



The LIGONIER

Published by the Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association for the Friends of the LVRR

Volume 11 - Issue 1

From Our Collection:

THE LIGONIER ICE POND

Ice became an integral and necessary part of daily life in the nineteenth century. This was mostly due to the efforts of Frederick Tudor, a Boston businessman, who conceived the idea of exporting ice in the holds of sailing ships to warmer climates. He developed designs for ice houses for storing ice, had patents on tools for cutting the ice with a horse-drawn ice cutter and other tools for handling ice. Usage of natural ice in 1880 for the total United States exceeded five million tons.

By the late nineteenth century people had "ice boxes" to keep milk, butter and other foods fresh. People were served iced drinks in restaurants and hotels, and generally came to rely on a regular supply of ice. All of the ice was natural, cut from lakes and rivers in winter, stored in huge ice houses and delivered to consumers in horse-drawn wagons. Artificial refrigeration didn't become commercially available until early in the twentieth century as it was dependent on electricity.



Ice Boxes



A sign in a home's window let the ice deliveryman know whether a 25, 50, 75 or 100 pound block of ice was needed. The required size was broken off and carried with large tongs to the purchaser's icebox.

From 1887 until about 1920 one of the major businesses in Ligonier was ice harvesting. On August 31, 1888, the Ligonier Valley Ice Company was formed with a capital of \$250,000 for the purpose of supplying ice to the public. Frank L. Duggan was president of the firm. It was a subsidiary of the Consolidated Ice Co. of Pittsburgh. The shareholders of that company were William Flinn, James Booth, Ira DeWitt, R. L. McCance, Joseph Brown and George Rowley. In other words, this was a Booth & Flinn operation. Booth & Flinn also operated the stone quarry west of Ligonier at Longbridge. For the ice pond the company had acquired 50 acres of land from Col. Samuel Elder's farm that year. Elder owned most of the land surrounding Route 30 west of Ligonier. As of this writing it is not clear if there was already a small ice pond established near Bell's Station. In either case Consolidated Ice scooped out 30 acres of earth to create the existing ice pond.

From The Ligonier Echo, Wednesday, September 5, 1888:

"Messrs. Booth & Flynn, of Pittsburgh, put a force of men to work last Tuesday to make an excavation for an immense ice-pond at Bell's Station, a mile below town, on the creek. They intend to dig out enough to make a pond 30 acres in extent. They have an ice house there with a capacity of 150,000 tons, and another here

in town with a capacity of 75,000 tons. Besides these, they have an extensive blue-stone quarry at Long Bridge, on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road and one on the P.R.R., near the Packsaddle. In excavating for this ice-pond they expect to employ 70 men and 30 teams, and will distribute a large amount of money in wages in this neighborhood."

To produce quality, clear ice, the water source must be pure so instead of using Loyalhanna Creek water they built a small dam on Two Mile Run, which was considered purer water, and ran a pipe under the Loyalhanna Creek to fill the Ice Pond. The water was drained into the Loyalhanna through an outlet on the far side (Eastern) of the pond. A dam on Two Mile Run is still there today and still provides water for the Ice Pond, which is now owned by the Ligonier Camp and Conference Center.

According to the Ligonier Echo there were two ice houses on the property. One measured 200 feet long and 120 feet wide and 33 feet high. The other was 150 feet long, 100 feet wide and 30 feet high. The ice house design was



Ice House Ligonier Ice Pond (date unknown)

standard with the wooden walls being about three feet thick with an outside and an inside wall and sawdust or straw between the walls to provide insulation. This design allowed the ice to be stored almost indefinitely. The downside of using sawdust was the fire

hazard. Several ice houses in New England burned down. In a lot of cases the fires were started by sparks from locomotives of the time that hauled cars in to transport the ice. On Thursday, October 17, 1889, Pittsburgh Dispatch reported that "the large ice house on the Ligonier Valley Road at Bell's station, which was principally owned by Booth & Flinn, of this city, was burned to the ground Tuesday night. It caught fire at 11 o'clock and burned until 2 o'clock yesterday morning. About 4,000 tons of ice was in the house at the time, and the loss to the owners is about \$8,000.

