

MAINE'S SWEET HISTORY

BY VANESSA LEMANSKI

The practice of making maple syrup has a rich history deeply rooted in Maine. Even before European settlers arrived in the New World, Native Americans had been harvesting maple sap for centuries. After collecting the sap, it was stored overnight, allowing the water to rise to the top and freeze, making it simple to extract. The remaining sap was then boiled down using hot stones, transforming it into a syrup-like consistency. Dried syrup could be further processed to create maple sugar, which became a staple in Native American diets. Its versatility extended beyond culinary uses, as it was employed to season food and sweeten medicines. Its significance was so profound that it occasionally served as a form of currency.

While the sap became more syrupy with the heat from the stones, it was significantly thinner compared to the syrup we have today. Once the colonists arrived, they swiftly discovered the value of maple syrup and the process of making it. They introduced kettles, which significantly simplified boiling and contributed to the desired thickness we are accustomed to. Maple sugar became more prevalent and easier to obtain than alternative sweetening methods. Cane sugar, on the other hand, had to be imported, which was costly. Cane sugar was often reserved for wealthy individuals. Conversely, anyone, regardless of income, could make their own maple sugar from the nearby maple trees, making it essentially a "poor man's sugar."

Sugar is present in maple sap during warmer, sunny days and freezing nights, repeated over an extended period. The long transition between Maine's winters and springs makes this state an ideal location for sweet maple sap and favorable sap flow. The terrain, soil, and weather conditions play a crucial role in determining the amount of maple sap extracted and the quality of the resulting maple syrup. Sugar maple trees contain the highest sugar content in their sap, but various types of maple trees can also produce suitable sap for syrup production. It is common for trees to grow for several years before they can be tapped. Typically, trees reach around 40 years of age before they can be tapped, but they can continue to produce sap for many years afterward. As long as the tree is well-cared for and tapped correctly, its sap can be utilized for over a century.

The best time to begin collecting maple sap is in late February and early March. This is the perfect time to tap the trees and get ready before the sap starts flowing when days get a little warmer. The sap begins to spoil once you start seeing buds on the trees, which happens in late April, so you only have a few weeks to harvest. To collect maple sap, you start by drilling a hole in a mature maple tree. You then insert a spout to let the sap pour out. You can hang a bucket under the spout to catch the sap. If you drive through the Maine woods during the maple syrup season, you are bound to see plastic tubing between trees. This plastic tubing is used to collect sap from many trees and move it into one collecting area. After you harvest your sap, you boil it down to make the syrup. Maple sap turns into syrup when it reaches a temperature of 219 degrees Fahrenheit. While it isn't a difficult process, it takes between 30 and 50 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup, so you will have to collect quite a bit of sap to make a useful amount of syrup.

Maple syrup's flavor and color vary greatly. Some syrups have a rich, dark flavor, while others have a light, golden hue. Generally, the longer you boil the syrup, the darker it becomes. Different types of syrup are suited for various purposes. Lighter syrups with a delicate flavor are ideal for pancakes and waffles, while darker syrups with stronger flavors are best for baking and cooking.



The fourth Sunday in March is always Maple Sunday in Maine. This year it falls on March 23rd. Local maple syrup producers usually offer demonstrations and samples of their maple goods. Maple products can range from syrup, all the way to maple popcorn or ice cream. One stop you can't miss during Maine Maple Weekend is Bob's Sugarhouse. The owner, known as "Sugar Bob," has been making syrup since he was 10 years old. Bob's Sugarhouse has been operating in Dover-Foxcroft for decades. They offer a variety of maple delicacies, including maple seasonings, maple candies, maple syrup, and more. If you can't make it to their shop, you can order from their website. Come check out the local flavor and learn more about Maine's rich maple history!



FISHING IN THE MAINE HIGHLANDS

BY VANESSA LEMANSKI

Maine is a fine fishing destination for beginners and pros alike. With plentiful lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers full of fresh fish, there isn't much more you could ask for. The 2025 open-water fishing season for all species begins April 1st and ends September 30th. If you're looking for a new fishing spot in the Maine Highlands area, check out one of these places:

Center Pond is a shallow pond located in Sangerville, Maine. Seasonal camps surround the pond, but you can find areas to fish near the public boat launch. This pond is home to many pickerel, white perch, and yellow perch.

Harlow Pond is a warm water pond in Parkman, Maine. It is a smaller and lesser-known fishing area, but it is loved by locals. Harlow Pond is full of pickerel and smallmouth bass.

Moosehead Lake, on the other hand, is far from small. It is the largest lake in Maine and is almost 40 miles long! This deep, coldwater lake is located in Piscataquis County. Moosehead Lake is abundant in many species of fish, including landlocked salmon, brook trout, lake trout, bass, perch, and togue. Moosehead's Lily and Spencer Bays are shallow areas that are easier to fish in. Surrounding Moosehead Lake, there are also more than 40 lakes and ponds to explore while you are in the area.



