimes, where the sport was so popular. In New Brunswick, the sport helped New Brunswickers develop an identity separate from central Canada. Historian Nancy Bouchier examined harness racing and civic holiday celebrations in Woodstock, Ontario, and found that team sports domi-



Although harness races were most commonly held in the warmer months, races did sometimes occur in the winter, as pictured here in Poland Spring around the turn of the century. Maine Historical Society Collections.

nated civic holidays, and horse racing the agricultural fair.<sup>31</sup> She suggests that “although Woodstock’s urban population relied as heavily upon horses as their rural counterparts did, horses and horse interest ostensibly held no role in symbolic representations of the town leaders’ vision of their urban corporate community.”<sup>32</sup> Unlike what Bouchier found in Ontario, in Fredericton horse racing was featured alongside team sport competitions at holiday celebrations.

Harness racing was of such importance in Fredericton that it was an all-year concern besides being specially featured at fairs and civic holidays. Frederictonians regularly held a day of sport on Dominion Day (July 1). In 1891, the festivities included baseball and lacrosse games as well as harness races. “There will be two closely contested horse races, and perhaps a third,” the *Daily Gleaner* reported, “but the two now decided will bring the best horses in the city and vicinity, and prove very interesting to the lovers of this class of sport.”<sup>33</sup> Trains and steamers offered special excursion rates for those wishing to attend from other parts of the region. Many did attend; as noted in the *Daily Gleaner*, “the crowd was steadily increasing and when the first race was called, the grand

stand was full, a large number were sweltering near the ball grounds and the track fence was lined with all classes from the grand stand to the stable entrance.”<sup>34</sup> After the event, it was reported that, “all the streets were thronged yet it was a quiet crowd. There were no disturbances and few were drunk. The day was passed pleasantly and soberly,” emphasizing the importance of sobriety.<sup>35</sup> Harness races were again held the following year on Dominion Day, and the paper wrote, “it is hoped they may be successful as without some such sport as this Fredericton would have a dull Dominion Day.”<sup>36</sup> It is not surprising that harness racing would be key in Fredericton’s national celebrations, as it was an activity that aroused local pride and community spirit in the growing middle class.

The American counterpart to Dominion Day was the Fourth of July or Independence Day. Cross-border interaction even occurred on national holidays. For example, in July 1882, the people of Fredericton and Woodstock were invited to Fourth of July celebrations in Calais, Maine. The Independence Day celebration in Calais featured trotting races.<sup>37</sup> The seasonal schedule of the United States influenced the activities in New Brunswick in other ways; in 1890 the Fredericton Driving Park decided to follow the United States custom and open the harness racing season earlier in the spring with a free afternoon of music and other sports which had “now become a very popular method of opening up a season.”<sup>38</sup> New England and Maritime harness racing traditions influenced one another as ideas flowed easily back and forth across the border.

### Community Spirit and the Harness Racer

Community spirit evolves from regional and civic identity, and it found a strong expression in local sporting representatives of harness racing. Group identity could develop at the regional, state, provincial, town, or village level. In the broadest sense of community, New Brunswickers sometimes allied themselves with harness horses from Maine, and felt a sporting connection to the equine stars of the state. Local newspapers in New Brunswick frequently published information on Maine race horses. For example, a story on the front page of the Fredericton *Daily Gleaner* on September 11, 1890, stated, “interest in the pedigree of Allerton, the fast stallion, who has just beaten the time of our own Nelson, has increased considerably since his recent great performance.”<sup>39</sup> Nelson was a renowned race horse from Waterville, Maine, but was claimed as “our own” in the New Brunswick paper. The article also pointed out that the pedigree of the new champion, Allerton, traced to

Maine mares. The account suggested that Maine and New Brunswick were part of the same sporting region.

