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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:

- Describes various Horn Society ceremonies.
George First Rider: Okay, I didn't finish the story of how the Horn Society when they went for the lodge centre pole, so I'll just fill out the story. Now the Horns have brought back the lodge centre pole and their horses were led away and they sat on the north side of the shade of the sponsorer of the Holy Lodge. I (First Rider) was actually a Horn Society member at that time, that is why I tell these stories. I was the head of the drumming. The others drummers are Low Horn, Crazy Bull, Wolf Child and me; I am First Rider. My other name is Miserable Boy. At the end of our line the All Brave Dogs also sat and in the next row were the Braves. There were three societies that

sat by the shade of the sponsorer of the Holy Lodge. Bought groceries were unloaded. They were of all kinds; at that time Indian life was still rich. The bought groceries were from the sponsorers of the Holy Lodge. The sponsorer of the Holy Lodge did not buy the grub alone; his friends helped him. Crow Shoe (Rainy Chief) was the one that sponsored the Holy Lodge. Rainy Chief's society friends were the Big Pierced Ears; their young society friends were the Hard Rider Parted Hair. These two societies help their friend (Rainy Chief) in sponsoring the Holy Lodge. When the ceremony was about to start, tongues were brought to the centre by the women that sliced the tongues. The tongues were going to be distributed to the participants, and all the cookings berry brews will be all served out. The Horns prayed and then we sang. I (First Rider) sang the first song, I sang the second song and I sang the third song. I sang the fourth song, and the Horns danced the fifth song. After they danced they all sat down again. The All Brave Dogs dance too; the Braves also dance. The Horns were all half nude and they were all painted. So I sang again. I sang the first song again. I (First Rider) sang four songs and the Horns danced and I sang the fifth song and the sixth song. The seventh song is the prayer song. I did not sing the prayer song, I sang the next song and I sang the next song and then I sang the dance song and the Horns danced. So I sang eight songs. The Horns danced twice to two songs. They danced to the day songs* and then the tongues were distributed.

One big dried sliced tongue was fed to the Horn Society and the All Brave Dogs were fed too and the Brave Society were fed also. The women that helped prepare the tongues fed their relatives the tongues that they prepared. The Horns were put first, so incense was burned and the Horns were told to pray. So we all took a piece off the tongues that were given to us

*There are two special songs in the Horn Society songs. One is called the night song, sung at night, when they will dance at night; the other is called the day song, which is sung when the Horns dance in the daytime.

and we all prayed and we fed the pieces of tongues to the Great Spirit. The All Brave Dogs did the same, they also took some of the tongues and fed them to the Great Spirit. The Brave Society did the same. The women that helped and the sponsorer of the Holy Lodge and all the participants prayed but the Horns were the first ones to pray. So the tongues were fed to the heavens. First the sun was called that we were going to feast with him, and then the last Horn Societies were called. Towards the end of the prayer the ground was called that we were going to eat with the ground. After the prayer the pieces of tongues that we prayed with were buried in the ground and the rest of the tongues were eaten. We didn't eat all the tongues that were given to us; we took home what we didn't eat.

After the tongues were eaten I (First Rider) sang again. I sang the eighth song, the ninth song, the tenth song, the

eleventh song, the twelfth song and I sang the dance song that they dance to. After they danced they sat down again and some prayed. I sang the day song. The All Brave Dogs and the Braves also danced and then I sang again. The first time I sang, I sang four songs and the Horns danced. They danced to a different song, and when I sang again I also sang another four songs. That makes eight songs that I sang not counting the dance song. The songs came up to 12 songs when we sang again. The Horns danced at the 16th song so I sang 16 and the ceremony ended. Then we went home to our tipi and food was brought into the tipi. We shared with our relatives with the tongues that were fed to us and then some more food were brought in by our relatives and we feasted again.

We took our seats again and got ready to start drumming so I sang the first song. I sang four songs and then I sang the dance song and the Horns danced. They danced again and then they ate. They enjoyed the feast and night came and the Horns did some singing. The next morning the societies that were going into the Holy Lodge went in to perform. The Horns all go dressed up. Our elderly comrades were Bear Black Color and our comrade who died recently. Our elderly comrades, Bear Black Color and Heavy Head, took us into the Holy Lodge. Heavy Head took us into the Holy Lodge after he counted coups. Some of the Horn members were us in the sham dance. This performance occurred a day after the Holy Lodge was erected. During the night the staffs were unwrapped. The Horn members had to go and get their grandfathers. The former Horn Society members, the former Horn Society did the unwrapping of the staffs. Everything was dismantled and packed away. Now all the Horn Society bundles are packed. The only time they'll be opened is when they are going to be used the following summer; that is how the Horn Society operations.