The chain of **Roach Ponds** in Kokadjo, Maine is great for fishing trout and salmon. First Roach Pond is the biggest of the Roach Ponds and measures 7 miles long. Roach River runs from First Roach Pond and flows 6 and a half miles to Spencer Bay on Moosehead Lake. The Roach River offers fantastic fishing, but it is catch-and-release only so keep that in mind.

The **Kennebec River** flows from Moosehead Lake south to the Atlantic Ocean. The East Outlet of the river is famous for its landlocked salmon and brook trout and is deemed one of the best places for fishing those species in all of New England. This particular part of the Kennebec River is open for fishing year-round regardless of the season, but from October to April 1st, it is catch-and-release only.

The **Piscataquis River** begins in Blanchard, Maine, and runs to Howland, Maine where it flows into the Penobscot River. The Piscataquis River contains brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, landlocked salmon, and more. It is great for fly fishing. To catch the best fish, it is recommended to fish the calmer areas near piles of rocks.

Before you head out to any of these spots, make sure you have your fishing license and always check for any local regulations. There are various options and prices for both residents and non-residents. If you don't want to get a fishing license, the free fishing weekend this year is May 31st and June 1st. During this weekend, any locals or visitors without licenses are allowed to fish. While the above locations are pretty good for fishing, the best spots are secrets kept by the locals. If you want to know the best fishing holes in the area, stop by a local pub or bar and chat up some of the regulars!



THE ABBOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BY BRIAN HANSCOM

Just up the road from Guilford lies the town of Abbot, incorporated in 1827. Once a thriving town with over a hundred farms, several sawmills, a gristmill, a woolen mill, multiple stores, and even a grand hotel, Abbot's heyday has long since passed. However, the **Abbot Historical Society** diligently works to preserve the town's rich history through stories, photographs, and other artifacts, ensuring that these tales and memories are accessible to future generations.

We were incorporated in 1996 and are delighted to have the **Knights of Pythian** building in our village as our museum. During the warmer months, we are open on Tuesdays from noon to 3 PM and by appointment on other days. In the winter months, we gather at the Town Hall to digitize our records and family histories.

As a group, we organize various fundraising activities throughout the year. These include plant sales, an ice cream social every Fall, a yearly road trip to a local museum, a cemetery tour, Christmas tree lighting, and Game Day at the Town Hall on Thursdays from noon to 3 PM during the winter months. These events provide an excellent opportunity for socializing and enjoying delicious food, making them inclusive for anyone interested in joining.



This past summer, we embarked on a significant project that will span several years. Our initiative commenced at our oldest cemetery, situated across the road from the Town office. We commenced the task of cleaning headstones and repairing those in disrepair. Once the weather improves, we will resume our efforts on Thursdays, picking up where we left off. Our goal is to complete this cemetery in time for the town's 200th birthday in a couple of years.

A remarkable group of volunteers eagerly joins us whenever their schedules permit. They dedicate their time to cleaning the cemetery. If you are interested in learning more about the process, feel free to contact us at **bothhistoricalsociety@gmail.com** or by calling 207-951-2535. Membership is an affordable \$7.00 per year, and we welcome anyone who shares our passion for preserving this historical site to join us.





THE SOUTHERN BELLE

LISA MCNAMARA

GOING HOME.

Last spring, our family made a decision to purchase the Guilford Bed and Breakfast. It was a bold move - maybe even a crazy one, but we were excited about the prospect. My husband John visited Guilford alone while Jack and I stayed in Atlanta, juggling our busy schedules.

When John returned from Guilford, brimming with excitement, I realized our dream was about to become a reality. While thrilled for the adventure, I was also apprehensive. Jack had been friends with the same group of kids since kindergarten, and they were like an extended family to him—to us. I worked at the Cathedral of St. Philip, a beautiful Episcopal church with a vibrant and welcoming community I adored. I had grown to love my Atlanta life, and the thought of leaving felt daunting. It had been years since I had experienced such dread. The prospect of moving to a new home in a new town, all sight unseen, seemed overwhelming. Leaving behind more than 30 years of friendships to move to a place where we knew no one felt like an insurmountable task. But I knew I had to do it for my family. I knew this was the right next move for us, but I still shed many tears.

When the day finally arrived for us to move, the boys (John and Jack) moved up to Guilford before me. I stayed in Atlanta to savor every last moment of my time at my beloved church so that I could complete my work assignments, lead the parish retreat and relish in my final week of Vacation Bible School. But then, it was my turn to bid farewell to Atlanta. The goodbye was incredibly difficult - much more so than I expected.

