

OLD COON VISITS THE SUGAR BUSH

The Father had been mending a crack in one of the Mother's treasured old maplewood bowls, made more than a century ago by a Wyandot, when the tribe lived in Canada, along the beautiful Detroit.

The Boy having watched the work of pouring the melted lead into the broken place in the bowl, turned to his aunt and said: "Neh- ah, you and I will make sugar this year. We'll tap the trees down along the bluff, and have some real maple syrup. We can take our lunch every day and have a sure enough camp. You can tell me stories while we boil down the sap."

Neh- ah nodded assent and replied:

"Yes, that jus' like you, always think some way to get story. Anyhow, I don' tole you yet, what he's do nex' Ol' Fox an' Coon, an' what you talk 'bout 'minds me of it. He's always mek it maple- suga' Ouendots. It's lots a work, too, but he don' care fo' that. Could jus' keep 'im busy do somethin' all a time. Don' had no clock, no ah- man- ac them days, tell 'em how much time gone. I spec' don' get ol' so quick, peoples them days."

"Well, days bin get lit'l long, sun he's start go back north. It's time come bright night an' frosty mornin', an' kin' a warm sunshine day- time. It's jus' 'bout time go suga'- bush, those people, tap tree an' mek 'em maple suga'. Jus' make lots of it, put in mo- cocks, use in winta' time. It's kin' a hard works mek 'em suga' them days, 'cause got to mek- em lots trough birch- bark, ketch'em sap. He's got b- i- g trough too, mek'em out a big log. Don' had no kettle them days; jus' have to put 'em hot rock in big trough; but he don' care fo' nothin' them peoples, don' care fo' hundred snakes, 'cause he's jus' got lots a times, them days. Don' got no times do nothin' now days.

"Jus' 'bout this time year, he's jus' like it to follow them peoples to suga- bush, that Coon. He's alway jus' like it, poke 'roun' in suga'- camp, come night, an' he's sleep it them peoples. That Ol' Coon he's jus' l- i- k- e it to put it his nose in trough an' drink it lit'l bit sap, s- w- e- e- t one. He like it good that sap, an' sometime if be don' found it in lit'l trough, he's try to get one drink out'a that b- i- g trough. It's hard to do that one tho', 'cause mebbe it's prit' hot that sap in big trough, an' it's always jus' keep cover up that big trough with nice boa'ds, white ones, jus' mek it out'a lin- wood, them peoples.

"Afta' he's put it on that Fox that dry muds, it's long time no seen each otlm' that Fox an' that Coon. He jus' thought it Ol' Coon, it's prit' near even to him, that Fox; an' mebbe so he won't try nothin' notha' kin' tricks. He don' want see 'im tho', an' jus' keep out a way, 'cause he might try mek' 'notha' tricks on 'im, that Fox. It's jus' go on that way fo' days, an' Ol' Coon jus' 'bout think: 'Well, I guess mebbe so he's fo' get it, that las' trick, my couzzen."

"But that Fox, be don' fo' get it notfiin', no seh. He's prit' sharp, an' he jus' all a time got it, that what you call 'em' watch- full- a- waitin'. He's know it Ol' Fox, 'bout his couzzen all a time likes to foolish 'roun' that suga'- bush, when that peoples he's mekin' suga', an' he's know it how he like it to drink that sap, heap s- w- e- e- t. So, he's just keep it, his 'watchfull- a- waitin', an' when Skunk tole 'im: 'Ole Coon not home, bin gone three- fou' days,' that Fox jus' sed it: 'I spec' mebbe so it's gone suga'bush, my couzzen, I guess I go see."

"Well, he's start that Fox to go suga'bush. It's fine days an' when gets there, jus' see all a peoples heap busy, work. Fox he's jus' slip 'roun' edge ov camp, alla- time he's lookin' fo' sign ov that Coon. He's look l- o- n- g time, an' by- um- by he's fin' tracks 'long edge lit'l branch, that Coon' he's bin lookin' crawfishes, mebbe so.

