

art.

Sup. roller

~~Stone paper~~

Charcoal

Sign checks

Water cross

Myron - Cedar

Peter & Bill

Braamse (Braam)

(Holland)

Reeds
Purvis

Sugar maple
-hard (Best)

Low sugar in salt

3-40's = Young
trees (1928 cut)

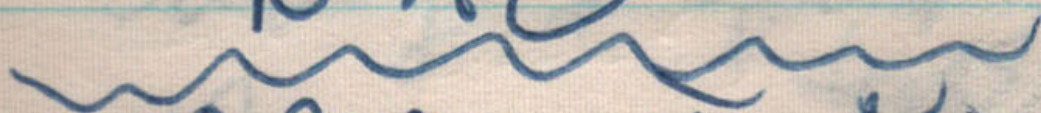
Maple syrup

Sell locally

3 customers

Huron Mt
College

19 Ath



1932 started
buys little

(Carmelutdrow)



~~Not many~~

Only 1 in City

community.

Pure

. Candy and blend

can sugar = good
body + fudge
type

Pure sugar head
Chop it = texture

~~~~~

Specs heavy  
stirring, mats,  
molds

~~~~~


Address

80 Ave Grand

Get bulletins

Pairs 8, 12

1 tap on to 16. dia

2 on to 24 "

more on bigger "

B² printing under 10"

^

Usually March
15; thru 18 to
20 April.

Batman's case
flow. New case
fill to keep open
(Aspirin)

1600 pairs at
peak =

Ideal day^{sup}

25 - 28 = mid

35 - 40 = day

To summer cool

best day: today

and day: No rain
3

Covered tank

About 300 gals

Gather - straw - cloths

oil burner

Cook sap: reduce

H₂O by heat

1/40 (or 1/50)

Syrup 119° Berlin
Point =

Boil at 219 or

7° more. Standard
11 lbs gal

Above rush cards

Below them

4 triangles in bag
one. Commercial

Final double
cloth strain = twice

Blend of fine "

Schubert sand
prints out

used most till
2 yrs. ago

Spule = $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3.

7/16 (nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ mic)

st
1/14/67

Rube
Goldbergson

Ye Olde Maple Sugar Mill

Mill is actually a misnomer, nothing is crushed or ground there, but I sort of like it because it sounds so nostalgic and old-fashioned. Refinery is closer, and technically evaporator house is the ^{name of the product} place where maple syrup is made. But who in the world ever heard of strolling minstrels or ^{midnight} drunks going around singing "Dawn by the old evaporator house stream?" So will call it ^{a maple syrup} mill, damn it.

Imagine a giant ~~and miller~~ half-moon lying on its back, with its ^{blunt} westerly frong ^{reaching} up in Minnesota, its easterly frong in New England, and its ^{with great} black-side rolling melody ⁱⁿ Indiana, Ohio and part of West Virginia. This is the ^{across} ~~appetitive~~ range of the hard maple tree in this country, and it ~~is~~ from the sap of this tree which the best maple syrup is made. Of the ~~thirteen~~ species of ^{tree} this is the acer saccharum (don't credit me with being a Latin scholar; I switched it out of a government bulletin), sometimes ^{variously} called the sugar maple, rock maple, or sugar tree or bush. Of the thirteen species of native maples, this is the boss tree for making the best maple syrup. ^{Sweet} Saccharum, yum yum... Get it?

Despite the fact that Michigan lies in the heart of this swollen half moon, and possesses roughly one-fifth the total stand of all hard maple trees ^{in the country}, the bulk of which ~~is~~ grow in the Upper Peninsula (more government bulletin erudition), this spring was the first time I, ^{a native} ever visited a maple sugar mill ~~in this land~~ area where I was born and still live.

hell out of

Maple syrup making is a dying if not lost art that has taken a spurt in recent years because of technical improvements in its manufacture. But the basic recipe remains the same -- Boil the water out of the sap, ^{to get rid of the water,} and what you have left is maple syrup. The Indians started it all before Columbus or even Liep Eriksson (but let's not get into that) by putting the sap in a hollow log and adding hot stones to evaporate the water. Early white settlers substituted a ~~series of~~ metal kettles, ^{then a series of kettles,} but the results were still crude and chancy. About 1900, ^{came} the flat, ^{pan} flue-type continuous "assembly line" with evaporator, with an enclosed firebox, which is still with us today. This is what the Braamers use.

The Braamers mill was not on fire. The "smoke" I had seen was mostly ^{escaping} steam from the evaporation of the water content of the sap. Since ~~the~~ ^{fresh maple} sap is ^{now} ^{about} forty parts water to one part syrup (that is, it takes forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup) that is an awful lot of steam. It also accounts for the high price of pure maple syrup, which costs almost as much as sour mash bourbon.

The reasons why the making of maple syrup will probably never reach epidemic proportions are several: to make good syrup it is tedious and exacting, the season is short and uncertain, and the end product is damnably expensive -- almost as much as our much beloved.

"Where do you sell the stuff?" I asked Mr. Arthur Braames,

His eyes twinkled.

"Mostly to the rich. Clubs, big shots, people who drive or are driven in Cadillacs." Also to loaded radio newspaper columnists.

"Dough," I said, hanging my head. "But why the rich?"

He reflected a moment. "It's not so much that the rich have better taste than us," he said, "It's that they can better afford to indulge it. Pure maple syrup is a nectar of the gods and costs accordingly. Want to try some?" fresh out of the vat.

"Love to."

He poured me a ^{generous} shot in a paper cup. I raised my cup. "Here's bumps," I toasted, always the joker.

Again the twinkle. "It's great with some of that in it," he said. "I'd give you some, but I don't monkey with it during working hours."

"Me neither," announced the wealthy columnist, downing his drink. It was lumpy.

I said my goodbyes and hoisted my sport and went out to the car. I looked back. The ^{people} still looked on fine. One a ^{gaily} surmounter waved at me from a limousine door.

And the end product is
annually expensive.

The making of ^{pure} maple syrup is

~~becoming~~ a dying ^{arts} ^{yet} ^{art}, if not a lost art. The reasons

are several: The syrup is expensive, to make it
is tedious, ^{and expensive,} the season ^{for making it} is short, ~~First time expense.~~

^{expensive because it}
It takes roughly forty gallons of sap from the

trees to make one gallon of ^{maple} syrup, which just

about explains covers the tedious part too. And the

season lasts roughly but a month. ~~No millionaires~~

~~have emerged from the art.~~ ^{It is} ^{largely} a

labor of love, and no millionaires have emerged

from the art. It is one of the last of the old

backward crafts.

