

Phil Ochs, The Ballad Of Alferd Packer

In the state of Colorado
In the year of seventy-four
They crossed the San Juan Mountains
Growing hungry to the core.
Their guide was Alferd Packer
And they trusted him too long:
For his character was weak
And his appetite was strong.

They called him a murderer, a cannibal, a thief;
It just doesn't pay to eat anything but Government-inspected beef.

Along the Gunnison River
An Indian camp they spied.
An Indian chief approached them,
To stop them he did try.
He warned them of the danger
In the snow that lay around,
But the danger was in Packer,
For his hunger knew now bound.

They called him a murderer, a cannibal, a thief;
It just doesn't pay to eat anything but Government-inspected beef.

Two cold months went slowly by;
Packer came back alone.
"My comrades they all froze to death,
I'm starving," he did moan.
The Indian chief knew how he lied,
He spat upon the ground,
For Packer's belly hung out all over his belt:
He'd gained some thirty pounds.

They called him a murderer, a cannibal, a thief;
It just doesn't pay to eat anything but Government-inspected beef.

Well for nine long years he ran away
But finally he was tried.
He claimed he didn't kill them,
He only ate their hide.
That County had six dem-o-crats
Until that man arrived.
Well only one lives on today:
He ate the other five.

They called him a murderer, a cannibal, a thief;
It just doesn't pay to eat anything but Government-inspected beef.

Eighteen years he stayed in jail,
It was a dreadful fate,
For he suffered indigestion
Every time he ate.
Still, it's hard to blame this hungry guy
Who went searchin' for the mines,
For when he ate his friends
He'd never heard of Duncan Hines.