

NATURE NOW

Apple Has Important Role in American Life and Industry

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Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Those of you who, together with your nature columnist, remember the "good old days" will recall the long winters when apples were the staple fruit for family use. An orange was a much-treasured gift which appeared like magic in the toe of a Christmas stocking. It was turned lovingly in a possessive hand; it was eaten slowly and savored to the last juicy drop.

But as apple was a common thing. The cellar was full of apples, stored in barrels or bins. No evening passed but that large bowlful was brought up to the living room table.

An apple crisp goodness punctuated neighborhood visits. An apple was an after-school "must." Few winter meals were prepared without it; apple sauce, baked apples, apple and mince pies, apple fritters, apple dowsy, apple dumplings, apple butter—the list would never end.

Altogether the apple was and still is our best year-round fruit.

APPLES (Malus) are members of the rose family which vies with the grasses for the honor of being the most valuable group of cultivated plants. It includes some 2,500 species of wild and cultivated flowers, shrubs and trees which one can meet in many climes and places. It is sometimes called the "fruit tree" family for to it belongs not only the apple but cherry, quince, pear and peach as well as strawberries, blackberries and raspberries.

Hawthorne, cinquifol, spiraea and mountain ash are also family members in good standing.

AS IN ALL plants, the flower of the rose family is a tell-tale index of the species. Every springtime you see it in many guises; a misty froth of fragrance in old orchards, a white bouquet of bridal wreath guarding a doorway, a tangle of wild rose festooning a country roadside.

But when you examine the bloom, there are always five sepals, five petals and many pollen-bearing stamens in multiples of five. (The roses in your garden have confining stamen and petal counts because some stamens are turned into petals by breeding.)

Fruit types of the rose family vary, but those with extensive juicy pulp like the apple are called "pomes".

If you cut an apple in two cross-wise, you will see a five-parted design. This is made up of the tough parchment-like carpels each containing several seeds. Together they comprise the core.

Apples are usually cross-pollinated by honey bees. Infrequently they are self-pollinating. Many varieties are self-sterile. When setting out an orchard it is therefore wise to plant alternate rows of varieties that have an affinity for each other.

AFTER fertilization the petals drop and a complicated development begins. This results in the



CARIBBEAN PORT of the Netherlands West Indies, Venezuela and Colombia were the destinations of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Lotz of 1112 Stanley avenue when they left on the Grace Line's Santa Rosa. The couple began the 12-day cruise from New York on Feb. 19.

ing ceremony—the boiling of the winter's supply of apple-butter. This was done in a big brass kettle swung over an open fire in the backyard.

The apples to "fill in" were prepared on the previous evening, at a friendly neighborhood "schmitzing".

Apple butter making was an all-day ritual requiring considerable skill, but by late afternoon several dozen gallon crocks were filled with the rich dark "spread" and set out on the grass to cool.

OUR WINTER apples included such varieties as Grimes Golden, Baldwin, Northern Spy, Ben Davis and Greening, the latter for pies well into March.

The State of Washington leads our apple "industry" which altogether produces some 150 million bushels of fruit annually.

Apple processing has many by-lines such as the production of vinegar which is accomplished by

store-houses of the pre-historic Lake Dwellers of Switzerland.

THE EARLY colonists transplanted our native crab-apple to their yards and orchards hoping for cultivation to make it as fine-flavored as European varieties. This failed but by the middle of the 18th century many fine orchards were established and new varieties produced through the selection of natural variants.

Now the United States not only grows the finest apples in the world but exports large quantities to England and Europe.

Society deadline is 3 p.m. each Tuesday.

Quite a Catch Netted By Birmingham Family

The Quinn family recently returned to Birmingham after vacationing at Deerfield Beach in Florida. The Hubert J. Quinns returned to their home on Lone Pine road and their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. (Mike) Quinn to their home at 1727 Washington avenue.

While fishing off Boca Raton, the two men and Mrs. Quinn, Jr., reeled in a 6 foot 10 1/2 inch sailfish, a 22 1/2 pound African Pompano, a 35 pound amberjack and several smaller fish.

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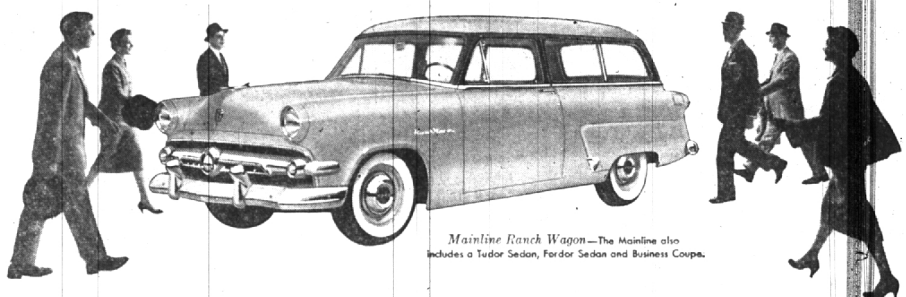
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The Weight of Public Opinion is Against the Excise Tax on Telephone Service

"Which Federal excise tax do you personally object to most?"

That question was asked recently in a public poll conducted by Opinion Research Corporation. They wanted to learn how people personally felt about Federal excise taxes. These were their findings: THE EXCISE TAX THAT INCURRED THE MOST RESSENTMENT AND IRRITATION WAS THE TAX ON TELEPHONE SERVICE.

Of the people interviewed, 59% objected most to this tax. It was more objectionable than the Federal excise taxes on gasoline, automobiles, tires, railroad tickets, cigarettes, movie tickets, and many other things.

This high percentage of objection to telephone excise taxes is understandable. Each month they add 15% to your telephone bill for local service, and 25% to your bill for long distance calls costing 25 cents or more. For excise tax purposes, it's as though your telephone were a luxury, like jewelry or furs.

We recognize the Government's need for adequate income and for balancing the budget. But if Congress is to consider any excise tax reductions, we believe the excise taxes on telephone service should be among the first to get attention.

All the savings from a reduction or repeal of these taxes would go to telephone users—not to the telephone company.

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