Maple syrup is made from the sap of hard maple trees, and
(The ^{effective} range of ~~the~~ ^{hard maple} ^{trees} in this country is
largely confined to east of the Mississippi River, its eastern
extension being ^{roughly} the New England ^{and a portion of West Virginia} states, the
Minnesota, ^{and} southern Indiana and Ohio ^{states}. Although
located in the heart of this range, it is ^{still} surprising to learn
from a government bulletin that the state has one-fifth
of ~~all~~ the total stand of ^{all} hard-maple trees, of which ^{the bulk} ~~the~~
grows in the Upper Peninsula. Despite ^{all} this, and
further despite the fact that I was born and raised and
still live in the Upper Peninsula, it was only this spring
that I visited a maple syrup refining and ^{now} learned
how the stuff was made.

When ^{regular} sugar becomes scarce or expensive, or both,
the production of maple ~~sugar~~ and syrup rises. During the
Civil War and ^{again during} World War I it exceeded 4,000,000 gallons (1) and
again rose sharply during World War II (1)

Gallon weighs about 11 lbs and is the equivalent of
8 lbs. of sugar. (2)

Let me throw some figures at you:

1 qt of syrup per tap-hole. (20 gal. of sap)

Since 1926 Vermont leading state. (3), followed by NY.

with Mich now higher than 5th. ^{of the} and justly in 5th

It is not that the
rich necessarily have
better taste than the
rest of us; rather they
^{are better able to}
~~care~~ ~~avoid~~ ~~to~~ indulge it.
^

Top quality
Pure maple syrup is
^ almost ^{as} expensive as ~~the~~
the best ^
^ some mash whiskey

Ye Olde Maple Syrup Mill

Although Michigan is reputed to possess roughly a fifth of the sugar maple trees in this country, and the bulk of these

grow in my native Upper Peninsula, where

I ^{still} live, I had never visited a ^{commercial} maple syrup refining until last week this spring. And the fact is

that there are not many of them, perhaps not

two dozen commercially producing ones in the ^{whole vast} Peninsula.

a lovely couple --

quite, intelligent, hard working.

Evaporator house: looks like a drafty blackhouse.

of the 13 species of native maples (Acer)

only 2 are important in sugar production:

Sops (A) Acer saccharum Mill. (Common name: sugar maple, hard maple, rock maple or sugar tree)

(B) Acer nigrum

Largely confined to Lake States & Northeast. (3)

most maple sugar groves, commonly called sugar bushes,

(6) never know how fast sap will run. Might come in

beginning, middle, in end. In 1960 peak year most

(6) of sap was collected in a 2-day period. (Overflow buckets (Hence plastic tubing being introduced))

Yield & sweetness of sap varies from yr. to yr. but, within this fluctuation, individual trees remain ^{relatively} much the same. (Learn by

(7) It is the sugar content of the sap that produces the syrup (low sugar, low syrup)

(7) Sap is called "sweet water" by Indians & still is in water Pennsylvania.

(7) Overlapping can damage tree, much as blood donors

(8) Drill at 5° downward pitch, Drill 3 inches

(9) Warm side of tree. Drill = work ^{spatially} up yr after yr.

(9) When buds swell tapping is over.

(11) gemmicide Taphole pellet dev. by MSU
evaporator pan.

(12) Taphole summary

Sprouts (spits) & buckets, Injured shoulder,
Earliest were ^{hollow} reeds.

Sap coll. Stoneboat Sump & collecting tanks.

(32) Evaporator house (or sugar house)

Old dormer windows or ~~loss~~ LOUVERS

(37) A Early = Hollow logs & hot stones to
evaporate water.

B Flat pan

C 4 kettles

D Modern continuous evaporator,
using channelled pans + flue pans

Consists of sap pan and syrup pan,

Flat valve on sap pan regulates.

Run off a batch:

(39) Time in evaporator: $1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. (30 min in
sap pan & 1 hr in syrup pan)

(Both are at full boil)

1 inch level average

(Quicker the better syrup)

(40) 50% of water goes in sap pan.

(42) Syrup boils at 219° .

Finishing pans,

(45) Sugar sand = a calcium & magnesium
salt deposit that looks like fresh pebbles.
(Tefloncoated pans easier)

(56) Little known
Chemical reaction

(57) Dark syrup is gummy stronger & more

acid caramel flavor.

(58) Buddy flavor. (amino acids increase)

(59) Summary: Pull of syrup not

Cold weather fruit run sap
makes fruit syrup, that is, because
less fermentation in sap.

Gradually gets hotter, ...

Other products (butter)

Sugars, candies, maple cream, maple spreads,

Fondant is a soft chewy [^]
nougat-type candy.

Maple fluff (ice cream sundae, frosting)

Maple-Honey spread 1 pt to 2 pts honey

Mill is actually a misnomer, nothing is ground there,
I like it because
but it sounds sort of nostalgic and old-fashioned. Refinery is closer,
and evaporator house is ^{technically} the name of the structure where the syrup is made.

But whoever heard of strolling minstrels and drunks going around
singing, "Down By The Old Evaporator House Steam"? So
let's call it mill, at least for this moment.

25
110
Although Michigan is said to possess
roughly a fifth of the sugar maple trees in
the country, and the bulk of these grow in my
native Upper Peninsula, ~~where again the bulk~~
~~of the~~ I did not visit a maple sugar refinery
until this spring.

Apr. 69
Revised May 3, 1969

YE OLDE MAPLE SYRUP MILL

I draft, please

In mid-April, ^{of this year} I visited my first ^{a Holland Dutch} ^{pronounced like that} ^{of the composer Brahms} maple syrup mill in Michigan or anywhere. It ^{owned and} is run by the Braamse brothers, ^{of An Train, who were among that} ~~Pete and Betty and they~~. The ~~place~~ ^{place} mill stands in the midst of a tall maple forest along the ^{growing} ^{then} ~~rushing~~ ^{then} ~~spring-flooded~~ Rock River, a famous Upper Peninsula trout stream, about two miles above where the ^{intriguing} river joins Lake Superior. This mill, I was to learn, ^{later operates} stands in the ^{very} heart of the syrup-producing hard maple tree area of the ^{entire} country.

