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Panama City Pilot

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No. 19

Vickers & McKenzie's Still, Panama City, Fla.

V. & McK. Still.

The illustration for our Naval Stores number this week is very appropriately a picture of a still in operation with its surroundings. It is the property of Vickers & McKenzie near Panama City. It is situated in the midst of a pretty pine forest, and is surrounded by the commissary, residence of the manager, woods riders, and some of the laborers.

The product of this still some 600 barrels of spirits and 1,900 of resin are hauled to Millville, and shipped from there on the Tarpon to Pensacola. About 75 men are employed by the company, and several teams. As is customary at all still locations they run their own commissary, supplying the necessities of life to all their help. Mr R. L. McKenzie, one of the firm, gives the property his attention and is aided by J. E. McKenzie, as General Manager.



This firm have been operating this still a little over two years; before that they were running the Gay still which they had purchased, having been in the business in this section since 1902. They are now working some twenty crops. Nearly all their work is done by contract.

R. L. McKenzie of this firm was the first to introduce the cup system in the business in this section. This was in 1903. They are now using some 40,000 of them. Mr McKenzie speaks very favorably of this system, and it is his opinion that it will not be long before that method alone will be used to gather the gum. Thus far the high cost of transportation and loss from breakage has diminished their use, but the new McCoy metal cup overcomes in a great measure both these difficulties, and promises to aid largely in establishing the cup system.

ST ANDREWS BAY NAVAL STORES INDUSTRIES.

Annual Product Now Two Thirds of a Million Dollars

The following table gives the names of the firms engaged in the naval stores business on this bay, including those who are contiguous to the same, and whose product is shipped from points upon it, also the annual production of each still. A few firms ship by the German American Lumber Company R. R. to Millville, while the Sales-Davis Company's railway brings to Anderson the product of the stills near there. The schooner Lucy H. handles that brought to Anderson, while the steamer Tarpon carries for that which is brought into Millville by railway, the steamer Dewey, and by teams. All of the product at present goes to Pensacola, being consigned to different naval stores companies at that point.

NAMES	STILLS	SPIRITS MADE BARRELS	ROSIN MADE BARRELS
Southern Timber Co.	4	2,000	6,400
Saunders & Magette	2	1,700	5,200
Covington & MacRogerson	1	650	2,000
Young & Spann	2	1,500	4,700
Spinn Brothers	1	1,000	3,200
Smith & Britt	2	1,000	3,200
Stone & Co.	1	600	1,900
Vickers & McKenzie	1	600	1,900
Jennings & Co.	2	1,200	3,900
Gilbert & Co.	1	300	1,000
Taylor & Schermer	1	500	1,600
Gainer & Anderson	1	200	650
Totals	19	11,250	35,650

	BARRELS	VALUE
Total annual production spirits	11,250	\$337,500.00
Total annual production rosin	35,650	320,850.00
Receipts from dross		3,600.00
Totals	46,900	\$661,950.00

There are employed in the above business besides the owners, 1286 men, classified as follows: Stillers 19, Coopers 19, Laborers about stills 19, Choppers 19, Teamsters 55, Woodsriders 37, Commissary men 18, Boxers, Chippers, Dippers, and Scrapers 1,100, also 55 teams. The wages paid at present are about as follows: General Manager \$1,000 per year; Woods riders \$60 per month; Stillers \$50 per month; Teamsters \$35 per month; Commissary men \$50 per month; Laborers about \$30 per month. Contract work runs about as follows: cutting boxes 2 cents each; chipping 90 cents per 1,000, dipping 60 cents a barrel.

NAVAL STORES INDUSTRY

ON ST ANDREWS BAY.

History, Extent, Future.

Nature has endowed this region with a wealth of resinous bearing trees that are now, and will for many years to come, prove an important source of revenue and profit to the Bay country. Slowly but surely in the past few years the saw mill men have driven the naval stores producers from state to state southward, until at present the only large bodies of so called round pine timber not being drawn upon by the lumbermen, are in Florida.

The use of pitch to make water tight, canoes and boats, antedates history. The trees of the forests on this bay were drawn upon for this purpose by the aborigines living here, and in 1525, in the month of September, when Narvarez had about completed the boats at St Marks with which he hoped to escape from the country, DeVaca states that they were

"tarred with pitch which a Greek named Don Teodoro made from certain pines."

Undoubtedly tar was produced by the early settlers along the bay shore, and shipped to Mobile and Galveston in small quantities. Dr Keyes states that it was a business that had been carried on before he came to the bay in 1844, and in 1853 he engaged in it himself. During the war large supplies of tar and rosin for the Confederacy were made along these shores. For some years after the close of the war nothing was done in this line, and it was not until the country began to be settled in the 80's that tar was again made in any quantity.

To Capt A. J. Gay belongs the credit of making and shipping the first spirits of turpentine from this Bay. On December 1st, 1897, he began the erection near his home on North Bay, of a still, and the cutting of boxes. He brought in help from Chipley, and Georgia. By April 1st, 1898, he had his first product ready for shipment. Notifying Capt L. M. Ware the latter went with his sail boat and a seine boat to Mr Gays location, and loaded 9 barrels of spirits into the same,

which he brought to St Andrews where it was shipped by the steamer Alpha to Carrabelle. That was the first shipment of spirits from St Andrews Bay.

