

# Our Starting and Ending Location

## Pittman's Maple Syrup

3:40 – 4:30



Pittman's Maple Syrup originated in the early 1940s. William Sr., a dairy farmer, started boiling sap in a large cast iron kettle in the woods. He gathered sap from nearby maple trees producing only enough for his family throughout the year. William Jr. was a senior in high school at the time. In 1946, after a couple of years of boiling in the kettle, William Sr. purchased a flat pan to cook for 100 taps. In 1948, he purchased one of the old Arkansaw School wood sheds and moved it to its current site in the woods on top of Little Arkansaw Valley. That year 300 taps were put out and we were unable to keep up with boiling. The next year we decided to purchase a 2'x8' evaporator. We had another good year and enlarged to a 40"x 10' Leader Evaporator. William Jr and wife Sylvia assisted and eventually took over the maple syrup production from William Sr. with the help of their children Greg and Karen; William Jr. continued to boil syrup on the hill for several years.

In 1964 the first tubing was introduced to the operation. Minnesota Mining (3M) tubing was used for approx 20 taps. In 1978, the decision was made to move the boiling operation to the home farm a few miles away. We purchased a 4x14 Leader evaporator and collected sap from approximately 600 taps by pails with only 50 taps installed on tubing that year.

Greg married Debbie in 1979 and was very involved with the maple syrup business and running the family farm. Tubing was placed in the "Main" woods that year and more tubing was added over the next 2 years to complete the area where the old sugar shack is located. Tubing was added to another woods we called "Grandpa's," in 1986. Greg added another woods "The Hoffman" in 1988. That year Greg started purchasing sap from a couple people who enjoyed tapping trees but were unable to boil the sap themselves, that's when Greg and Debbie started keeping maple syrup supplies on hand for people.

In 1990 the decision was made to expand the business which prompted a move to a larger building on the farm currently known as the "Sugar Bush." We were able to use the 4'x14' evaporator from the previous building and also bought a 6'x18' evaporator to help with the increased sap amounts. A reverse osmosis machine was added in 1995 to help cut back on the long, sleepless nights of boiling. Slowly more and more people were interested in tapping trees and in 2007 a second story was added to the current "Sugar Bush." The second level is mainly used for heat recovery to preheat sap, cutting back on boiling times for the increased sap totals. Greg and Jason have also come up with several other ideas to improve maple production including building their own reverse osmosis machines and vacuum pump set ups for collecting sap. Our family believes the best tasting syrup comes from a wood fired evaporator versus oil or propane heated. Pittman's Maple Syrup is known to be one of the largest maple syrup producers in the U.S. using all wood fired evaporators. The wood that is gathered, brought to the farm, and split throughout the summer to replenish the supply needed for the following spring.

In 2000 a large store and storage building were built to handle more supplies for our customers. We partnered with Anderson's Maple Syrup in Cumberland, WI and are able to supply local producers with syrup equipment and supplies. In 2012 we became a full dealer for Leader Evaporator and are now able to carry their full line of supplies. Along with the expansion of supplies we also remodeled and expanded our bottling facility and cold storage room. We now have the capacity to store hundreds of barrels of syrup and keep them at a cool temperature to ensure the quality of the product.

Maple syrup production has always been a family affair. Pittman's Maple Syrup is now in its 5th generation. Greg, Debbie, their children Angie, Jodie, Teresa, and Jason, and their families, are very involved during Maple Syrup Season. William Jr., now in his 80s, is also there as much as possible. Pittman's tap 5 different areas of maples near the farm all on vacuum setups. They have over 4,000 taps and buy sap from 35-40 families. That brings the total number of taps to over 30,000 with a production of over 10,000 gallons in a year.

# Harry Family Franklin and Studebaker Car Collections

9:15-10:30

Our first stop on our tour is the Harry Family Franklin and Studebaker Car Collection in Alma. Richard "Dick" and Kathryn Harry were Studebaker Dealers from 1963 to 1966. From 1963 to 1997 they ran a repair shop, working on larger and small engines and anything mechanical that needed to be fixed and in 1997 they close up shop and sold to Kwik Trip. They have a beautiful climate controlled building that hold 36 of their prized cars and another building that Kathryn calls their "dirty stinky building" with other car parts and unrestored cars and other odd sand ends.

After our visit with Richard and Kathryn we are on to a make a quick stop at Buena Vista Point.

## Buena Vista Point Park

10:45-11:00



Buena Vista Park is a natural treasure not to be missed. Located 500 feet above Alma, Wisconsin on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, it's a small park with a big view of the Mississippi River Valley for several miles to the north and south. According to Better Homes & Gardens magazine, "Buena Vista Park is one of the river valley's finest natural balconies."