Mill is ^{actually} a misnomer. ~~Actually~~ Nothing is ground or crushed there. But it does have ~~an~~ a ^{and I like it.} sort of old-fashioned nostalgic song, ^{Refinery is closer,} ^{I guess,} and technically the structure where the syrup is made is called ~~an~~ ^{the} evaporator house. But who ever heard strolling minstrels or ^{carefree} ~~drunks~~ ^{drunks} going around singing "Down by the old evaporator house stream"? So

mill it will remain, for this stint at least.

~~on a dirt country road Oct. here was the first trap set I ever set. I was driving into the place. I had seen a fresh coyote track and jumped two deer driving in, and I thought sure I had blundered upon a "Sonsmoke" set, as I drove in and parked. In this episode the Indians had gone on the warpath and besieged a lone blackhouse and set it afire. Smoke streamed~~

As they leapt gaily away they

Driving into the place ^{from the Lake Superior shore road on} ~~and~~ ^{on} a dirt
country road I had seen fresh coyote tracks and
jumped two deer. ~~When~~ ^{They} looked ⁱⁿ pretty ^{fair shape} good after
our unusually severe winter. ^{Some hadn't made it go well and many hadn't} Then I spied the first
sap buckets hanging from the trees and I knew
I was close. As I ~~drove~~ ^{turned off} on a ^{deep} rutted side road and
parked I thought I had blundered upon a set for
"Sunmoke". In this episode ^{I might say} the Indians were ^{trying to kidnap} ~~abducting~~
poor Kitty (smart Indians) ^{who} in a lone blockhouse ^{was alone} ~~with~~ ^{they had}
~~it~~ ^{to smoke her out.} ~~afire~~ ^{Smoke} stream and belched from its roof
and sides. [Look in what follows]

made it at all...

/

and belched from its roof and sides. Remembering
my Scout oath, I dashed to the rescue and groped
my way inside. There, in a fog of smoke, I
found ^{not Kitty but} Byron Braames ^{calmly} presiding over a boiling
^{of sap.} vat. I told him who I was.

"I know," he said. "I read the book and
saw the movie."

I hung my head. Though I have had
^{eight} ~~seven~~ books published ^{and one in the works}, I shall go to my grave as the
flash-in-the-pan author of but one book, Anatomy of
a Murder....

"I'd like," I said, rallying, "to take the two-hour
Cram course in how to make maple syrup."

"I'm making some now," he said, and we
were off and away in a cloud of boiling ~~maple~~ sap.

There ~~are~~ ^{are} three main stages in making
maple syrup, ~~he~~ ^{he} explained: tapping the trees, and then
boiling the water out of it ^{to make syrup}, and bottling and canning the
~~was~~ ^{is} labelling and bottling and canning the finished syrup. This
final chore was presided over by his wife Edna. He pointed
at an ~~open~~ ^a doorway covered by a heavy curtain. "She's
in the finishing room now ^{working away} ~~planning her stuff~~."

"Where are your sons?"

4 Pet and Bill

~~The boys~~ were away that day, ^{working at the upland,} and ^{on another job} ~~the~~

and his wife and a hired hand were holding the
fort -- ^{or rather} ~~the~~ mill. How long had they been operating
at this site? Since 1932, when the boys were little --
~~didn't time fly?~~ --
and now there were grandchildren coming along and getting
into the act. Yes, their operation was comparatively small:
120 acres ^{of hard maples} and about 1600 taps holes.

"Tap holes?" I repeated.

"Come on outside and I'll show you," he
said, after calling to his wife to "mind the store
for a moment," meaning to watch the boiling sap.

The first tree was close to my parked car. He pointed
at a ^{spouted} metal gadget protruding ^{perhaps two inches} from the tree, ^{about waist high} ~~about two~~
~~meters~~ from which hung a ten-quart metal pail from
a slot in its side partly filled with sap.

"Cute faucets," I said.

"Spiles," Byron ^{explained} ~~said~~ ^{and} ~~dryly~~, "driven in
three inches into the tree in a sap-hole about a half-inch
in diameter." He went on to explain that a given
tree, depending on its diameter, [look in what follows]

7

more books I shall go to my grave as the flesh-in-
the-span author of at least one book, Anatomy of a Murder...

"I want," I said, rallying, "to take the two-hour
exam course in making maple syrup."

"I'm making it now," Byron said, and we
were away in a cloud of boiling sap.

There are three main stages in making
maple syrup, I learned: gathering the sap, boiling
the water out of it, and bottling and canning the
finished syrup. The Braames (pronounced apparently
a Dutch version of Braams, and pronounced the same)
mill is comparatively small: one-hundred and
twenty acres of hard maple forest with sixteen
hundred tap holes...

"Tap holes?" I repeated.

"The holes you bore in the ^{maple} trees to ^{drain} ~~get~~
the sap out," Byron explained. These holes are three
inches deep, slightly less than a half inch in
diameter, and a tree, depending upon its diameter,
might ~~may~~ have from one to four tap holes going
simultaneously. The Braames ^{two} maple forest had been cut
over in 1928 so, ^{virtually all} ~~most~~ of their trees were one-tappers.

I calculated swiftly. "That means you've now
got out sixteen hundred sap buckets on as many
trees," I said triumphantly.

X

"The man can add," Byron said, mostly
to himself. "Not much soap in this bucket," I said.
"Too cool," Byron said.

The day was ^{indeed clear and} cold and, ~~the soap was~~
~~running fast~~ and, sniffing, I realized that my
patrician nose was running faster. [Hobbs in what follows]

X

Insert

Just then the helper came ^{pumping} along
driving a ^{smarting} tractor. To this was attached a ~~300~~
large two-wheeled trailer carrying a covered
300-gallon ^{metal} sap tank and ^{also} ~~behind it~~ ^{immediately} a second
and smaller ^{sump} tank. We watched him deftly empty the sap pails.
The sap pails ~~were~~ ^{were} dumped
into the smaller sump ~~then~~ tank over the mouth of
which was a cloth strainer to weed out the twigs
and beetles and ~~any~~ ^{any} ~~wind-blown~~ ^{fragments} trading stumps.
When it was full it was pumped into the larger tank.
When ^{all} the ^{sap} pails were emptied the ^{collected} sap was drawn
back to the evaporator house and ^{pumped into} stored ⁱⁿ outside
stationary tanks connected with the evaporator house...

