



The Society Scroll

Newsletter of
The Ocean County Historical Society

26 Hadley Avenue
Toms River, NJ 08753

Phone: 732 341-1880 FAX: 732 341-4372



"Telling The Stories Of Ocean County"

Season's Greetings!

On-Line Extra December 2009

CHRISTMAS pp.29-30

Excerpted from Living With The Pine Barrens by Jack Cervetto 1908-1995

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After deer season we would go Christmas tree hunting. some of the families wanted a cedar tree and some wanted pine. To find a good shaped tree we would have to look at the top of larger trees and when we found one we would cut the tree down, then cut the top to the length we wanted. Sometimes after the top was cut off and loaded it was not in as good shape as it looked in the air and we would look for a better one. We would look for Princess or standing pine which grows in certain patches in the woods. It looks like a pine tree but grows only eight inches tall and its small branches feel like satin. We also hunt for holly with berries.

Holly is not too plentiful in this area. We would gather some laurel branches and some pine cones. Getting a tree and preparing to decorate it is something most of us do today. The difference is that today we have electricity. Electric didn't come to Warren Grove until 1940. The boys and girls before 1940 made all the decorations for the Christmas Tree.

We had been working on tree decorations for some time. We also had some decorations from the previous year. Every year we had to make our long string of cranberries and also a long string of popcorn that we raised and we had a small patch of cranberries in front of our house. Popcorn and cranberries did not keep for a year. We made several items with red, white, and blue paper such as chains made of paper rings of these colors. We cut Santa Claus out of sales books and pasted them on Cardboard. We also used other attractions found in sales books. Our tree looked good to us and we waited for Dad to come down for Christmas with some presents. Mother baked all kinds of goodies for the holidays. There are about eighteen pupils attending our one room school in Warren Grove including the Sim Place pupils. Most of the Sim Place pupils attended our Church School also.

My father and grandfather came down from Garfield and we had a nice Christmas Day with presents and everything else. My grandfather stayed with us for a month. The weather was cold and that big black stove in our kitchen kept our rooms comfortable. But the cold weather would also lower the wood in the wood box. It gave my brother, Sam, and me extra work to keep the wood box full.



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ICE HARVESTING pp. 22-23

Another job that has to be done is filling the ice houses. There is a man in town that checks the thickness of the ice every week starting in the middle of January. He has done this for many years. The desired thickness is six inches. One year that I remember we had to settle for four inches. However, this year we did get six inch ice.

When the men were ready to cut the ice, the three men who have done this job for years were the first on the bog in the morning. Two of the men mark the ice with a pointed rod for the size of the width to be cut. The other man cuts the ice and has a good start before the gang arrives. Every block of ice was the same size and this made it easy to stack in the building. The saw used to cut the ice is about the size of a two man saw, but is only made for one man as one end is down in the water. The cutting edge of this saw was made special for cutting ice. This saw was used until 1941 which was the last year we filled our ice houses and is the year electric lines were brought here.



All the men who helped kill and clean the hogs were out to help fill the two ice houses in town. We had three wagons to haul the ice. Boys ten years old and older were let out of school to help skid ice over the pond to the wagons. This was more like play for us boys than work. One of the men brought a load of wood and had a beautiful camp fire roaring. Cake and cocoa were sent by wagon drivers to us by some of the women in town.

A block of ice is stacked in the center of the building and a three-foot wall of sawdust is spread from the ice to the wall of the building. To get a piece of ice one would climb about a seven-foot ladder to an upper small door and this would take you to the top of the ice stack. A shovel is kept up there to move two to three feet of sawdust before getting to the top of the ice. With your shovel loosen a piece of ice and place it in your pail. Then shovel the sawdust back over the ice. This was done until 1940 when electric was brought here.

[Living With The Pine Barrens](#) by Jack Cervetto 1908-1995 is available for purchase at the Ocean County Historical Society.

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