

MILLERS MILLS GRANGE # 581

Chartered 1889

Millers Mills Annual Ice Harvest

West Winfield, NY: The Millers Mills Community is planning their annual Ice Harvest for Sunday, February 8, 2026. As always, this event is subject to Mother Nature's fickle ways. Both sufficient ice to cut, and snow for sleighs to carry the ice are critical. The Millers Mills Grange sponsors the event and feels compelled to carry on this tradition to offer younger generations an opportunity to step back in time and experience a task that their ancestors once did.

The use of old hand tools to saw, separate, and load the ice blocks onto horse-drawn sleighs maintains the authenticity of a 19th century ice harvest. The only exception is the antique, gas-powered machine used to score the ice the day before. This ensures that the blocks are of uniform size, and easier to cut and handle. The harvest begins at 11 AM and continues until the icehouse is full in mid-afternoon. Visitors are encouraged to participate in cutting the ice, if a minimum 8-inch ice depth is met for safety. Cedarville Fire Department and Ambulance crew will be on location.

The Millers Mills Pond has been the source for ice harvesting since its founding by Andrew Miller over two centuries ago. During that time ice was needed to preserve food and cool farmers' milk. After electricity arrived in 1941, the community church, and later the Grange, continued harvesting ice to freeze the custard for ice cream making during summer socials. Today the Millers Mills Ice Harvest has become a nationally known community effort to preserve and share a small facet of rural American heritage.

An impressive team of draft horses hauls the ice from Millers Mills Pond to the icehouse a short distance away. Packed in sawdust and snow, the ice blocks last well into the following summer. The empty sleighs provide spectator rides back to the pond.

Visitors to the nearby Grange Hall can purchase chili, hot dogs, donuts and hot chocolate at the cash concession. The Community Church located by the icehouse will have an abbreviated warm menu too.

The Millers Mills Grange is located at 107 Finger Ave, West Winfield, in southern Herkimer County. Watch for signs to Millers Mills Rd off Route 51 or Jones Road off Jordanville Road. Parking and admission are free. Dress warmly and bring your camera.

Please visit the Millers Mills Grange website, millersmillsny.com or check the Millers Mills Facebook page for updates and additional information on the day's events and status of the ice. ➤