This city park is a great birding spot with breathtaking sunsets and is a "must see" when you come to Alma. This scenic vista 500 feet above Alma and the Mississippi River Valley has a natural viewing platform. Visitors can watch barges traveling up the river and locking through Lock Dam #4 along with views of sand islands and backwaters.

After enjoying the view at Buena Vista Park, at 11:00 we depart to Danzinger Vinyards.

# Danzinger Vineyards

## Alma Bluffs

11:15-1:15



Perched atop the Alma Bluffs in Buffalo County, Wisconsin, Danzinger Vineyards overlooks the Mighty Mississippi River. In addition to having a spectacular view, Danzinger Vineyards has excellent wines, receiving the Wisconsin Grape Growers Association 2013 Winery of the Year!

We invite you to come take in the view while enjoying a glass of one of our finest wines on our patio. Our vineyard is currently 18 acres and was started in 2003, with our beautiful tasting room being added in 2010.

All of our grape wines are estate wines, we use all of our own grapes, make and bottle the wine on-site. Grapes used are: Frontenac, Frontenac Gris, Prairie Star, St Pepin, La Crescent, La Crosse, Brianna, St. Croix and Marquette. We also have many fruit wines available!

**11:30 -- At Danzinger's we will be enjoying lunch catered by J and J BBQ. Lunch will be complemented by a choice of fine Danzinger vineyard wines or other beverages of your choice.**

After lunch (hopefully we can all walk straight) at 1:15 we depart Danzinger Vineyards and return back on our sugar makers tour. Our next stop will be at Rick & Deb Traun's Sugarhouse located near Plum City.

# Traun's Sugar Bush

1:30-2:15



Traun's Sugar Bush, owned and operated by Rick & Deb Traun is truly a family business. The legacy of Traun's Sugar Bush began generations ago in the small shack pictured on the bottle labels. As a young boy, Rick's father, Jim, worked with his father making maple syrup as a family hobby. Jim's interest in making maple syrup carried into his adult life when in 1981 he started Traun's Sugar Bush with Rick at his side.

The first years of production were with pails and a flat pan on an arch built every spring in the farm yard making a gallon of syrup an hour. As the years went on, the equipment progressed to wood fired evaporators, and the pails were replaced with tubing and shortly afterwards vacuum pumps were installed. In 1998 we purchased our current 4x12 oil fired Thunderbolt arch. Along the way there was a piggy back and a small R.O. Our current equipment consists of 2 year old pans, a sugar house and a 3 post R.O. along with other modern equipment. This progression has increased current production to 50 gallons an hour.

Traun's Sugar Bush once coincided with the family operated dairy and hog farm. Upon Jim's passing in 1999, Rick carried on the maple syrup and farming duties until 2009 when he sold the milk cows. He continues with cash cropping, raising steers, and custom baling and combining. We are happy to say we moved into our new sugarhouse this year. The spring syrup season is something the entire family looks forward to each year. Rick along with his brother John, son Jeremy and grandson Blake make this family hobby a *sweet* success!

We will say goodbye to Traun's Sugarbush at 2:15 and proceed to our next stop at John & Shirley Smith's Eau Galle Apiaries LLC Honey and Maple Syrup.

# Eau Galle Apiaries LLC

## Eau Galle, WI

2:30 – 3:20



Smith's Honey and Maple Syrup in Eau Galle, WI was started in 1942 with John's parents, Walter and Ethel Smith.

Moving here from Arkansaw, WI. Walter, a dairy farmer, purchased 300 beehives from a beekeeper in Arkansaw, WI. Walter had experience making maple syrup on the family dairy farm.

Walter started tapping on his property in rural Arkansaw, WI, and boiling sap in a 2x7 flat pan; eventually converting to a 3x10 evaporator pan in 1960, in a syrup house in the woods. John was born in 1946. He grew up working with the bees and tapping a few trees.

John & Shirley had two different sets of 4x15 evaporator pan in the syrup house in the woods. In the meanwhile, the bee business was expanding.

In 1980 the operation was moved home and the sap was boiled in a 6x20 evaporator. Also running 1,000 colonies of bees in four counties.

In 2014, our youngest daughter, Laura and her husband, Dan Berger, joined the honey and maple syrup business. We then formed Eau Galle Apiaries LLC with a full time employee, Josh Bauer.

Following our tour of Eau Galle Apiaries, at 3:40 we will load up and return back to Pittman's Maple Syrup for a tour of their maple production.

Thank you for sharing your day with us!