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WHO WE ARE IS WHO WE WERE HISTORIC BUSINESSES OF CAPE ANN: CAPE POND ICE LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

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Video Description

From 2012 Press Release: Scott Memhard, President of Cape Pond Ice Company, Inc., will be discussing his historic business. As part of his illustrated talk, Memhard will have historic ice harvesting tools, block ice and other tools of the trade to share with the audience.

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Cape Pond Ice Company was started as Gloucester Co. in 1848 by blacksmith Nathaniel R. Webster, who recognized the local fishing industry's need for a reliable, large volume source of ice. Prior to that time, fish - primarily halibut & cod - were preserved with salt and brine. Webster dammed a local brook and built his first ice house on what became known as Webster's Pond; today it is the site of Veteran's Memorial School and the Route 128 extension. The ice industry grew rapidly, and within four years Webster built ice houses on Upper & Lower Day's Ponds, where Foster's Service Station is located, and on Cape Pond in Rockport, which the company is still named after.

Almost a century and a half later, in 1983, Memhard Investment Bankers of Riverside CT became the fifth family group to own and operate Cape Pond Ice. Today, it not only provides ice to the commercial fishing industry but also the produce, poultry, and concrete industries, and to sculpture and wholesale / retail packaged ice customers.

Since “The Perfect Storm” sales of the popular “Cape Pond Ice - Gloucester - The Coolest Guys Around” t-shirts and merchandise have become a significant element of the business, including national advertising and internet sales. Over the past 29 years, in the face of dramatic declines in the commercial fishing industry, the company has implemented a strategy of diversification, requiring substantial investment in plant and technology upgrades. The workforce increases from a year-round base of 7 to 20-30 during the busy summer season, including a fleet of ice delivery trucks. Cape Pond Ice occupies an acre of industrial harbor-front real estate, and also has storage and distribution operations in Peabody and Lawrence, MA.

Funding for this program was made possible through a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences, in order to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and to contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.

Transcription

00:05

Good afternoon. Excellent. Could you please turn off your mobile device? Thank you. Today we present our second lecture in the Who We Are is Who We Were Historic Businesses of Cape Ann series. We seem to have a beverage theme going on. So far, we had Brian and Wood here last year, so stay tuned for next year. You never know. Scott Memhard and his father organized the investment group that bought Cape Pond Ice in 1983. Scott's is the fifth family group to own the business since it was founded in 1848. He has been General Manager and President of Cape Pond Ice since 1991, with full responsibility of running the business that provides ice to the commercial fishing industry and also the produce, poultry, and concrete industries and to sculpture and wholesale retail packaged ice customers. Can't wait to hear all about it. Scott is actively involved in our community, as you know, I'm sure. He serves on the board of the Board of Directors of Maritime Gloucester, the Gloucester Lyceum and Sawyer Free Library, Cape Ann Commercial Fishermen Loan Fund, Gloucester Fisheries Commission, Bass Rocks Beach Club, Waterfront Property Owners Task Force, and he is a Cape Ann Savings Bank Cooperator. And a lot of other things that he's been involved in over the many decades that he's been here. He's been one of Cape Ann Chamber's Gloucester Small Businessmen of the Year. Some of you might not know this, but he also has a psychology degree from Amherst College. While researching his ice company at the Cape Ann Historical Association, he met and married our very own Martha Oaks, the curator of this institution. They have three beautiful children and a growing menagerie at their East Gloucester home. Please join me in welcoming the coolest guy around.

02:30

Scott Memhard

I paid her extra to be so nice. Thank you all for coming. Unfortunately for me, it's a beautiful day out there. So, I hope I can make your afternoon worthwhile so you can get back to raking leaves. I should warn you upfront that I'm trying to figure out how to fashion this account into the equivalent of a really gripping, gritty Dennis Lehane novel, something along the lines you see here of the five families of Gloucester ice. It's not a story that Sebastian Junger or Mark Kurlansky have tackled. And Israel Horowitz has not made it yet a subject of a Gloucester play. But first to thank Courtney Richardson for inviting me to speak in this historic businesses series. Also to photo archivist Fred Buck for his encouragement, digging up wonderful historic images of Gloucester's ice industry, and too, thanks to Martis Morn for his spectacular photographs documenting Cape Pond Ice in the more recent past. Work was launched through SeArts Artists and Business Collaboration Program.