The definition of what “our” horse meant could change from race to race. Sometimes New Brunswickers supported Maine horses, while at other times they supported a New Brunswick horse, especially when they competed in the United States. But rivalries between cities and towns within New Brunswick also developed, especially between the cities of Fredericton and Saint John. When Fredericton horses competed at the Moosepath Park in Saint John, they were always mentioned in Fredericton’s *Daily Gleaner*. For example, in September 1890, the harness racers Bessie Clay, Harry M., and Sporter, Jr. travelled to Saint John: “this is Fredericton’s contribution to the Moosepath races, and it is believed that they will give a good account of themselves,” reported the *Gleaner* on the Fredericton horses.<sup>40</sup> Insults directed toward Saint John also appeared in the paper. While watching harness racers on the ice, a reporter noted, “strangers present on the bank of the river dispersed with the opinion that the local flyers are good ones and not surrounded with fog like the flying in the sister St. John.”<sup>41</sup>

The rivalry between Saint John and Fredericton could sometimes be heated. In 1880, following a sporting event, some Frederictonians claimed that Saint John men had “shown sporting misconduct and ‘run on’ Fredericton in sporting matters, [and] therefore will not be invited” to a sporting day in Fredericton. Details of the incident that merited this censure were not given in the newspaper report.<sup>42</sup> When Frederictonians proposed a day of sport featuring harness racing, the people of St. Stephen and Woodstock, New Brunswick, and Calais, Maine, were invited. Saint Johners seem to have been purposely excluded, although it may have been that towns from the immediate area only were invited. The comment made in the city newspaper at the time read:

Fredericton has been so far deprived of her day’s sport. Her boating men, horsemen, walkers, runners and athletes generally are just spoiling for a chance to exhibit their prowess; and no one will deny that denuded of their demoralizing aspects manly sports should be encouraged.<sup>43</sup>

Thus even within the Maine-New Brunswick sporting region, the international boundary was sometimes ignored for the purposes of cheering and competing. In this example from 1880, at least, Frederictonians invited citizens from Calais, Maine, to the sporting day, but not their fellow New Brunswickers from Saint John.

Frederictonians were always eager to compare their horses to those of outsiders, the anthropological "other." New Brunswick cities contrasted their identities through sport. The *Daily Gleaner* described the spirited mood of the citizens in anticipation of an upcoming harness racing meet:

Already much speculation is rife respecting the entries for the race in this city. The purses are good sized ones, and it is expected that some good outside horses will be present. The best local horses will be in the races and some of them are now being fitted. It would add very much to the enjoyment if outside horses show up, as Fredericton horsemen think they can take the wind out of the sails of all that may come. A fair field and no favour, is the motto, and the races will be run on their merits.<sup>44</sup>

The sport of harness racing thus could help in the creation of identity on a community level. Racing horses created passion among spectators which sparked a sense of group identity.

### Conclusion

New Brunswick and Maine formed a sporting region with a similar outlook and goals with regards to harness racing. The newly established railway routes allowed for the easy travel of racers and spectators alike and helped connect the state of Maine and province of New Brunswick. It was the involvement of the spectator that made the sport of harness racing socially significant. The large number of spectators that attended races created a forum for social interaction and reinforcement of cultural values. The characteristics of harness racing expressed the idea of progress, yet at the same time allowed for nostalgia for a rural past. Besides expressing a modern, middle-class outlook, the sport was often featured in displays of national and local pride. Harness racing was important in defining region, community, and group identity in Maine and New Brunswick and reflected the societal changes of the late nineteenth century. The popularity of harness racing in the region continued through the first part of the twentieth century, and Maine and New Brunswick continued to be tied together as a sporting region. A combined Maine and New Brunswick Harness Racing Circuit was established officially between the years 1921 and 1930 and included races at tracks in Fredericton, Woodstock, Saint John, Moncton, Houlton, Presque Isle, Bangor, and Skowhegan.<sup>45</sup> The international boundary was

no barrier to the people of Maine and New Brunswick, who often came together, as both spectators and competitors, through the sport of harness racing.

