

Prehistoric Extension Work

► CULTIVATION of certain plants by the Indians was remarkably widespread, despite their lack of long-range means of transportation and communication. When the first English settlers came to Virginia and Massachusetts, they found the Indians using corn, pumpkins, squashes, beans and tobacco, none of which was native to the Atlantic seaboard of this continent. Corn and tobacco came from somewhere in South or Middle America, pumpkins and squashes apparently from Mexico, and beans from a region that lies partly in our own Southwest, partly in northern Mexico. Indians who maintained friendly relations with their new neighbors passed on their knowledge of cultivation methods—which was a literal life-saver for the often hard-pressed whites.

Nobody knows how these plants and the art of cultivating them came into the hands of these Indians, so remote from their original centers of distribution. Neither does anybody know how long a time was required for the spread

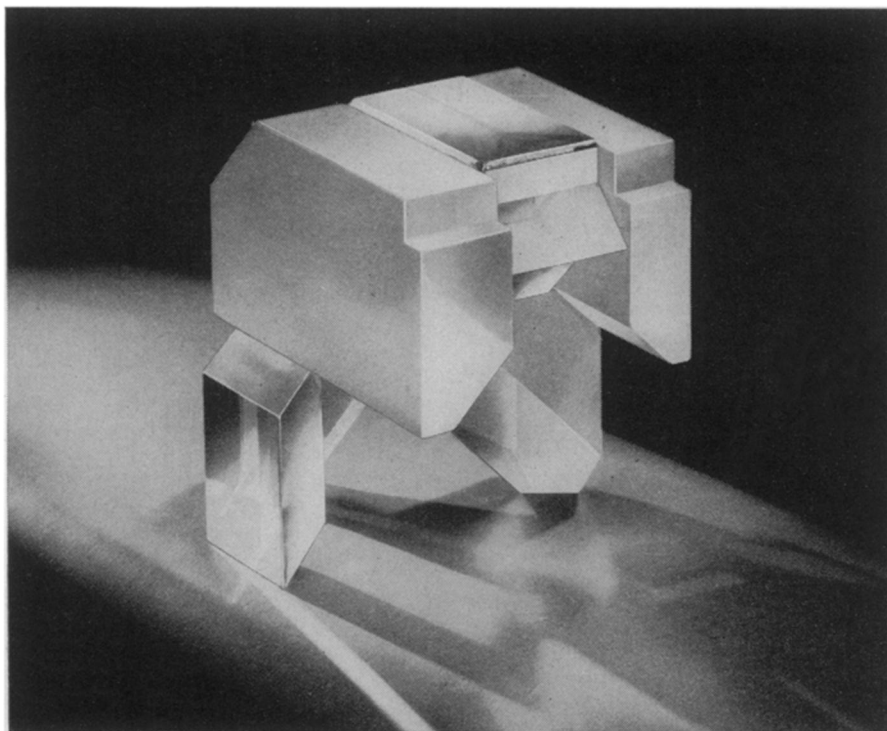
of this knowledge. It seems reasonable to conjecture, however, that the process was slow, and that the knowledge passed from tribe to friendly tribe, very much as it passed from friendly Indians to the first paleface farmers.

There is at least an outside possibility, however, that new crops and methods may have been speeded up occasionally by what might be termed prehistoric agricultural missionaries. Crop cultivation among Indians, as among many other relatively primitive peoples, had a very large religious content. In Aztec

Mexico especially, corn cultivation was also a cult, with a zealous priesthood.

One may at least speculate on the possibility of members of that priesthood (or more likely, an even earlier one) having travelled among neighboring tribes, at least as far as their prestige would accredit them, spreading the gospel of the great Maize God. Then, after the lapse of the missionary effort, their none-too-solid converts may have backslid, forgetting the god but keeping his envoys' gift.

Science News Letter, November 18, 1944



To Win a Battle or Build a Better Mousetrap



Here is a range finder prism . . . the glass heart of one of the most precise optical instruments that the ingenuity of man has produced . . . so accurate that the angular error amounts to no more than 1 inch in 6½ miles. Created by Bausch & Lomb, every step in its manufacture has been controlled by the world's finest optical glass technicians. From the selection of the ingredients from which the optical glass is made to the final polishing, the objective has been to make America's gunfire the most accurate and deadly in the world.

This is the same care and these the same

skills that are also producing the fine optical instruments used in the furtherance of our war effort. Tomorrow, many of those instruments will be available to help build better lawnmowers . . . razor blades . . . automobiles . . . vacuum cleaners, etc. . . . to hasten progress in scientific research, medicine, education.

BAUSCH & LOMB

OPTICAL CO., ROCHESTER, N. Y.



Makers of Optical Glass and a Complete Line of Optical Instruments for Military Use, Education, Research Industry and Eyesight Correction and Conservation

NEW "PICK-UP" CANE

Permits Disabled Persons To Pick Up Small Articles Without Painful Stooping.

NO OTHER CANE LIKE IT

The Mason "Pick-Up" is a light double purpose cane with concealed patented pick up mechanism that enables the user by simple finger pressure and without any stooping to easily pick up papers, pencils, cards, coins, etc. Proper balance and rubber grip tip insures safer walking. Use a beautifully finished Mason "Pick-Up" Cane yourself or as a perfect gift for a disabled service man or friend. Write today for FREE CIRCULAR and 5 days trial offer.

W. H. MASON
Box 27, Leesburgh, Ohio

