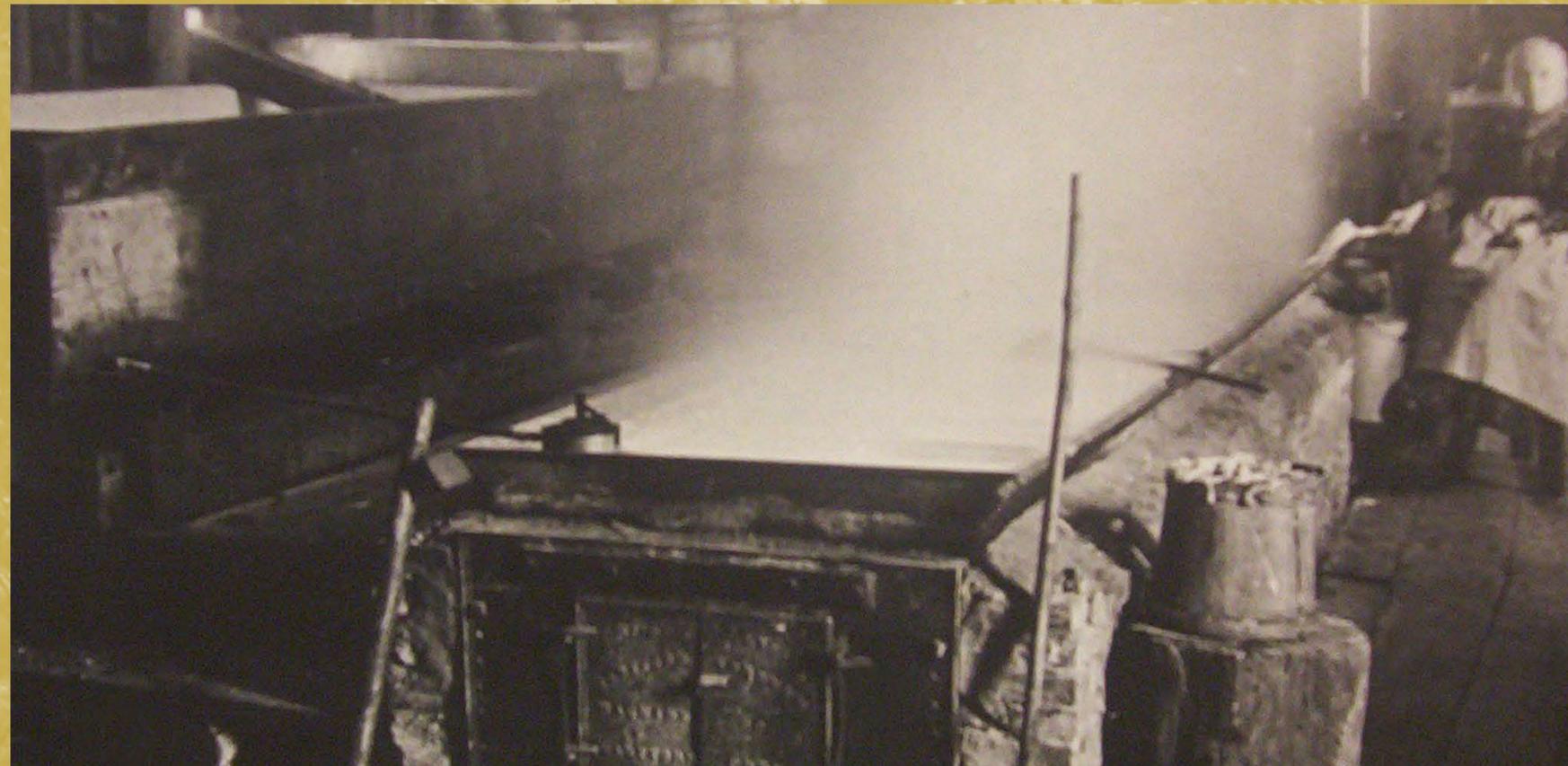


Maple Syrup-making is Steamy Work

In the Sugarhouse

The process of converting maple sap to syrup involves boiling the sap over a long period of time to evaporate much of the water in the sap and to concentrate the sugar. The flavor and color of syrup develops as a result of chemical reactions that occur while the sap is being boiled.

The first evaporators were hollowed out logs or an animal skin container. The next evaporator was a metal kettle hung over an open fire. Then in the 1800s, flat-bottom evaporator pans and enclosed fireboxes were designed. The greater heating surface of the pan and the confined fire increased the efficiency of the fuel but made the sugar house a very hot and steamy place to be. During sugaring season still today, look for the clouds of steam rolling out of the large vents on the roofs of sugarhouses.



American Maple Museum, Croghan, NY



Erin Sheridan/NYSMPA

Making the Grade

There are many different grades of pure New York maple syrup—Grade A Fancy, Grade A Medium Amber, Grade A Dark Amber, Grade A Extra Dark Amber, and Grade B. Grading standards are based on syrup color and correspond to the minimum percent light that is transmitted through each grade of syrup. All syrup must meet a minimum density standard—66% sugar.



Mary Jeanne Packer/NYSMPA

Fueling the Fire

Early maple evaporators were heated exclusively by wood fires; and wood fuel is still used today by many maple producers. It usually takes about a cord of firewood to make 25 gallons of maple syrup. A cord is a pile of wood about four feet high, eight feet long, and four feet deep. Maple producers get firewood from their sugarbush by removing trees that were competing with the sugar maples for sunlight and water.



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