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Dec. 15 - 1949

# In Cleveland County's Early Days

By MAMIE JONES

## THE MIRACLE OF TODAY IS THE COMMONPLACE OF TOMORROW

Among those early Clevelanders were some pretty smart men, but if anyone had told them a hundred years ago that in 1949 their grandchildren would be manufacturing ice in their own kitchens in the hot summertime, they would probably have exclaimed, as did the old Negro when some one suggested showing him through an ice-manufacturing plant: "Whut! Freezing Ice in July! Why de good God hisself can't do that."

Artificial ice was manufactured first in New Orleans about 1866; but no satisfactory method of producing artificial ice for commercial use was found until 1880-1885.

I do not know definitely when the first artificial ice reached Shelby. Bloom Kendall tells me that Kendrick & Kendall, who had a drug store in what had formerly been the old Captain Wells' drug store, at the location where Messick's now is, had ice shipped from Charlotte by express, in the early nineties. He says further that before the drug store began serving ice cream that they served pineapple snow, which they made by shaving ice into a custard. He says also that this firm, Kendrick & Kendall, served the first Coca Cola in Shelby, buying it in five-gallon cans in the 1890's.

## PEDDLED ICE CREAM

In the early 1890's, when Shelby was just a little village with pro-

bably less than 1,400 people—nearly half of whom were Negroes — "John — the barber" (sometimes called John Turby Wilson) described as a tan Negro with large, bulging eyes, used to peddle ice cream from a push cart along the dusty streets, shouting as he went along: "Ice cream! Ice cream! It must be sold."

About 1896 or '97 Shelby begun to grow, and soon the drug stores were selling ice cream. The very first ice cream cones I recall were sold at a carnival tent located where the post office now stands. I think the year was about 1906 or 1907. This cone was made of a batter fried on a stove right beside the ice cream freezer. The cone was rolled up cornucopia fashion while still warm, and the ice cream was put in. But one had to be careful, else the cream would drip out of the hole at the bottom.

## ICE CREAM SUPPERS

I wonder how many of my readers recall the good times we had serving ice cream suppers on the court square under auspices of the different churches. Quite a bit of money was raised that way. This ice cream was the home-made kind—a frozen custard made with plenty of eggs and rich milk. With it was served a big slice of home-made cake made with lots of eggs and home-churned butter.

## BUILT ICE HOUSES

In earlier years, before commer-

cial ice was procurable, ice was gathered from ponds and rivers, packed in saw dust and stored in ice houses. Instead of constructing ice houses, some people dug pits and ice packed these kept well in to the summer.

I recall Mr. Albert Green had an ice house on East Marion Street where the Rogers theatre now stands. He gathered ice from a pond in the hollow just back of what is now the Rogers' building. He sold this ice to the drug stores. They used it for packing.

Around 1900 A. B. Suttle and Marion Putnam built an ice storage house on Morgan street, and ice was shipped here over the Southern Railway.

About 1904 or 1905 Marion Putnam, C. B. Suttle, and (I think) Elzie Wellmon, built an ice manufacturing plant on Morgan St. Hill Kendrick was the first superintendent.

However, without man-made ice, the earlier citizens got along pretty well for centuries. Milk and butter were kept sweet in the spring-house, built by the side of the spring branch, where running water lapped the sides of the milk crocks and kept them cool. Lacking a spring-house, food was frequently put into a bucket and let down into an open well, being raised and lowered by means of a rope.

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