CATCHING OF NEW MEMBERS (HORN SOCIETY)

The bundles have been transferred to the Horns and they have used them and if any one of the Horn members hasn't got a partner yet he'll tell the members, "Please try to get me a partner." The Horn members will be after everybody to catch to be a member of the Horn Society. Low Horn told me, "Miserable Boy (First Rider), you will get me a partner," so Little White Weasel Calf was brought in. After he sat down he said, "Is there a white rock?" So a white rock was brought in and it was set on a mound of dirt that was scraped from the incense burning place. Little White Weasel Calf said, "Now, who do you want to get for a partner?" Low Horn told him, "There is Calf Robe but he is on the alert but I really want to have him for a partner." So someone looked out to see if he (Calf Robe) is home. On the north side there was a tent, the tent was wide open. He was seen sitting on the north side close to the door facing the tipi. Who is going to approach him to get him for a partner? The scout said, "He is there but he is very wise." Little White Weasel Calf said, "Give me the rock." So incense was placed and burned and the rock was given to him and he (little White Weasel Calf) prayed. He tried very hard to keep Calf Robe down so that Calf Robe will not move. Little White

Weasel Calf took the rock and spit on the rock with a power root in his mouth. Then he took a sage grass and broke it off at the bigger end to the length of a match. He laid the piece of sage grass on the mound of dirt and said, "Now this is Calf Robe." The bud of the sage grass that was broken off to the length of a match substituted for Calf Robe. The rock was picked up and held over the incense and he (Little White Weasel Calf) spit on it. It was held over the incense again and he spit on it again. Again it was held over the incense and he spit on it again. The white rock was held over the incense again and he spit on it again. Then he (Little White Weasel Calf) laid the broken off piece of sage grass on the mound of dirt and weighed it down with the rock and he said, "This is Calf Robe. He will not be able to move and you will bring him in today. He will be your comrade."

After Calf Robe was weighed down with the rock he (Little White Weasel Calf) said, "Now who is going to capture a comrade? Yes, Miserable Boy (First Rider) will go." So the pipe was filled with tobacco and I (First Rider) took my robe. I hid the pipe under my robe and I went out. The tent of Calf Robe was on the north side of our tipi and as I was out I walked south to the camps that were on the south side of the main entrance of the camps. I went to the tent of a Blackfoot Indian; his name is Eagle Tail Feathers (Fred Stud Horse). I (First Rider) hid the pipe. Instead of going into Calf Robe's tent I went to Eagle Tail Feathers. I (First Rider) went into

his tent. He was also a Horn Society member. As I walked into his tent I told him, "My friend, I came over. I am seeking for a partner." He (Fred Stud Horse) said, "Okay, sit down." Incense was burned and he (Fred Stud Horse) prayed that I (First Rider) may be successful in getting a partner. After he had prayed I (First Rider) got up and walked. I walked between the camps; I walked quite a ways. I must have walked for about two hundred yards. Our lookout sat outside of the Horn Society tipi facing Calf Robe's tent. He had his robe over his head just keeping Calf Robe in sight and Calf Robe was also watching him. Our spy told me, "If he (Calf Robe) gets up and goes out I will uncover my head so you will know that he (Calf Robe) has moved. If he stays put I'll keep covering my head." There was a wagon on the south side of the tent with a water barrel on the wagon. As I got to the tent I stood at the back of the tent and I (First Rider) looked at the man that's watching Calf Robe; he still had his head covered. I knew that he (Calf Robe) was still inside. His (Calf Robe) mother-in-law sat by the south side corner of the tent facing the Horn Society tipi, her son-in-law was sitting inside. The door was wide open. Calf Robe was served and he started to eat and on the alert too, but how come he didn't see me? The wagon was on the north side of the tipi. So I (First Rider) started. The old woman that was watching out for anybody to come was facing the other way. I walked from behind her and I approached Calf Robe and I gave him the pipe. I (First Rider) told him (Calf Robe), "Okay, this is your smoke, Low Horn will be your partner."

Calf Robe's wife ran out to her mother whose name was Old Woman

Amongst. She touched her mother on the shoulder and told her mother, "You're supposed to be on the lookout. My husband is caught." As she looked around I was holding the pipe in front of Calf Robe. The old woman got up and told Calf Robe, "Sonny, take the pipe. The payments will be on me and don't flee from the Horns any more because I have a lot of grandchildren." The old woman's daughter was Calf Robe's (Arthur Healy) wife; her name is Putting On A Top Kot. Calf Robe (Arthur Healy) said, "Wait. I will not take the pipe. You go to the tipi, I will follow after. I will take the pipe when I get into the tipi." So I went back to the tipi. I did not have to sneak around any more.

