

Waseca County Historical Society and
FarmAmerica

Living History Event

ICE HARVEST



Clear Lake Park, Waseca MN



The Waseca County Historical Society and Farmamerica for many years were able to bring this living history event to 6th graders from across the region. This was possible because of the many volunteers, teachers and City of Waseca who dedicated many hours to make this happen.

Thank you!

Ice harvesting took place in Waseca County from the late 1800's
to the late 1950's.

Huge blocks of ice where cut from Lake Elysian, Tetonka, Sakata,
Loon and Clear Lake in Waseca.



It was hard and dangerous work.
Cold temperatures, snow and wind had to be endured by the men
and the horses.



Hauling Crystal Ice From Clear Lake Waseca Minn
Property of WEHS

When the ice was thick enough to cut, usually in February, crews of men and teams of horses would head out onto the frozen lakes.

The first thing done was “ice scoring”. Scoring was done by scratching into the surface with a blade.





Ice was cut by hand with ice saws. Later, cutting machines were invented.



After the ice was cut into cakes,
it was floated down channels.
The cakes were cut 32"x22"
and weighed 300 lbs or more.



Ice cakes were pulled out of the water using ropes, ramps and horses.



A hooked tool called an ice gaff was used to move the ice on and off the sleds.



Loading Ice On Clear Lake

Wagona Minn

Property of WCHS

Ice Tongs

This tool was tied to a rope. The rope was tied to a horse, the ice tongs were clamped around the floating cake of ice.



Many teams of horses were needed to get the job done.



Hauling Crystal Ice From Clear Lake Mesaca Minn
Property of WEHS

Ice Harvest 2009

Welcome students and teachers from
Waseca Central Intermediate School
Waseca Team Academy
Waseca Sacred Heart
NRHEG
Medford
Waterville/Morristown/Elysian

Ice harvest enthusiast Tim Graf will show you all the tools and equipment needed to harvest ice.



First the ice must be scored...



...then the ice is cut..



Then the ice cakes are pulled up the ramp and onto the ice...



..To the Ice House.
You will see and learn how ice is stored



The ice cakes need to be stacked on top of each other...



..and covered with sawdust. Every town had at least one Ice House, usually located along the railroad tracks. Ice was loaded and transported by train as far away as the Dakotas.



Guess who gets this job!



Kristin Wood and Ice Landic horses will show off their agility on ice. These small horses were originally bred to work on ice.



You will get a ride on a horse drawn sled..



and a horse drawn wagon.....



And warm by the fire.



At the Logging Camp you will
cut wood for the fire.



And when your good and tired you will board the nice warm bus...
And when you get home you can tell your family all about it.
And best of all you will carry on the age old
tradition of ice harvesting!



DRESS CODE FOR ICE HARVEST

- Heads must be covered– hoods that stay up and tied under chin are acceptable.
- Ears must be covered with ear muffs or bands and head with a hat.
- Necks must be covered with scarf or muffler (polar fleece dickey) . For face protection have enough scarf to pull up over nose, mouth and chin. Pull-over head masks are ideal.
- Insulated mittens are the best. Insulated gloves permitted, but hands stay warmer in mittens.
- Single ply gloves or mittens will not keep you warm and are not acceptable.
- Insulated boots– large enough for thick wool socks. Borrow your older brother or sisters boots for the extra room– your feet will stay much warmer if you can move your toes.
- Long underwear-tops and bottoms or at least 2 layers of pants and shirts. First layer should be snug to your skin. Snow pants with bibs and one layer acceptable. Snowmobile suits and one layer IDEAL!
- Jackets and coats-the longer the better. Down or wool liners and vest underneath lighter jackets acceptable. Most fashionable jackets will not keep you warm and may not fit with multiple layers underneath. Parkas and oversized jackets with layers underneath are best.
- *Hand and feet warmers can be purchased that when activated will keep fingers and toes warm for hours. These work great for this event and cost about \$1.00 at Fleet Farm and Wal-mart. Instruct children not to activate until they arrive at the event.*