At the Bangor airport, I was greeted by John and Jack at the relatively small gate. Overwhelmed with joy, I eagerly prepared to embark on the journey to my new home. However, the gloomy weather—gray, rainy, and chilly—on June 8th cast a shadow over my excitement. As we drove through each quaint foreign town, a growing sense of melancholy washed over me. I yearned for the sunny skies of Atlanta and the familiar faces I cherished.

Upon reaching the big house on the hill - our new home, my sadness intensified. It was cluttered with the previous owners' furniture and "treasures" they had left behind. The house desperately needed cleaning and extensive renovations to the owner's spaces - our new home. Tears welled up in my eyes, but John reassured me that he would transform our quarters into a haven for our family. Determined to cheer up, I recognized John's talent and vision for home decor and renovation. He has a knack for making things look beautiful and functional. I just had to have patience.

John also urged us to immerse ourselves in the local community. We dined out regularly to socialize and meet new people. We rented a boat on Sebec Lake, went ATV riding in Greenville, participated in the town yard sale, attended the Whoopi Pie Festival, and visited the traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall. We also attended the county fair and Riverfest, making sure to attend every event that piqued our interest. Despite these efforts, I still felt like an outsider, longing for the familiarity of Atlanta.



The boys, on the other hand, were having an absolute blast! Jack and John embraced our new experience with open arms, fully enjoying the adventure, and their new lives in the north.

John kept assuring me that things would improve and that we would make friends, and he was right. Eventually things started to click. I stopped pining for Atlanta and realized that this was the best place for my boys, and our family.

One day, I received a call from the delightful Courtney McLaughlin, who wanted to host an event at the B&B. This introduced us to a wonderful group of people. Patty Davis followed up by inviting a group of friends for our first B&B happy hour, further expanding our circle of friends. I was getting my groove back. We also joined Community Fitness, and I started attending the morning exercise classes. These classes were welcoming and inclusive, and I began to meet more people. Friendships started to blossom, and I felt a sense of belonging. Suddenly, I was having fun! And I was also feeling an enormous amount of gratitude for this new community.

Fast forward to the New Year - less than eight months from arriving, when John and Jack surprised me with a ticket to return to Atlanta for a friend's celebration. I was thrilled! I was going home! I would reunite with all the people I cherished - all the people I missed.

My Atlanta trip was wonderful. I thoroughly enjoyed catching up with my loved ones, attending church, and teaching Sunday School to my little nuggets (that's what I affectionately called the kids in my program). As much fun as I was having back in Atlanta, I felt an unexpected longing for Guilford. I missed my new friends and my new routines. When my trip concluded, I was so excited to board the plane and return to my tiny town in the heart of Maine. Guilford has become my new home, where my new friends, my boys, and my heart reside. It took me longer than John and Jack to recognize that Guilford and central Maine has all the grace, excellence, and hospitality that I was missing. I will always love the charm of the south, but northern charm is equally as delightful.

As for the renovations, John more than kept his promise to make our living quarters perfect for our family, which included a beautiful and comfy couch we purchased from Guilford's very own Davis Brother's Furniture store. Perhaps he made them a bit too perfect, because I often find myself reluctant to leave them. :-)



This is the start of a new monthly blog from Lisa McNamara, owner of The Guilford Bed & Breakfast. Join this small town girl from Mobile, Alabama who moved to the big city as she moves back to small town life, but this time in Maine where she maneuvers, with a little humor, through the next chapter of her family's big adventure.



EVENTS & ADVENTURES

MONSON ARTS GALLERY

An exhibition of the many styles of Monson's own Roberta Jarvis. Jarvis' painting are heavily influences by the Maine woods and wildlife in her own back yard. **Exhibit runs through April 20, 2025.** Visit the Monson Arts Gallery at 8 Greenville Road, Monson, ME. Winter hours are Fri - Sun 12P - 5P (207-997-2070). Learn more at www.monsonarts.org



MAINE MAPLE SUNDAY WEEKEND

Visit Bob's Sugarhouse during the 41st annual Maine Maple Sunday weekend.

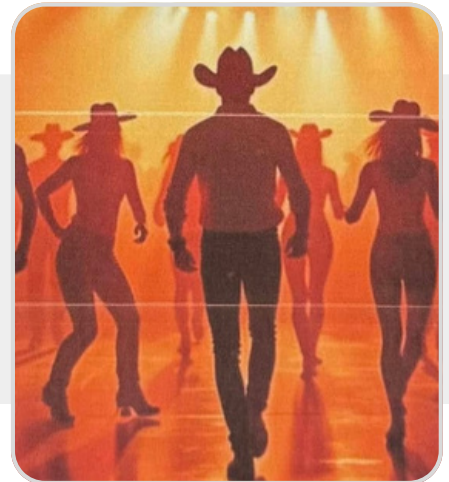
It is a "Rite of Spring" and a chance to visit with neighbors and friends after a long winter and enjoy the sweet smells of Maple Sap boiling and the clouds filling the air across East Main Street. Come watch the boiling and processing of one of Maine's favorite treats.

