

BEEF ISSUE: DIVIDING THE CARCASS

(We were talking about how they used to divide up the meat when they butchered-- how did they decide who was going to get what?)

Well, they had ration tickets for their groceries--like lard, coffee, sugar, flour, baking powder and bacon. And they had a ticket. Now one week maybe my dad would get the shoulder. And the others would get the other part of the beef, and they'd make a note of that--the Agency employees that made those tickets. And the next time they'd say, "Well, Rowledge got shoulder last week, so he gets ribs." Something like that. And then maybe another man with maybe a bigger family gets the hind quarter, the back, and different parts. You didn't get the same thing all the time.

(How did they decide who gets the heart and tongue an all those parts?)

It was up to the family groups. But the Cheyennes always came around. They have a system among the Cheyennes that they have a feast. Usually for their faith and ceremony. One Cheyenne would offer to go around to every place where they was butchering. He didn't ask no questions. You just saw him carrying a whole string of tongues. When you saw that, you just cut the tongue out of your beef and just handed it to him, and he'd go on. The Cheyennes did that.

(What would be the purpose--?)

I don't know what the purpose was but it was for ceremonial purpose.

(Did the Arapahoes ever do that?)

No, not that I know of. Oh, if nobody come and ask them, they give it to whoever they choose for that week to keep the tongue and heart. But anybody was entitled to keep it. And the liver.

(I guess I still don't understand. But on those days when they were issuing meat and I guess they'd butcher a number of cattle?)