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Phillips County
Gladys W. Miller
Malta Mont

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Nov.19,1941
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Subject What America Eats;- The Ranchers On the Missouri.

Source Gladys W. Miller. Teacher On the Missouri at Ceekay,1936.

I was teaching near the old Ceekay Ranch on the Missouri during 1935-36. The shoolhouse on which I lived with my small daughter for company was a rough log affair,the unfinished log walls of which reflected the candlelight,for I was unable to obtain kerosene in most pioneer fashion. But though ewe culd see through the chinks the big squartty iron heater kept us warm and we burned pine knots twhichcast apflickering light upon the walls at evening in true Pilgrim fashion. During the long evenings people frequently dropped in for popcorn and apples roasted on the big hearth and liste ned to our radio the only modern touch in our school life on the river.

We carried our water up over the bluff from the river by a narrow cattle trail,steep and winding. I didn't like the idea of having to drink the river water,but the older dwellers on the river assured me,"Why its perfectly pure. Scientists say that the water purifies itself every hundred yards or so. None ever has typhoid or malaria here." So my fears were assauged and we drank it till spring. After the spring break up I asked one of the youngsters,"What's that sticking up there in the water?" It was only about a quarter of a mile away.
"Oh,that's only Joe Kline's bull. He fell in and was drowned last winter." needless to say I carried water from the nearest aranch two miles away all spring.

One evening a handsome youngster,whose mother had fallen a

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a victim to the flu at Thanksgiving time approached me rather timidly."Mrs.Miller,Wont you and Maryona come down tonite for the week end. Dad and the boys would like to have you."

I hesitated. To go to a strange place where there was only the masculine element rather phased me but the b oy added "Please come. It,s so lonely in the evenings." So we went. It was very cold and we were glad after the two mile drive brought us to the old Ceekay Ranch,a cluster of long low log buildings built in the old time manner with a string of bunk houses attached to the main building. The house was warm and well lighted and we were welcomed by the father and three husky brothers in typical friendly fashion. The living rooma nd dining room were one a great room. A table of planks set on trestles was near the big range and long benches were on each side t o accomodate the guests. The table was covered with a spotless oil cloth. The odor of savory roast was tantalizing as we had been unable to procure fresh meat since Christmas. It was soon on the table,hot biscuits ,delicately brown, gravy, honey canned peaches and store cookies made a meal which waas served by the three big brothers as deftly and daintily as if they had been girls. There was no butter,and the milk was canned. In fact on many occasions I found that many of the ranchers did not have any milch cows as they were definitely engaged in growing beef. After supper I queried as to the meat. "Venison,thyye answered. We killed some this fall.

Subject;The ranchers along the Missouri. What America Eats.

A knock at the door and Auntie Marie,husband and two tall sons entered. Aunt Marie said she thought I had better have a little feminine company,so while the men listened excitedly to the prizefight,we made fudge and popcorn balls and the boys made coffee and served cookies at midnight.

In the morning we found breakfast of sourdough hot cakes fried venisin liver,gravy and oranges. We went to Aunt Marie's for din dinner of fried fish,potatoes baked, ,mashed squash and apple pie they drove us home to the schoolhouse. Up the river and on the ice,to my terror narrowly avoiding airholes, for th e river was coated with snow and it seemed very dangerous to me. In fact that winter they did get in the water with a big load of groceries and lost both food and car and escaped within a veritable "inch of their lives."

Our next visit was to the fri nds at he postoffice. Here we were in different surroundings as the postmistreess was a wonderful and dainty cook. They had plenty of milk and butter for our hostess would nit be satisfied without it. And coffee. Delicious and such cream. Sourdoughs as light as a feather,maple syrup, ham, and sliced oranges for breakfast. I remember it yet.

Meanwhile the weather grew colder and the snow deeper. The radio reported coldand colder. No children at school. Across from the schoolhouse in the cabin intended for the teacherage lived the clerk of the district a woman with four small children and two young nephews of 11 and thirteeen. They had moved down for shool But the mail man didn't come.

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What America Eats;-The Ranchers along the Missouri.

And when he did come he brought our little group no groceries. Mrs. C. Had cabbage and potatoes enough for a few days, I had pancake flour,a package of Bisquick and a little canned fruit, one can odf Campbell's soup and some pineapple. The mail man came,by pack horse and brought -- of all things- a radio, a belated Christmas gift from a New York cousin. We almost shed tears, Seven children- and no food. Suddenly a figure appeared struggling thorugh the snow. It was a lonely bachelor who lived two miles below. He was a radio enthusiast and the mailman had told him he had brought the schoolma'am a radio. When he heard of our plight he promptly came to the rescue. That afternoon he appeared with a floursack of beans, a can of Crisco, a dozen cans of tomatoes and some prunes. We lived on beans until some of our neighbors arrived with a little bit of venison and MRS.C's husband came down and took her home. The weather improved and the mailman came through. That was my liveliest experienc with American Eats .