## NOTES

1. The British origins of colonial sport are discussed by Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005); Robert D. Day, "The British Garrison at Halifax: Its Contribution to the Development of Sport in the Community" in Morris Mott ed., *Sports in Canada: Historical Readings* (Mississauga, Ontario: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1989).
2. Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 1-14.
3. P.A. Buckner, "The Borderlands Concept: A Critical Appraisal," in *The Northeastern Borderlands: Four Centuries of Interaction*, eds. Stephen J. Hornsby, Victor A. Konrad, and James J. Herlan (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1989), p. 156.
4. Graeme Wynn, "New England's Outpost in the Nineteenth Century," in Hornsby, Konrad, and Herlan, *The Northeastern Borderlands*, pp. 64-93.
5. Judith Fingard, "1880s," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1997). The phenomenon of out-migration in the Maritimes is ably discussed in the journal *Acadiensis* in such articles as Alan Brooks, "Out-Migration for the Maritimes Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations," *Acadiensis* 2 (Spring 1976); Betsey Beattie, "Going Up to Lynn: Single, Maritime-Born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930," *Acadiensis* 22 (Autumn 1992); and Patricia Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look," *Acadiensis* 15 (Autumn 1985).
6. Wynn, "New England's Outpost in the Nineteenth Century."
7. Colin Howell, "Borderlands, Baselines and Bearhunters: Conceptualizing the Northeast as a Sporting Region in the Interwar Period," *Journal of Sport History* 29 (Summer 2002): 251-270; Colin Howell and Daryl Leeworthy, "Borderlands" in *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, eds. S.W. Pope and John Nauright (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 71-84.
8. Howell, "Borderlands, Baselines and Bearhunters," p. 266.
9. Gregory MacIntosh Ross, "Beyond 'The Abysmal Brute': A Social History of Boxing in Interwar Nova Scotia" (M.A. Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 2008).
10. W.H. Gocher, *Trotalong* (Hartford: W.H. Gocher, 1928), pp. 70-73. The park is now known as Bangor Historic Track and is on the National Register of Historic Places.
11. Clark P. Thompson, *Walking Tour of Bangor Historic Track* (n.d.; pamphlet, Special Collections Department, Fogler Library, University of Maine, Orono, Maine).
12. Ken Ward, "Maplewood Park Fair became Agricultural Mecca," *Bangor Daily News*, June 28, 1983, Ephemera, Bangor Museum.
13. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 5, 1890.
14. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), June 26, 1891.
15. R.W. Tomlinson, "A Geography of Flat-racing in Great Britain," *Geography Journal of the Geological Association* 71.3 (1986): 228-239.
16. John Tolston and Wray Vamplew, "Derailed: Railways and Horse-Racing Revisited," *The Sports Historian* 18 (November 1998): 34-49.

17. Dean Jobb, "Sackville Promotes a Railway: The Politics of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Railway, 1872-1886" in *People and Place: Studies of Small Town Life in the Maritimes*, ed. Larry McCann (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 1987), pp. 31-56.
18. Otty fonds, #50, New Brunswick Museum Archives (hereafter NBMA).
19. McMonagle fonds, #63, NBMA.
20. Bangor Fair Programs, 1914, 1913 B Ag 2, H 791.974131, Bangor Museum.
21. McMonagle fonds, #125.
22. *Bangor Daily Commercial*, August 8, 1890.
23. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), Sept. 26, 1890.
24. Clipping from the McMonagle fonds, NBMA.
25. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), October 17, 1890.
26. Gocher, *Trotalong*, p. 245.
27. Curtis Miner, "And They're Off! Pennsylvania's Horse Racing Tradition," *Pennsylvania Heritage* 32 (Spring 2005): 26-35.
28. Miner, "And They're Off," pp. 26-35.
29. *Bangor Daily Commercial*, July 5, 1890.
30. Bangor Fair Programs, 1914, 1913 B Ag 2, H 791.974131, Bangor Museum.
31. Nancy Bouchier, "Strictly Honorable Races: Woodstock's Driving Park Association and Nineteenth-Century Small Town Civic Holidays," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport* 24 (1993): 29-51.
32. Bouchier, "Strictly Honorable Races," p. 41.
33. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), June 29, 1891.
34. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), July 2, 1891.
35. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), July 2, 1891.
36. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), June 9, 1892.
37. *New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), June 21, 1882.
38. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), May 28, 1890.
39. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 11, 1890.
40. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 21, 1890.
41. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), March 18, 1892.
42. *New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), July 28, 1880.
43. *New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), July 28, 1880.
44. *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton), September 18, 1890.
45. Fred H. Phillips, "Past Glories Haunt Fredericton Raceway," New Brunswick Sport Hall of Fame collections.