



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ICE HARVEST

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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

From the 1830s to the 1930s the harvesting of natural ice was a major industry in communities and a winter chore for many farmers. Before electric refrigeration, natural ice was the coolant in ice boxes, refrigerated railroad cars and cold storages.

Many farmsteads had their own ice house where the cakes of ice were packed away in saw dust.

Every village had an ice business. These men came around a couple of times a week to deliver 25, 50, 75 or 100 pounds of ice as desired. Our photo from a pond

north of Morton near Troutburg was taken in 1924. From left to right are Mr. Petty holding a dog, Rofendo Espulveda, Frank Rockow, Carl Nettin and Luther Staffin.

Such winter scenes occurred on mill ponds, creeks, rivers and lakes all across the north in those ice-cutting days. There were

saws, tongs, scoring plows, iron bars, sleds and horses.

There were red-flannel drawers, cold feet and drippy noses.

Occasionally there were breaks in the ice and a man had to be rescued ... even horses were rescued.

There was a trick to saving a horse. A rope was pulled tight around the neck so the panic-stricken animal could breathe in but not out. When it passed out, the inflated lungs lifted it to the surface. Then, other horses on solid ice could haul it out.

These horses almost always recovered but could seldom be coaxed onto the ice again.