

Mystery #13 Echo Lake Ice Company



The first large scale ice company in our region was started at Campbell's Pond by the Knickerbocker Ice Company in 1876. In 1891, the Echo Lake Ice Company cut 15,000 tons of ice and employed 100 men in the process. When Francis Greene wrote his history of the Boothbay Region in 1905, there were at least six businesses that were cutting ice in the area. Ice was cut and layered in ice houses. When available, meadow hay was spread over all. If hay wasn't available, sawdust was used. Ice was in demand for home consumption, especially during summer months when local resorts were at capacity. Boothbay Harbor was a busy center for the coast bait trade and this added to the demand for ice. Although the ice trade is long gone and there is no longer a need to maintain the water levels at Echo Lake, a family of resident beavers sees to it anyway.

According to Harold B. Clifford in his book, *The Boothbay Harbor Region, 1906-1960*, the high price of naturally-harvested ice spurred the development of mechanical production. "Fishermen continued to load ice well into the 1930s. The 1940s saw gas and electric refrigerators in such numbers that the cutting and storing of ice virtually stopped. In the 1950s the huge old ice houses had fallen down or been removed."

Resources;

History of Boothbay, Southport, and Boothbay Harbor by Francis Green

Boothbay Region Land Trust

Maine Ice Harvest 1891

The Boothbay Harbor Region, 1906-1960, Harold B. Clifford

Photo Requirements: This property is now part of the extensive Boothbay Region Land Trust trails. It is a little more difficult to find and it may appear as though you are walking on private property. Just stick to the path and you will see their informational kiosk. Take your picture there.

MAP CLUE