"It's late in evenin', while he's sleep it some place that Coon, Ol' Fox he's jus' get busy. Afta' that peoples he's gone to all lit'l ones, trough, to get it, sap, Fox he's come 'long behin', an' he's jus' turn it, bottom up, eva' one that litl trough. Then he's go look in big trough. It's prit' near full sap, it's hot.

"So he's sne- e- k 'roun' some mo' an' watch it good ol' squaw cover it big trough, all good with that white boa'd. He's jus' watch it 'roun' 'till it's all fix it, eva'thing, an' them peoples it's all sleep it. Then that Fox he's slip up by big trough, an' jus' push it two that boa'ds, lit'l 'ways' part.

"Well, he's jus' push it ova' them two boa'ds 'til end of it right on edges ov big trough. It's smell good that sap, prit' near mak' 'em Fox want some he- self; but he don' botha' it, 'fraid might ketch 'im his ovm trap, I spec'. When he's all done fix it, that Fox, he's jus' go lit'l ways, hide in bushes an' watch for him, that Coon. He's wait long time, an' by- um- by he's hear it comin' somebody, jus' grumblin' to heself. It's that Ol' Coon, an' Fox he's hear him sed it: 'Wonda' what fo' so steengy, them peoples; jus' turn 'em upside bottom all lit'l trough. Can't fin' lit'l bit sap. Mebbe I could get drink on big trough if don' turn it upside bottom, too.'

"Ol' Fox he's keep it still, jus' kin' a chuckle tho', 'cause he knows goin' ketch 'im that trap what he fix it fo' Ol' Coon.

"That Coon jus' come pokin' long slow like, till he fin' it that big trough. He's jus' walk all 'roun' kin' a easy, jus' sniffin' an' lookin' fo' crack. Fox he's fix it chunk right front where he's fix it that boa'ds, an' that Ol' Coon he's jump on that chunk, his nose stick up, in air, an' jus' get good whiff that saps. It's kin' a hot. Well, he's set on chunk lit'l bit an' jus' lookin' roun'. He don't seen nothin', then he's jus' mek 'notha' jump an' he's lan' right on end ov that boa'ds what's he push it ova' that Fox. That boa'ds he jus' slide ova' otha' way queek, an' that Ol' Coon he's jus' go kerplum in that hot saps.

"Them boa'ds make big rattle noise an' it's wake 'im up that Ol' Squaw. He's come out lodge see what's matta' an' come by that big trough jus' time he's crawl out Ol' Coon. He's got big stick in his han' that squaw, an' jus' hit that Coon good whack on side when he's run 'way. He's jus' go hurry, Ol' Coon, an' by- um- by when he's go thro' bush, somebody sed it: 'Hoh, Couzzen, you like it to take good wash in hot sap, ain't it? Mebbe so ain't good 'nough wata'?"



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2010

VA Jobs Boost Local Economy

Muskogee Office Uses Recovery Funds to Improve Services to Veterans

MUSKOGEE -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its Muskogee VA regional benefits office are putting Americans directly to work with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Muskogee VA regional office was authorized to hire 102 new employees to assist with processing Veterans' claims for VA benefits. The new jobs came from federal dollars allocated under the Recovery Act, enacted by Congress in February 2009.

"This is a win for the new employees and a win for the Veterans we serve in Oklahoma and other Western states," said VA Regional Office Director Samuel D. Jarvis. "We are pleased to be able to expand staff here in Muskogee."

The new hires are involved in administrative work supporting the professional adjudicators who make compensation, pension or education decisions, or process changes in Veterans' benefits. VA expects the additional staffing will help to deliver Veterans their benefits as quickly as possible.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$150 million for the program to hire and train the new staffers. Nationally, VA has put 2,300 people to work in benefits offices including 500 new staff members hired as permanent employees.

While Recovery Act funding for the term employees will expire in September 2010, the 2011 President's budget includes funds to retain or replace these employees on a permanent basis and to hire more than 2,000 additional new processors.

In addition to bolstering the benefits office staffing, the law is funding more than \$1 billion of improvements at VA medical centers and national cemeteries around the country.

More information about VA benefits is available at www.va.gov or Veterans may contact one of VA's Call Center representatives at 1-800-827-1000.

###