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## THE MAPLE SUGAR INDUSTRY OF THE FARM

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An Outline of the Industry, as it Exists To-day in those parts of Canada that Produce the Maple Tree, with Some of its Past History. Modern Methods and Equipment are Necessary in the Manufacture of a First-Class Article

THE Maple industry is an old and long established one. It had its origin with the Aborigines of Canada—the Indians who employed only the most primitive and of course wasteful methods. Later on the early white settlers, copying but improving on the methods of the Indians, began by making use of wooden spouts fashioned to fit the holes that they bored in the trees with an auger. The auger-holes took the place of the gouge in previous use. For receptacles, wooden troughs were roughly gouged out; some nearby basswood or pine trees furnishing the material. These served the purpose fairly well, but when the sun shone strongly on the snow on which they were laid, and melted it, suddenly over they would go, spilling the precious contents on the ground.

The gathering was mostly done by hand or by main strength and when the sap was collected it was boiled into sugar in large iron kettles, strung sometimes three or four on a large pole. On account of the great amount of sparks falling into the boiling contents of these kettles, and the fact that it was boiled altogether in an iron vessel, the result was that the finished product was often of a very dark and uninviting appearance.

As "commercial" sugar was rather a luxury in those days and money was proportionately scarce, the maple product supplied the wants of the settlers very acceptably. But, as those who had been making it in a larger way and who sold their surplus make, began to see the possibility of making their maple bushes a source of profit and an additional revenue to their farms, they began to look about for more improved methods of handling the sap. At this point we notice the passing away of much of the romantic part of the industry, where the young people of the settlement were accustomed to gather around the camp fire and enjoy to the full, the fun of the old-fashioned "sugaring off."

Then came the shanty or camp with its brick or stone arch and chimney and large pans and heaters, buckets of tin hung from metal spouts, more trees being tapped, gathering being done by horse and sleigh, syrup being manufactured as well as sugar. As a ready market was found for the product, the business rapidly grew until now we see in many parts of our country, especially in the Province of Quebec, large sugaring camps where the sap, from in some instances 4,000 to 8,000 trees, is rapidly converted into the delicious sugar and syrup of the most beautiful and attractive appearance and flavor.

This could never have been possible without the advent of the modern and up-to-date evaporators and appliances we now have. The business has lost much of the hard toilsome work as well as

much of the "fun" of the antiquated system of the past generation.

The makers of the improved evaporators have only improved on the plan of the pioneers in the handling of the sap; but it is a vast improvement. In the old way the sap was poured into a kettle at one end of the row and dipped from one to another, gradually becoming stronger as it reached the end of the line. To-day we have tinned spouts, tin buckets, tin gathering tanks, storage tanks of the same material. The sap never touches



An Improved Covered Sap Bucket

Those who have them say that covers for their sap buckets are a valuable and an indispensable part of their equipment. Photo taken on the farm of Mr. Marcus Lee, Westworth Co., Ont.

from the time it leaves the tree, the sap coming into the evaporator by the force of gravitation from the storage tank and gradually working its way by means of the same force from one compartment of the machine to another until at the far end of the machine it is finished and drawn off as the pure, beautiful and delicious maple syrup.

Owing to the fact that there is only a comparatively small amount of sap over the fire and that for a short time only, the result is a much superior article both in flavor and in appearance. No farmer who has a maple bush large enough from which to make enough syrup for home use should be without an up-to-date evaporator. Anyone who contemplates fitting up their sugar-bush should

first get in touch with manufacturers of such machines who will gladly furnish them with full details of requirements, estimates of cost, etc. In my own bush, I have installed a 5 x 16 ft. Champion Evaporator, manufactured by the Grimm Mfg. Co. of Montreal, which handles very easily the sap from 1,000 trees and can take care of many more if necessary.

I have tried nearly every kind of spout that I have seen and have satisfied myself that there is none to compare with the improved Grimm No. 2. They will soon pay for themselves in the increased flow of sap. I doubted this until induced to try 900 and thus prove them for myself. I distributed them when tapping all through my bush amongst the others I had been using. I was so thoroughly convinced of the truth of the claims of superiority made by the firm, that the next season I used them to the exclusion of all others. Besides, I never have reamed out the holes as my trees are not the largest and I am always well satisfied with the amount of sap I get from the first boring.

The greatest drawback to the sugaring industry to-day—but one which I am glad to say is being gradually regulated by wise laws—is the adulteration of the pure product which has been largely resorted to by unscrupulous dealers, and I regret to say, in some instances though not to any great extent, by makers.

Maple sugar makers can never hope to compete with other manufacturers of syrup and sugar in the open market nor do they need to do so. Theirs is an altogether different and superior article. It is the maple flavor that people demand and which they ungrudgingly pay for once they are satisfied they are getting a pure and unadulterated article. No one who has a good maple bush need be afraid to fit it up, as the demand for pure syrup always is equal to, if not in excess of, the supply and at fairly remunerative prices.

It costs much more now than of old to produce a gallon of pure maple sugar: fuel, labor, camp and all necessary utensils are so much more expensive. But let a farmer begin right, by purchasing the most approved, up-to-date outfit he can procure, attend strictly to every detail, make a strictly honest article, giving good quality, weight and measure, label his goods to show his customers he is not ashamed to have them know who made it, and that he guarantees the contents to be free from any adulteration whatever and he may feel assured that he will enjoy a ready and increasing demand for all that he can supply.

The total pure maple product at the present time is only some three or four pounds per head of the population. It should be more. As I have already noted, one great drawback to the industry is the amount of "compound" and adulterated stuff put on the market some of which has not a drop of pure maple whatever in it but is flavored with a preparation called "Maple Flavor." With this adulterated article bridled by suitable legislation, the pure maple product as manufactured by modern means in a properly equipped sugar camp would enjoy a wider reputation and be more easily sought for by the consuming public, to the mutual advantage of both producer and consumer.