



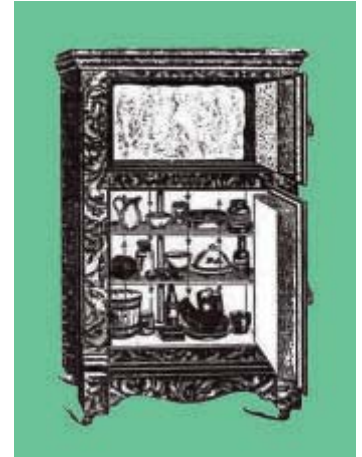
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
1300 BRIGHTON ROAD
BEAVER, PENNSYLVANIA 15009-9211
(724) 774-4800
www.brightontwp.org

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Memories of an Old Time Business

The following are highlights from an oral history provided by Mr. Dominic Cascio. In this article Dominic shares memories of the family-run ice business during olden times. Prior to the invention and implementation of the modern refrigerator, use of the ice box was widespread. One major drawback to the icebox system was a need for constant replenishment of ice. In the local area that need was fulfilled by the Cascio family.

The Cascio family, father Tony, his brother Dominic and a family friend Nick Dideo made and delivered ice blocks to the Brighton Township area. The Beaver Ice Company was started in the early 1920s. Initially, the operation was carried out at the family homestead on Glenn Drive located off Gypsy Glen Road and slightly beyond the High School practice field. This was an ideal location for an ice business, due to the fact that a stream is located adjacent to the property. During the winter months, the stream would freeze and ice chunks would then be hand cut. The large chunks were then taken and stored in the family barn. Incredibly, the ice would stay frozen for long time periods using known storage methods of the era. The ice was cut in either 25 or 50 pound blocks and delivered to customers via horse and wagon.



As times changed so did ice making technology. New ways of ice making and increased demand necessitated business adaptation. Therefore, it was only natural that the ice operation be reorganized. Eventually, a new ice plant was built in approximately 1926. It was located in the area that present day Wendy's occupies. The need for ice storage was minimized by the new technology of the day. Two large tanks were incorporated in the building design. Filled with water and injected with an ammonia mixture, a chemical reaction froze the water in just 48 hours. The huge ice blocks were hauled out of the tanks, cut into smaller blocks and sold. Water for this ongoing operation was supplied by two wells of 1000 and 1500 feet deep located on the property.

Other memories of bygone ice days include the following:

Dominic conveys and underscores the physically taxing nature of the business. It was one man and one 50 pound block of ice coping with stairs and narrow passage ways in all types of weather. He recalls, as a teenager, carrying ice blocks up to third floor apartments one stair step at a time in the now Huntington Bank building.

During his early teens Dominic started to ride along with his father on ice routes, including Brighton Township. Deliveries of ice in the Township were every Tuesday and Saturday. The route started at Market Street and proceeded to the end of Dutch Ridge Road then onto Tuscarawas Road and eventually back to town. Essentially, the route was a loop and took much of the day to deliver.

The use of refrigerators was slow to catch on in this country and likewise this area. Practical technology problems, household cost considerations and a WW II parts shortage greatly expanded the economic life of the iceman. As the post WW II era began, the refrigerator became universal. Likewise, as time passed so did the iceman. The Beaver Ice Company closed in the early 1950s.

Editor's note: Dominic left High School in his junior year to serve in WW II. Upon completion of his wartime duties, he eventually became a school teacher and coached three sports. After 34 years of teaching and despite 26 years into retirement, he is still teaching us local history. The Brighton Township Historical Society wishes to thank Mr. Dominic Cascio for helping with this column.

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