Σ Now back to white ---
by we strolled, etc

8

"The man can add," Byron said dryly. "Let's go take a look." So we emerged from the fog into the April sunlight.

"What's that?" I asked, pointing at a tiny faucet protruding from the great tree, from ^{an under hook on} which hung a handless galvanized ^{tin} bail with a slot in the top.

Spiles.

Start

These spiles are about five inches long, three inches being in the tree and two out.

Early maple syrup tappers had been plagued by having their holes dry up, Byron explained, until researchers at ^{attracted by the free feast,} Michigan State University had learned that ^{discovered that the} this stoppage was caused

by bacteria ^{in them} and ^{they had} developed a low-grade formaldehyde pill to insert in the hole upon tapping to prevent it.

"Must have been ^{July} done it ^{June} between football seasons," I murmured.

"What's that?" Byron inquired.

"I went to Michigan," I said. "We hate MSU." [Here take yellow-mint beginning. "Just then the helper, etc.]

We strolled back into the barning evaporator house to the imitated.

Blackhouse, "Why all the smoke?" I said, blinking.

"Steam from the boiling sap," Byron explained.

It takes roughly forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup. "That's what makes it so ~~stinky~~ steamy," he went on. "It's also what makes the syrup so ~~stinky~~ expensive."

The ^{boiling} evaporator pan is in two ^{connected} sections and looks as though it were invented by Rube Goldberg.

7

Underneath ^{these pans} is the oil-heated furnace (the Braames converted from wood fire two years ago) that keeps the sap at a constant boil. The first section is the ^{metal-partitioned} sap pan connected ~~with~~ by pipes with the outside sap storage tanks. The flow ^{sap} is controlled by an automatic float valve, ^{at about} ~~constant~~ ^{constant} level. The fresh sap, being mostly water, boils at 212 degrees. The sap pan is connected by a free flowing hole into the syrup pan. As the boiling sap leaves the sap pan and flows freely into the adjoining syrup pan it has ^{already} lost about fifty percent of its water. Further and final concentration takes place in this ^{syrup} pan, also separated into four long and ^{inter-} ^{metal} connected troughs. As the boiling concentrated sap flows ^{on} its boiling point ^{gradually} increases. And since the boiling point of ~~the~~ pure maple syrup ^{boils} is seven degrees above that of water, it is ^{automatically} drawn off ^{at 219 degrees} (and again strained) into a two-handled "milk" container.

¶ The whole operation from fresh sap to finished syrup generally speaking, the quicker it is made the better the syrup. Takes about an hour and a half. This is where Mrs.

Braames ^{spoke up.} ~~came in.~~ She ^{and I} washed ~~the containers and bottles~~ and ~~came the finished syrup.~~

"It's like making jelly," she observed. "The quicker you make it the closer the product." Bryan and I accompanied her ^{where she poured us} ~~into the adjoining finishing room and had coffee~~ ^{we sat and} and watched her work.

7

said. "Could you, ^{please} get us the cream, Edna?" Byron

I ^{stealthily} ~~lifted~~ ^{dipped} my cup ^{toward} the man. Besides being an ardent girl-watcher I have been a stoic work-watcher since boyhood, ^{and} for Byron I thought I detected a kindred soul.

His eyes tumbled ~~and~~ ^{up as} he ^{quickly} drew a half ^{the lower part of} circle in the air. "Imagine a fat half moon ^{lying on its back} with one blunt prong up in Minnesota, the other in New England and" -- he glanced at his wife -- "it's ^{fat} rolling indolently across Indiana, Ohio, part of West Virginia and up through Pennsylvania. This is the effective range of the hard maple tree in this country."

"Then Michigan must be the biggest ^{of maple syrup,} producer," I put in, "since we lie in the heart of your half moon."

"No. Despite the ^{roughly about} fact that a fifth of the hard maples are concentrated in Michigan, Vermont ^{closely} followed by New York are the top producers. Michigan has rarely been above fifth place."

"Why?"

He glanced at his ^{too many} twining wife Edna paused and ^{smilingly} answered that one. "Because ^{in Michigan} there are easier and steadier ways to make a living. Making maple syrup is She spread her hands. "The season is short and uncertain, the work ^{is hard long and the process exacting} tedious, the syrup ^{is} expensive -- and I love it." She paused and passed me a sample in a paper cup.

X

¶ I raised my cup. "Here's bumps," I toasted, always the joker.

¶ "It's great with some of that in it, too," Byron said. "I'd give you a shot, but I don't monkey with the stuff during working hours."

"Me either," I said, feeling a great surge of virtue as I downed my drink. It was lovely.

"Where do you sell the stuff?" I asked.

"Some of it locally, some to ^{the} tourists, ~~and~~ but our biggest customers are ~~the~~ private clubs and ~~the~~ people who drive or are driven in Cadillacs." His blue eyes twinkled. "Also ~~the~~ wealthy newspaper columnists."

Again I hung my head. "But why to the rich?"

"Because it's so expensive. It isn't that the rich have better taste than the rest of us but that they can better afford to indulge it. The ^{pure} stuff costs nearly as much as our mash bourbon.

It was time for me to leave so I bought nearly two gallons, and when I paid Mrs. Braamse I discovered Byron was right. So I ~~staggered~~ said my goodbyes to these two lovely people -- so gentle, so intelligent, so hard-working -- and toted my load to the car. As I drove away I looked back and ~~from~~ ^{from the} ~~door~~ ^{steaming} door of the burning block house ~~and~~ saw Kitty waving goodbye.

I
sure bumps. ~~AM~~

1st Typed (5/5/67)

TW 2-2463 (Phone)

Written by etc

Two
Final, please

YE OLDE MAPLE SYRUP MILL

^{by}
Robert Gruen

In mid-April of this year I visited my first maple syrup

mill in Michigan or anywhere. It is owned and run by the

Braamse brothers of Au Train, a Holland Dutch ^{name} pronounced

like that of the composer Brahms. The mill stands in the

midst of a tall maple forest growing alongside the then

spring-flooded Rock River, a ^{well-known} famous Upper Peninsula trout

stream, about ~~two~~ ^{two} miles above where ^{it} ~~this~~ intriguing river

joins Lake Superior. This mill, I ~~was to learn later~~ ^{discovered}

operates in the very heart of ^{one of the best sap-producing} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~syrup-producing~~

hard maple tree area of ~~the entire country.~~ ^{the United States.}

6

Mill is actually a misnomer. Nothing is ground or
crushed there. But it ^{has} ~~does~~ have ^{an} ~~a sort of~~ old-fashioned
nostalgic ring and I like it. Refinery is closer, I guess,
and technically the structure where the syrup is made is
called the evaporator house. But who ever heard ^{of} strolling
minstrels or carefree drunks going around singing "Down
by the old evaporator house stream?" ? So mill it will
remain, for this stint at least.