Bob's Sugarhouse will be open 9am - 5pm, Saturday, March 22 and 9am - 4pm on Sunday March 23. Visit Bob's online at www.mainemaplesyrup.com

COUNTRY WESTERN LINE DANCE PARTY

Get ready to kick up your heels at our Country Western Line Dancing Party on **April 4th at 6PM** at the **Guilford Community Fitness Center**. Come dressed in your best western wear-think boots, jeans, and cowboy hats-or just show up in something comfortable and ready to move. The music will be lively, the atmosphere welcoming, and the energy high as everyone gets their groove on. \$15 in advance, \$10 at the door. 16 & Under are Free.

Learn more at www.comfitme.com



PISCATAQUIS RIVER RACE

The Kiwanis Club of Dover-Foxcroft will be hosting the **51st Annual Piscataquis River Race on April 26, 2025**. Proceeds of the race are used for a wide variety of charities supported by the Kiwanis Club of Dover-Foxcroft.

To sign up to race, or to learn more, visit them at www.doverfoxcroftkiwanis.org/fundraiser-piscataquis-river-race



EVENTS & ADVENTURES

WHOOPIE PIE FESTIVAL

Taste. Experience. Discover.

The Maine Whoopie Pie Festival will be held at the Piscataquis Valley Fairgrounds on **June 14, 2025** (rain or shine). Join thousands of people sampling hundreds of varieties to whoopie pies at this annual tradition. The festival has fun for the whole family. \$6 entry per person. kids under 12 are free! For more information, visit www.mainewhoopiepiefestival.com



GUILFORD RIVERFEST

Guilford Athletic Fields

5K & Kids Fun Run, Parade, Car Show, Free Throw Contest, Pie Eating Contest, Food, Beer Garden,

Vendors, Fireworks, Music, Games & More!

Learn More at www.townofguilford.com/piscataquisriverfestival



HAPPY HOUR

Join us Monday - Wednesday from 4PM - 6PM for Happy Hour. In the winter months, you can enjoy the warmth of the fireplace in the library and read one of the 100s of books with a glass of wine, a beer or a cocktail along with some lite bites. No reservation necessary and groups are always welcome.

BUNCO NIGHT

On the 2nd Thursday of each month we host a Bunco Night. Reservations encouraged. Bring a friend, or a group and have a fun evening of eats, drinks and of course, dice rolling. Various cash prizes. 5P-7P, 2nd Thursdays.





FROM OUR KITCHEN

There's nothing quite like the enticing aroma of a warm crumble cake. The harmonious blend of apples and cinnamon, complemented by the sweet scent of brown sugar, creates a truly delightful treat for our guests. We serve it warm as a delightful breakfast dessert or as an anytime treat with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

APPLE CRUMBLE CAKE

INGREDIENTS

CAKE BATTER

- 1 Cup of granulated sugar
- 2 Cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon of baking powder
- 1 Teaspoon of salt
- 2 Tablespoons of cinnamon
- 1 Large egg
- 1 Cup of whole milk
- 1/3 Cup of melted butter (unsalted)

CRUMBLE TOPPING

- 1/2 Cup of light brown sugar
- 1/2 Cup of all-purpose flour
- 2 Tablespoons of cinnamon
- 5 Tablespoons of soft butter (unsalted)

APPLE MIX

- 3 Large apples, minced
- 2 Tablespoons of cinnamon



ICING

- 1 Cup of powdered sugar
- 2 Tablespoons of whole milk



INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees
- Spray a bunt pan or loaf pan (your preference) with non-stick cooking spray
- Peel and cut the apples into small wedges and then mince so they are tiny cubes (see image on the left), then add 2 tablespoons of cinnamon
- Combine the dry cake batter ingredients together: sugar, flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in a bowl and set aside
- Beat the wet cake batter ingredients together: egg, milk and melted butter in a large bowl
- Add the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until everything is well blended together
- Fold in the minced apple mixture
- Combine the crumble ingredients together in a bowl with a fork until it is crumbly - don't mix too much - you want it lumpy
- Pour half of the cake batter into the pan and spread evenly
- Pour half of the crumble mixture over the cake batter, spreading evenly
- Pour the remainder of the cake batter over the crumble mixture and spread evenly
- Sprinkle the remainder of the crumble mixture over the cake batter evenly
- Bake for 60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean
- Remove the cake from the pan and let cool for 15 minutes
- For the glaze, whisk the powdered sugar and milk together
- Drizzle the icing on the cooled cake
- Serve warm

THE GUILFORD BED & BREAKFAST

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