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## The Saint John's maple syrup operation: something sweet for everyone

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# The Saint John's Maple Syrup Operation: Something Sweet for Everyone



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## A Tradition Since 1942

- Fr. Wendelin Luetmer tapped 150 trees in 1942
- Spurred by sugar shortages during WWII
- Syrup produced 55 of past 77 years
- Originally only monastic (Saint John's Abbey)
- Saint John's University (Outdoor University program) became co-partners in 2001

## Production Statistics: 1942 - 2019

Typical Tapping Date	7 March
Number of taps	1343
Sap Flow Season	17 Mar – 11 April
Total Sap Production per season (gal)	9947
Sap per tap (gal)	7.5
Syrup Production (gal)	257 (39 – 560)
Syrup per tap (qt)	0.77
Sap [Sugar] %	2.2 (1.4 – 2.7%)
Sap / syrup ratio	40.4
Wood used (cords)	12.5
Syrup (gal) per cord	21.5
Hours of labor/gallon	5.8

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Saint John's Maple Syrup operation is to continue the long-standing Benedictine tradition of making maple syrup. Since 1942 the monks and their friends have gathered together to tap trees, collect sap and boil it down to produce a heavenly confection that is a testament to the forest stewardship of the Benedictine community. In addition, we strive to provide opportunities for the Saint John's community, including monks, students, and the public at-large, to learn about, and participate in, the process of making this sustainable forest product.

## Education is a Priority

- Experiential & applied learning opportunities
- All ages: preK – college
- Age-appropriate curricula
- Concepts range from history to geography to art to botany to physics & engineering
- 2 x 6 Leader – Teaching evaporator
- College Courses
  - BIOL201 – Physiology of sap flow lab
  - BIOL385 – 1 credit course; all aspects of syrumping; hands-on
- Maple Syrup 101 – community workshop
- 1197 student visitors annually (avg.)
- Various demos (spiles, sugar in syrup & sap, wood cookies)



ST. JOHN'S MAPLE SYRUP



A BENEDICTINE TRADITION SINCE 1942

## A Benedictine Operation

- Saint John's founded in 1856 by Benedictine monks
- Rule of Benedict
- Maple operation embodies the values of:
  - **Stewardship** – FSC certification
  - **Welcoming visitors** "as Christ himself"
  - **Work**
  - **Community** – monks work alongside faculty, students, and community

## Maple Research

- Course (BIOL385, BIOL327) Projects
- Faculty/Student projects
  - 7/16<sup>th</sup> vs. 5/16<sup>th</sup> sap flow
  - Should ice be discarded?
  - Sap flow in box elder
  - Sugar concentration in various species
  - Visual differences between grades



## Community Outreach

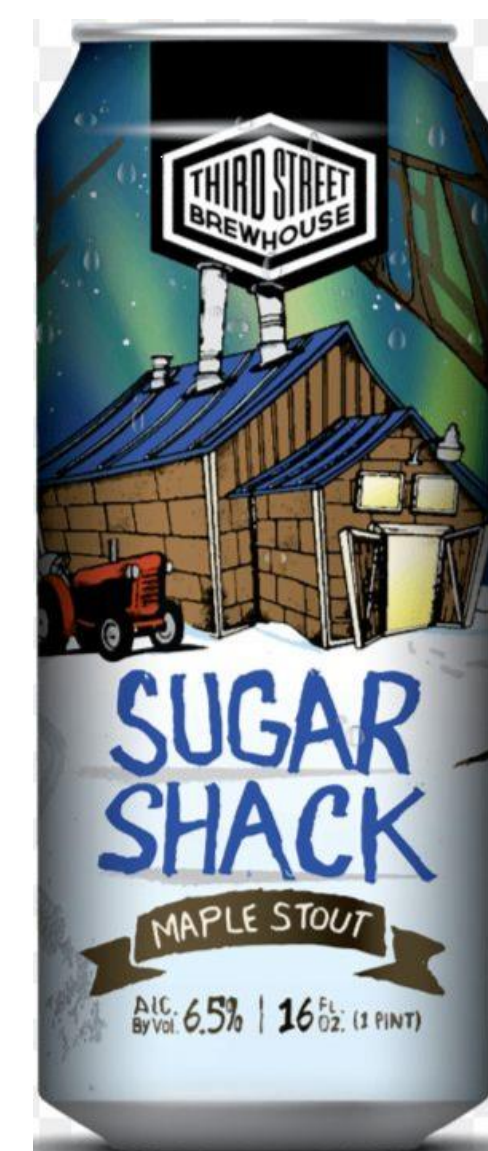
- **Tapping Day** – communal celebration
- **Festivals** – tapping demos, sap collecting, sundaes, educational activities, shack tours
- **Tours** of the operation
- **2525 visitors** annually (avg)

## Blessed with Volunteers

- Run by Br. Walter Kieffer, O.S.B. and a Core Crew
- 156 volunteers annually (avg.)
- Volunteers collectively donate 1197 hours
- "Paid" with syrup
- "Maple Syrup Crew" button

## Maple Promotions

- College student events – Maple Trivia Night, Maple Syrup shots, Flapjack Fridays
- Partnership with Third Street Brewery – "Sugar Shack Stout"
- Shirts & hats – create sense of community
- Branding iron – logo souvenir



The sweet return of spring...