/

The Braamse mill is remote.

Driving into the place from the Lake Superior shore
road on a dirt country road I ~~had seen~~^{saw} fresh coyote tracks
and jumped two deer. As ~~they~~^{the deer} leapt gaily away they looked
in pretty fair shape after our unusually severe winter.

~~Some~~^{Many} hadn't made it so well and ~~many~~^{some} hadn't made it at all....

Then I spied the first sap buckets hanging from the trees
and I knew I was close. As I turned off on ~~a~~^{the} deep-rutted
side road and parked I thought I had blundered upon a set
for "Gunsmoke." In this episode, I swiftly saw, the

Indians were trying to kidnap poor Kitty (smart Indians),
who ~~for some droll reason~~^{had barricaded herself} was alone in a lone blockhouse,
which ~~they~~^{the Indians} had set afire to smoke her out. Smoke streamed
and belched from its roof and sides. Remembering my Scout

oath, I dashed to ~~the~~^{her} rescue and groped my way inside. There,
in a fog of smoke, I found not Kitty but the Braamses' boys'
father, Byron Braames, calmly presiding over a boiling vat of
sap. I told him who I was.

Z

"I know," he said. "I read the book and saw the movie."

I hung my head. Though I have had eight books published
and one in the works I shall ^{have} go to my grave as the flash-in-
^{doubtless} the-pan author of but one book, ANATOMY OF A MURDER....

"I'd like," I said, rallying ^{and producing my note book,} "to take the two-hour
cram course in how to make maple syrup."

"I'm making some now," he said, and we were off ~~and away~~
in a cloud of boiling sap.

There are three main stages in making maple syrup, ^{as} *Byron Braamse*
explained: tapping the trees, gathering the sap, and then
boiling the water out of it to make the syrup. A subsequent
stage is labelling and bottling and canning the finished syrup.
This final chore was presided over by his wife Edna. He pointed
at a doorway covered by a heavy curtain. "She's in the
finishing room ^{there} now working away."

/

"Where are your ~~two~~ sons?"
^

Pete and Bill were away that day working at another
-- making maple syrup was merely a seasonal sideline --
job, he explained, and he and his wife and a hired hand
were holding the fort--or rather ^{the} mill. How long had they
^
been operating at this site? Since 1932, when the boys
were little--doesn't time fly?--and now there were
grandchildren coming along and getting into the act. ^{And sometimes into the syrup...}
^

Their operation was comparatively small: 120 acres of hard
maples and about 1600 tap holes...
^

"Tap holes?" I repeated.

"Come ~~on~~ outside and I'll show you," he said, calling to
his wife to "mind the store ^{for} ~~for~~ a moment," meaning ^{for} to watch the
~~hike~~ boiling sap. The first tree was close to my parked car.

He pointed at a spouted metal gadget protruding perhaps ~~two~~ ^{three}
inches from the tree, about waist high, from which hung a ten-quart
metal pail from a slot in its side, partly filled with sap.

7

"Cute fancy's," I said.

"~~Spiles~~ "Spiles," Byron corrected me dryly, "driven about a half inch into a three-inch hole drilled into the tree."

"How wide is the hole?"

"Nearly a half inch. You drive the spile just deep enough to support the sap bucket but not too deep that you can't remove it ^{easily} when the run is over."

so the ~~tree~~ ^{tree} ~~bleed to death?~~ ^{What do you do ^{about} the hole? Cork it?}

"Nothing. Nature closes the hole." He pointed out ^{several} ~~at some~~ bark-covered scars on the same tree. "See ^{these} ~~these~~ ^{the} healed tap-holes from other years?"

"Looks like a powerful lot of drilling," I said, remembering ^{these} ~~these~~ 1600 tap holes.

"That's a powerful sage observation," Byron said, going on to explain that a given tree, depending upon its diameter, might have from one to four tap holes going simultaneously. [^{and hooking in} Now back to old "The Braames forest, etc."]

Spile cut 3:
In $\frac{1}{2}$ inch --
Hole 3 inches.

~~"Cute faucets," I said.~~

~~"Spiles," Byron explained dryly, "driven in, three~~
~~inches into the tree in a sap hole about a half inch in~~
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Start

~~simultaneously.~~ The Braames ~~maple~~ forest had been cut
over in 1928, so virtually all of their trees were one-tappers.

~~for timber~~

~~comparatively young~~

I calculated swiftly. "That means you've ~~got~~ got out

~~about~~ sixteen hundred sap buckets on as many trees," I said
triumphantly.

"The man can add," Byron said, mostly to himself.

"Not much sap in this bucket," I said.

"Too cool today," Byron said.

"In fact, ^{so far} it's been a pretty poor season."

J

The day indeed was clear and cold and, sniffing, I realized that my patrician nose was running faster ^{rather} than the sap.

As I tried ^{surreptitiously} to divert its flow Byron explained that

^{for years} ~~early~~ maple syrup tappers had been plagued by having their holes dry up, Byron explained, ^{They thought the tree had run out of sap} and ~~season~~ ^{happens} ~~robbers~~

^{until crafty researchers} at Michigan State University ~~had~~ discovered that the stoppage

^{instead} was caused by bacteria attracted by the free ^{hungry} ~~feast~~ ^{mealy} and, presto,

~~they~~ had developed a low-grade formaldehyde pill to insert

in the hole upon tapping to prevent it.

"They must have done it between football seasons," I

murmured. "The MSU researchers, I mean."

"You are speaking ^{of} the school ^{attended} I went to," Byron said, smiling. "What's that?" Byron inquired.

"I went to Michigan," I said. "We hate MSU. ^{They've lost their sense of humor and} ~~They won't let us~~

win anymore."

