

WHERE THE VEGETABLES COME FROM AND HOW OLD YOUR FAVORITES ARE

Watermelons, Apples, Onions and Spinach Are of Ancient Descent—Potatoes and Cranberries Are American and the Pumpkin a Waif—Cucumbers Were Probably Born in India, Lettuce Is Ancient, and Peanuts Are a Product of the New World

(Peter Roman Sterling, in the current number of the National Republican, Washington, has the following on the origin of some of the principal vegetables:)

The watermelon, that juicy appetizing thing that makes summer joyful, tickled the palates of the Egyptians many centuries before Mr. Columbus steered his craft across the blue and found our land. It is reliably stated that it was the favorite dessert of Cleopatra and other notables of that period. To this day it is popular among the inhabitants of that land of sixty centuries. On ancient tombs may be seen carvings of this melon. The Hebrew name of watermelon is "Abbatichim," and it is thus mentioned in the Hebrew exodus from Egypt.

The watermelon grows wild in tropical Africa and is eaten by natives and wild animals. Livingston saw thousands of acres of them. They were planted in America by the early settlers. Massachusetts had many of them as early as 1629, and the Florida Indians were raising large quantities as early as 1664. The United States produces over 50,000 carloads of melons yearly, exclusive of local consumption. There are about a thousand melons in each car, a total of 50,000,000.

Onions Very Old

Onions seem to be almost as old as the hills. They are mentioned in the Bible as one of the things longed for by the Israelites in the wilderness and complained about to Moses. Herodotus says that in his time there was an inscription on the Great Pyramid, stating the sum expended for onions, radishes, and garlic, which had been consumed by the laborers during its erection as 1,600 talents. Ancient pictures show priests holding onions in their hands at the altar.

Early explorers, including Columbus, brought onion seed to the New World. New Englanders were raising them as early as 1634, and General Sullivan, in 1779, in his raid against the Indians in central New York, destroyed many onion fields belonging to the savages. Nineteen states now produce large commercial crops of onions. Texas scents up the whole Gulf of Mexico and the eastern side of the Atlantic with her onion-laden vessels bound for New York.

The Cranberry Native

What would be a Christmas or Thanksgiving dinner without a nice dish of cranberry sauce? Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Wisconsin are the three principal commercial cranberry producing states. These three states produce more than half a million barrels annually, valued at almost \$6,000,000.

The cranberry was found growing wild by the New England pioneers, who observed the Indians eating them and decided to follow the example. It did not become a real commercial crop until about 1830. From old records, we learn that "Mr. F. A. Hayden, of Lincoln, Mass., is stated to have gathered from his farm in 1830, 400 bushels of cranberries, which brought him in Boston market \$600."

Potatoes South American

Potatoes have become almost as popular as bread and meat. Practically every botanist in the world gives the Andean mountains of South America as the original home of this popular vegetable. According to history, it was introduced into Spain soon after the Spanish invasion in South Amer-

ica, and from there found its way into Italy and central Europe. A Department of Agriculture expert says that "history records its introduction into Ireland from Virginia in one of Sir Walter Raleigh's trading vessels about 1586. It is apparent, however, that a discrepancy occurs in this account in that it implies that the potato was a native of Virginia. From the description of the Virginia plant it is quite evident that the historian had in mind a tuberous-bearing plant of the pulse family. There is every reason to believe, however, that the true potato was brought over in one of Raleigh's ships, but that it was obtained at some trading post on the west coast of South America rather than in Virginia."

The largest potato-producing states are New York, Minnesota, Michigan, Maine, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, their total production being 203,167,400 bushels, or nearly 40 per cent of the total crop of the country.

Apple Oldest Fruit

The apple seems to be about the oldest of all fruits. It has gained wide and permanent publicity through its popularity in the Garden of Eden. The scientific gentleman tells us that the apple is believed to have been distributed from prehistoric times both in the wild state and in cultivation throughout much of Europe, where it is believed to have been indigenous; also, south of the Caucasus and in northern Russia. It is to be noted, however, that with few exceptions the varieties now grown in the United States are of our own origin, the outstanding exceptions being some of the early ripening sorts of Russian origin. No other fruit in America has been given so many different names as the apple. No one knows how many varieties exist, or have existed. American literature records something like 7,500 varieties. We produce about 175,000,000 bushels of apples annually.

Spinach Crop Large

Not so very long ago a lot of people turned up their noses at spinach, declaring it to be fit food only for sheep and pigs. Things have changed. Spinach is now the Beau Brummell of vegetables. Babies are supposed to cry for it and thrive on it. Grown-ups who eat it are declared to be adding to their longevity.

Spinach, despite its recent popularity, is one of the oldest known cultivated vegetables. It is mentioned in a Chinese book published a dozen centuries ago. It was known as "a prince of vegetables" in Spain in the twelfth century. In England the name "spynoches" occurs in a cook book of 1390, compiled for the use of the Court of King Richard II. There seems to be no early record of its introduction into America. The total annual value of this crop to the farmers is close to \$8,000,000.

Cucumbers from India

All the world seems to have a "hankering" for cucumbers. About 10,000 carloads are shipped to market annually. This is in addition to those grown in greenhouses and small truck patches and marketed locally, also those

grown for home consumption.

There are historical references to the cucumber 3000 years B. C. It is generally supposed to be a native of India, and was brought into China from the west 86 B. C. Cucumbers were known to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Pliny mentions their forced culture. They were grown by Columbus at Haiti in 1494. There is a record of their production by the Indians in the section now occupied by Montreal, Canada, and by Indians in Florida. Captain John Smith speaks of growing them in Virginia. Rev. Francis Higginson tells of seeing them in Massachusetts in 1629.

