

Pictures of the Past

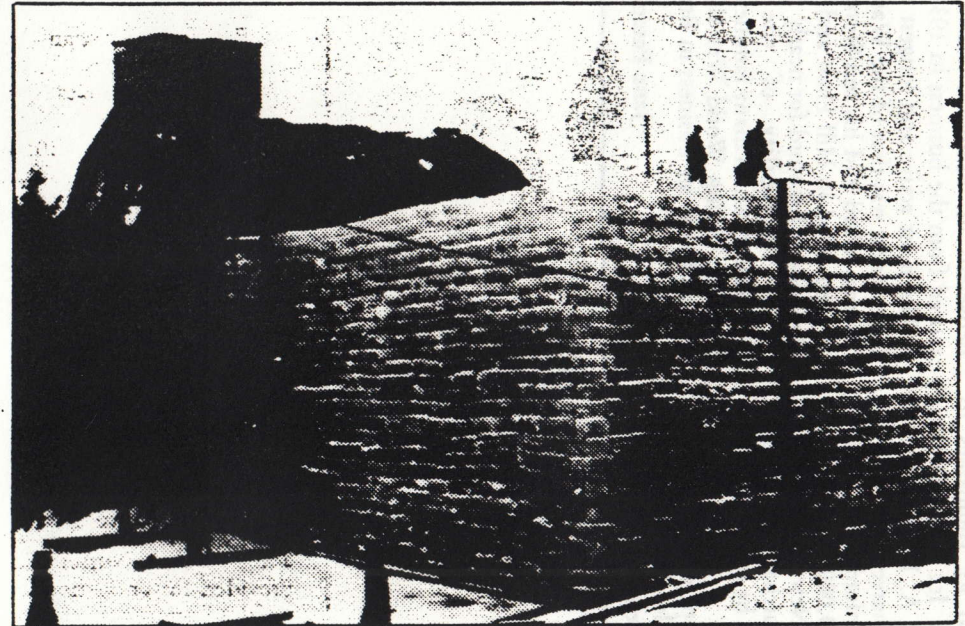
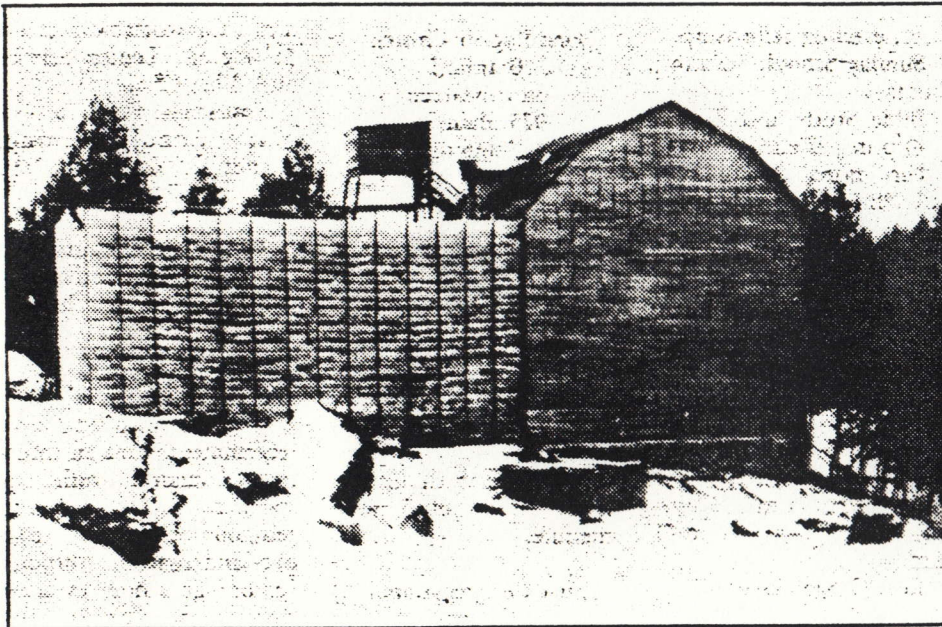


Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society

The ICE HOUSE belonging to the Branford Ice Company at Supply Pond in 1913.

Ice-cutting was a major activity in Branford during the winter months. There was an abundant supply of ice to be harvested at the Supply Pond and Ward's Pond in Mill Plain, at the Bradley Pond in Cherry Hill, Altmannsberger's Pond in Short

Beach and from the Branford River.

The ice had to be a minimum of nine inches thick to harvest. It was cut and pulled out of the pond by horses up a ramp to the ice house. Here it was stacked many layers deep and covered with hay or

sawdust. A wall was constructed around the ice that would preserve the ice throughout the year. The industry was dependent upon the weather and some years there was a poor harvest. In 1890, 1907 and 1908 there was no ice in Bran-

ford and it had to be purchased in Maine. 1917 was a particularly good year with 3,000 tons of 11-inch clear ice harvested that January at Wards and all the other ice houses in town were filled to capacity.

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DR. KATHERINE E. BLACK - LEE



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There were several ice companies in town. The Branford Ice Company was founded in 1912 by A. Louis Rogers of Branford and they harvested ice at the Supply Pond and Branford River. Their ice house could store 10,000 tons and they sold largely to the New Haven market. The company was purchased by William W. Ham in 1915 and he continued operation until 1926.

Another large ice operation in Branford was that of the Bradley family of Cherry Hill. They had their own ice house

(sometime called an ice elevator) and delivered in Branford. The Bradleys retired from the business in 1936.

The most active and longest operating ice business was that of the Ward family. Thomas Ward and his son Sidney cut ice at their pond in Mill Plain and delivered throughout Branford for nearly 100 years.

The availability of the electric refrigerator, which many families began to purchase during World War II, brought an end to the ice business in Branford.

Jane Peterson Bouley