The man who done the first stilling was Ed Redmond, who learned the trade in Georgia. Mr Gay had 11 crops. His output was about 365 barrels of spirits and 1,100 barrels of rosin. Spirits brought 23 cents per gallon and rosin about \$1 for a barrel of 280 pounds. Mr Gay paid 1 1/2 cent for boxing, 45 cents for chipping, and 35 cents per barrel for dipping.

The same year stills were erected and the business began by J. A. Donaldson, on Sandy Creek; J. R. Sanders, at Cook; and Myers Brothers, near Tompkins. All worked convicts except Mr Gay. Their product was taken out by steamer consigned principally to Pensacola.

From that time to the present there has been a steady growth in the business, new stills being erected every year. Even a casual examination of conditions will show that as yet the business is but in its infancy here on the bay. Without going beyond hauling distance from its shores there are at present about 1,000,000 acres of round timber that are available for the naval stores business. There are tracts that would conveniently care for ten stills. Undoubtedly in the future there will be much heavier operations along these lines, and companies will engage in the business that will run numerous stills.

The above figures are based solely upon lands adjacent to this bay. With the building of roads north and south through the county a number of other stills now in operation will deliver their product here. Other tracts will be opened up by the naval stores men, and a large addition made to the output, and to this class of business going forward from this port. The price of spirits has gone from 23 cents to 60 within a very few years, and the demand grows, while the virgin forests from which it must be produced are growing less every day. There can be no lasting fall in prices, and the probabilities are that they will advance yearly. As a shipping point for this valuable product Panama City in the future will assume the importance that certain Atlantic seaboard cities have held for years through being the receiving and forwarding points for naval stores. We have the forests, the demand is positive, and capital can find no more favorable investment than in producing from these forests an article of such universal demand as Naval Stores.

"Crop." Prices, Cups vs Boxes

In the naval stores business a "crop" consists of 10,500 boxes. Each still handles the product from several crops. The product of the first year is called virgin spirits, and the rosin is more valuable than that produced in subsequent years. Prices for the past year have averaged about as follows, 60 cents per gallon for spirits, and \$9 per barrel for rosin. A tract is worked about 3 years when it is turned over to the saw mill men. There have been in late years some change made by operators in securing the gum through the use of earthen cups, such as are referred to in another portion of this paper in the article by U. S. Forestry. Those who have examined into this matter state that where they have been getting an average of 45 barrels of spirits per crop from the old method of boxing, by using cups they get from 52 to 55 barrels. This would seem to demonstrate such an increase in product as to warrant an extensive installation of the cup system. Besides the increase in product the timber is left in much better condition where cups only are used. After the first year the product under the box system averages about 35 barrels per year for the 4 years further operation, and about 40 barrels per year from the cup system.

Distillation.

The steady advance in the price of turpentine and rosin, and the constant destruction of the resinous pine forests by the lumbermen, has caused the attention of naval stores men to be turned to the many processes that have been put forth within the past few years for obtaining these products through distillation. Many plants are now being successfully operated and are said to be making good returns to their owners. Mill men have put in these distillation plants to care for the resinous products in the slabs and saw dust, and at other points tops and stumps left by the lumbermen are being utilized. When the time comes that this source of supply must be looked after to help out the supply, this section offers a most profitable field for operating a distilling plant. There is an abundance of very rich stumps, dead timber, and shaky pine that can be worked to advantage in the stills, and from which a large amount of spirits, creosote, and tar can be taken. There is no point in the turpentine belt that offers such inducements to the worker through distillation as can be found on and contiguous to St Andrews Bay.

The naval stores men pay out over \$20,000 a year upon freight coming in to them.

Cromanton.

George Kinney is home this week. Chas Mashburn was in town Sunday.

Henry Spicer was in Parker Monday morning.

W. M. Railsback was visiting friends here Sunday.

Mrs E. C. Spicer has been very ill for the past week.

Mrs Georgia Albritton is visiting in Econfina for a month.

M. D. Howlett is doing some fine photo work these days.

Mr Percival, of Parker, was in Cromanton shopping Tuesday.

The stork made a trip to "Fres Water Bayou" last Tuesday leaving a fine boy for a indefinite length of time. Mr and Mrs Kinney are very proud of the new son.

A small party of Mrs Hoskins friends called at her home last Monday night to see her "night blooming cereus" open. Three buds opened at once, the largest measuring about six inches in diameter.

Wetappo.

Miss Winnie Kronmiller was here Thursday.

Mr F. A. Shermer spent Sunday at Mr Olivers on the Point.

S. P. Davis made a business call here Thursday afternoon.

Mrs J. J. Kronmiller spent Tuesday afternoon with Mrs S. Dyer.

D. W. Raffield was down from the mouth of Wetappo Creek Sunday.

Miss Martha Brown is visiting L. W. Enzor's family on Sandy Creek.

Messrs S. and J. Dyer and J. J. Kronmiller were at Farmdale Sunday.

John Bell came in from Wewahitchka Friday and proceeded down the bay.

Capt L. C. Davis with the Cuba was up Wetappo Creek last week with lumber and freight.

Messrs Taylor, Shermer and Allan stopped here a few minutes Monday on their way up Wetappo Creek.

W. H. Danley, who has been keeping a store up Sandy Creek moved to Millville last week where he will go into business.

The German American Lumber Co's booms up Sandy Creek have broken twice and the bay has been more or less full of floating logs for a week.

There was so much rain Friday and Saturday, the Wewahitchka mail did not get in until Monday morning, then it had to be brought afoot from Wetappo Creek while the horse waited for the water to go down.