

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON
67 MORTON STREET
NEW YORK 14

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Dear Mr. Schultz:

Stupid of me to confuse you with McLaughlin. I always knew better, until April 7th!

You offer to get me a small sample of Blackfeet pemmican. Yes, please do. I shall appreciate it ever so much.

And there is one thing about your description of pemmican which I hope you will check over with your memory and with the Indians. It is the relation by weight of the pounded meat to the rendered fat. You think it may have been 5 of lean to 1 of fat. David Thompson says the proportions varied from fifty-fifty to 5 lbs. of lean and 4 of fat. Most of the other old time writers give fifty-fifty; one or two, out of 100 or so, say a third of fat and two-thirds of lean. This is, of course, with reference to the "good" pemmican, called by some writers summer pemmican, where the lean had been thoroughly dried; the inferior pemmican, or winter pemmican, would have had different proportions by weight, since there was so much water still in the lean. This, I take it, was the kind described in your first paragraph.

A pound of the shredded or powdered lean is, unless you compress it very tight, several times as bulky as a pound of fat. This is what makes me think that perhaps the fat percentage, small in bulk, was different by weight from what you remember. At any rate, I hope you will check with the Blackfeet and write me thereafter what the consensus of opinion is between you and them.

For the sake of a friend of mine to whom I want to send a carbon of this letter, George Will of Bismarck, I copy your sentence: "I never heard of wild rice, corn meal, roots or nuts being mixed in with pemmican." He is a pretty thorough student, as you know, and he had heard from somewhere that these ingredients were at times included. I am now hoping he will write me to say where he got the idea. We have, as above, examined many hundreds of books on the early days, in which we have found a hundred or so that have references to pemmican, and none of them speak of these ingredients being used in the olden days -- they speak only of choke berries, service berries, saskatoons, etc., as you do. But in more recent works there are accounts of all sorts of adulterants, among them corn meal, oat meal, wheat flour, ground nuts -- in addition to the raisins, which nowadays take the place of the choke cherries.

Mr. James Willard Schultz,
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