

Because if you don't, you may take in a good polled Hereford calf and get back a blue Jersey. There's a difference in beef. Take a Jersey or a Holstein, and you get blue meat. And you take a good polled Hereford that's in good shape, and it's good red meat.

(It's not aged, then, the way they do it now?)

Bob: The beef? What you called "aged beef" is before you butcher it. You can get a calf butchered, and there's no aging to it. You just got veal. If you want to let one get to be a year old, then you've got aged beef--mature beef. It matures in the feed lot.

(I was thinking about what I've heard about prime carcasses left hanging in the slaughter house or in a cool place for maybe six weeks before it was cut up--)

Bob: Oh yeah, well, they don't have to leave it for six weeks. They just cool it out because it'll slice better. See, if it comes in here--they have hooks. They usually cut it in quarters or halve it, and they put it on these hooks and they got rollers, and they roll it into the cooling room and it stays there-- usually they let it stay there about a week--just so it gets chilled, and then it slices better. Then when it's sliced, they process it--you tell them how thick you want your steaks, and what you want to do with the ribs and so on, and it's done just like you want it.

(Back when they were doing their own butchering, how would the white farmers cut it up? Could you explain how they went about dissecting the animal?)

Bob: They had these four quarters. They take the shoulders--

Jess: Shoulders go with the ribs--

Bob: Shoulders and ribs, and then you had your hind quarters--that's where you have your good steaks--that was your good round steaks, back there. And the front--you can get some good steaks off the front quarter, but usually it was good roasts. We always take our ribs and have them made into hamburger. We like hamburger better than we like barbecued ribs or anything like that.

(Back then, did they used to slice the round steaks and saw the bone so they looked like the ones we have now at the store?)