

## Then & Now - Echo Lake Rd. Ice House, and Deer & Elk Park



*Replacement Dam and Spillway Being Built in 1905*

This 2-acre lake was created in the late 1800's. Although, we do not know exactly when the dam was constructed, it was displayed on the 1902 map, which shows the property being owned by F. E. Reed, just before it was acquired by the State Reservation. The original dam broke and was rebuilt in the 1905.

In 1908-9 a windmill driven pumping station on top of Mt. Wachusett was installed to pump water from Echo Lake to the Summit House hotel. Five thousand feet of 1 ½ inch pipe was laid to raise the water 750 feet to tanks, located in the attic of the hotel, with a capacity of 2,000 gallons.



*Windmill On Wachusett Mountain*

### **Ice House and Dam**

In the late 1800's, many Princeton residents cut and stored their own ice during the winter. In 1903, Charles U. Hubbard began an ice business, supplying ice for customers from Echo Lake. That same winter the Mason

Brothers bought his business, and cut and stored ice in the Ice Barn they built next to Echo Lake, and used sawdust from a nearby sawmill to insulate it from melting. They had over 90 customers. With the advent of electric refrigerators, and mechanical ice plants the Mason stopped selling ice in the 1930's and dismantled their barn.



Ice was hand cut into 15" cubes or 2'x4'x8" rectangles by hand with a saw or horse drawn sled saws. It was hard and dangerous work, and it was important to keep the lake or pond clear of snow to promote the even freezing of ice.

*Sketch Of Ice Being Harvested*

After starting a hole with a spud, they'd switch to a **saw** and angle the blade as they **cut**. To **cut** a straight line, you want to keep the blade at a 45- to 60-degree angle, not straight up and down, and make your **cuts** as you push the blade into the **ice**, not when you draw it backward. The blocks were then pulled up onto the ice by men or horses, or floated to the shore and stored in an ice house, with each layer of ice being covered with sawdust to inhibit melting.



*Echo Lake Dam & Ice House After 1906*





*Possibly, Mrs. Everett Needham - Sitting On The Dam Spillway ~ Winter of 1905*



*Above is a view of Echo Lake as it is today. This picture is taken from across the lake in woods looking at the spillway that has replaced the previous dam. The Ice House was in the woods beyond the dam, behind and to the left of the road. The Saw Mill was further up Echo Lake Rd. on the left.*

## Deer and Elk Park



*Deer and Elk Feeding*

From about 1903 to 1918 a herd of elk and deer were kept in a 300-acre fenced area on the southwesterly side of Mt Wachusett bordering the north side of Echo Lake Rd.

As well as being a tourist attraction, the deer and elk were

harvested for their venison and sold to Boston restaurants and served at the Summit House restaurant.

The maintenance, upkeep, and one winter's heavy snow, which covered the 300-acres to fence height, thus allowing the herd to escape and eventually repetitively invade the gardens of local homeowners and farmers. These two situations proved to make keeping this Deer and Elk Park more work than it was worth.

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We would love to hear from you, if you have any questions or information to share at

[princetonmahistory@gmail.com](mailto:princetonmahistory@gmail.com)