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Spontaneous combustion of the sawdust is supposed to be the cause of the fire. The house was part of the Ligonier Valley Ice Company's plant, and the product was controlled by the Chataqua Ice Company."

In 1829 the horse drawn ice cutter was invented. This tool, supplemented by other devices, was the primary reason for the growth and development of the ice industry in America. Harvesting ice required specialized equipment and tools. In addition to the horse drawn ice scorer and ice plows, a variety of hand tools were utilized. These included axes, saws, tongs, breaking bars, picks, pikes and sleds.

To start the harvest a large horse-drawn scoop cleared snow off the surface of the ice. Then horse-drawn ice cutters were used to score the ice into the correct size blocks. The horses were brought in by train from Pittsburgh, where they pulled ice wagons that delivered ice to homes during the summer. The horses were shod with horseshoes with spikes. The ice was scored into acre plots and cut into smaller blocks or cakes. Then it was conveyed to an icehouse for storage. Men broke the pieces apart then used a pike pole to pull them into a room to be stacked up to the roof. The blocks were insulated from each other by layers of sawdust.

From a retrospective about Ligonier in 1888 by Gilbert Love, writing in the Pittsburgh Press:

"...It was becoming unnecessary for every family to keep a cow, because James Clark had started a dairy wagon. Housewives filled jugs as the wagon stopped. Some even got milk in glass bottles. Meat was available every day. John Carns of Laughlinton killed a steer every morning and delivered the meat that afternoon. It was cooled by ice from the ice house, which lasted into late summer that year."

From The Ligonier Echo, Wednesday, February 13, 1889:

"The long wished for freeze has come at last, and the ice men are happy. Preparations were made for the cutting of ice on the large ice pond near this place, belonging to Booth & Flynn and work commenced last Thursday at noon, and from then until Monday evening about 15,000 tons of ice was stored in the two large ice houses at the pond. The ice averages from 9 to 10 inches in thickness, and 138 tons is put up every hour. This work gives employment to 400 men, 200 of whom work at night and 200 in daylight, as the work goes on night and day. Messrs. Booth & Flynn have gone to considerable expense in fixing up the pond and we are glad to see them succeed in getting some return for their large outlay."



On December 27, 1891, The Pittsburgh Dispatch reported that "a petition was filed yesterday by William Flinn, President of the Company, asking for a decree for the

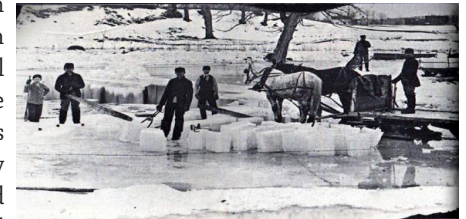


Horse Drawn Ice Cutter

dissolution of the Ligonier Valley Ice Company charted for tax reasons." The business was to be continued by its owners.

The Ligonier Echo, Wednesday, January 25, 1893:

The Ice Harvest "One of the busiest hives of industry, during the present cold snap, is Bell's Station, on the Ligonier Valley R.R., where two hundred men are at work harvesting the immense ice crop. The pond and building are owned by Booth & Flinn, the popular Pittsburgh contractors, who are also the owners of the Blue Rock quarries located a few miles below, but at which work has been suspended until spring. The huge ice pond covers an area of thirty acres and is filled with pure crystal



mountain water from the famous Two Mile Run. The water is carried under the Loyalhanna through a conduit underneath the creek and is as clear as spring water. These two hundred men, under the supervision of Alex McCance, the genial and efficient superintendent, have been at work, night and day, one-half working at night and the other half during the day in order that the immense crop may be harvested before the weather breaks up."

From The Ligonier Echo, Wednesday, February 1, 1893:

"There has been put up into the two ice houses of Booth & Flinn near Bell's station about 25,000 tons of the best and purest ice ever secured in this country. It has required from 200 to 300 men about one month to do this work of harvesting thirty acres of ice, much of which is more than a foot thick."