"You mean the self-proclaimed

^{now} ~~The~~ champions of the West have become the champions of Ann Arbor," Byron said, ^{symbolizing the} ~~spike~~, ~~was on the ball.~~

driving home the spike.

g at this critical juncture

Just then the helper came bumping along driving a ^{and snorting} snorting tractor. To ~~the~~ ^{which} was attached a large two-wheeled trailer carrying a covered 300-gallon metal sap tank and,

~~also~~, behind it, a second and smaller sump tank. We ^{fresh} watched him deftly empty the sap pails, ^{dumping the sap} The sap was dumped into the smaller sump tank over the mouth of which was a

cloth strainer to weed out ~~the~~ twigs and beetles and ~~any~~

^{any wind-blown} fugitive trading stamps. When ~~it~~ ^{the smaller sump tank} was full ~~it~~ ^{the} ~~was pumped~~ ^{he} ~~the sap was pumped~~ ^{the sap} into the larger tank. When all the sap pails were emptied

^{helper headed} the ~~collected~~ ^{the} sap was drawn back to the evaporator house

and pumped ~~into~~ ^{his load into the} outside stationary tanks ^{storage} connected with ^{by pipes}

the evaporator house....

7

Byron and I ^{Kittys}
we strolled back into ~~the~~ burning blockhouse

~~evaporator house to the initiated.~~ ^{But} "Why all the smoke?" I

said, blinking.

"Steam from the boiling sap."

"^{Steam} from the boiling sap," Byron explained. It

now
[all quotes]

takes roughly forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of

maple syrup. ^{The place} "That's what makes it so steamy," ~~he went~~

~~up.~~ "It's also what makes the syrup so expensive."

6

Byron now lectured in earnest, for this was his department.

The boiling evaporator pan is in two connected sections
^ and looks as though it were ^{designed} ~~invented~~ by Rube Goldberg.
^

Underneath these pans is the oil-heated firebox (the
Braames converted from wood fire two years ago) that keeps
the sap at a constant boil. The first section is the
metal-partitioned sap pan connected by pipes with the
outside sap storage tanks. The sap flows into ^{the} ~~both~~ pans
is controlled by an automatic float valve at about a
^ ^a constant ~~inch~~ ^{of one inch} level. The fresh sap, being mostly water,
^ boils at 212 degrees.

"Let's take a fine tree I scatched up on my notes,"
I said. Byron waited until I quit scribbling, and
away he ^{went off} ~~went~~ again.
^

6

"As the boiling sap leaves the sap pan and flows freely

into the adjoining syrup pan it has already lost about

fifty percent of its water," ^{Byron explained, as I made notes like} "Further and final concentration

takes place in the syrup pan, like the sap ~~pan~~ pan also

separated into four long and inter-connected metal troughs.

"How do you spell 'trough'?" I asked Byron, Byron spelled it.

and over "As the boiling concentrated ^{along} sap flows on its boiling point

gradually increases," ^{he continued,} "And since the boiling point of pure

maple syrup is seven degrees above that of water, it is

automatically drawn off at 219 degrees, ^{and again strained}

into ^{one of those} big two-hander "milk" containers.

This is the "This is the ^{now} end of the line," ^{he} Byron concluded. "You've got ^{your} pure maple syrup."

"How long does it take?" I asked.

the maple syrup

/

"The whole operation from fresh sap to finished syrup takes about an hour and a half," ^{he explained.} Generally speaking, the quicker ~~it is made~~ ^{operation the} the better the syrup. Mrs. Braames

spoke up. "It's like making jelly," she observed. "The quicker you make it the clearer the ^{jelly.} products." Byron and I accompanied her into the adjoining finishing room where ^{mercifully}

she poured us coffee and we sat and watched her work -- ^{washing} and labelling bottles, filling them with syrup, minding the store while Byron trafficked with wandering colonists...

"Could you please get us the cream, Edna?" Byron said.

I ~~stealthily~~ dipped my ~~lip~~ toward the man. Besides being an ardent girl-watcher ^{since boyhood, I have also been a dedicated} ~~I have been a stoic~~ work-watcher

~~since boyhood~~ and in Byron I thought I detected a kindred soul.

"Who started all this?" I said, ~~asking the umpteenth~~ ~~question.~~ "I mean in the very beginning?"

6

"The Indians," Byron said. ~~It had~~^{"A"} ~~all been~~ rather
 crude--sap drawn by hollow reeds into skin sacks and
 poured into a hollow log and the water evaporated by
 adding hot stones. The first white men ~~had~~ introduced the
 metal kettle over an open wood fire, then a series of three
 or four kettles in a row, ladling the ever-concentrating sap
 from one kettle to another--but still ^{all} pretty chancy and
 primitive. ^{then} About 1900 came the flat ^{shallow} divided-pan ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
 continuous-flow ^{sab} concentrators. "All the rest ^{had} been
 gage^{ry}," he concluded. "Float valves, oil heat, deep
 flues, thermometers, hydrometers, hydrotherms."

X

"All this and MSU," I murmured. "What trees make the best syrup?"

"Acer saccharum," he replied promptly. "It's the best syrup producer ~~of~~ of our thirteen species of native maples, and is variously called the hard maple, sugar maple, rock maple or plain sugar tree or ~~sugar~~ bush--depending on what locality you're in. ^{in the UP} ~~Up~~ here we call it simply the hard maple."

"What's its range?" I asked.

^{blue} His eyes twinkled as he quickly drew a half circle in the air. "Imagine a fat half moon lying on its back with one blunt prong up in Minnesota, the other in New England ~~and~~ and"---he glanced at his wife---"its fat fanny lolling indolently across Indiana, Ohio, part of West Virginia and up through Pennsylvania. This is the effective range of the hard maple tree in this country."

Again I ^{swiftly} calculated.

"Then Michigan must be the biggest producer of maple syrup,"
I ^{said,} ~~put in~~, "since we lie in the heart of your half moon."

"No. Despite the fact that roughly about a fifth of the
^{countries} hard maples are concentrated in Michigan, Vermont followed
closely by New York are the top ^{syrup} producers. Michigan has
rarely been above fifth place."

"Why?"

His toiling wife Edna paused and smilingly answered that
one. "Because in Michigan ^{the tradition has never really caught on and anyway} there are too many easier and

steadier ways to make a living." She spread her hands. "The

season is short and uncertain, the working hours long and

tedious, the process exacting, the syrup expensive--and I

love it." She paused and ^{poured} ~~passed~~ me a sample ^{of fresh syrup} in a paper cup.

It was still warm.

7

I raised my cup. "Here's bumps," I toasted, always the
joker.

"It's great with some of that in it, too," Byron said.
"I'd give you a shot, but I don't monkey with the stuff
during working hours."

