

Recall Time When Ice Was Cut From Lakes and Streams Here

Frank Goodman Recalls "Old Bob" Turner on Spring Branch Road as Well as Many Others—Great Progress in Industry.

A few years ago a freeze like the present one would have been looked upon by at least one local industry as a blessing. The ice industry of a few years back smiled broadly when heavy freezes came.

Frank Goodman, engineer of the Independence Ice & Creamery Co. recalled today that "Old Bob" Turner owned the first ice business here. Years and years ago Bob Turner, Sr., had an ice house on the Spring Branch Road somewhere near the site of the rock crusher. Ice was cut from the Spring Branch and from lakes in the neighborhood.

George Schulze was the first ice man to make his own equipment in this city. Not having a suitable water supply available, Schulze built an artificial lake at the southeast corner of West South Avenue and Osage Street. A part of the old lake dam still stands there today.

"Young Bob" Turner made his appearance in the ice business and used the old McCoy Lake (Doutt's Lake) as a source of ice. The Dickinson Lakes were used by Ray and W. B. Dickinson to supply their ice house. The May Grain & Coal Company also entered the ice business while it was still in the natural ice stage.

When no natural ice was available here it was shipped in by rail from northern communities. Delivery of ice in the early days did not have the finesse and technique of the modern delivery service. Ice was tossed into the yard with a shout of "Ice" and the customer had to hustle out and recover the cake of ice, wash it and carry it inside.

In the old days the ice was sawed with odd-looking saws. The cakes varied in size according to the thickness of the ice on the lake. Some icemen drove a horse out onto the lake and "plowed" the ice both ways with an ice plow. This plow did not cut all of the way through and the cakes were broken off with pike poles by workmen who floated them to a chute where they were hauled up into the ice house and stored in sawdust.

In 1905 W. O. Porter, J. B. Hatten, J. M. Burgner and Randolph Jones built the first artificial ice plant. It had a capacity of thirty-five tons per day and used distilled water, which cost much

more than the raw water used today. In 1913 a 2,000-ton storage house was added to the plant. The plant was increased to 100-ton capacity in 1915 but in 1925 a 60-ton raw water plant was added to the equipment.

The present modern plant of 108 tons daily capacity was changed from steam operation to electrification in 1932. About the same time many of the old gadgets around the ice plant were replaced by more up-to-date stuff. Gone are the old brass scales that hung on the back of the wagon. A scoring machine has made them no longer a necessity. The fine broad-backed horses have been replaced by trucks which move about too fast for the modern kid to get a chance to filch a small piece of ice on a hot day. Time was when sneaking a small piece of ice off of the back of a wagon was quite a sport on a hot day.