

Ice Cutting Videos

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaSwMeLXnM0>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jxuMhwSvwY>



Cutting Lake Ice

Cutting ice on Big Stone Lake, Big Stone County, Minnesota

Ice harvesting crew at work on Big Stone Lake. Original image was taken from a glass plate negative. **

**<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/bsc/id/2194/rv/singleitem>

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Note that some tool will be needed to extract the block of ice, after it is cut "By Handsaw". One way is when the lake is first safe to walk, you hand drill one inch holes every 3' and insert a 3/4" stick, to use for lifting in the spring. My Dad talked about an ice saw and tongs for cutting and lifting the blocks.

I'd guess that some kind of ice cleats (like removable "yax trax") on one's boots would make it safer to be standing out there lifting blocks of ice out. I wouldn't want to slide into the open water. A person could use an ice fishing sled (or other sled) to move the blocks off the lake/river/pond.

Locate the structure near your main house in as shady a spot as possible. Under a tree is good, as is a site on the north side of a hill . . . or you can always build a trellis over the building later and train ivy or other vines to cover the latticework. If you try the latter method, keep the trellis at least a foot from the building beneath (this creates a space for cool air to circulate). As a general rule the Icehouse is next to the lake or river, as cutting and hauling on a sled is work.

They had a cellar under their barn where they stored the ice. I remember as a child seeing the wooden steps leading down to the cellar when my Dad lifted the trap door to show me.

We used to make a snow cave before we had a refrigerator. We'd lay a plastic 50-gallon barrel on its side, facing north with a board lying under each side to keep it from rocking. Over winter we'd keep packing snow against and over it as tight as we could.

The end that opened had a screw on lid. We laid a board inside the barrel, cut to make a level "floor", to set food on. We took two pieces of 1" thick Styrofoam, glued them together and fitted it against the outside of the lid. To get into the barrel you set the Styrofoam aside, unscrewed the lid, and put food in or took it out.

By spring it would have about 4' of tightly packed snow that had hardened almost to ice. Then we'd break open bales of old hay or straw and spread that a foot or so thick over the whole thing. One year we put a tarp over that with the shiny foil-like side facing the sun. That actually melted the snow faster than just using the straw.