"Me either," I said, feeling a ~~great~~^{fine} surge of virtue as
I downed $\frac{1}{2}$ my drink. It was lovely.

"Where do you sell the ~~stuff~~^{syrup?}?" I asked.

"Some of it locally, some to the tourists, but our biggest ^{steady}
customers are private clubs and people who drive or are driven
in Cadillacs." ^{Again the twinkling eyes.} ~~His blue eyes twinkled.~~ ^{rich} "Also ~~wealthy~~ newspaper
columnists."

/

Again I hung my head. "But why ^{mostly} to the rich?" *This seems*
far too good for them."

"Because it's so expensive. It isn't that the rich
^{such} have better taste than the rest of us but that they can
^{rather} better afford to indulge it. ~~The~~ ^{pure} stuff costs ^{almost} ~~nearly~~ as
much as sour mash bourbon." He pained. "I exaggerate a little for emphasis."

"I love the comparison," I said.

¶ Byron had to get back to his boiling sap and
^{it} was time for me to leave, so I bought nearly two
^{and} gallons, when I paid Mrs. Braamse I discovered ^{what} ^{meant} ^{about} ^{the} ^{bourbon} ^{bit.} ~~Byron~~ ^{was} ^{right.}
So I said my goodbyes to these two lovely people—so gentle,
so intelligent, so hard-working—and ^{treated} ^{out} ~~toted~~ my ~~foot~~ to the
car. As I drove away I looked back and ^{at} ~~from~~ the ~~steaming~~
~~door of the~~ burning blockhouse ^{and, I swear,} ~~sure~~ ^{enough} saw Kitty waving
goodbye ^{steaming} ^{from} ^{the} ^{doorway.}

YE OLDE MAPLE SYRUP MILL

(21.7)

15 stems

by

Robert Traver

R-57

mt

Just had 9/15 made

In mid-April of this year I visited my first maple syrup mill in Michigan or anywhere. It is owned and run by the Braamse Brothers of Au Train, a Holland Dutch name pronounced like that of the composer Brahms. The mill stands in the midst of a tall maple forest growing alongside the then spring-flooded Rock River, a well-known Upper Peninsula trout stream, about two miles above where it joins Lake Superior. This mill operates in the very heart of the best sap-producing hard maple tree area of the United States.

[L.C.]

9/10 Imp

152
30

Mill is actually a misnomer. Nothing is ground or crushed there. But it has an old-fashioned nostalgic ring and I like it. Refinery is closer, I guess, and technically the structure where the syrup is made is called the evaporator house. But who ever heard of strolling minstrels or carefree drunks going around singing "Down by the old evaporator house stream"? So mill it will remain, for this stint at least.

The Braamse mill is remote. Driving into the place from the Lake Superior shore road on a dirt country road I saw fresh coyote tracks and jumped two deer. As the deer leapt gaily away they looked in pretty fair shape after our unusually severe winter. Many hadn't made it so well, and some hadn't made it at all....

Then I spied the first sap buckets hanging from the trees and I knew I was close. As I turned off on the deep-rutted side road and parked I thought I had blundered upon a set for "Gunsmoke."

In this episode, I swiftly saw, the Indians were trying to kidnap poor Kitty (smart Indians), who had barricaded herself in a lone blockhouse, which the Indians had set afire to smoke her out.

Smoke streamed and belched from its roof and sides. ^{Making like} ~~Remembering~~
^{Matt Dillon} ~~my Scout oath~~, I dashed to her rescue and groped my way inside.

There, in a fog of smoke, I found not Kitty but the Braamses' boys' father, Byron Braames, calmly presiding over a boiling vat of sap. I told him who I was.

"I know," he said. "I read the book and saw the movie."

stet
I hung my head. Though I have had eight books published and ~~have~~ one in the works I shall doubtless go to my grave as the flash-in-the-pan author of but one book, ANATOMY OF A MURDER....

"I'd like," I said, rallying and producing my notebook, "to take the two-hour cram course in how to make maple syrup."

"I'm making some now," he said, and we were off in a cloud of boiling sap.

There are three main stages in making maple syrup, Byron Braamse explained: tapping the trees, gathering the sap, and then boiling the water out of it to make the syrup. A subsequent stage is labelling and bottling and canning the finished syrup. This ~~final~~ chore was presided over by his wife Edna. He pointed at a doorway covered by a heavy curtain. "She's in the finishing room there now working away."

"Where are your sons?"

Pete and Bill were away that day working at another job, he explained--making maple syrup was merely a seasonal sideline--and he and his wife and a hired hand were holding the fort--or rather

the mill. How long had they been operating at this site? Since 1932, when the boys were little--doesn't time fly?--and now there

were grandchildren coming along and getting into the act. And sometimes into the syrup.... Their operation was comparatively small: 120 acres of hard maples and about 1600 tap holes.

"Tap holes?" I repeated.

"Come outside and I'll show you," he said, calling to his wife to "mind the store for a moment," meaning to watch the boiling sap. The ~~first~~ ^{nearest} tree was close to my parked car. He pointed at a spouted metal gadget protruding perhaps three inches from the tree, about waist high, from which hung a ten-quart metal pail from a slot in its side, partly filled with sap.

"Cute faucets," I said.

"Spiles," Byron corrected me dryly, "driven about a half inch into a three-inch hole drilled into the tree."

"How wide is the hole?"

"Nearly a half inch. You drive the spile just deep enough to support the sap bucket but not too deep that you can't remove it easily when the ^{sap} run is over."

"What do you do about the hole? Cork it so the tree won't bleed to death?"

"Nothing. Nature closes the hole." He pointed out several bark-covered scars on the same tree. "See these healed tap-holes from other years?"

"Looks like a powerful lot of drilling," I said, remembering those 1600 tap holes.

is *understatement,* *»*
"That's a powerful ~~sage~~ ^{sage} observation," Byron said, going on to explain that a given tree, depending upon its diameter, might have from one to four tap holes going simultaneously. The Braames forest had been cut over in 1928, so virtually all of their

comparatively young trees were one-tappers.

I calculated swiftly. "That means you've got out about sixteen hundred sap buckets on as many trees," I said triumphantly.

"The man can add," Byron said.

"Not much sap in this bucket," I said.

"Too cool today," Byron said. "In fact so far it's been a pretty poor season."

