

Letter from Uncle Randall

①

My Q: How old were you when you started in the ice business.

Letter: 12 yrs. old - my first job was to fill the water pans that we had to wash the sawdust off the ice.

My Q: How did you get the ice off the lake & with what did you cut it with.

Letter: We cut the ice in mud lake we had a gas engine saw to cut on the lake. We also had to cut some with hand saws. We used alot of tongs + shovels + bars. - when I was small we got the ice off the lake with horses - mainly all the work was done with horses like we had a wooden ~~plow~~ plow that the horses would pull to get the sawdust off the lake. we had wagons for the summer sleighs for the winter - The ice was pulled in the ice house w/ horses.

My Q: Did everyone use ice - were you the only ice company around?

Letter: At that time nearly everyone used ice. There were 3 ice co. in Ishpeming.

my Q: were horses always used - throughout the ice business?

letter: When my dad took the business over, he sold the horses + bought some trucks.

my Q: How many ice houses did you have?

letter: We had four large ice houses next to the lake - When they were full, we would pack ice on the sides + tops of them.

my Q: Where did you get the sawdust from?

letter: We got the sawdust from the local sawmills. We had to shovel it all by hand.

my Q: Do you remember any scary, funny or interesting events that took place?

letter: The scary thing I remember is when a horse fell through thin ice + it was a hard time for my dad to keep him calm + get him out. Another time was when I had the truck on thin ice + the back end went through - we had to use planks + borrow forks from the railroad to get it out.

my Q: Who did you deliver ice to and how much did it cost?

letter: The railroads used a lot of ice we had to fill the rail cars everyday.

Letter (cont): All the stores had ice coolers we had to fill them about every week. We had to fill peoples ice boxes in there homes every 3 to 5 ~~weeks~~ days. It was 10-25 cents for a chunk of ice when I first started + it went up to about 50¢ near the end.

My Q: When did refridgerators come out?

Letter: There were a few refridgerators before WW II but after the war people bought them as fast as the could get them. By 1960 the ice buisness was about all over.

My Q: How much did you get payed?

Letter: I worked for 50¢ an hour for a long time near the end I got \$1.25 an hour.

My Q: What is the ice museum like?

Letter: The museum at Port Huron is a nice place to see. It has tools from all over the country and it has old moving pictures of cutting ice. It also has a large picture of your great grandpa mounted on the old ice saw. It says Racine Ice Co, Ishpeming Mich. on it.