03:44

I do invite you all to visit Cape Pond Ice Company, if you haven't already, at the end of Commercial Street on the Fort, where you can still see fishing vessels taking on ice before they

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head out. And we still manufacturer 300-pound ice blocks and store them in our ice house. And coming into the New Year's season, our shop can be a virtual Santa's workshop of ice sculptures. As I mentioned to several of you, this is a work in progress, and today may spur you to contribute your recollections to go home and search for old photographs and ice artifacts to add to the fabric of our account before it's too late and lost from memory. One day, the Cape Ann Museum, or Maritime Gloucester, or the Harbor Walk's story moments may bless our ice industry with a modest exhibit alongside granite, fisheries, and art. Peabody Essex Museum has one display case that I know of honoring Frederick Tudor's clipper ships delivering ice between Boston and Calcutta. I am lucky to be in a business with such a rich tradition. And as you heard Courtney account, I did meet my wife, Martha Oaks, in the mid 80s when I began a pursuit to learn about Cape Pond Ice Company's history, visiting the Cape Ann Historical Association to look at the old leather-bound schooner logs, recording how many tons and tons of ice were taken each fishing trip. And this presentation today is an outgrowth of that meeting.

05:17

The significance of ice has faded from our awareness. Ask a child today where ice comes from, and they shrug with a puzzled look at your silly question. Why, It comes from the freezer side of the refrigerator with its automatic icemaker, of course. But it was more than that.

05:40

So on to the story of the five families of Gloucester's ice business. For Gloucester, first there was Nathaniel R. Webster, originally from Essex, who built upon smaller scale localized businesses of William and Abram Williams. Nathaniel Webster, dubbed, in a 1900 *Gloucester Daily Times* article, the Pioneer Iceman of Gloucester. Quote, "His keen business foresight led him to perceive that the fishing business, although then in its infancy, promised to be of vast magnitude, and Mr. Webster was prompt in knowing that large quantities of ice must be used, and he at once began steps to control this business for the fisheries, a pursuit later carried on by his son, Nathaniel, Jr." As you likely know, before using ice, salt was used to try and preserve fish in flake yards along the harbor front. You can see images and a diorama upstairs documenting that. Nathaniel Webster's blacksmith shop was on Union Hill, and he constructed an earthen dam at his brook to form Webster's Pond in 1848, today's Mattos Field. He built his first ice house there. His 100-foot dam was later, quote "carried away," an annoyance and a source of great discouragement, but subsequently was rebuilt by his son, the younger and energetic Nathaniel, who carried on with the indomitable energy which proved characteristic throughout his life.

07:23

The Websters expanded ice operations to Upper and Lower Day's Pond, and here you see them ice skating on Upper Day's Pond below Wolf Hill. Lower Day's Pond in the marsh is not evident anymore. The ice house there was quite significant. And then on to Cape Pond in the town of Rockport, Webster virtually monopolized the ice business on Cape Ann for over two decades.

You can see the ice houses, here, and what they called “the Great House,” here, and on the right side, the ice houses at the Grove. There are still ways into both of those.

08:00

Nathaniel Webster died in 1858, but his distinctive yellow and white Greek revival home overlooking Gloucester Harbor, built in 1845, still stands, although in a recently rebuilt replica, interesting. His son, Nathaniel, Jr., is described in his 1900 obituary as perhaps one of the most remarkable citizens that Gloucester has ever had and for years was the heaviest taxpayer of the city. A December 1874 article in the *Cape Ann Weekly Advertiser* captures the community's interest in the ice harvest, quote, “Ice cutting has been at full tide of successful operation in the present week, and a good crop of prime quality, about 12 inches in thickness, is now being housed. Mr. Webster has cut his pond at the head of the harbor also with the Day's Ponds and Patches Pond in East Gloucester. Everything has worked well and hundreds of our citizens have visited to witness the harvesting of the crop by steam.”

09:08

Ice family number 2. In 1876, brothers William and Francis Homans, at great financial risk to themselves with over \$75,000 in their own resources invested, formed, in West Gloucester, an artificial 32-acre Fernwood Lake in a former meadow, and they built one of the largest ice houses in the country, measuring 236 by 210 feet with a capacity of 38,000 tons of ice stored. Francis Homans had been born 1832 in Beverly; he worked as a clerk for one of Gloucester's most prominent businessmen, George H. Rogers; and then, in 1868, embarked in the East Indian Suriname trade of fish and molasses, owning several vessels before he turned his attention to ice, which was in great demand, but with wildly fluctuating costs ranging at that time from \$3 up to \$9 and back per ton. Frank Homans formed a partnership in 1876, with financing from the largest ice buyers in the fishing business, including the Atlantic Halibut Company, Cunningham and Thompson, John Pew and Son, G. Tarr and Brothers, and others, based on the premise of furnishing a volume supply of ice at a guaranteed price not to exceed \$2.50 per ton for 10 years.

10:43

At this point, Gloucester's, fresh, quote “market fishery” consumed over 40,000 tons of ice a year in schooners and ashore, not to mention in kitchen iceboxes. And for Fernwood, as you can see in the bottom of this slide in the lower corner, oysters made a cool sideline at the Fernwood Lake, 145 Main Street office.