The day indeed was clear and cold and, sniffing, I realized that my patrician nose was running rather faster than the sap. As I tried surreptitiously to divert its flow Byron explained that maple syrup tappers had for years been plagued by having their holes dry up. They thought the tree had run out of sap until crafty researchers at Michigan State University discovered that the stoppage was instead caused by ^{handles of} hungry bacteria attracted by the free meal and, presto, had developed a low-grade formaldehyde pill to insert in the hole upon tapping to prevent it.

"They must have done it between football seasons," I murmured.

"The MSU researchers, I mean."

"You are speaking, sir, of the school I attended," Byron said, smiling.

"I went to Michigan," I said. "We hate MSU. They've lost their sense of humor and won't let us win anymore."

"You mean the self-proclaimed champions of the West have now become the champions of Ann Arbor," Byron said, driving home the spile.

05
"I'm tempted to write the regents to get on the ball and invent a pill to stop MSU," I said.

"And Duffy," Byron said.

"And Duffy," I agreed.

At this critical juncture the helper came bumping and snorting along driving a tractor to which was attached a large two-wheeled trailer carrying a covered 300-gallon metal sap tank and, behind it, a second and smaller sump tank. We watched him deftly empty the sap pails, dumping the fresh sap into the smaller sump tank over the mouth of which was a cloth strainer to weed out ^{the} twigs and beetles and any wind-blown trading stamps. When the smaller sump tank was full he pumped the sap into the larger tank. When all the sap pails were emptied the helper headed back to the evaporator house and pumped his load into the outside stationary storage tanks connected by pipes with the evaporator house....

Byron and I strolled back into Kitty's burning blockhouse.

"But why all the smoke?" I said, blinking.

asp "Steam," Byron explained. "Steam from the boiling sap. It takes roughly forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup. That's what makes the place so steamy. It's also what makes the syrup so expensive."

Byron now lectured in earnest, for this was his department. The boiling evaporator pan is in two connected sections and looks as though it were designed by Rube Goldberg. Underneath these pans is the oil-heated firebox (the Braames converted from wood fire two years ago) that keeps the sap at a constant boil. The first section is the metal-partitioned sap pan connected by pipes with the outside sap storage tanks. The sap flow into the pans is

controlled by an automatic float valve at a constant level of one inch. The fresh sap, being mostly water, boils at 212 degrees.

"Let's take a five till I catch up on my notes," I said. Byron waited until I quit scribbling, and he was off again.

"As the boiling sap leaves the sap pan and flows freely into the adjoining syrup pan it has already lost about fifty percent of its water," Byron explained. "Further and final concentration takes place in the syrup pan, like the sap pan also separated into four long and inter-connected metal troughs."

"How do you spell ^{small} 'trough'?" I asked Byron. Byron spelled it, *racking* *which was another victory for M S U.*

"As the boiling and ever concentrating sap flows along its boiling point gradually increases," he continued, "and since the boiling point of pure maple syrup is seven degrees above that of water, it is automatically drawn off at 219 degrees, and again strained into this big two-hander milk container. This is the end of the line," he concluded. "You've now got your pure maple syrup."

"How long does it take?" I asked.

"The whole operation from fresh sap to finished syrup takes about an hour and a half," he explained. "Generally speaking, the quicker the operation the better the syrup." Mrs. Braames spoke up. "It's like making jelly," she observed. "The quicker you make it the clearer the jelly." Byron and I accompanied her into the adjoining and mercifully vaporless finishing room where she poured us coffee and we sat and watched her work--washing and labelling bottles, filling them with syrup, minding the store while Byron trafficked with wandering columnists...

"Could you please get us the cream, Edna?" Byron said.

I dipped my cup toward the man. Besides being an ardent girl-watcher since boyhood, I have also been a dedicated work-watcher and in Byron I thought I detected a kindred soul.

"Who started all this?" I said. "I mean in the very beginning?"

"The Indians," Byron said. "All rather crude—sap drawn by hollow reeds into skin sacks and poured into a hollow log and the water evaporated by adding hot stones. The first white men introduced the metal kettle over an open wood fire, then a series of three or four kettles in a row, ladling the ever-concentrating sap from one kettle to another—but still all pretty chancy and primitive. Then about 1900 came the ^{first} flat shallow divided-pan continuous-flow sap concentrators. All the rest has been gadgetry," he concluded. "Float valves, oil heat, deep flues, thermometers, hydrometers, hydrotherms."

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at his wife--"its fat fanny lolling indolently across Indiana, Ohio, part of West Virginia and up through Pennsylvania. This is the effective range of the hard maple tree in this country."

Again I calculated swiftly. "Then Michigan must be the biggest producer of maple syrup," I said, "since we lie in the heart of your half moon."

"No. Despite the fact that roughly about a fifth of the country's hard maples ~~are concentrated~~ ^{grow} in Michigan, Vermont followed closely by New York are the ~~top~~ ^{country} syrup producers. Michigan has rarely been above fifth place."

"Why?"

His toiling wife Edna paused and smilingly answered that one. "Because in Michigan the tradition has never really caught on and anyway there are too many easier and steadier ways to make a living." She spread her hands. "The season is short and uncertain, the working hours long and tedious, the process exacting, the syrup expensive--and I love it." She paused and poured me a sample of fresh syrup in a paper cup. It was still warm.

I raised my cup. "Here's bumps," I toasted, always the joker.

"It's great with some of that in it, too," Byron said. "I'd give you a shot, but I don't monkey with the stuff during working hours."

"Me either," I said, feeling a fine surge of virtue as I downed my drink. It was lovely.

"Where do you sell the syrup?" I asked.

"Some of it locally, some to the tourists, but our biggest steady customers are private clubs and people who drive or are driven in Cadillacs." Again the twinkling eyes. "Also rich newspaper columnists."

Again I hung my head. "But why mostly to the rich? This seems far too good for them."

"Because it's so expensive. It isn't that the rich have ~~such~~ better taste than the rest of us but rather that they can better afford to indulge it. Pure stuff like ours costs almost as much as sour mash bourbon." He paused. "I exaggerate a little for emphasis."

"I love the comparison," I said.

Byron had to get back to his boiling sap and it was time for me to leave, so I bought nearly two gallons ^{of} and when I paid Mrs. Braamse ~~I~~ discovered what Byron meant by the bourbon bit. So I said my goodbyes to these two lovely people--so gentle, so intelligent, so hard-working--and toted my treasure out to the car. As I drove away I looked back at the burning blockhouse and, I swear, saw Kitty waving goodbye from the steaming doorway.

→ OSC