

As part of the Naval Stores Industry the Longleaf Pine Tree was Tapped for its Sticky Resin

(bolded words in text indicate key words and concepts)

Student Information:

Similar to how maple is tapped from maple trees in the Northeastern United States, thick sticky resin was also drawn off the longleaf pine tree. However, unlike sweet maple syrup, the resins scraped off the longleaf pine tree were used in thousands of non-edible products from waterproofing ships, to medicines, or as paint thinner.

Teacher Information:

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the longleaf pine region was responsible for producing 70 percent of the world's supply of naval stores-the collective name for products such as **tar**, **pitch**, **spirits of turpentine** and **rosin** obtained from the pine tree. A century earlier, the dominance of North Carolina in the production of turpentine earned it the title of Tarheel State (for the black gummy tar that would accumulate on the bare feet of workers). It was the highly resinous wood (often called **fatwood** or **lightwood**) of the longleaf pine tree that made it so desirable and sparked the naval stores industry throughout much of the south. The term **naval stores** was originally applied to the pitch and tar needed for **caulking** wooden ship planks and waterproofing canvas sails of the seagoing vessels of the Royal British Navy in the seventeenth century. As the industry evolved, the distillation of fatwood shifted to the processing of pine gum (oleoresin) extracted from the living pine tree. Around 1850, the production of gum turpentine peaked in North Carolina and began to spread southward through the longleaf pine belt as northerly forest were exhausted. In fact, the movement of many families in the South can be traced the naval stores industry.

Gum from the pine tree was distilled into rosin and spirits of **turpentine** in what has been described by many as "oversized liquor still". The collection and processing of pine gum was a year round ordeal and often required a large work force. Laborers would work their way from tree to tree chipping shallow gutters (called streaks) into the fresh wood of the tree face with a tool called a **hack**. This cut face and aluminum gutters nailed to the tree would direct the gum down into a "**box**" that was notched at the bottom of the tree by a broad axe. However, these boxes were often very destructive-essentially girdling the tree at its base. In the early years of the twentieth century, technology improvements allowed gum to be collected in clay or metal cups hung from the tree by a nail. The cut faces were sometimes called "**catfaces**".

A squad of workers traveled from tree to tree **dipping** gum from the cups or scraping the gum from the tree face (called **scrape**) and depositing it into barrels. When a worker finished his task on a tree, he would sing out a particular name he had chosen for himself. A **talleyman** would record this song with a dot. The number of dots determined a worker's pay. Barrels of gum were hauled to a nearby **distillery** and refined. All operations were overseen by the mounted "**wood's rider**".

Key Words and Concepts: box cut, catface, caulking, dipping, distill, fatwood, hack, lightwood, naval stores, rosin, scrape, spirits of turpentine, talleyman, tar, turpentine, wood's rider.