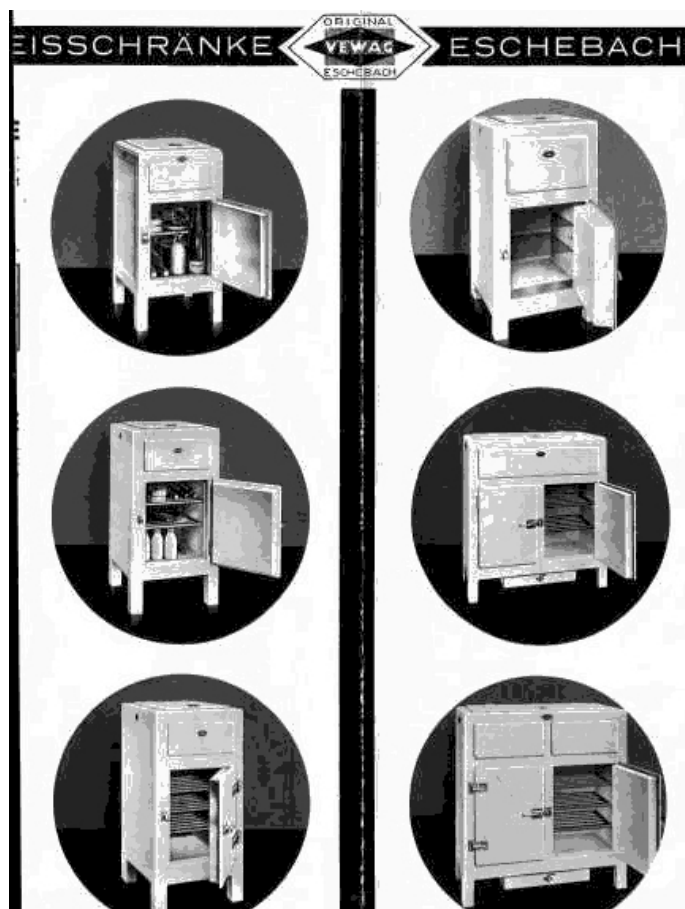


Technology in the living area -

The ice man is coming

Today, an electric fridge can be found in every modern kitchen and ensures cool storage for optimal durability especially for short-life food products.

The big scale production of industrially made electric fridges only started in the 50ties of the last century. Before that, short-life foods were usually stored in the cellar. Deep and well developed cellars were the rule. So it was at our home. The cellar with its thick basalt stone walls had a constant room temperature of 4 to 6 degree in winter as well as summer.



But in the multi-story buildings of the cities it got increasingly complicated to transport the daily foods from the cellar to the upper stories. In the first half of the 20th century some relief was provided by ice boxes which were available in different sizes and were most times put into the kitchen as furniture. In Dresden, such ice boxes were produced primarily in the Eschbach-works, from 1900 on in the Riesaer Straße in Pieschen. Further known producers are R. v. Bandel, Dresden, Blasewitzer Straße, Gebrüder Gießel and Fr. Reindel, Dresden-Neustadt.

Excerpt from an original pamphlet of the Eschbach- works (30ties):

Image source:
www.eichwaelder.de

The ice box was insulated with e.g. wood, turf or straw and cooled with ice. The ice was stored in separate, often in a tin compartment in the upper section. There was drainage for the melt water that was sealed with a tap. The food was stored in the lower compartments- mostly on steel grates for better air circulation. The ice provided cool air in the wall unit that did not get in touch with the food. Warm air was cooled by the ice and circulated down the walls. The disadvantage was that on a regular basis, i.e. at least once a week, the ice had to be renewed and the melt water had to be regulated daily. But where to get the ice from? The "ice man" brought it. My wife got familiar with this method in her childhood years in the early 50ties in Dresden-Johannstadt. On his weekly tour with the van the ice man came to every street once a week. The van had an insulated chest construction for ice blocks. With a huge bell he summoned to the van. People

came with buckets or bowl and the ice man sold everyone the demanded amount by breaking the blocks into pieces. It was also a custom to put the buckets or bowls outside beforehand and put the correct amount of money under them. When the ice man had filled the reservoir they were soon picked up.

The children always enjoyed following the slow driving van and holding on to it to get a ride. The ice man realized that and smilingly let them do it. In the beginning the ice was gained in the winter from frozen rivers and lakes by breaking or sawing it to transportable pieces and storing it in extremely cool ice cellars. The ice was kept ready for delivery over the summer. In 1876, the German engineer Carl Paul Gottfried von Linde received the patent license for his ammonia refrigerator machine which worked with vapor compression. Production of artificial ice with these refrigerator machines began, it allowed a demand-oriented production without necessity for long storage periods and made the troublesome breaking of ice superfluous. In the late 50ties industrial production of electric household refrigerators according to the Linde- principle began. Today, a refrigerator belongs to the basic equipment for every household. Hardly anybody is aware of how hard it was to keep food fresh just two or three generations ago.

Used internet sources:

- wikipedia “Eisschrank” entry
- - www.eichwaelder.de – excerpts from a “Eschbach-works” pamphlet