GEORGE FIRST RIDER

George First Rider of the Blood Reserve was born in 1904. He had no formal schooling but became an accomplished horseman and worked for a time on the rodeo circuit. After working as a farmer he ended up in jail as a result of alcoholism and theft. He attributes his reform to his conversion to Christianity.

He prides himself on his ability as a storyteller and on his knowledge of Blood culture, particularly the holy societies many of which he joined as a young man.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Tells of the origin of the Brave Dog Society.

George First Rider: Okay, the Dogs, the Dog Society. A man who is a wealthy person but he never became a chief, nor did he go to war, nor capturing a gun -- he didn't occupy these -- but the people considered him as a leader. He was placed that way because he had good horses and he shares his food with the people. He gives them rations to eat, that is why he is considered as an important man. When it comes to make use of chieftainship he can't participate because he was not a chief.

The man was always worried. This occurred to him because he got married before he reached manhood and he got so in love with his wife he never went on the warpath. There was nothing wrong with him. He was not sick or anything; he was just lazy to go to war. That is the reason why the people of the past will not have him for chief. He is the kind, his wives. Some
of his horses are idle, he also lends his horses to people that have no horses for transportation and when he goes on a hunt he tells others to go with him and they butcher for him and he gives them one buffalo. So that's how kind he is. When he invites people he offers them smoke. So he gathers people together that way but he never was a chief.

Now we are haunted that our enemy will come and we broke camp. It was a hot day. It is said the chokecherries were ripe; that is the hottest season. The people of the past will sample the chokecherries. When the saskatoon berries and the chokecherries are ripe at the same amount then they'll put up a Holy Lodge. So that is why he was going to sponsor a Holy Lodge, because he can't perform inside the Holy Lodge. He is not a chief. He was just naturally among the people.

As the camps were broken and they had travelled a long ways off, suddenly he noticed that two of the colts were missing. So he went around to the others but his horses were not amongst the other herds. He told his wives, "I am going back to look for the colts." So he roped a bay horse; that's his best horse. He was a fast runner and long-winded. He uses him on a buffalo chase. It was said that the horse was called Seven Paint. He had a curly tail. He was a nice horse.

He took his weapons. So he went back on the trail and he rode to where he herds his horses and he couldn't find the colts; the colts were not there. So he rode back and when he is about to ride to a hill he'd quickly ride off from the trail and he comes up on the hill from a different direction. He is scared to be ambushed. By now he has seen the people that were moving camp.

Next, when he was about to come to a small hollow place he heard someone that sang and he thought, "There is someone in front." He thought, "I never heard this song before." So he ran in another direction all of a sudden. When he rode into the coulee -- it was not a very big coulee, it was a small coulee -- when he saw it there was no one there.

He rode back and when he got back to where he heard the dog he heard it again, singing. Then it howled and as he rode up to the edge there it was, a dog, a black dog, an old dog. It was done for in walking. He was exhausted, his tongue was hanging out. The dog was very old. He was black with a yellow dot above each eye with a yellow strip down the throat and its chest. He saw him walking away, then he knew that it was the one that was singing. He told him, "Old man, why are you crying?" And the dog jumped to one side yelping because he got scared.

He dismounted beside it and he picked it up and the people camped at this point. He led his mount the rest of the way. His wives had set up their tipi. He rounded up his horses and he drove them to a lake. He put his dog in the water and he told him, "Now drink some water," and the dog drank. When it
got through drinking he wrapped it up in his saddle blanket and he took his dog home.

His home was already erected and his wives were through cooking. He walked in with it and put his dog in the space between the two back rests. His secondary wife told him, "Why are you coming in with that dog?" He told her, "Yes, I got him for my dog." "It's an old dog. What use is it going to be?" the woman said. He didn't speak to her any more.

His other wife served him. When he was going to eat he picked out the best meat from his plate and he fed them. His wife told him, "Why did you leave some? You should feed them all to this dog." He told her, "Why are you so irritable about him. I got him for my dog." So she didn't speak to him any more.

It slept there at night and it approached him. At this time the dog told him, "Since you are very kind to me I'll be kind to you in the same way. Even if dogs are already piled up on their meal and I'll be coming and I'll eat some of that. Even if they had already piled up on your enemy before you got those, you will capture something on them." He knew then, "I am not a chief and now there is going to be something to make me a chief."

The dog told him, "Study me. Take a dog of the same color as I am and cut it from the corner of its mouth and down the ribs and to the tail and skin it and tan the hide and you will use that in combat and you attach some feathers to me."

