

## Aux Aliments Du Pays

*Aux Aliments Du Pays* - To Live From the Land. The motto of the American Mountain Men was often a real fact of life or death for those that traveled far from home in the early 1800's. No matter if these men left with a large party or started out alone, at some time into the journey all of these hearty travelers would be faced with the problem of finding food, shelter and clothing, sometimes all of them at one time.

After leaving the settlements, some provisions were normally taken if the journey was to be a long one. These food stuffs were either soon eaten, went bad or were lost. Then the travelers would have to rely on nature to provide sustenance. Some times it was plentiful and other times it was scarce. In addition to finding food, these men were also faced with the challenge of suitable shelter when mother nature unleashed her wrath and keeping themselves suitably clothed after what they left home in wore out.

As these men traveled across the continent, they found many types of game both large and small that were sometimes plentiful. Large herds of buffalo were sometimes seen covering the prairie for miles. James O. Pattie remarked "As far as the plain was visible in all directions innumerable herds of wild horses, buffaloes, antilopes, deer, elk, and wolves fed in their wild and fierce freedom." [(3) p.13] James Clyman also noted in his journal that he "found the buffalo in great quantities, killed one very fine one, loaded my mule and headed for camp." [(4) p.93] When excess meat was available it was often cut thinly and dried in the sun or over a small smoky fire and was said to be called jerked meat. If kept dry, the meat would stay good for a long time.

One of the favorite meats was taken from the buffalo. Hump ribs and tongue were considered to be the choicest pieces. According to Meriweather Lewis "My fare is really sumptuous this evening, buffalo humps, tongues and marrow bones." [(6) p.135]

Deer, antelope, sheep and bear were other varieties of big game that was available. Clyman wrote "these hills (Black Hills) are finely stored with game such as Black tailed deer, antelope, mountain sheep and at times Buffalo, Elk and Grizzly Bear." [(4) p. 98] In the words of Joe Meek