

Harvesting Ice

This picture was taken in January 1895 according to what is written on the backside. It goes on to note that this is the Old Mill Pond on East State Street at the Shourds Brothers Ice House. With the four men standing in the doorway there are at least 20 men in this picture. George W. Shourds is the man standing at the left.

From the early 1800's into the 1930's the harvesting of natural ice was a winter time activity especially during January and February. It was carried on by both farmers for their own usage and commercially for sale to village residents. Before the Davis and Stevenson ice business off West Avenue in Albion, the Shourds Brothers was taking ice from the West Branch of Sandy

Creek out of this mill pond. Shourds advertised their product as spring ice. The ice house shown here was located at about the end of East Park Street. The houses in the distance are on the west side of Clarendon Street between East Park and East State.

The man in the foreground is holding onto the handles of an ice plow. This piece of equipment with eight blades would have been pulled by a horse to make three-inch grooves into the ice 18 inches apart and then crisscrossing those grooves.

The men with ice saws seen in the middle ground then sawed out cakes 18 inches square. The thickness of the ice was ideally at least 14 inches or more. A man is seen here

holding a pike pole for reaching out into the water to pull in cakes of floating ice which had been sawed.

The Shourds Brothers delivered ice to village residents for home use in their kitchen ice boxes before electric refrigeration. Ice was packed in sawdust in the ice house which kept it insulated from melting. By the 1930's ice was manufactured in cold storages which did away with having to harvest natural ice.

Shourds Brothers also owned and operated a coal and fuel wood business on the Erie Canal at the foot of Platt Street in Albion. Just recently the old Shourds family residence on West Park Street has been demolished following a fire this fall.