He told his wife, "I am going out. Please take care of my dog." While he was walking around outside he found a dead dog the same color as his dog. When he found the dog he took his knife and he skinned it from the corner of its mouth and down the ribs and the tail was still on. He came home and his dog was still there. He told his wife -- the first one, that didn't want the dog -- he gave her the hide and told her, "Scrape it and you tan it. Don't let it be hard. Fix it good. Clean it after you tan it and I'll tell you what to do to it."

The woman had it stretched out and when it got dry she soaked it over again, then she oiled it and tanned it. When it got ready, when she got through scraping it out white, she told her husband, "Here it is. It is done." He cut it open in the back and he tried it on as a bandolier. After he had cut it open in the back he plucked the feathers out from his fan. After he had the feathers attached to the hide, he then tied it to a tipi pole and he twist it up and had it for a tipi flag. This was in the morning.

In the evening the men were herding their horses to certain spots for the night. Suddenly the announcer said, "Mind your horses. Those people that camped on that side are haunted." So they watched their horses that night; the enemy that were advancing came. As he doesn't go to war and he never gained anything he didn't join the others. The enemy dug a trench far
from the camps and they were encountered.

Some came back for some ammunition, one of his wives told him, "Why did you hoist up your dog for?" He told her, "You are right, olei, bring my dog in." His old dog was still sitting where it was. The dog pelt was brought in, and he put his warpaint just the way his dog instructed him. He painted his face with real paint and made streaks on his face with his fingers. His leggings were black strand old canvas leggings. He wore garters on them, then he rolled them down.

He rolled up his horse's tail in a bob and tied it with a rawhide thong in the centre and he painted his horse. He didn't gain anything to paint his horse for. He just drew circles on the shoulder and on the hips. That's how he painted his horse and he got on his horse and he sang his war song right in the camps; we don't know the song. There he was riding around in the camps.

He said, "Could my dog have lied?" He said, 'Even if they have piled up on a carcass you will get something to eat out of it.' How could it occur to me not to gain anything to where I am going?" At this point they were battling the enemy. So he walked his horse away and when he got a little further he got his horse into a gallop. When he got to the others they told him, "They are very vicious." But he sang his war song again. He was walking up and down. He galloped his horse away. When he got to the enemy trench he jumped off from his horse. His horse was just throwing its head up, dodging the shots; it didn't run away.

He jumped on them. He didn't use a gun, he was just stabbing them. He took their weapons. When he moved back after he captured some weapons then the people jumped in. They cut the wrist off their enemies and their feet and they strung them together. Those are used in the victory singing. Himself, he took what's useful.

So immediately there was a big victory singsong. So he reattached the feathers on the dog skin. He attached seven feathers on it representing the seven men that he killed, that his war exploit. So he had something to paint his horse for. He painted him for what he did in his close combat. The other people admired the dog. The dog was called a buff-colored dog. It was called a buff-colored dog because of its mixed color with yellow.

When he copied it, he didn't transfer it. He just made a copy of his dog, then he transferred it. So copies were made of the dog robe after that. Finally it occurred the ones that went on the warpath with it. The dog became an item to go on the warpath with it. Whoever goes on the warpath with it will gain something with it, and he returned it, and then the one that went to war with it make a copy of the dog robe.
It is called the dog robe with a black sling loop; that is the new chieftainship. They gradually increased. They danced it when they sang a victory song with it. They utter the awful hooting that they make in their fighting. They utter a hoot like that to scare the enemy. The songs that they dance to is not the song of the dog; the dancing songs are different.

The ones that were painted for the dog that was mysteriously seen started to see it in their dreams, and it started to increase and eventually they became a chief and he led the people in moving camps. The young people didn't own the society, it's a chieftain society. They'll take over the Dog Society and they keep on transferring the Dog Society.

Small societies will be transferred to them first. The man that first saw the dog that was exhausted became a chief and led the people in moving camps so the Dog Society turned out that way. It is a society to lead the people in moving camps.

The poor people cannot obtain it because it's a chieftain life. Later on they dressed up in real style for it. When they started to transfer it some wear weird tail buckskin suits. Those are their dance outfits and there is their dog robe.

The artifact that they swing their arms with is called an ax. They are not ax. They are carved with serrated edges. We'll kill somebody if we strike with them. They make them fancy; they attach bells to them. When they swing their arms they jingle. They are just like a policeman's billy. They dance with them, as dogs don't have rifles, and after that it was a common society.

