

A Winter Harvest and the Ice House

Harvesting did not end with the crops. With winter upon nearby ponds and storing it in an icehouse attached to the home. This underground chamber could store ice well into the summer months. The ice was used to keep food fresh and cool drinks. A 1906 article describes Eusebius R Barnard harvesting 3 inches of ice from a nearby pond. Though not thick, it was of the best quality.

According to Eusebius R Barnard's farm ledger, the ice house was built by his father in 1856. It also states that "the carpenter was Jonathan Boughbard, a colored man." The Preservation Plan describes "the icehouse took the form of a below ground stone-lined pit. At grade, the pit was likely framed and covered with a gabled roof." The stone pit and basement entry door still exist along with the imprint of the original roof in the house wall.

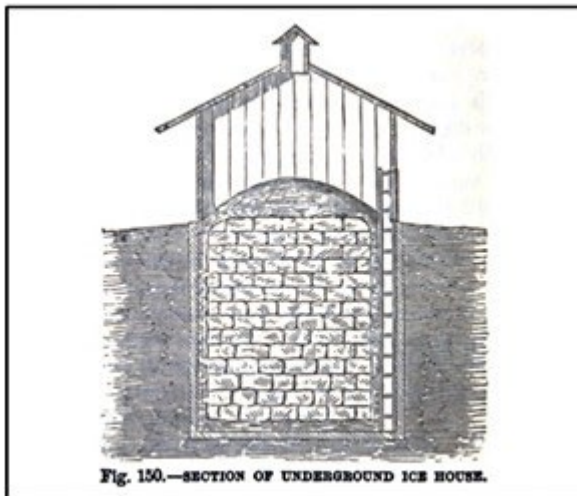
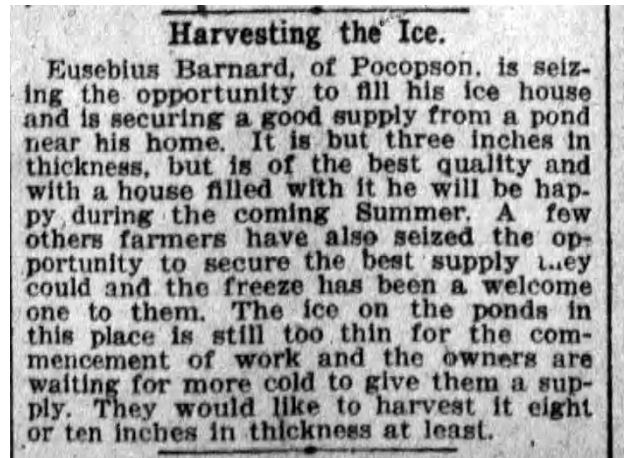


Figure 6: Illustration of an icehouse comprising a pit and frame enclosure.

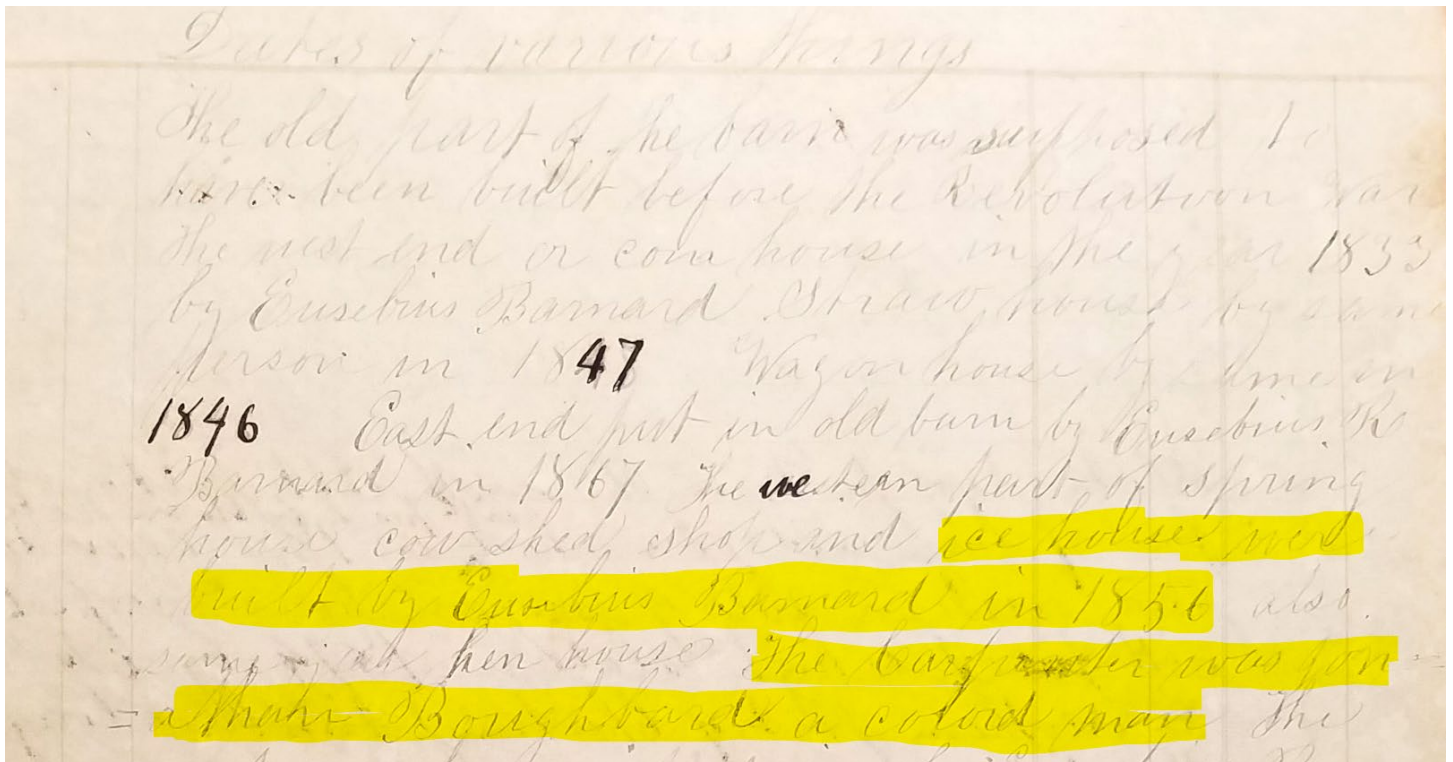


Left: Door in basement to ice house. Above: inside door is a stone lined ice storage area



Prior to the invention of the refrigerator, people used ice houses or purchased blocks of ice to keep food cold. The 'harvesting' of ice was big business. During the heyday of the ice trade, a typical commercial icehouse would store 2,700 tons of ice in a 30 by 100 ft and 45 ft high building. Most notable was Frederic Tudor (known as Boston's "Ice King") who formed the Tudor Ice Company in the early 19th century. In winter months, ice was chipped from a lake surface and often dragged by sled to the icehouse. In summer months, icemen delivered it to

residences in ice-wagons; the ice would then be stored in an icebox, which was used much like a modern refrigerator. By 1884, most homes had ice boxes; some were elaborate pieces of furniture. Ice harvesting became obsolete by the 1960s. There are still people today who call their refrigerator an 'ice box'.



Eusebius R Barnard Farm Ledger

Daily Village Record
Sat, Dec 16, 1893 ·Page 3

Housed Twelve Loads of Ice
Eusebius Barnard, Pocopson, cut the ice off his pond on Wednesday, and put twelve large loads into his ice house. It was four inches thick and of an excellent quality.