In 1908 the Cold Storage & Ice Trade Journal reported, "The Ligonier Valley Ice Company has been incorporated with its main office at Ligonier, PA. The capital is \$250,000 and the incorporators J.J. Booth, I Dewitt, B.L. McCance, of Pittsburgh."

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road ran a siding into the area of the ice pond sometime between 1888 and 1889. A nine-tenths-of-a-mile spur of the railroad ran around the lake. When the Camp and Conference Center was working on the site they found old rails buried on the eastern side, toward Idlewild. We do know that the LVRR shipped the ice as we have the ICC reports for 1888, 1889 and 1891, which list 526 tons in 1889 and 1,571 tons in 1891. Boxcars carried the ice to Pittsburgh, mainly in the summer.

Sources: "The Frozen Water Trade", by Gavin Weightman, Hyperion Press, 2003
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederic_Tudor
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booth_and_Flinn
<http://www.iceharvestingusa.com/iceharvestingusa.html>
Pasto Agricultural Museum - Penn State - <http://agsci.psu.edu/pasto/exhibits/2005>
Ligonier Valley Library, Pennsylvania Room

New Members • LVRRA Welcomes new members

**Naomi Neiderhiser • Harold Kopp • Richard Reminger • Keith Kapalka • John Sopcisak • Kenneth Merusi
Bradley Watson • Larry Burch • Bob Rymer • Don Albert • Mike Kairys • Brian & Kimberly Lyons**



A Year In Review

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Museum Staff, Volunteers, and Directors would like to thank all who attended our events in 2014.

We wish you peace and happiness in 2015.



Board of Directors

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Bill McCullough

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Mimi Owens – Director
Fred Potthoff – Director

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Lisa Hays
Janet Hudson
Al Pilz
Ralph Scalise
Bill Stablein
Jim Aldridge
Bob Stutzman
Pat Wallace

Recent Contributions

Thanks to all contributors for the following items that have been donated to the LVRRA since the last Liggie publication.

LIGONIER VALLEY RAIL ROAD ASSOCIATION ~ The Railroadiana Express magazine

ELLEN FULLMAN ~ Photo of a Kingston Station. Painting by Victor Fullman in 1938

ALAN DARAZIO ~ Tenafly Road Station replica from the collection of sculptures entitled America's Historic Railroad Stations by Danbury Mint

FERN DYE ~ 5 Pairs of railroad safety work gloves, 1 Pair of suspenders, 1 Ticket punch, 1 Booklet – PRR Schedule of Regulations and Rates of Pay for the Government of Conductors, Trainmen and Switch-Tenders in Road and Yard Service, 1 Booklet – Constitution and General Rule of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, 1 LVRRA pass to Mr. John C. McConnaughey, Brakeman 1935, 1 PRR Voluntary Relief Department certificate of membership in the relief fund (1929), 3 Dailey planner books – First National Bank of Blairsville, PA (1926 and 1927), First Saving & Trust Co. of Derry, PA (1929), 1 PRR letter sent to each stockholder giving notice of annual meeting and election of directors.

E-Version of The Liggie



If you prefer to access the newsletter in electronic format rather than to receive a hard copy, please notify the office at **724-238-7819** or send an e-mail to **www.lvrro.org**

Friend Forever in Memorial

RAYMOND R. "RAY" ROBB

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

If you would like to volunteer at the museum, stop in or give us a call at **(724) 238 - 7819** to discuss available opportunities.



Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association
P.O. Box 21
Ligonier, PA 15658

THE MISSION of the LVRRA

Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association

Organized in 2004:

To Preserve the legacy of the LVRRA

To Conserve vestiges of the LVRRA

To Collect memorabilia of the LVRRA

To Educate the public about the history of railroading in Ligonier Valley

Find us on the web

www.lvrra.org



Hours of Operation

Wednesday through Saturday
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

724-238-7819 info@lvrra.org

Please consult the website for changes

www.lvrra.org

Contact Information

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The Ligie is published

quarterly for

Friends of the LVRRA.