



Kennebec Land & Lumber Company

The Ice Industry



Harvesting Crew moving the ice blocks with tongs



(Tools from left to right)

Long-handled picks were used on the field of ice.

Busting bars were used to break a sheet of ice away from the main field.

Chisels, with 4" or 5" sharp blades, were used for cutting holes and smoothing.

Short picks were used in the ice houses.



The harvesting crew at work, marking, grooving and cutting a new field.



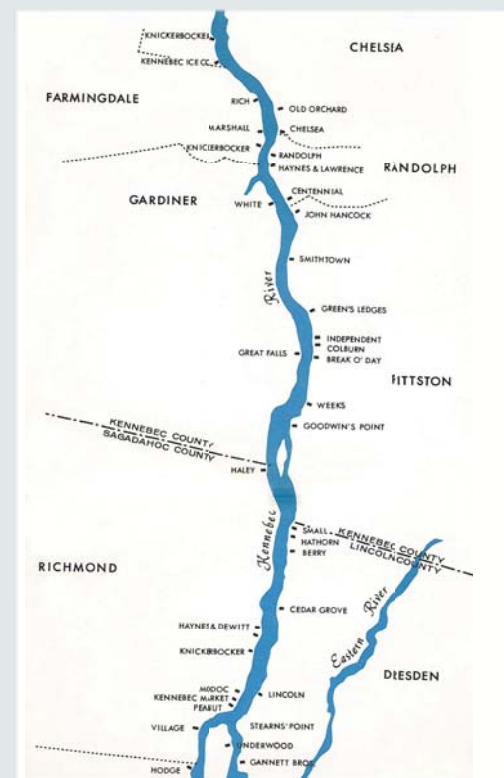
The American Ice Co. in Pittston.

Lumber and ice, two of the great Kennebec River industries, came together in the Kennebec Land and Lumber Company, established by Ira D. Sturgis and William Sprague. Sturgis built a large sawmill with a towering brick chimney (above) on the riverfront in Pittston, now Randolph. Immediately north of the mill, Sturgis erected a huge icehouse. It was just one of over 30 in the area (see map).



A sailing vessel next to the ice house

The City of Gardiner became known worldwide for exporting ice. Each winter men cut large blocks from the Kennebec River. Sawdust insulation kept the ice frozen in giant warehouses well into summer. It was loaded year-round on large vessels for shipment throughout the United States and the world. Gardiner was noted for its pristine Kennebec ice, harvested at the furthest point upriver that deep-draft vessels could reach.



Ice house locations in the Gardiner area