

ARIKARA ORDER OF BUTCHERING A BUFFALO*

The Indian order of cutting up a beef was different from ours because of the different conditions of their life. First of all the meat must be cut up in such wise as to accommodate the uses of parts and the means of preservation. For instance we make no use of the sinew, but that was a valuable part in Indian economy, therefore the meat-cutting plan must be such as to preserve that commodity. Also the only means they had of preservation of meat was by drying. On that account the cuts must be so planned as best to prepare for the process of drying. And as butchering was a community industry, all members of the community being employed in the work, each according to his several ability, the cutting up of the carcass must be according a plan which would be best fitted to facilitate an equitable division of the meat.

To save unnecessary weight in transportation the cutting was planned to strip all the meat, leaving the bones on the prairie where the animal was killed, except the backbone, the neck and the ribs which could not well be stripped out. These pieces were used for immediate cooking and eating, while the rest of the muscular structure was taken into camp and there cut into thin strips and dried for preservation. Large bones were broken with sledge hammers to obtain the marrow.

The fat was taken off and rendered down and poured while warm and fluid into the packing cases where it hardened on cooking; thus it was preserved for future use. The intestines were cleaned and used for casing in which was stuffed choice bits of lean and fat in proper proportions for cooking.

The heart, liver, kidneys and tripe were cooked and eaten fresh. In fact the butchers often cut off and ate pieces of the raw liver while at their work; flavoring it first with the gall. Some had the hardihood to drink the clear gall directly from the gall duct. The tripe was washed in the blood and divided among the butchers. This part was cooked by boiling.

The butchers stripped off the skin, leaving the carcass lying on the skin while the division of the meat was made, taking first the cuts on one side, then turning over the carcass they took off the

* Arikara order of butchering a buffalo in old time, according to information from several Arikara informants and observation of the process in killing and dressing a beef in August, 1923, by Melvin R. Gilmore

corresponding cuts from the other side. These eight pairs of cuts are as follows:

1. Katak, the muscle back of the hipbone.
2. Swis, the muscle in front of the hipbone.
3. Histihako, the muscle on the back from hip to neck. It is from these two long muscles on the back that the sinew is obtained.
4. Winu, the muscles of foreleg and shoulder.
5. Kaku, all the muscles of the hindleg below the hip joint.
6. Wikatkh, all the flank muscle.
7. Cisu, the muscles on the side of the neck.
8. Satu, the ribs of one side altogether.

As stated before, when these eight cuts are made the carcass is turned over and the eight corresponding cuts on the other side are made. There now remain two more parts which as full cuts, and which naturally are not paired, namely, the neck and the backbone