

Ice Harvesting

Before the advent of electricity into our community, one of the most important industries was the harvesting of ice on Whitman's and Great Pond. Nearly a score of ice houses were built on the shores of both, and a flourishing business continued throughout the year, distributing ice to the homes and stores for the preservation of foodstuffs.

The South Boston Ice Company located in 1874 on Great Pond in the northeast corner, a short distance from our present filter station. This was by far the largest; cutting tons for export and having their own spur railroad connecting to the main line, over which to transport the ice cakes to the freight cars. Ice was packed in straw and sawdust for an insulator to slow the melting process and keep the cakes from sealing. As many as 150 men would be employed during the harvesting time. The frozen pond surface or "field" as it was often called, was first marked out with a horse and a plough especially designed for cutting a groove in the ice. The men would then start cutting with large ice saws and as soon as a channel had been opened, the cakes were pushed with long cant hooks toward the cog chain lift at the ice house which took the ice to each level until the building was filled. In exceptionally cold winters, several cuttings could be harvested. The South Boston Company, for instance, could hold some 40,000 tons in their houses.

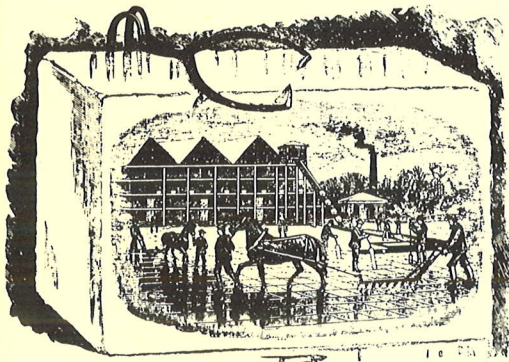


Photo Courtesy Weymouth News

First Town Hall — Built in 1852 near the corner of Middle & Washington Sts.; moved in 1906-7 to the site of our present Police Station, and remodelled. Destroyed by fire, May 27, 1914.



Picture courtesy of Lester L. Belcher