11:09

Now it gets good. All was not calm on this cold winter's night. The established players in Gloucester's ice business, apparently, quote, “unified in unnatural and unwarranted opposition against Homans, seeking to defeat his Fernwood Lake venture his very first season. Witness Gloucester's infamous “ice wars,” as luridly described in the *Cape Ann Advertiser* of December 15th, 1876. And this is so well written, I was telling Meredith Fine, it's too bad the paper, Richard Gaines doesn't write like this today. I had trouble editing it, so bear with me, because the flavor

of it is partly on just how long it goes on. This is wonderful. “Dastardly attempt to ruin the ice crop of Fernwood Lake, West Gloucester.” That's the headline.

12:09

And now to the plot. “On Tuesday morning, as Mr. B.B. Hansen[?], foreman of the Fernwood Lake Ice Company of West Gloucester, went on the lake to see about removing the snow, he found a hole in which the water had come up and overflowed a considerable portion of the ice. He also saw marks of footprints in the newly fallen snow, which awakened his suspicions that all was not right. The examination of the hole proved that it had been cut with an ice chisel, the size of the hole being nearly square, with the exception of a trifle rounding caused by the action of the water. On further examination of the pond, there were no less than 30 such holes and 15 channels all cut in such a systematic and scientific manner as to carry conviction that they were the work of a man or men familiar with the ice business no less, who had made these holes for the purpose of overflowing the lake. The water coming up from below, mingling with the snow and then freezing, would not only be totally unfit for marketable ice, but the removal of the hubbly snow and ice would prove so costly, expensive, and protracted a job as to seriously hinder the getting in the crop of ice this season. The time for the prevalence of a snowstorm was a most propitious one for such a villainous transaction a, had it kept on snowing all night, the weight of the snow and water combined would in all probability have sunk the ice. This being accomplished, the holes would not have been seen and foul play would not have been known or suspected even. This is one of the most dastardly and villainous transactions we have ever recorded, and to the cessation of the snowstorm on Monday night may be attributed the failure of the nefarious scheme. There are strong suspicions that the plot was coolly premeditated and determined to prevent a crop of ice being gathered on Fernwood Lake this season, thus dealing a disastrous blow to the company which would result in a great loss. Mr. Francis W. Homans, the leading proprietor of the company, offers a \$500 reward for evidence sufficient to convict the person or persons who, quote, ‘committed the outrageous depredations at Fernwood Lake, intending to prevent me from obtaining a crop of ice. We hope the guilty parties may soon be detected, as no man or business is safe while such rascals are at liberty.’ Anyone who committed the above would not hesitate to fire a building or commit any other crime that need be for the accomplishment of their design. Perhaps the burning ice houses at Cape Pond, at Day’s Pond, and at Niles Pond, East Gloucester, may have some direct connection with the cowardly attempt of last night. Time will tell.” Almost as much drama as caused by the appearance of the Gloucester sea serpent.

15:39

Controversy gradually settled. Fernwood flourished alongside Cape Pond Ice as a welcome new player of major scale in Gloucester’s ice business with its needed new ice capacity. We had trouble coming up with a good slide for that Ice War narration. We thought... we developed a little bit of a snowstorm that almost covered the tracks. Page one of the *Cape Ann Advertiser*, January, 1893, describes (this is back to more routine operation) interesting scenes at Fernwood Lake where a handsome ice crop is being harvested. The great ice house was a hive of industry.

Ice cutting had commenced, and 125 men were harvesting the crystal product of the pond to the immense 38,000-ton house. For many years there has not been such a handsome ice: 12 inches thick, clear as crystal, entirely free from sand or snow. While the pond with markers and movers and scrapers and large gang moving up the ice is interesting, the sight inside the great house is the magnet.

16:46

As one stands at the top of the first stairway, the scene is one of mounting, almost to fascination, the sharp clink of the great chain, the chink of the heavy blocks as they start on their long journey, and the accompanying hum and cry of voices all make a scene not soon to be forgotten. The great Bristol squares seem impelled by some superhuman force as they come sheep-like up the tramway and then slide down the railway. The way is inclined and runs to the other side of the building. (I'm glad we had that earlier video, so you saw these in action.) At convenient spots are openings to the different houses under the roof, and before each of these is a snubber, which practically stops the speed of the great 300-pound keg, so that a man in the corner can turn it, and away it goes down the steep incline to the smaller house where it is packed by a large and active gang. They do take lunch breaks. Despite the apparent chill of this atmosphere, one could stand for hours and never weary of the interesting sight, the same thing over and over again. Soon 4000 tons of congealed crystals, so welcome in summer, will be stored away.

