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## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

**TITLE:** Where Does Popcorn Come From?

**SUBJECT:** Social Studies

**GRADE LEVEL:** 3-6

**MATERIAL(S):** A map of the Americas

**OBJECTIVE(S):** To understand more about the history of popcorn in the Americas, learn which U.S. states produce popcorn and identify where those states are on a map.

**OVERVIEW:** Archaeologists have uncovered proof that popcorn had been around long before the arrival of the Europeans in the New World. Excavations in the Bat Cave of West Central New Mexico turned up popcorn ears nearly 5,600 years old, according to radio-carbon tests. An 80,000 year-old fossil pollen found 200 feet below Mexico City has been identified as corn pollen. In tombs on the east coast of Peru, researchers uncovered 1,000-year-old grains of popcorn so well preserved they still pop.

Today, Americans consume 17 billion quarts of popped popcorn annually or 59 quarts per man, woman and child. Most of the popcorn consumed throughout the world is grown in the United States. The major popcorn producing states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio.

- 1) Have students go to the Popcorn Board's Website to "Encyclopedia Popcornica: The History of Popcorn" (<http://www.popcorn.org/frames.cfm?main=/teachers/index.cfm&usernav=flash>) and read about the history of popcorn.
- 2) Review the list of geographic locations that have played a part in popcorn's history.
- 3) Ask students to locate these spots on the map.
- 4) Identify states that produce popcorn on the map.