

THE LECOUNT HOUSE

The winter of 1895 was a monster. By Mid-February the ice on the Thames River above the railroad bridge was 10 inches thick. The harbor bridge was frozen tight and the mercury hovered around 10 below zero. This seemed like a perfect time to move the LeCount house across Gardner Lake which was covered with 16 inches of ice. The plan was simple, drag the 2 ½ story building down to the lake shore and jack it up enough to put giant sled-like runners under it, and pull it a half mile to its new site. Once the house was in place, the LeCount barn and bath house would follow. All three were brown, with yellow trim and dark brown roofs. The project started on February 10th with a dozen or so draft horses and the strongest tack that could be found. The ice was pronounced thick enough. All of the furnishings, carpets, clothing and china were left in the house. The house was pulled onto the ice on the 11th, about 250 ft from shore the ice began to dip and crack. The building began to settle below the frozen surface. More horses were brought in, but the house could not be moved either backward or forward. The house began to settle deeper into the ice due to the weight of the kitchen chimney. The back of the house began to dip into the water. The front of the house remained high and dry. Most of the family mementos and furnishings were removed to dry ground. The house remained on top of the ice and afloat in the water for a few years. In the winter there were accounts of people skating around and through the house and in the summer they would sit on the window ledges and fish. The LeCount house remained a tourist attraction to Gardner Lake for several years before it disappeared and settled at the bottom of the lake where it still can be seen today.