

## ***Memories of the Ice Harvests at Hemlock Lake***

1959

Written by Ira H. Briggs

Courtesy of Ann Briggs Brown



*Photo courtesy of Livingston County Historical Society*

The year 1901 Dad and Mother moved in with Gramp and Aunt May. Dad took over management of the farm. Raised good crops and three “little problems” which grew into big ones, but that is another story!

After a few years, Dad built an ice house. Us boys had gotten big enough to help, so during Christmas vacation when the ice on Hemlock Lake got nice and thick, all hands, including neighbors with teams, hired men, and boys, started hauling sleigh loads of ice up, “You guessed it” Jakeway Hill.

My job was to drive the snatch team and to be ready at the foot of the hill to hitch on ahead and double up to the top, then hurry back to the foot and catch the next load, and so on until the

ice house was full, so that we, as well as, the neighbors could enjoy homemade ice cream for Decoration Day, the 4th of July, Sundays throughout the summer, and ice for the wooden ice boxes.

I suppose you are wondering how come I stopped at the foot of Jakeway Hill on a very cold moonlight night, bundled up in a full-length fur coat which belonged to my father, driving a horse and cutter towing another cutter behind. Well, that is another story, too!

The story right now is how did I get up the hill? I love horses. “Mutt” (my horses name), I thought was tired of hauling two cutters such a long way, so I got out of the cutter and bent down and loosened the rear cutter, planning to get it next day. Just as I succeeded to untie the knot, “Mutt” happened to look around, saw that big black object there in the snow, and took off like a shot out of a gun. He stopped occasionally, but if he saw or heard me sneaking up on him, he would continue on his way, so I walked the 2 1/2 miles with that big coat sweating like it was high noon in the sun on the 4th of July. “Mutt” and some other names I gave him was waiting for me at the barn door. He was my first horse and I wished I had him now but there is not enough snow so far, this winter for the cutter.

Incidentally, it was a borrowed cutter belonging to neighbor Sam Spencer. The cutter I left behind belonged to my father.

Moral of my story is: That teenagers today could be worse.

**Ira H. Briggs**

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*Editor's note: Ira H. Briggs lived in Richmond NY and was married to Mary Greenman.*

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