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## STORIES of New Jersey

In 1931 New Jersey first produced the tomato commercially in its latest form -- pure tomato juice, which was later dressed up as tomato cocktail, and this product has been gaining in popularity steadily.

Millions of dollars have been spent in studying and developing tomato culture. Every care is exercised in growing what was once a wild plant and later a lowly garden inhabitant.

Paper cups are filled with special soil and a seed is planted in each cup. These are placed in hothouses or seed beds, heated by pipes. Each night they are covered with salt hay. This salt hay, gathered in the New Jersey marshes, is more costly than regular field hay or straw but it packs better and makes a more effective blanket for the tender young plants.

The heat in the beds or hothouses is controlled to regulate the development of the plants so that their growth may be speeded up or retarded to meet the demands of the market. When the young plants have reached the right size they are lifted on flat shovels and transported to the field in two-wheeled carts.

Once in the ground the struggle begins against the numerous natural enemies that lie in wait. There is a particularly vicious variety of aphid that completely covers the plant and sucks out the sap. Then there are the rapacious green worms that also attack the plants like the plague of locusts in Egypt. Up-to-date farmers keep apace of the times by using airplanes to dust the fields with poison to fight off these destructive pests.

The canning companies, of which there are thirty-five in New Jersey, cooperate with the farmers not only in the development of the tomato, but in marketing it as well. Contract farming is a general practice in South Jersey. The farmer and the canning company agree on the number of acres to be planted and the canning company sets a price at which it will accept the entire crop. The price will fluctuate slightly according to the size and quality of the produce delivered by the farmer.

The Campbell Soup Company pays approximately \$3,000,000 to the farmers of South Jersey for tomatoes alone. A farmer who grows from 15 to 16 acres of tomatoes receives about \$2,500 for his crop. The tomato made the late Dr. John T. Dorrance, head of the Campbell Soup Company, a millionaire many times over and he devoted 176 acres of his home, Pomona Farm, at Cinnaminson, Burlington County, to experimentation and to improving its color, taste, size and freedom from disease.

During the picking season South Jersey looks as though it had been invaded by an army of gypsies. From Philadelphia and other nearby cities whole families move into the district and camp out under the trees or in temporary quarters supplied for them on the farms. The parents and all the children large enough to work spend the day in the fields.

At night the women prepare the family food over open fires or camp stoves, and afterwards groups gather for a time to sing songs or play games before tucking in for a good night's sleep under the stars. A whole family can thus have a happy and profitable summer, going from farm to farm, until the school bell rings for the children in the fall.