424-Hoards

EARLY DAY FOOD PRICES IN COLORADO

The food of these early pioneers consisted chiefly of wild meat, fish, and flour; most of the flour was shipped in from St. Joseph, Missouri.

During the gold rushes in and around Central City and Black Hawk, flour brought as high as $100 a hundred pounds, and butter sold for one dollar a pound.

Wild game formed a large part of the pioneer's diet; antelope and buffalo probably played the most important part. A sixty-five or seventy pound antelope, which was the average weight when dressed, sold for one dollar a head; buffalo sold at a cent a pound. Both the black- and white-tailed deer and elk of the mountains were used. Beaver was often used for food--the tail, which tasted much like pork, being considered a great delicacy.

Some salt pork was shipped in or a good supply was brought by the settlers as they came. It wasn't until the early seventies that hogs were raised here because of the lack of grain crops with which to feed them.

Many fish were found in the streams of the plains, such as the sucker, the red-horse sucker, wall-eyed pike, sunfish, and the white fish. Black-speckled native trout were found in abundance in mountain streams.

Many of these early settlers brought cows with them, which supplied them with milk, butter, and cheese; the cheese being made in

hand-made presses which consisted of a small hoop placed on a flat board. After the cheese was poured into this mold, a lid was placed inside the hoop and weighted down with a stone. Rennet to curd the milk was obtained from the stomach of a calf or young deer, preferably the deer. (This was the first stomach of the young animal which was cleaned, washed, and dried and from which a small piece was cut as it was needed).

Some dried fruit was shipped in from St. Joseph, Missouri, the principal ones being apples and peaches. For the most part the only fruits used were wild chokecherry, currants, grapes, and plum.

Honey and sugar were both shipped from the East. The grade of sugar generally used was a very dark brown; however, the best grade was of a yellow color.

Coffee consisted of parched corn or wheat ground with the coffee. Tea sold for two dollars a pound.

Sour-dough or salt rising bread as it was generally called, and soda biscuits occupied a prominent place at each meal.

The first onion seed used here came from Mexico near the year 1868 and cost its weight in gold dust. The growing of corn first met with failure because that used as seed was not acclimated. The first corn grown successfully was a small flint corn which came from Mexico. Mr. Swadley, who lived near Golden, developed a good strain of corn which now bears his name, and from which hominy was made by the early settlers.

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