When the man got very old he donated the one that lived, the one that handed down the Dog Society, and it has its bed at the end where the beds begin. That's that dog. It was the exhausted dog that was first seen. It was donated to the society at this point. Then we'll say that is the only dog; the rest are all copies. The ones that made copies of the dog hide kept on adding songs to it. Finally they increased. The people of the past have battles and they capture women and the women will marry the people over here and they see all these artifacts that are transferable and they will succeed to escape after a length of time. When they get back home they'll take what they saw. Like, they won't say the dog robe society. They'll take it like as if they captured it.

The different tribe will reconstruct it and they carry it on too. That is why the sacred bundles all differ a lot. They are just like sacred discoveries and they increase in number that way. So the Dog Society was formed. That's what it is called, Dog Society. The time they got extinct I (First Rider) saw them. The Dog Society members were all old men. When those old men take over the Dog Society then they go the Horn Society and then after there is nothing to be transferred to them.

When they also transfer their Horn Society bundles they got to
the Horn Society from their Dog Society, after they have transferred the Horn Society bundles, the Group Smoking existed then and they are the ones that carry it on. If a person doesn't join the Dog Society, if they don't join the Prairie Chicken Society, if they didn't join the Pigeon Society and those that are transferable, how can they get to the Group Smoking ceremonies? A person will have to obtain all these, then he will be able to get to a Group Smoking ceremony.

Now let us say it go different. A person doesn't have to be a Dog Society member. He will join the Horns right off from the start. Now it differs again. A person that joins the Horns and the other person will just help him with payments, that person will say, "I helped him with his payments, that's how he became a Horn Society member. So I am just as good as him in the Horn Society, and the Dog Society is the same and now I can sing about the Horn society." That is why there are a lot of changes in all sacred bundles on account of the man that just helped the other man with his payments. That is why there are a lot of people that take advantage of it. Myself, what I (First Rider) saw, those are the ones that correct their holy ceremonies.

So the Dogs increased. The dog owner, when he went up to a higher rank, he was just like a fighting dog. No one can defeat him. It is said aggressive dogs, an aggressive dog, is crazy, greedy and always fights and the Brave Dog bundle was created. The dog robe was also made into a Brave Dog bundle. The Brave Dogs. The same man that saw the dog had a vision of a bear. When he had a vision of a bear he combined his dog bundle with it. He made a dagger. When the dagger was made it had a sharp point and sharp on both edges and it had a wooden handle. The handle is bound with sinew and it is looped with the jaw of a bear. The jaws were not broken in any way. The knives was looped with that.

The rattle is there. The Brave Dog is going to fight with the dagger. The song of the Brave Dogs differed a little. There are two ways about the dagger. The bear knife owners are also different; they did the same. The dagger is looped with the jaw of a bear. Many stories are told about the Brave Dog. The Brave Dog sleeps amongst the dogs way out on the prairie where the dogs all sleep.

The person that told stories said the bear knife owner sleeps where dogs all sleep. The bear knife owner, his opponents are dogs. He can't go near the dogs, and today if we go to the mountains, as soon as the bears see the dogs they'll fight them. How can he sleep among the dogs? The Brave Dog sleeps amongst the dogs. The Brave Dog will sleep outside for four nights. We'll say the broth where the bones were boiled in, the bones that are called stripped bones, they will be emptied and the Brave Dog will go there and he'll eat some of those. He will not be fed during the four days. He will take whatever food he can find. He will start a song whenever he gets cold
as he has no clothes and the people will say, "That is the Brave Dog."

These Brave Dogs don't go through transferal ceremonies in groups. There may be one among the South Peigans and maybe on the Blackfoot Reserve. The Brave Dogs don't go through transferal ceremonies in groups and they don't have dances in groups. They dance alone, themselves, the Brave Dogs.

There they are. They will not retreat in a battle, yet it occurs when they are going to flee a relative will run to him and he'll really whip him and then the Brave Dog will flee. If no one whips him he'll be killed right there. That's the Brave Dog. That is the reason why they did not increase because a lot of them were killed for not retreat. These are rules; they will not retreat. There will not be many in a battle but we'll say they are encountered. A Brave Dog will walk up. He has no guns. All he has is his dagger and his rattle. He will walk into the enemy. If he will kill them he'll kill them but they might kill him. So they use those in the battles. The people feared to get killed so they didn't take too many of the Brave Dog doggishness.

The Brave Dogs started to extinct, and this day dawn at Blackstone* along that river, there is a Brave Dog who is buried there. When people walk around there alone will hear him singing; it means it's a ghost.

*The city of Lethbridge is called Blackstone or Coal in Blackfoot.

INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX TERM</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STORIES AND STORYTELLING (SPECIFIC)</td>
<td>IH-AA.051</td>
<td>BR DOG SCTY</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>