I was not back in the tipi very long when Calf Robe (Arthur Healy) came in and he (Arthur Healy) stood at the door. Little White Weasel Calf told him (Arthur Healy), "Come around on the south side." So he (Arthur Healy) went around on the south side. The Horn members moved forward to let him (Arthur Healy) pass. He (Arthur Healy) sat on the right hand side of Little White Weasel Calf; he (Arthur Healy) was facing him (Little

White Weasel Calf). The pipe was there. Little Weasel Calf told the others, "Burn the incense." So incense was burned and he (Little White Weasel Calf) told Calf Robe (Arthur Healy), "Take that pipe and offer me a smoke and you can make any wish you want." So Calf Robe (Arthur Healy) took the pipe and gave it to Little White Weasel Calf. He (Arthur Healy) told Little White Weasel Calf, "This is your smoke. May I raise my children and may I reach old age." Little White Weasel Calf took the pipe and prayed. After he got through praying with the pipe, Calf Robe (Arthur Healy) made a downward brushing motion on both sides of Little White Weasel Calf. He (Arthur Healy) took the pipe and a Horn member that sat by the door lit the pipe for him. He (Healy) smoked and the pipe was passed around. Everyone made a downward brushing motion with a puff of smoke on the palm of the hand. Each Horn Society member blew a puff of smoke on the palm of his right hand and he'll make a downward brushing motion on his left side and he'll blow a smoke on his left palm and he'll make a downward brushing motion on his right side. He'll do this four times, twice on each side. After the smoke period Low Horn's wife, her name is Ambush Woman, got up and went up to Calf Robe (Healy) and kissed him. She (Ambush Woman) told him (Healy), "There is our bed. We will sit there." He (Healy) got up and sat beside Low Horn and Ambush Woman sat beside Arthur Healy. Now Low Horn got a partner. If Calf Robe (Healy) wasn't bewitched he'd never be captured by the Horn Society. It was said that he was doped with a power root. He (Healy) was paralyzed temporarily so that he will not get so wise and to flee from the Horn Society. I (First Rider) just captured him (Healy). The Horn members know then that Miserable Boy (First Rider) captured a man real good so they started to hire me to capture some partners for them. So I walk for them and I capture people successfully and they become members of the Horn Society.

The next morning when we were going out to dance in the open the ceremonialist came in. At this point a sacred Horn Society

bundle was going to be transferred to Calf Robe (Healy); the medicine hat of Low Horn was going to be transferred to him (Healy). Calf Robe (Healy) got a little late because the Horns went out in the open to dance before the transferal ceremony could start. The day the bundle was transferred to him (Healy) he took his clothes off when the bundle was going to be transferred to him (Healy). Ambush Woman took the clothing that were included in the transferal. He (Healy) went for the clothes to put on so the day Calf Robe (Healy) joined in the dance out in the open.

So that is how the Horn Society members get their partners. When a Horn Society member wants to get a partner he'll dope

and weigh him down with a rock that he wants to have for a partner; that is how the Horn members get their partners. Others will get a tipi peg from the person that they want to have for a partner. A person that captures a partner will pay. He'll give a horse away, and when his partner gets painted the captor will treat his partner's wife to something. A new Horn Society member will be welcome to the Horn Society by all the members. The member of the Horn Society will rule over his partner that has the main bundle. The owner of a main bundle will take orders from his partner that has the secondary bundle. The new member will be the one that will give away the wife of his partner; he will be taking her to the men.

This is the ceremony where the wife of his partner, he will be taking her to the men. This is the ceremony when a woman will be stripped naked. Before the new member joined the Horn Society he was always on the alert not to be captured by the Horn Society. But still he was caught and how can he refuse to give away the woman? The woman just gave herself up. If she goes to the man that transferred his bundle to them will have a sexual intercourse with her. After the man is through having a sexual intercourse with her, she will paint her face then. A woman that does this and paints her face, she can give a name to one of her grandchildren. There is a girl, her name is Painted Her Face In The Secret Ceremony. The man will have a sacred power root in his mouth and after the intercourse with the woman he will kiss the woman and at the same time he will push the power root with his tongue into the mouth of the woman. Women will give names to their grandchildren or to their own children for going through the secret ceremony. There is a woman that was given the name of Long Time Power Root and another girl her name is Many Power Root Woman. And in the facial painting a woman got her name by the facial painting; her name is Holy Painted Face Woman. A woman is taken to a man at night and the man will have a sexual intercourse with her; that is how women can give names to little children. The new member of the Horn Society will also give a name for taking the woman around. There is a person that was given the name of Walking At Night. I (First Rider) gave the name Walking At Night. And the name Different Power Root was also given to a man. He received various kinds of power roots so he was given the name Different Power Roots.

That is how people give names for going around at nights and also another woman's is Holy Power Root. That is what the Horn Society is. A person cannot give a name if he respects his Horn Society religion. He is still using the Horn Society religion, that is what we say. When a person cannot go through the transferals any more then he can give a name for how he took a woman around. He will give a name about what they did in all their walks. That is what the Horn Society is.

It is different when a person makes a vow to join in the Horn Society. He will keep the rules of the Horn Society religion. The man that was caught for a friend is aggressive for being caught as a friend; that is what it says. So now I'll close my story at this point. I just completed the story of how new Horn Society members are caught, so I'll conclude my story at this point. I'll give an information of the other subject, and now I close the story. I (First Rider) tell these stories clear and accurate, the stories that I know and what the story is about. Some of the stories that I tell I just heard about them. I always give the names of the ones that told me the story. Someone told me a story like this. And now I am telling stories of what I did, and now I am going to close my story.

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