

4. The distribution and origin of pop corn.

Since in a recent paper, Erwin (1949) reached some conclusions about the question, it seems to me interesting to state that these conclusions have to be revised today. Pop corn is now known to occur in the form of old indigenous races in a number of places in South America: the pointed and round seeded "Pipoca" of the Guarani and Caingang (in the Paraguay-Paraná area), the pointed seeded pop corn "Pisankalla" of the Andes of Boliva-Peru, the round-seeded "Pira" of Colombia, the Choco-corn on the Pacific coast of Colombia, etc. These races seem to have several basic characters in common, but occupy completely separated areas. It seems practically impossible to assume that the early Indian breeders may have obtained by independent selection, all these races starting from the soft races predominantly or exclusively present among South-American indigenous races. Thus it seems more probable to assume that all these pop corn races are of common origin and relics of a very old basic race which survived as a special purpose corn and only in some regions. In the absence of South-American archeological relics, nothing definite can be said about the center of origin of this racial group, and its routes of migration and distribution in prehistorical time. The distribution, as found today, is not in contradiction however with the hypothesis of the origin in the lowlands and mountain regions, east of the Andes, of northern Bolivia and Brazil. On the basis of Mangelsdorf and Smith's conclusions about the Bat cave material - disregarding the possibility of more extensive infiltration by teosinte genes in the material - pop corn appeared in this area some 4,000 years ago at least.