Starke County tidbit 37 --- **Ice** ----

It is winter –

---- Many years ago in the winter it was ice-making season on the ponds, rivers and lakes of Starke County. Really, I should say "ice harvesting." Farmers and others from the area would be hired by the Ice Companies to cut blocks of ice to store for the next summer's use. These blocks of ice were elevated and placed in large "ice barns" and insulated with saw dust or marsh hay. Because of the large mass of ice in one location, the ice would last for several months (see attachment). Often the ice, in large blocks, was loaded into railroad box cars and shipped to Chicago and other places for the customers' kitchen ice boxes. Bass Lake had a railroad line on the south side of the lake to carry vacationers in the summer and ice in the winter.

The Modern refrigerator has changed the way people live all around the world. It's easy to take the "white box" in your kitchen for granted. Just take a look at places in the world which don't have refrigeration. People go shopping every day. They may lower dairy products and other foods into a well or spring so they will stay cool for a couple of days without spoiling. There is no way that a modern America would be recognizable to you or me if it weren't for refrigeration.

In the 1930's, before electricity, I remember the **ice box**. It was a common fixture in every home. Ice boxes were usually made of wood with insulated walls, lined with tin inside. There was a door for a large (maybe a 100 lb) block of ice. The other doors were for milk, fruit, vegetables and other perishables. There was a drain tray at the bottom for the melting ice water. My Mother would put a sign (see attachment) in the window, letting the ice man know how much ice she wanted to buy that day. He would cut that approximate size with his ice pick, grab it up with his ice tongs, throw it over his shoulder, carry it into the house and put it into our ice box. I was usually close at hand to see if I could find any small chunks of ice which I could suck on during a hot summer's day.

The last attachment shows the Shaws from Knox with their delivery truck ready to haul ice to customers. The Shaw family had ponds and ice houses just north of the Yellow River and north of the present location of the Knox Railroad Depot (Gateway area). Across U.S. 35 from the Depot, they owned a coal yard and ice storage building. They would regularly deliver ice in the summer and coal in the winter.

Refrigerators, as we know them now, have only been mass-produced since the late 1940s. Appreciate yours!

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