

“The Ice Pond”

In the mid-19th Century, ice blocks were cut out of a small pond located where the Senior Citizen Housing now stands. Blocks were packed in straw and housed below ground so they could last into the summer. The pond was later filled in.

Before refrigeration became commonly available, people cut blocks of ice from frozen ponds, lakes, and rivers in winter. These were carted to ice houses—low-lying buildings partially below ground to remain cooler (Fig. 1). The ice was packed in hay or marsh reeds, which acted as insulation, and could remain available well into the summer. The “ice trade” flourished in the Northeast until refrigeration became commonly available early in the 20th century.

One popular ice pond in early 19th century Englewood was located in the area where the Senior Citizen Housing now stands on West Demarest Ave. It was fed by the stream that flowed down from the hills to the northeast and became Overpeck Creek. After Brookside Cemetery was established in 1876, many people stopped buying from this ice pond over worries of what might be carried away in the stream from the burial grounds. Eventually, it was filled in. Much of the stream now flows in channels and underground culverts.

Crystal Lake by Sheffield Avenue and Miller’s Pond were among other local ice ponds. The Hudson River and many other bodies of water were also harvested for ice in winter.



Fig. 1 Typical ice house

<http://www.waterfordhistory.org/history/waterford-ice-houses/>



Fig.2 Magazine illustration of ice harvesters

<http://www.alcademics.com/2012/01/modern-day-ice-harvests-in-america-.html>

More information

J.A. Humphrey (1899) Englewood, Its Annals and Reminiscences.

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