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A Science Service Feature

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A PENNSYLVANIA ICE CAVE

Several "ice caves" or "freezing caverns" are local wonders in different parts of the United States, though probably none exhibits such remarkable ice formations as those found in the great Kungur caves of the Ural Mountains, of which descriptions have recently been published in the magazines. One of the most celebrated examples in America is the Coudersport Ice Mine, located a few miles east of Coudersport, Pa. This so-called "mine" owes its name to the fact that when prospectors were digging on the spot in search of silver they discovered deposits of ice and jokingly remarked that they had found an ice mine instead of a silver mine. The miners made a vertical shaft about 25 feet deep. The bottom has gradually sunk until the depth is 40 feet.

On the walls of this shaft large quantities of ice form in spring, last through the summer, and disappear on the approach of winter. As in the case of other ice caves, the cold air of winter enters the cave, sinks to the bottom on account of its density, and remains through the summer because there is no outlet by which it may escape. The ice forms mainly in spring because there is an abundant supply of water at that season, supplied by the thawing of ice and snow on the ground above. By the end of summer the pool of stagnant air at the bottom of the cave has grown warm enough to melt the ice, which therefore disappears.

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