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ANNUAL SUGAR PARTY.

REMINISCENCES.

FOR ten years or more Mr. Erastus Livingston, living about three-quarters of a mile north of Athens, has given an invitation to a number of the "old boys" of the village to go out and partake of a supply of sugar and wax at his sugar camp. The boys gathered in force on Monday last, and when the roll was called the following answered to their names:

I. C. Algure, Jas. Ross, B. Loverin, Jos. Thompson, H. H. Arnold, C. H. Smith and son, Geo. W. Beach, Jas. B. Saunders and dog ("Tip"), R. R. Phillips, Alex. Taylor, B. W. Falkner, N. D. McVeigh, Chas. H. Wilson, W. F. Earl, Jas. P. Lamb, W. A. Lewis, Geo. McIntosh, John H. Livingston, and 'Rastus and his

March 31, 1898 on March 18, 1899 on April 23, 1900 on April 17, 1901 on April 15. The greatest number of names was registered in 1898, when 24 were present. This year there were 18.

While writing the foregoing short account of the annual sugar party, the Scribe of the Reporter went back along memory's path for 45 years, and contrasted the different methods of sugar making then and now. His thoughts ran back to the time when he, a lad of some sixteen years, worked during his spare moments, mostly in the evening, by the light of an old-fashioned fire place in a back kitchen, making wooden troughs for holding sap. These troughs were made of tamarac, cut into lengths of about two feet and split into halves, which were hollowed out with an axe and would hold about



watermelon dog, "Snap."

The commissary was under the supervision of Messrs. Lamb, Thompson and Wilson, who had provided a generous supply of ham, eggs, bread and butter, cheese, pickles, and the other little etc's that go to make up a genuine camp dinner. The ham was toasted on long, sharp-pointed sticks and there were often a dozen pieces of ham toasting in front of the fire-arch at once. A careful record of the amount of ham and eggs stowed away by each individual was kept, and G. W. Beach was awarded the honors on ham and Geo. M. McIntosh on eggs.

A couple of large pots had been filled with syrup and when dinner was over the wax was ready, and there being plenty of snow for making good wax, the crowd soon scurried the kettles dry and had a large supply of the saccharine matter stowed away.

A pail of sap each. The trees were tapped by cutting a clean notch in the maple, on a slant, and then a half-round chisel, called a tapping gouge, was driven through the bark into the wood with a heavy wooden mallet. A hole was thus made to receive the spile, which was usually made of straight-grained cedar, split out with the tapping gouge so as to be of the same shape as the hole made in the tree. The point was nicely whittled down with a jack-knife, and it required considerable skill to sharpen the end so as not to allow any of the sap to escape. The sap was all gathered by hand in those days and carried from the trees to the boiling place with a neckyoke, as shown in our illustration.

The boiling utensils usually consisted of one or two potash kettles which were never allowed to stop boiling from the time the fires were started until



By special request, Mr. Lewis read Mr. Dooley's poetical account of the ruction in the British parliament when the Irish members attempted to address the house in the mother tongue of Ireland.

The Reporter's kodak secured a couple of fine snap shots of the boys eating great "gobs of wax," and then the teams were got out and a start made for home. 'Rastus extending to the crowd a genial "Come again, boys" and also come in watermelon time and he would agree that his watermelon "perp" would be safely muzzled so as to give them no trouble, even if they stole into the patch by moonlight.

It has been customary for several years to write a list of those present and the date of their coming on the walls of the sugar house. The Scribe noted that the annual visits were as follows: 1894 on April 8, 1897 on

the syrup was ready to be dipped out. A couple of heavy crocheted poles were cut, ten or twelve feet long, and, with a stout pole dropped into these crochets at the ends, were leaned up against a couple of trees and the kettles hung to the long pole by chains. Sometimes the only boiling apparatus consisted of one solitary potash kettle swung up to the end of a heavy sapling by chains. The centre of the pole rested on a convenient stump, and when the sap was boiled down to the right consistency the farmer would place his weight on the outer end of the pole and balance the kettle so as to swing it off the fire. A back-log and forestick served to hold the heat as well as being a resting place for the smaller wood filled in around the kettles. Sugar makers in those days seldom thought of having dry wood, but felled the most con-

venient tree to the boiling place and filled in the time between gathering sap and punching the fire by cutting green wood into lengths suitable for firewood. The sap was kept boiling from early morn until late at night, and as the sap was liable to run over the top of the kettle if the fire got too hot, the person in charge had to resort to many expedients to keep the sap down. The most popular and approved methods were to grease the top of the kettle with a pork rind, or hang a piece of salt pork by a string or twig so as to reach down a little below the top of the kettle, which would allow the grease from the meat to float on top of the sap and prevent it running over.

The sap was boiled down into thin syrup and then carried with the neckyoke to the house, where it was turned over to the care of the good wife, whose first duty would be to carefully strain it through a piece of home-made flannel fastened to a hoop. It was then allowed to settle and the work of sugaring-off commenced. The thin syrup was placed in large iron kettles on the kitchen stove and when brought to a boiling point was cleansed by adding an egg well beaten up with a small quantity of milk, which caused all the impurities in the syrup to rise to the top, when it was skimmed off. The most popular way of telling when the syrup was boiled down to the right consistency for making into cakes was to take a straw from a broom and tie the end into a loop. This loop was placed in the boiling mass, then pulled out quickly and blown upon, and if the syrup would form in a blubber and float off it was considered ready for taking off the fire and stirring until cold enough to be poured into the pans and formed into cakes. Very little syrup was made in the early days, all being made into hard sugar.

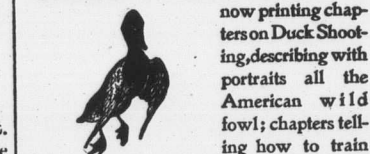
Ah! but those were days of hard work and few social enjoyments, compared with the present, but it begot a rugged constitution and good health, and the old people of to-day love to cast a retrospective glance along down the path of time and feel that they have had some humble share in clearing up the land and making the grass to grow where in their younger days the forest covered the now fertile fields.

A Bold Guess.

We hazard the guess that the depopulation of women who last week urged Hon Mr. Ross to give the franchise to their sex was made up largely of childless wives. The birthrate in this province shows a startling decrease. While the Ontario woman fondles the ballet box, her Quebec sister looks after the babies. And in this case it will soon be literally true that the hand that rocks the cradle rules our country.—Ottawa Union.

MONTREAL, Dec. 1900.
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