17:59

In 1908, Homans Endowed Fishermen's Ice Company, facing political setbacks and loss of patronage (and I'm not sure the details of that story; that requires further looking into) reluctantly sold Fernwood Lake Ice operations to Cape Pond Ice Company, under the leadership now of Rockporter Freeman H. Abbott and his cousin James Abbott, ice family number three as shown in that photograph earlier at Cape Pond. This is Francis Homans' stone. Francis died in 1913, and his impressive stone, befitting an impressive career, fulfilling Gloucester's demands for ice, is at the Oak Grove Cemetery.

18:42

Abbott, who established the F.H. Abbott Ice Company in 1895 and had driven teams for Nathaniel Webster, he himself was a horse lover, eventually owning over 60 horses. By 1916, Abbott's company also acquired the Homans Brothers' ice houses in Magnolia and at Alton Bay Mount Major on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire, where ice could be brought to Gloucester by rail, a 14-hour train trip with as many as four box cars leaving for Gloucester daily. This was their insurance policy against a poor ice harvest during warm coastal winters about every eight to ten years, apparently. Freeman Abbott died unexpectedly at Alton Bay in 1923. His son, E. Raymond Abbott, continued to run the business. In addition to a large delivery household ice trade, Cape Pond Ice Company continued to supply large quantities of ice to the fisheries and also to the downtown saloons, for which Gloucester was well-known, and summer hotels. The office was located at 105 1/2 Main Street (that's the Cape Ann Savings Bank), where a display of modern electric refrigerators gradually replaced ice boxes. The 1925 Cape Pond Ice Annual

Outing in Centennial Grove in Essex was commemorated in a photograph with 45 men and boys included many Aptts, Abbotts, Days, Tebos, and other Cape Ann family names.

20:13

There were many other ice companies and ice dealers: Homans Pond, now West Pond in Magnolia; George Todd in Rockport, now part of Rose's Oil. The Scott Energy Company is partially an outgrowth of Henry West's ice and coal business and the Keleher ice and oil business in Beverly. (Incidentally, David Rhineland's here. I have a reference here that gives you credit.) The Fort Wharf Ice building, according to David Rhineland's research, but not mentioned in Mark Kurlansky's recent scholarship, had been the original 1925 freezer and workshop and laboratory for a certain Clarence Birdseye and his General Seafoods Corporation before he moved up Commercial Street to the tower Birdseye factory that we all know today.

21:02

In 1924, Webster's Pond was sold to the City of Gloucester for recreation land. This is an interesting comparison; it was in the paper. In 1943, Upper Day's Pond was gifted as parkland where neighborhood kids could always ice skate, and Fernwood Lake was sold for \$28,000 to the City of Gloucester water department. Also in 1943, Cape Pond was sold by Ray Abbott, who was in real estate business at that point in his career, to Rockport, and Cape Pond Ice business was purchased by entrepreneur John Ryan, the enterprising, visionary, hard-driving Irish, arriving as Gloucester ice family number four. John Ryan built Gloucester Ice and Cold Storage on the state fish pier and the present Cape Pond Ice Company factory on the Fort in 1946, on the site of the original Fort Wharf Ice Company, where ice from Cape Pond and Fernwood had been stored, crushed, and loaded into fishing vessels. The little landmark Cape Pond Ice office, next to the Cape Ann Savings Bank managed by Milton Smith for over 39 years, closed and moved to Commercial Street. By the late 1940s the natural ice harvest had been entirely replaced by reliable mechanical refrigeration, and ice houses at Cape Pond and Fernwood, as at Manchester's Ayer's Pond and Magnolia's West Pond, were abandoned and burned or taken down. Only granite and concrete foundations remain today. A December 1945 *Gloucester Daily Times* article highlights the level of anticipation around John Ryan's investment in expanded new ice making capacity. (This is the era that I wish my family led the ice business.)

22:53

A badly needed plant. Gloucester in 1944 saw some 188 millions of pounds of fish brought around Eastern Point, and we'll see handy of 215 millions before the year 1945 ends. The fishing industry had been faced in the past two years with a necessity of seeking ice from other cities to fulfill the demand. The Gloucester Ice and Cold Storage, with a plant capable of manufacturing 70 tons of ice every 24 hours and with a supply of natural ice from local ponds, was still forced to import 12,000 tons of ice from other places and even then was unable this year to meet the demands. Gloucester boats, and many of them, were forced to go as far as Nova Scotian ports to ice up this past summer, while mackerel sailors went to Maine ports and others to Boston. Many boats lost valuable fishing time at the height of production this summer, waiting their turn to get

ice. Fish processing firms, which also require plenty of ice to protect their fresh fish purchases in the heat of summer from spoilage, were hard pressed by insufficient ice to meet the volume of business.