**Saint John's Maple Syrup Community Tapping Day**  
 Sunday, March 8 | 2-5 p.m.  
 esbsju.edu/outdooru/maplesyrup

Spend the last afternoon of the CSB/SJU Spring Break out at the Sugar Shack.  
 1000 taps in 3 hours.

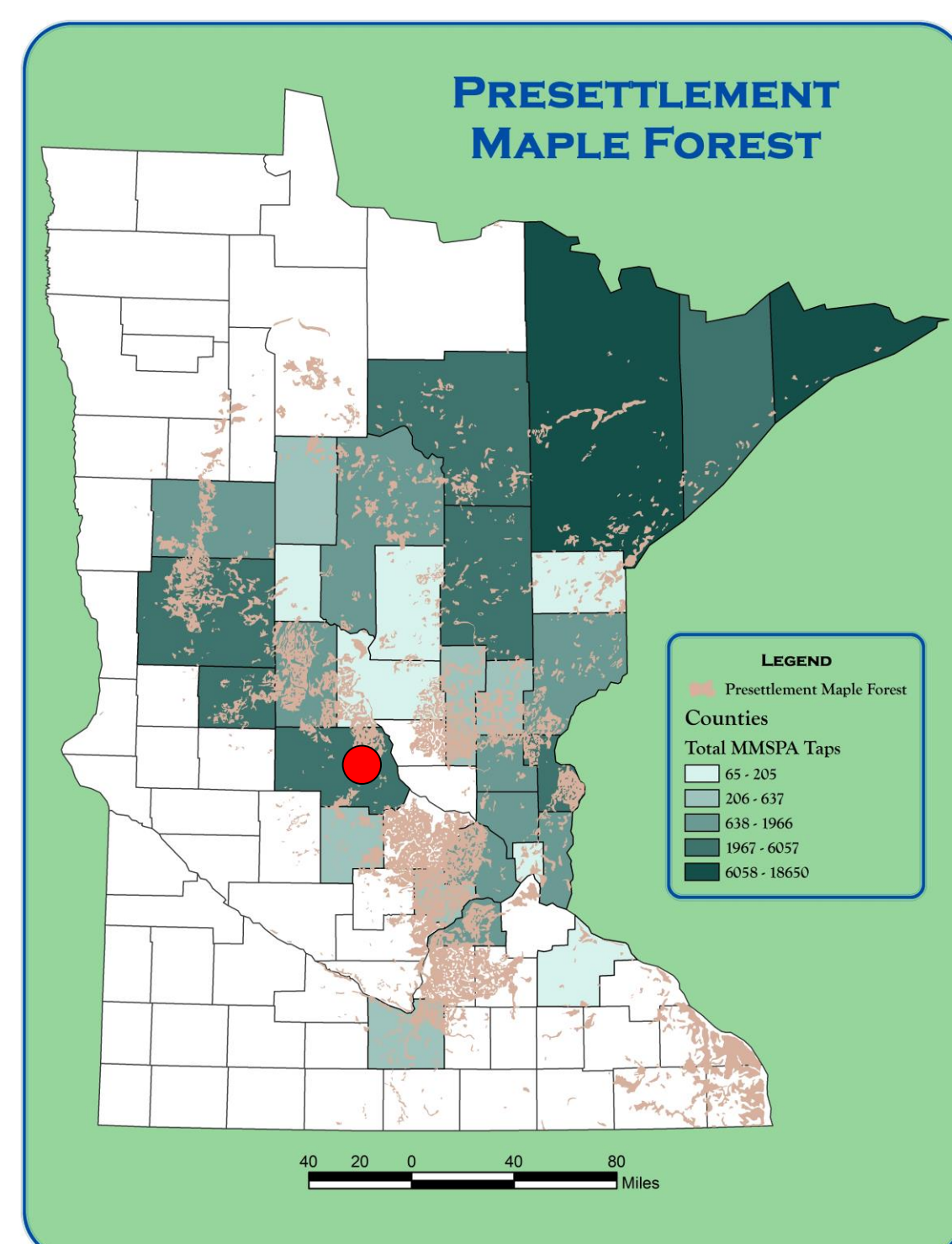


Image courtesy Ben Carlson

## Traditional Methods

- Buckets & bags
- 4 x 14 Leader production evaporator
- ca. 1500 taps annually
- 5/16<sup>th</sup> stainless steel spiles

COLLEGE OF Saint Benedict



Saint John's UNIVERSITY