

# Pipe Smoking Said Reviving Too Fast For Manufacturers

New York - (UPI) - Pipe smoking, which lost ground to cigarettes in the early post-war years, now is booming so fast pipemakers can't get enough briar root or block meerschaum to meet the demand, according to the Pipe and Tobacco Council.

And in Washington, Mo., center of the corn cob pipe industry, one factory is running three shifts trying to keep up with orders.

Sales of pipes at retail hit \$44 million last year in spite of the continuing boom in the cigarette market.

"This year they may go to \$50 million," said Jerry Nagler, council executive, "and sales of pipe tobaccos may hit 80 million pounds. Sales for the first half of the year were 50 million pounds - the largest in five years. The smokers are buying better grade tobaccos, too - 30 to 40 cents

an ounce - although the average is only 20 cents."

Although virtually all the individual blocks are imported, 90 per cent of the pipes sold in the United States are manufactured here. The briar root blocks come from Algeria and other Mediterranean lands.

A few less expensive domestic pipes are made of cherry wood. Italy and France export some cheaper finished

briar pipes to this country, and Britain, Denmark and Holland send us high-grade finished briar pipes to sell for \$5 to \$25.

"Briar pipes sell for all the way from \$2 to \$50, according to design and the perfection of the piece of briar root," said Nagler. "The main innovations recently have been nylon bits to replace hard rubber in some popular priced lines and some sleek

new Italian-designed shapes with large bowls but very narrow shanks. These styles go well with the Italian tailoring styles that have proved so popular in men's clothing in recent years."

Meerschaum block pipes retain their popularity, Nagler said, although few men carry a meerschaum around.

"The good block meerschaum still comes from Turkey and it's scarce," Nagler

said. "A few years ago we had hopes that a meerschaum style clay found in Kenya would prove satisfactory for pipes, but manufacturers concluded it was too brittle and not porous enough to provide the wonderfully cool meerschaum smoke."

Block meerschaums usually cost \$12 and up. A few still have genuine carved amber bits - "but most don't, we just can't find the amber," said

Nagler.

There aren't any listed public companies in American pipe making. The leaders probably are S. M. Frank & Co. of New York, Dr. Graebow Co. of Greensboro, N.C., and Knickerbocker Pipe Co.

of Brooklyn, N. Y., Nagler said, but there are many prosperous smaller firms.

"The corn cob pipe industry's sales are growing fantastically," Nagler said, "even though three firms in Washington, Mo., have virtually all

the market. They are Missouri Meerschaum, Buescher Industries and Hirsch, Bendine Co. They make the cob pipes in many shapes, some lacquered and colored. But most corn cob pipe lovers want their pipe to look like a corn cob."

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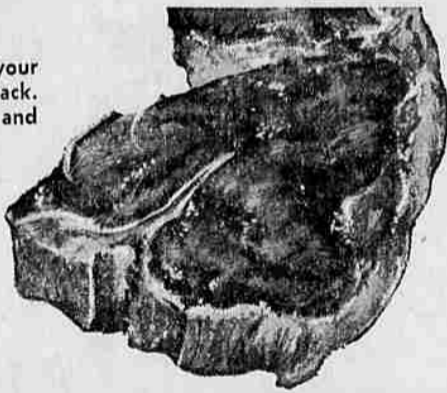
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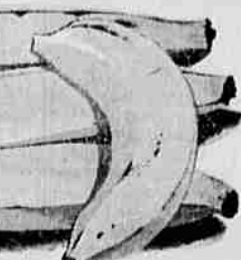
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