

The Ice House In Maplewood, Pa.  
From the Memoirs of George Searle Black

There was an ice business built by the Consumer's Ice Company of Dunmore in 1880 where they built a large ice house on Lake Henry in Maplewood, Pennsylvania. It housed the ice in the winter to be used during the summer months. There were two ice houses, a small one at first and then a larger one later. I worked in the new one.

The Erie railroad had a spur put in where they could load cars with ice and send it to different places. Philander Black was the boss for the Consumer Ice Company and also his son, Guy Black, was a boss for some time.



Ice harvesting in the winter months was a big thing for it hired many men. By 1932, Kearney Ice Company took over Consumer's Ice Company and they put in an artificial ice plant where they could put out 1280 cakes of pure ice in one day weighting 320 pounds each. They used spring water to make pure ice. The men who were employed by the artificial ice plant were getting 32 ½ cents an hour, but then you could buy a loaf of bread for 12 cents, a pack of cigarettes for 17 cents and seven gallons of gas for \$1.00.



When the new company had the ice plant, if the machinery stopped for 15 minutes, they would dock your pay. You just stood there and waited because there was no other place to get a job.

Thinking back now, it is hard to believe we could live without electricity, but we did. It is hard to believe that my Dad, Friend Black, lived 55 years without electricity and I was between the ages of 14 and 15.

At this time, Kearny Ice Company was going to put in a large generator to produce electricity for Maplewood, but because PP&L had the franchise, they put in the electricity. WOW!

No more kerosene lanterns and lamps.



Charles Gromlich had an ice business to distribute ice to ice boxes to the cottagers and local people. Ray Gromlich drove one Model-A Ford truck and George M. Black drove another Model-A Ford 1 ½ truck. Mr. Hall peddled ice to a few customers. We could fill an ice box for 25 cents, but some only took 10 or 15 cents worth.

Around the years 1936-38, the electric refrigerator and deep freezers came out and the ice business declined rapidly.



A view of the ice house from where Friend Black lived with his nine children. Lake Henry is behind the tree on the left side.

His daughter, Florence Black, remembered the "constant creaking and groaning" of the ice house in operation.