24:12

The answer was given by Mr. Ryan, who set to work to build an icemaker plant that would meet the requirements of growing Gloucester, showing his faith in the future of this port as a fishing center. John Ryan's Cape Pond Ice factory was a modern industrial block ice plant designed by the Frick Refrigeration Company with 3600 four-foot by two-foot by one-foot steel molds. Giant ice cube trays for 300-pound ice blocks manufactured in two indoor concrete brine tanks, which we can call "colloquial ponds" still, in reference to our history, refrigerated with compressed ammonia and harvested by two overhead Shepard Niles cranes. More than 300 tons of ice could be reliably manufactured each day, using electricity instead of Mother Nature to serve a flourishing ice industry. Throughout the 1970s and '80s, the fishing industry thrived under the Magnuson Act, the new 200-mile limit, excluding foreign fishing vessels. Gloucester Ice was managed by feisty Everett Anderson and Cape Pond Ice by General Manager Phil Harvey, whose daughter **Ellen** is here, with able help from Vito "Benny" Benedetto.

25:38

Forty years later, here we are. Gloucester ice family number five. My father, Dick Memhard , and I, from good German/Scotch/Nantucket stock, we formed a group to purchase Cape Pond Ice Company from Jack Ryan and Jack Hodges, John Ryan's son and son-in-law, in 1983. They smell/saw the writing on the wall for the declining future of Gloucester's fisheries, and they exited the ice business, leaving us new owners to scrape along. Next generations of Ryan's and Hodges' big Catholic families with Newton and Manchester connections had been quite intrigued by our notoriety for the 1991 *Perfect Storm* and sideline of our popular t-shirt merchandise line to their families' former business.

26:19

In the 1990s, we Memhards again modernized Cape Pond Ice's factory and technology, investing in new steel-faced, foam-insulated panels to replace old cork insulation of the 1947 harbor front ice house and a 40-ton automatic TURBO Tiger (that stands for ice generator ammonia remote ice machine) which uses ammonia refrigerant and makes sanitary ice on stainless steel plates stored in two 50-ton capacity ice rake bins, giant erector sets, and ice delivery system of screw conveyors and controls to convey ice to trucks or boats or fish processors and to our packaged production line. The new machinery operates alongside the 1947 Frick block plant constructed by John Ryan, which is used more today for ice sculpture blocks and block ice for poultry growers and ready-mix concrete contractors than for the demands of the fishing industry.

27:15

Today, Cape Pond is the only ice company left on Gloucester harbor. Our last full-fledged competitor operated by the other five families, the Brancaleones, Novellos, Lovascos, Moceris,

Parisis, the Sicilian fishing families, who bought Burnham Brothers to form Gloucester Marine Railways in 1953 and operated a 90-ton Northstar flake plant on Harbor loop until 1998 that is now known as nonprofit Maritime Gloucester. But we face continuing competition with changes in technology, the convenience of modern self-contained ice machines in fish plants and on-board boats, and with declining fishing fleet impacted by overfishing and stringent federal government regulation on capture or tax share policies. We hope that the regulations will be effective eventually, although that carrot has been held out in front of us for a long time and keeps getting jerked further away out to the future. I hope that that industry is still coming back when my son Larry and Margarita and my daughter Maria are running Cape Pond Ice Company. We are still seeking out new markets for ice capacity and our products including packaged ice sold in grocery, liquor, and convenience stores. Today we operate satellite locations from Peabody and Lawrence to service markets down into Boston and up into southern New Hampshire. And we sell from our office shop as well as online our Cape Pond Ice t-shirts and merchandise. Our horse-drawn ice delivery wagons have been updated. Our historic ice house tours share the account of our 165-year history.

28:53

I'd like to end on a positive note. And if Courtney is ready with it, we have our 4 TV spots that were on local Adelphia cable television, which became too expensive when it merged. But they're still now available on our website and also on YouTube, of course. And then we can have questions, too. But again, we'd like to invite you all to come and visit us at the ice company. Brittany does a great job as a tour guide. We offer tours typically at 11 o'clock and two, Monday through Saturday. Here are our brand promotion spots. They're each targeted at different specific markets, as you can tell. That's the adult one.

[Promo ads are shown]

[Comments from the audience are unintelligible.]

30:03

Second promo voice over:

....selling ice to fishermen, and Cape Pond Ice was born. While ice is no longer cut from the pond, Cape Pond is still going strong, producing 300 tons of ice every day. That works out to billions of pounds of ice sold to fishermen, contractors, farms, grocery stores, and people like you...even our clothing line, custom sculptures, and party [?]. Why, it's no wonder we're the coolest guys around.

30:43

Children selling lemonade voice over:

Is that Cape Pond ice?

No.

Next time make it Cape Pond ice.

