

least once, each held his mouth under the wooden spigot, set into a hole bored in the tree, and lapped up all he could of the thin sweet trickle coming from the inner bark.

There was a low bench beside the big vats in the Sugar house and it was always filled with a waiting crowd, hopefully following with their eyes, the graduation from vat to vat as the thin watery sap began to boil down and become thicker and thicker until it assumed the consistency of rich golden-brown molasses. Very often the cooking sap boiled over a little, as the fire beneath gave a sudden sport and all the watching row squealed and pulled their feet up from the hard earthen floor. When this happened, an attendant threw in a tablespoon of cream or a small piece of fat and the overflow subsided as quickly as it had risen.

As the syrup grew thicker and thicker, foam had to be skimmed off the top and little boys begged for the privilege of eating it. It was certainly sweet, but must have contained many ingredients besides sugar! Faces and hands became very sticky--even one's hair sometimes felt sticky; the very air seemed to absorb a certain amount of sugar from the evaporating sap.

On the day that the grades were entertained, the syrup, instead of being bottled for table use with pancakes or waffles. (yum-yum), was allowed to condense still more. After being stirred a little it was poured into pans and formed hard sugar as it cooled. This was called "sugaring off." It required considerable skill and experience to know the exact moment at which the