

Holland Land Company's Search for Maple Sugar.

The sugar maple tree appears to be a native of the North American continent. How soon after the discovery of America and the settlement of the whites in New England, New York and Pennsylvania, the fact that sugar can be extracted from the juice of this tree was learned is probably unknown. It is unlikely that the Indians had any knowledge of converting the sap of the tree into sugar, although they no doubt were aware of its saccharine qualities.

But the questions must have early attracted the attention of the Europeans, and maple sugar was made at an early period all over the northern part of the continent where white men had settled. At that early period cane sugar was the only kind known to Europeans. The cultivation of the sugar beet was not introduced until Napoleon was compelled to find a substitute for the cane sugar, because Great Britain had closed all French ports to sugar importations. But the Europeans were not long in finding out the valuable qualities that lurked in the sugar maple trees.

The James Holland Land Company, which had purchased such a vast tract of land from the State of Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century, seems to have conceived the idea of turning this valuable asset to account. Whether the sugar maple trees on its own lands were not sufficient in number to meet what the company seems

to have thought a very profitable source of revenue, it took measures to enlarge this already very great acreage.

A rare little book purchased several years ago by Judge Landis contains an account of the travels of one John Lincklaen, a young man born in Amsterdam, who in 1791-92 was sent by the Holland Company into the States of Vermont, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania in order to gather by personal inspection and observation, and also to inquire into the art of sugar making from the maple trees. It was thought by those wide-awake Dutchmen that it might be possible to rival and perhaps supersede the product of the sugar cane. A more noble sentiment was also involved. Most of the cane sugar produced at that time was the product of slave labor, and it was hoped free labor might take the place of that which it was sought to drive out.

Mr. Lincklaen kept a very full journal of his travels and observations, and, of course, the sugar maple trees and their product occupy the greater part of his interesting little book. Through his representations the company was induced to purchase 117,186 acres of sugar maple timber near Cazenovia, in the State of New York. As a sample of his careful observations we quote his remarks, made at a place called Thornbottom, which is now in Wyoming county. He says: "Here at (Thornbottom) we met John Jhones; he gave us all information, and seemed an active and intelligent man. He has made hardly any sugar this year—his kettles having come too late—but he proposes to tap 2,000 trees next Spring. . . . Mr. Nicholson has 12,000 acres, 3,000 of which bear Maple Trees. A tree 15 to 20 inches

in diameter gives 25 gallons of sap and 5 gallons gives a pound of sugar. It is possible to boil five times a day. The Kettles hold half a gallon."

The journal, of course, does not state the nature of the report Mr. Lincklaen made to his principals. But whether favorable or otherwise, we believe there is no evidence that the Holland Land Company ever attempted to make maple sugar on an extended scale. That company had its hands full in disposing of the millions of acres it had purchased in Warren, Jefferson and McKean counties from the State of Pennsylvania.

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