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Promo of dull party voice over:
Next time make it Cape Pond ice..

Here we go.
Repeat of first promo of a romantic couple voice over:
[Initial dialog is unintelligible.]
Is that Cape Pond ice?
No.
Next time make it Cape Pond ice.

32:17

The best part of that is it does end our talk with a little laughter. So I'm happy to entertain any questions. We also have some exhibits up here for you to look at.

32:32

Audience member:
Is there any shrinkage over the winter storage period? [unintelligible continuation]

32:42

So Warren is asking about our storage of ice in the ice house. The ice house is maintained a steady temperature of about 28 degrees. And we have no fans, so there's very little movement of air. So as a result, ice tends to keep pretty darn well. But there is a little bit of what we call sublimation where it evaporates directly from solid state to gas, skipping the melting stage. Some of our ice sculptures that have been on display in the ice house for 10-12 years, as long as we remember to put a plastic bag back over them to help control the evaporation of sublimation, they last indefinitely.

33:21

33:23

Audience Member
What was the ice in the ice house insulated with when it was cut in the lakes?

Scott

It was all sawdust and they used some straw on top. Frederic Tudor apparently in the early 1800s, experimented a great deal about what was the best available insulation material, and at the time, it was sawdust, so the main lumber mills found a great outlet for their sawdust byproducts. And then again, as I mentioned, our own Cape Pond Ice factory in 1945 used granular cork as the insulation of choice. And then today we use modern foam insulated material. Courtney?

34:00

Courtney Richardson

Back then, when it was being used primarily for the fishing industry, were people still using it for soft drinks, you know, to make their drinks cold? And is there any sort of record of the taste of pond ice?

34:13

Scott

That's a good question. I'm not really sure. I know that they did all kinds of marketing to try and broaden the market. They were promoting ice cream. They were using ice in hospitals. The idea of chilled beverages – I think the beer industry and the meat industry all helped push the need for ice. When they were transporting it in railroad cars, they used ice to preserve it. But as we know, in Europe in England, cold drinks, cold beer – ich [shrug]. But the beer industry in America was partly responsible, really driving the need for ice. And by extension, I can tell you that two summers ago, it was a good summer in the ice business here in New England. We started getting calls. It was bizarre. We've never received so many calls from McDonald's and Dunkin Donuts. They had rolled out a new iced coffee product line, which was extraordinarily successful in warm weather. And they under anticipated the need for their own internal ice production. And so we said we can send a pallet of ice up there or a truckload of ice. That continues on today. But people's beverage drinking habits are certainly a factor in terms of our industry.

35:24

Audience Member

When they were sending ice to India, what did the Indians use the ice for? How long did it take them to get there? And was it really a big deal?

35:31

Scott

It was a big deal. We try to get into that. We talk a little more about that in our tour at the ice house. I was going to try to focus on Cape Ann and Gloucester's industry. The people they were selling ice to in India were the British. It was a lifesaver in terms of quality of life, and Frederic Tudor was awarded by the British ambassador for his service to their calling for helping to provide something that improved the quality of life for the poor British that were stationed in India. It was used in a broad range of ways. I'm not sure the exact length of time. It's certainly well documented, but it was a busy trade from Boston to Calcutta. Originally Tudor was shipping ice. His first sale was to Martinique in the Caribbean, then to Cuba a number of years, to several US cities like Savannah and New Orleans, then to Europe and England. And Queen Victoria is famously quoted as insisting on Wenham Lake ice because of its renowned purity and quality. And that worked for a while until the enterprising Norwegians renamed a fjord "Venom". Their travel costs were quite a bit less than Boston's travel costs. So it was an...For a period of time in the late 1800s, and again, this doesn't relate to Gloucester and fisheries so much, but ice was significant. I'm told it was the second major raw material export crop from the United States after cotton, which when you think about it, that's bizarre, amazing. Yes?

37:10

Audience Member

A couple of questions, if you don't mind. Where does your water come from currently, these days, presently, and when the tourist ships come into Gloucester...itineraries, do you have someone there, you know, suggesting that they come to visit Cape Pond Ice? That would be a great promo.

