

## ON GRADE

By Mark Horne, Former NHHLA Chief Inspector



I have received many calls lately regarding color sorted Maple and Birch, so I think it is time to review this subject again. Let's start with the rules for No. 1 and No. 2 White Maple (buyers need to specify either Hard Maple or Soft Maple on their purchase orders.

The color requirements for No. 1 and No. 2 White Maple state:

- "White" as used in these rules means Sapwood. The terms 'No. 1 White Maple' and 'No. 2 White Maple' designate Sapwood requirements of the cuttings in all grades.
- "In No. 1 White Maple, both faces and both edges of the required cutting must be Sapwood. In No. 2 White Maple, one face and both edges of the required cutting must be Sapwood, and the reverse side of the cuttings not less than 50 percent Sapwood."

Had I been Chief Inspector at the time "White" maple rules were written, I would have fought like crazy to keep this color sort from being called "White" Maple, because this sort has nothing to do with the color "white." If you look at the rule, the only requirement for the shipping inspector is that the clear face cutting have to

contain a specific amount of Sapwood. For the color sorts of Sap Hard Maple or Sap Birch, the rules for both state: "Each required cutting shall have one clear Sapwood face.

Again, the intent of this rule is the same as in No. 1 and No. 2 White Maple as far as the color is concerned. The color being inspected in the Sapwood, and again nowhere in the rules does it require Sapwood to be "white."

I am hearing about many buyers rejecting entire shipments of color sorted Maple or Birch because the Sapwood isn't "white" enough and that is absolutely against everything that the NHHLA rules and sales code stands for. If the Sapwood is not stained and the lumber in every other way is on grade, then the buyer must accept the load at full value. It is up to all buyers to visit prospective suppliers before making their purchases to ensure that the shade of color they desire can actually be found in the area of the U.S. or Canada that they are buying from.

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