

Days of Yesterdays, Esmont Community Center

Stories of the elders as told to Laura Piedmont, R.N. and Susan Hastings, R.N.

Copyright 2009 JABA, Charlottesville

Transcribed for Friends of Esmont web use with added photos, by Douglas H. Bush

The Esmont Ice Pond and House

by Lorraine Paige



As a young girl, I remembered the Ice Pond and House on my grandfather's property. The winters in the late '30s and early '40s were very cold. Thus, the water on the pond would freeze two to three inches thick. After a hard freeze, my father and grandfather equipped with long-handled blades would chop the ice into pieces. With long handled picks, they would bring the pieces to the bank of the pond with their hands. Wearing special heavy gloves, they loaded the ice on a wagon waiting by the pond.

Our horses, Alice, May, or Prince, patiently waited to pull the wagon up the hill to the ice house. The ice house consisted of a large hole dug in the ground and a wooden board house constructed over it with shelves on the sides for storing our perishables. The house had a large ladder to enter the hole. A load of ice was placed in the house. Next, my relatives were off to get a load of dried leaves to cover the ice. This was done after each hard freeze until the ice house was filled to the level of the large hole. In the summer, we had plenty of ice for the ice box, to make homemade ice cream to sell or give to our neighbors.

My father always dressed me in my warm blue snow suit sewed by my mother. Then, he would make a small fire on the bank of the pond to keep me warm. Also, he heated bricks and covered them for me to stand on just to keep my feet warm. This memory was one of my favorite experiences while living on our farm.