37:31

Scott

Two great questions. I thank you for both of those. We are fortunate that Gloucester and Cape Ann, and it's partly due to the foresight of our predecessors here on Cape Ann, we are well endowed with good natural water resources. And a lot of them are man-made water resources like Babson's Reservoir and Dykes Meadow Pond and Fernwood Lake today, which is a man-made pond and part of our Gloucester reservoir water system. Today we use City of Gloucester municipal water supply. We pay the same astronomic rates that you do as homeowners for making your ice cubes at home. And we make for our ice cubes for currently \$8.75 per 1000 gallons of water. Our industrial competitors in New Bedford in the ice business pay about 20% of that; they pay \$1.35 per 1000 gallons: \$1.35 compared to \$8.75 per 1000 gallons. I use the equation of what Virgilio's bakery paid: 600% more for their flour than a bakery in Beverly. Unfortunately, because of our granite ledge and aging infrastructure and old pipes, although we've probably got a lot of water resources, the delivery system and the filtration and, of course, the sewage particles set the equation expensive for us. We have not positioned somebody up at the cruise ship terminal. We've had a few people make their way down. Trolleys bring people as far as the head of Commercial Street at the Chamber of Commerce office. We're a little off the beaten track, unfortunately, for most of them. We haven't ... we've talked about it, believe me. We haven't made the investment to go up there and corral people and refer them down. The few that have made it to us, find us fascinating. It's quirky, it's the real McCoy. Whether they take our 45-minute narrated tour with Brittany, or whether they just get a glimpse inside of the old ice house, which is a really tactile experience: 28 degrees and these big blocks of ice and the accumulations of frost on the ammonia coils. It's like crystal in on the ceilings and we have sculptures on display. It's still an interesting thing. It doesn't help pay the bills the way putting ice on fishing boats or concrete trucks does, but it's something that we're very proud of, happy to share. David?

39:498

David

Scott, my summer house where I grew up in in the '40s and '50s had an icebox. The guy would come with a big piece of ice on his back. Was that Cape Pond Ice? I have no idea what the...

40:00

Scott

There were a lot of businesses. Cape Pond was the major supplier – Cape Pond and Fernwood as I said. There were a lot of independent delivery guys. George Todd in Rockport was a delivery guy. There were Harvey delivery companies independently before Phil was General Manager of Cape Pond Ice, up in Lanesville and on the backside of Cape Ann.

David

[some unintelligible talk in the background]

This was in East Gloucester. I still go with an icebox in my kitchen.

Scott

Just as there were so many dairy farms and egg farms in those days, there were a lot of ice companies and they were harvesting ice, literally, from every body of water that they could get a team of horses to. So Niles Pond (referred to as Patch's Pond) and people were... It was valuable enough that they were investing money to make their own ponds, man-made ponds that weren't very deep, but they were sufficient to harvest natural ice from in the winter months. And they were typically able to harvest apparently twice a season: once in December and then again in January or February. The ice had to be at least 12 inches thick, and preferably it was 24 to 30 inches thick for an economical harvest. Today, don't forget, we're lucky if it's thick enough to ice skate on. Yes?

41:11

Audience Member

In the days when we were exporting ice all over the world, were they worried about depleting the water supply?

41:19

Scott

That's an interesting question. I suspect they never thought about it. They were moving all that fresh water from New England over to Calcutta. As part of that evaporation and precipitation cycle that was just a new factor. It's interesting to see how global warming and the melting of ice the cap fits it fits into it all. In the back of the room, sir?

41:43

Audience Member

Did you ever think about buying equipment to convert seawater into fresh water like they do on board a lot of the ships?

41:51

Scott

Desalination is certainly a tempting idea, especially given Gloucester's high costs for water. Mike Fonzo of recent memory was somebody who thought that was a great idea and opportunity for Gloucester to capitalize on. When I try to study it, the economics of it gets beyond my reach

pretty quickly. You might be interested to know, we don't have a backup electric generator at Cape Pond Ice. If we lose power with our wonderful National Grid, we close our doors and battened down and wait till it comes back on again rather than invest in a really expensive backup generator that would run one of our big ammonia compressors. It just economically doesn't make sense for us. Are there any more questions? We can turn the lights back... Yes?

42:36

Audience Member

How much ice are you making a year now?

42:39

Scott

Not enough. When my dad and I formed the group to buy Cape Pond Ice, our annualized sales were measured as approximately 40 to 45,000 tons a year. And 80% of that was directly fishing related. Mostly right onboard boats. And it's great when your customer pulls up to the dock, you have no delivery expenses, they tell you they want 30 tons of ice, and 30 minutes later, they're gone. The next guy comes up. It's just... it's a wonderfully... our operation is efficient and economical at that level. The other fishing component are the processors we use. They typically have their own ice making machines, but they use us as a backup supplier. Last year fishing ice industry... ice product sales were about 35% of our business. This year, they'll be about 25% of our business. Our business is remarkably, relatively stable. It's very subject to the whims of Mother Nature and how good and hot a summer it is and how many good summer weekends we have. We do 80% of our sales in July and August and 20% of our sales the other 10 months of the year. But increasingly, concrete ice has been a major opportunity for us, as I mentioned earlier. But most of our most of our ice sales today are in packaged ice products, and they're being delivered in our fleet of delivery trucks, which unfortunately are very expensive and costly to operate and maintain. We had a truck that was cut off on Route 95 a month ago at Middleton and rolled over with a load of ice in it. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. You know, life... I like to think (maybe it's just my imagination) but life was simpler back 30 years ago. But you know, we're surviving. We're finding new markets. I feel like my dad and I and our current owner group have reinvented the business and reinvest in the business at least two or three times over again. If the Ryans and Hodges were still running the business, I suspect that we would have closed the doors, because we've sacrificed a lot to invest in our capacity to be still in business today. Fishermen particularly count on you to be reliable. They need that ice [snaps his fingers] now and then they're off. The crime for us is there're not a lot of fishermen left. Yes?

