



Smoke Belches, Steam Rises, Sap Runs for Syrup

By Don Ryder
When you enjoy pancakes and syrup for breakfast, did you ever stop to think how much work, time, sap and patience go into making the maple syrup? This week the Champion photographer went to the farm home of Duncan Moffat and followed the process through from tapping trees, evaporating the sap to canning the finished product.

Mr. Moffat and his wife are no newcomers to the field of maple syrup making. Mrs. Moffat, the former Irene Darby, was more or less brought up in the business and her husband has been active in the industry for the past 25 years.

The late Charlie Darby tapped trees and manufactured maple syrup for at least 25 years on the homestead at R.R. 2, Nassagaveya, and after Mr. Moffat married and moved to the Darby

homestead he began taking a hand in the operation. Each spring for the past 25 years has turned out the delicious product.

Taps 475 Trees
Children who run to the hardware store and purchase two or three spiles used for tapping trees to obtain a pailfull of sap can hardly conceive of anyone tapping 475 trees each spring. That is exactly what Mr. Moffat does. This year he started about March 22 and expects the pails to hang on the trees for at least a month.

As long as the sap runs he will be busy in the smoke house or evaporating house daily turning out the light amber-colored maple syrup.

The smoke house in itself is an eerie picture. Dense black smoke belches from the high stack in the roof of what appears to be a ramshackle building, and steam

rises from the pans of sap being boiled into maple syrup as the aroma of the product drifts through the woods.

Tires Burn Hotter
The reason for the dense black smoke is — old rubber tires! The reason for using old tires, mixed with wood, is simply to produce a hotter fire for boiling the sap.

As the maple syrup is hauled from the bush to the smoke house, it is poured from a 90-gallon container into a pan on the outside of the building. From there it runs through a pipe into the evaporator which holds 45 gallons and gradually circulates through a series of corrugated pans until it has reached 219 degrees or 7 degrees above boiling water. At this point the maple syrup is made. If the sap or syrup at this point is allowed to remain in the evaporator over the fire it will begin to form maple sugar, so the operator must keep an eagle eye on the thermometer.

After the maple syrup is poured from the evaporator it is run through a felt strainer to remove lime and any foreign objects. It is then put into special containers to cool and taken to the farm home where Mrs. Moffat has the chore of canning the finished product.

Horses Gone
When Mr. Moffat started in the

maple syrup business 25 years ago, sap was hauled from the bush to the smoke house by a team of horses. This method continued for the past 24 years.

This year the mechanized age has crept into the business and a tractor has replaced the team of horses but has increased the manpower.

Mr. Moffat fondly recalls when he alone would take a team of horses back into the bush to haul out the sap. But by using a tractor two men are necessary as there is so much hopping off and on to move it from tree to tree.

Tricks of Trade
Like most businesses there are tricks to the trade. Standing in the smoke house while steam from the boiling sap filled the building, Mr. Moffat produced a small container of milk and added a drop or two in the evaporator. This prevents the sap from frothing which would stop the continuous flow through the evaporator, he explained.

Next time you sit down to pancakes and maple syrup, remember it takes approximately 45 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup, days and days of hard work and hours and hours of standing over an evaporator in a hot smoke house.

But it's worth it!



OMAGH

Young People Hear Speaker 4-H Club Chooses New Name

By Mrs. Cecil Patterson
The Young People's Society of Omagh Presbyterian church held their meeting on Sunday evening with 22 attending. The annual Good Friday breakfast and communion service will be held this year in York Memorial church, Toronto. Several young people expressed a desire to attend this annual Easter service and enjoy fellowship with young people from all churches in the west Presbyterian.

Marlene Curtis was in charge of the devotional program. Joanne Patterson read the scripture lesson from Romans. Norman Hare, layman from Milton Baptist church was guest speaker for the meeting. Rev. B. A. Nevin introduced Mr. Hare and David Lawrence expressed appreciation for his fine message.

A social half hour followed and lunch was served by D. Lawrence and S. Grien.

"Kitchen Kueens"
All members of the Hornby South 4-H club attended the fourth meeting held on April 7 in the club work rooms. President Lynda Williamson conducted the business meeting, at which time the name "Kitchen Kueens" was chosen for this project. "The supper club".

Mrs. Kiernan demonstrated the making and cooking of rice and cheese casserole, and also prepared a supper dish "cheese fondue" the girls assisting. A discussion was held on "planning good meals, using left overs and ways of serving meat and meat alternates for supper." Questionnaires for the meeting were completed.

At the conclusion the supper dishes which had been prepared were served for lunch and cookies brought by Marlene Ball. Next meeting is April 14 at 6 p.m. in the work room, at which time "Salads, garnishes and using vegetables for the supper meal" will be discussed and demonstrated.

Shower Bride
Mrs. M. (Sheila) Gunby of Millgrove was guest of honor at a surprise baby shower, given by her sister Mrs. J. Ridgway and Mrs. D. Green on Wednesday evening at Mrs. Green's home. Mrs. Gunby received many gifts and was assisted in opening them by her little daughter Lise, niece Ronda Ridgway and Valerie Green. Games and contests were played and later a dainty lunch was enjoyed. A special shower cake shaped in the form of a baby bib was served.

Friends and relatives were present from Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Campbellville and Millgrove.

Mr. Baxter of the Eighth Line is the new caretaker at the P. W. Merry school to replace Mr. Simpson who retired.

Happy birthday to Mrs. James Galbraith now of Palermo, on her special day April 11.

Hearty congratulations to the pupils and teachers on their recent success at the Music Festival held last Tuesday at Munn's School.



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