The Lowly Turnip

You surely have missed something if you didn't live in the country when a boy or girl and enjoy the pleasure of pulling up a turnip in the late autumn, peeling it with an old barlow knife, and eating it like an apple. The cooked turnips served at home never will taste quite so good.

The turnip is said to be a native of Russia and Siberia and the Scandinavian Peninsula. England got them from Holland in 1550. Virginia cultivated them in 1609, and Massachusetts in 1629. They were plentiful in the farming sections around Philadelphia in 1707.

Pumpkin Mystery Plant

It is rather regrettable that the pumpkin is surrounded with mystery. All normal humans are fond of pumpkin pie and would be glad to know something about the original home of pumpkins. Writers and botanists have been unable to ascertain whether pumpkins are of Old World or New World origin. Some authorities are of the opinion that the common pumpkin originated in that section of Mexico now known as Texas. It is definitely known that the pumpkin was in general use in colonial times, but no one seems to know whether the Colonists got the seeds from the Indians or whether the Indians received them from their white friends.

Lettuce Is Ancient

Lettuce, which has recently become one of the most popular vegetables in America, was among the earliest cultivated plants of the Old World. We find reference to its use by Persian kings about 550 B. C. Aristotle, in 356 B. C., praised it highly. Hippocrates, about 420 B. C., commented upon its medicinal qualities. The early Romans were very fond of it. Its culture in China can be traced to the fifth century. Chaucer in England, in 1340, used the word "lettuce" in his prologue, saying: "Well loved he garlic, onions and lettuce."

The lettuce farms in the United States aggregate about 100,000 acres, and the annual crop to the farmers is worth about \$30,000,000.

About 1,000,000 acres in the United States are devoted to the raising of peanuts. About 750,000,000 pounds are raised yearly.

The Popular Peanut

The peanut is a product of the New World. Scientists have found them in ancient mummy graves in Peru. Tradition tells us that peanuts were introduced into Virginia in colonial times, presumably by slave traders as food for the slaves. Thomas Jefferson, in 1781, makes mention of peanuts. The industry was started in the vicinity of Jamestown, where soil and climatic conditions are ideal. In the early days they were grown largely in gardens and in small

patches, and a few were roasted and sold on the streets in Virginia towns, and later in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and other eastern cities. Most people, in that period, called them "ground nuts."

It was not until after the Civil War that the peanut was developed into a worthwhile commercial crop. Necessity for some crop that would yield a cash return induced the farmers of Virginia and North Carolina to go strong on peanuts. They were wise. Thomas Rowland, of Norfolk, Va., is referred to as the father of the peanut industry in America. The farmers brought their crops to his place in small boats and he paid them cash. They brought seventy-five cents a bushel. Evidently farm relief was needed then as well as now.

ASK HIGHER TARIFF BE PUT ON POTATOES

WASHINGTON, May 5—(AP) Noting a 281 per cent increase in the importation of white or Irish potatoes, the National Grange has called upon the United States tariff commission for an investigation and possibly a 50 per cent increase in tariff rates.

Official reports, the Grange says, show that during the two calendar years 1926 and 1927, the importation of white or Irish potatoes into the United States amounted to a total of 10,935,062 bushels, valued at \$13,575,293, an increase of 281 per cent as compared with the volume imported from 1924 and 1925.

It asks the commission to make an investigation of the cost of production in this country and abroad, and if the finding so warrant, to recommend a 50 per cent increase in the tariff rate.

NEBRASKA 4-H BOYS WIN TRIP ABROAD

ALBION, Neb., May 5.—(AP)—Eager that America retrieve her lost laurels, the state board of agriculture and the Nebraska state dairymen's association are helping to raise \$3,000 to send America's 4-H champion dairy cattle judging team to the international dairy judging contest at Wye, England, this summer. The members of the team are Jesse Bilyeu, Joe King, and Russell Hughes, all of Albion. America has won five of the seven contests, but England won the last two.

Don't delay orders for seeds and bulbs another day. This is the rush season so don't be impatient if there is delay in receiving your order.

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COW IS EFFICIENT IN PRODUCING FOOD

She Yields Larger Supply Yearly Than Is in Body of a Fat Steer

Many dairymen do not appreciate the actual output of human food by a good dairy cow within a year, and thus do not feed her sufficient quantities of a properly balanced ration. A cow that yields 8,000 pounds of milk containing about 300 pounds of butterfat produces in a year more edible food products for mankind than are contained in the body of a fat steer weighing 1200 pounds.

At the same time, the cow builds the body of her unborn calf. Thus each year she yields more produce than a two year old steer does in his entire life, says Lyle W. Ternahan, assistant county agent in charge of cow testing in Snohomish county, Washington.

A cow in milk needs much more feed than is required for maintenance, as she must get feed to supply the raw products from which milk is made. She may be compared to a highly efficient machine for converting feed into milk. Just as a certain amount of power is needed to keep a machine in motion, so a cow must be maintained even if she is dry.

Profits in dairying are influenced by a careful selection of feeds. Time, effort and large quantities of feed may be wasted by improperly feeding the herd.

NEW DEVICE KEEPS MILK FROM SOURING

GLASGOW, Scotland, May 5.—(AP)—A machine which destroys organism in cream so that it will not sour for a week or more has been invented by a Glasgow man.

The process will keep cream fresh much longer than the preservatives once used, the inventor says. Thousands of gallons of cream have gone to waste in the Glasgow area since adoption of a pure food law banning the use of preservatives.

Already the apparatus is on the market, selling for \$17,000. Its capacity is 200 gallons of cream an hour.

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