44:58

Audience Member

You say the concrete business. I'm just curious as to how that how that works? Is it part of the setting process?

45:05

Scott

Yes. I think the Portland Cement Institute has a set of standards, engineering standards. You could probably tell me more than I can tell you about it.

45:13

Audience Member

Well, about the standards. Yeah.

45:14

Scott

When they built the Hoover Dam, they built an ice plant on site to meet the ice needs. They actually replaced so much water in the ready-mix concrete with crushed ice...It's the cheapest, most economic way for them to lower the temperatures. Concrete as it cures goes through a chemical reaction and gives off heat. And in the summer time we have hot sand and hot aggregate chemical and hot incoming water. Hot concrete sets quickly and fragilely -- brittle. Apparently, it's a short crystal structure. When you can slow it down like by the temperature, it has a longer crystal structure. So particularly municipal job specs like bridge abutments, like the first big project that I remember hearing about which Evelyn's father was very much involved with was the Seabrook nuclear power plant cooling tunnels. There's a lot of Cape Pond Ice and Gloucester water in those tunnels to make sure that that concrete set strong. And then the Boston Big Dig was a phenomenal opportunity just ended too quickly and [audience laughter] I didn't use enough.

46:18

And of all the people that we dealt with was the one that wasn't beat me up on pricing, because they were such fantastic customers, of course, they're all in federal penitentiaries right now, they falsified how much ice they were using in the ready-mix. And so we're having problems with brittle tunnels. We did sell some ice last summer for wind turbine footings up in northern Vermont, really massive footings on the scale of what Durand is putting in. And then as I mentioned to some of you, really interesting project that we've been associated with the last two years, selling ice, plain ice to in construction scale is the World Trade Center towers in lower Manhattan. The Ready-mix Concrete Company in Flushing, New York can't get enough block ice in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut and they're coming to Gloucester and they're trucking it down. That's been a kick in the pants this past summer as we watched the fishing industry contract.

47:11

Fishing industry is always changing, though too, but we had the last two years an influx of New Jersey scallopers operating out of Gloucester and there have been several benefits: one is the fresh scallops for lobsters here in town and the other is they use quite a bit of ice. But a lot of these boats do have their own onboard ice making machines, which are notoriously unreliable. The Andrea Gale of the Perfect Storm had an icemaker on board. She did take 20 tons of ice

from Cape Pond on her last trip, 22 years ago on October 31, which helped them extend their trip. And then their icemaker broke down, so they had a difficult choice. They finally had a full hold of swordfish at that time, and they knew that the storm system was coming up the Atlantic, but their ice making machine had broken down. They'd been out at sea 30 days, and they didn't have enough ice to preserve the value of their swordfish catch, so they made a calculated gamut to try and get across the path of the storm system to Canada while they still had enough ice. Ice is cheap. When you don't have it, you know, the loss of the value of their fish is pretty extreme. All the big the enterprising challenges, big herring and mackerel seiners, you see aboard trawlers, they all use self-contained refrigerated seawater chilling systems now, so the technology has eliminated the need for our onshore ice plant supply from that industry. Great questions. Thank you. Yeah?

48:30

Audience Member

For the ice sculptures, have you supplied them for Boston First Night? And Rockport First Night?

Scott

Absolutely. Yup. Yup. That was one little niche market that we put a lot of effort into promoting and trying to expand. It was really hard hit by the economic recession. For some reason people think that ice sculptures are a frivolous part of the budget when it comes to your upcoming wedding or corporate party. But we do supply block ice for First Night in Boston and Portsmouth. We work with a network of all the talented sculptors that are based at Brookline or up in Lawrence or up in New Hampshire. And a lot of them, as I mentioned, use our ice house as a workshop, because they can't rely on stable freezing temperatures going through New Year's Eve in Boston. So they pay us a small rental fee to work in a controlled environment, which is fun for us. They cut massive sculptures into sections on pallets. When we deliver them on the truck, they put them back together again like a jigsaw puzzle. It's a lot of fun.

49:29

Thank you all very much. And again, there're some things to look at up here. [unintelligible due to applause] We'd love to hear them and help to document them to the future.