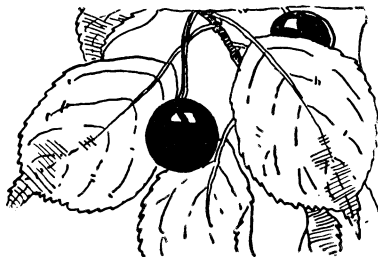


EVOLUTION  
**NATURE RAMBLINGS**  
*by Frank Thone*



**National Fruit**

➤ **CHERRIES**, and especially cherry pies, have come to be conventional fixtures in the celebration of Washington's birthday. It is too bad, really, that the cherry motif wasn't saved for Independence Day, for cherries are ripe and ready for pie over a large part of the country for a few weeks on either side of July 4.

The cherry's status as an American national emblem, and the strong bid it makes for being the national choice of choices as a pie filling, are based, to be sure, on a little-boy legend about George Washington that nobody really believes any more, but (like many another beloved fiction) all the better liked for that. It is a curious thing how young George's reputation for unflinching truthfulness was based on a tale now known to be a pious fib, told by a "parson" whose title, never claimed by himself, was also fictitious. And to heighten the irony, "Parson" Weems never said that little George chopped the cherry tree down; the word he actually used in his saccharinely moralistic narrative was "bark'd."

Be that as it may, the sober fact that young George neither chopped down nor "bark'd" a cherry tree merely meant that his father had one more source of fine fruit. The Weems story describes the tree merely as an "English" cherry tree. This merely identifies it as an imported tree, for none of our cultivated cherries are derived from any of the wild cherries native to this continent.

The two principal stocks from which our orchard cherries come are, respectively, the sour-cherry species native to Asia Minor and perhaps southeastern Europe, and the sweet-cherry distributed over western Asia and Europe generally. Both kinds were brought to this country in Colonial times, so it is impossible to guess which one Weems meant when he called the senior Washington's tree "English."

The sour-cherry varieties are much more commonly planted than the choicer-fruited sweet cherries primarily because the trees are hardy under a wider range of climatic conditions, less "fussy" about what kind of soil they will grow in, and not so hospitable to insect pests as are the sweet cherries. And they do make must excellent pie.

Science News Letter, June 11, 1949

ment over airplane wing models in high-velocity wind tunnels. It is known as schlieren photography, and may be described as a method in which shadow pictures are obtained by rays of light, some of whose straight paths from source to camera plate have been interfered with by the movements in the air.

Scientists have found that there are similarities which exist in many instances between sound waves and light waves with respect to the phenomena of reflection, refraction, diffraction and interference. Dr. R. Bowling Barnes and Dr. Charles J. Burton have succeeded in developing visual methods for studying ultrasonic phenomena by the schlieren process. Ultrasonic waves are too high in pitch to be audible to the human ear, but they are now being applied to research work and industrial uses.

These scientists, now with the American Optical Society, Southbridge, Mass., did their ultrasonic work while with the American Cyanamid Company. A scientific report of their findings is given in the *JOURNAL OF APPLIED PHYSICS* (March)

Science News Letter, June 11, 1949

Sometimes one branch of an *apple tree* will bear apples twice as large as other branches; when noted they are used for scion wood to graft other trees, to produce the larger fruit.

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**On This Week's Cover**

➤ **WHAT** sound waves look like, if they could be seen by the naked eye, is no longer a mystery. They are made visible in pictures taken by a special photographic technique which also is used in studying air move-



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