

# New York State's Rich Maple Heritage

## Early Sugaring

Maple sugaring has been an early Spring tradition in New York State since the Eastern Woodland Indians discovered that maple sap cooked over an open fire produces a sweet sugar. When European settlers arrived, Native Americans traded maple sugar with them and taught the settlers the secrets of the maple sugaring process.

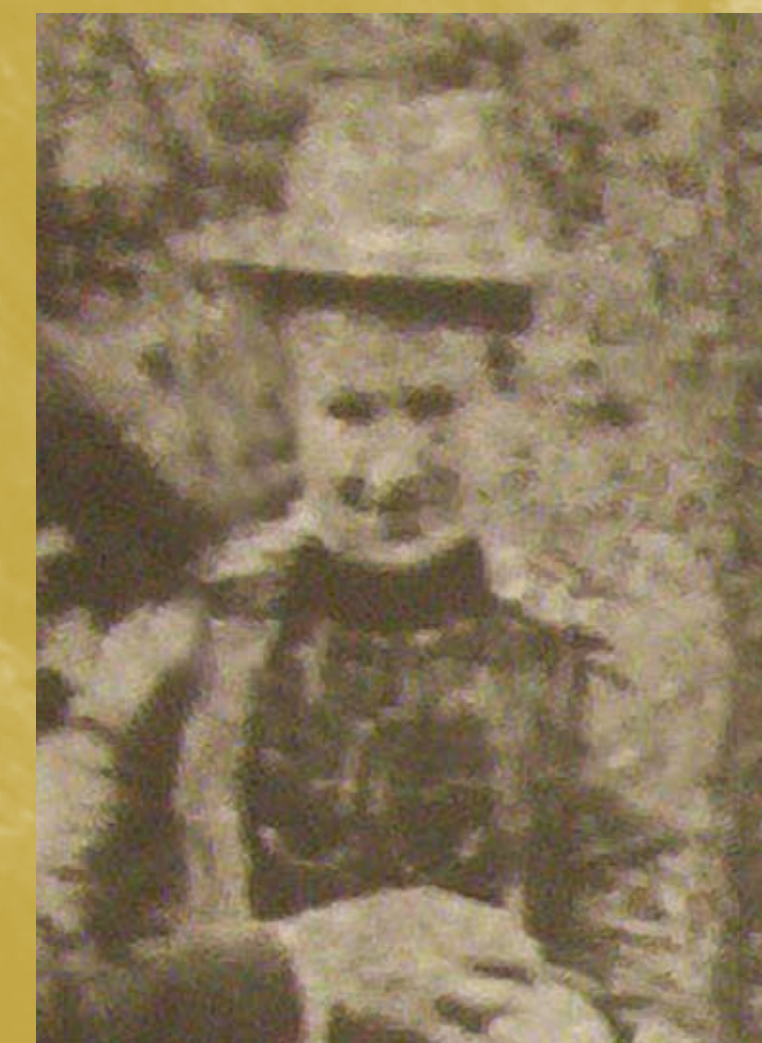
Other Europeans added their own technologies to the process. They bored holes in the maple tree trunks and inserted wooden spouts. They used wooden buckets to catch the sap, and then carried the sweet water on shoulder yokes to the metal boiling kettles. Early settlers, like the Native Americans, saved their maple as crystallized sugar. Maple sugar was the sole source of sweetener, as cane sugar was not introduced in America until the 1800's. At the time cane sugar was first introduced, maple sugar was much less expensive, and thought to be tastier.



*American Forest Scene/Currier & Ives*



*Photo courtesy of New England Maple Museum, Pittsford, VT*



*American Maple Museum, Croghan, NY*



*Photo courtesy of New England Maple Museum, Pittsford, VT*

## A Family Affair

Early in New York's history, each family made their own maple sugar for personal consumption. Later, sugar makers started businesses to produce maple products and sell them to the public. Men worked with oxen or horses to haul loads of sap and tended hot fires. Women molded sugar to store for their families' meals in the year ahead. Kids loved sugaring—tasting sweet "sugar on snow" and missing school to gather firewood.



**New York State Maple Producers Association, Inc.**  
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