

KANSAS HISTORY

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Cutting Ice. With his camera, Garden City photographer Henry L. Wolf captured the varied ordinary and extraordinary activities of many of his fellow western Kansans. At the turn of the century unlike today, many of these chores were seasonal. Before refrigeration had made its way onto the farm and into the homes and businesses of the community in the form of refrigerators and freezers, ice harvesting was a critical winter time job. In rural areas, ice for farm and household use was harvested from frozen rivers, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs and stored in well-insulated icehouses. When carefully packed in saw dust or straw, ice could be preserved well into the summer.

Many Finney Countians depended on Israel Lewelling Diesem (1852-1934), a prosperous and well-known area businessman and agricul-

turalist, for their cooling needs. Diesem operated an ice business on his farm near the northwest edge of Garden City (soon known as the Diesem Addition), where he had moved in 1885, and "Diesem Pure Well Water Ice" was delivered to area kitchens for many years. The men in this photograph, using special ice saws and other tools designed for the job, are "Cutting Ice" on one of two reservoirs that Diesem built for the irrigation of his orchard, alfalfa, and grain crops in the summer. The surface of the ice was marked off in large blocks, which were cut out and floated to a wooden ramp. Once on the ramp, the 300-pound chunks were attached to a pulley and hoisted up the ramp and into the icehouse for storage. During the following six to eight months, the ice was delivered and sold to residential and commercial customers in whatever size "cake" they cared to order.

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Front and back cover sketches are from a series of early-day agrarian scenes produced in 1929 by Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan. Agricultural folklife during the pioneering years in Kansas is the subject of this issue's "A Window on Flint Hills Folklife" edited by James F. Hoy.

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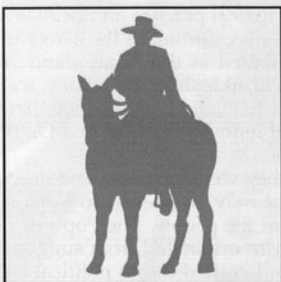
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