

ICE HARVESTING

What is ice harvesting?

Every winter, when NH's lakes froze over, people used to cut the ice into big blocks. The blocks of ice were used to keep food cold even after the weather warmed up. And they used it to make ice cream in the summer!



How did they harvest ice?

People used tools like ice saws to cut the ice into big rectangles. Then they used ice picks to move the ice to a clearing area. Ice tongs were used to lift the big blocks of ice out of the water.



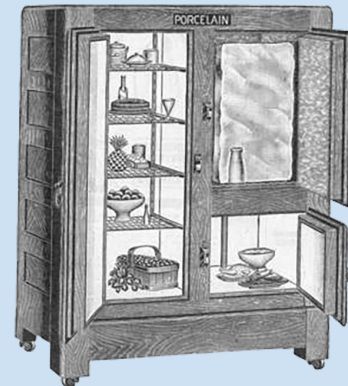
When was the ice ready to be harvested?

The ice needed to be about 12 inches thick before it could be harvested. Usually ice harvesting was done in January and February.



How did they keep the ice from melting?

Once the weather warms up, there's no way to stop ice from melting. But Granite Staters had ways to slow down how fast the ice melted. They stored the ice in ice houses, which were built in the shade so the sun didn't warm up the building. They also packed sawdust around the ice blocks, which protected the ice from heat. The ice would usually last until August!



What was the ice used for?

Before refrigerators were invented, people used the blocks of ice to keep their food cold. They had cabinets in their kitchens called ice boxes. One of the compartments of the cabinet contained a block of ice, which kept everything else cold. Once the ice melted, a delivery man would bring a new block of ice to replace it.

During what period did people harvest ice?

In the 19th century, NH was a big producer of ice. Granite State ice companies shipped ice all over the country. Most of the ice companies went out of business in the 1930s when people started buying refrigerators. But some people still harvest ice in NH today!



Pinardville ice house, Goffstown, NH

