

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: GEORGE FIRST RIDER  
INISKIN (BUFFALO STONE)  
FUNCTION & SIGNIFICANCE  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BLOOD RESERVE  
CARDSTON, ALBERTA  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BLOOD RESERVE  
CARDSTON, ALBERTA  
TRIBE/NATION: BLOOD TRIBE  
LANGUAGE: BLACKFOOT  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: OCTOBER 25, 1968  
INTERVIEWER: J.C. HELLSON  
INTERPRETER: DAVE MELTING TALLOW  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
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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:

- Tells the story of the buffalo stone.  
George First Rider: Now we are going to tell the story about the women that found a buffalo stone, the woman that went for wood. She was a poor woman. A man had many wives; their beds were all around the tipi. The one that had her bed by the doorway on the right-hand side is called the South Side Of The Doorway. The one that had her bed by the doorway is not a very bad wife and the one that had her bed by the doorway on the north side is the one that froze. The people had nothing to eat. They had no way of getting food and the children were all at the verge of starvation. The two wives that had their beds on each side of the doorway went for wood. There were some hips on the rocky shore as hips ripen in the winter.\* The women were picking the hard dried hips. They will boil the

hips so that their children will have something to eat. While the woman was picking hips and gathering firewood she heard a man that sang. When she heard the one that sang she looked in all directions. When she looks around she doesn't hear the man any more.

The woman started to pick hips again and she heard the man sing again. She lifted her head and looked around and she told her elder sister, "Sister, there is a man that is singing." The other woman told her, "There is no one that is singing."

The woman started to pick hips again and she heard him sing again. When she heard him again she told her sister, "Sister, he is singing again. Her sister told her, "He is mysterious, just listen to him." She looked around again but there was nobody in sight.

The woman started picking hips again and there was a cut bank on the north side. It had snow on it and when she started to pick hips again she heard the man singing. The man worded his song then. The words in the song were; "Woman, take me for I have supernatural powers," and as she looked to the cut bank she saw the dirt rolling down. It is called the brushed off shirt.

As the woman went to the cut bank, there it was, a buffalo stone. Its bed was buffalo wool. The shed off wool is the tangled hair of a buffalo; it falls off in the spring. That is what the buffalo stone sat on.

The woman took the buffalo stone and put it under her belt. Then they packed their wood on their backs and they went home and they unpacked their wood. They went in with the rose hips and they boiled them. They ate the boiled hips and they went to sleep. There was real hunger in the camps.

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\*Rose hips don't ripen in the winter, only the silver berries ripen in the winter. These silver berries are on Wolf Willows.

In the morning the woman that took the buffalo stone and her elder sister went out. When they got outside she told her elder sister, "Sister, now we will have something to eat with this buffalo stone. The buffaloes will come. Tell our husband to invite the elder people and I will sing a holy song for survival and pray so that the buffaloes will come." She had the buffalo stone under her belt.

The woman whose bed is on the south side went back inside. The other woman stayed outside because she was ashamed of what she said. The woman went in and the one that the man sat with, she is called the Woman That The Husband Sits Next To. The woman told her, "Sister, sister, our young sister found a buffalo stone. She is saying, 'Tell our husband to invite the elderly people and I will sing for survival and the buffaloes will come.'"

The woman that the husband sit next to her told the story to her husband. Her husband told her, "Yes. Tell her to come in. She will be put to death if no buffaloes come." The woman that has her bed on the south side told the other, "Go and tell our sister to come." She went out and told the woman that made the prediction, "Our husband wants you to come in. He said that if you fail you will be put to death." And the poor woman cried.

When the woman came in their husband told her, "Sit here." Their husband told her, "Now tell me what is to be done." The woman said, "Yes, this evening you will invite all the old people and I will pray so we will have something to eat." Their husband told her, "We are very hungry. There is nothing to eat in the whole camp." Us today we eat various things like bread and many other kinds of food. The people of the past lived on meat only. The woman told their husband, "There is a lot of time yet. We may as well go for some more wood and when we come back then you can invite the old people." "Yes," said the husband. "You go but don't hide away. I will kill you if you do."

The two wives went for wood and the poor woman was walking around crying. She was crying so that her prediction may come true. So they went home with their wood which they packed on their backs. The woman told the other woman that also has her bed by the door, "You will be with me from now on and you will tell our husband what the results will be." The two women went inside and sat by their husband and the woman that sits with the husband got up and sat by the doorway. Then the old people were invited and they all came into the tipi and the poor woman sat there with her head hung down because of fear. Her elderly sister was interpreting for her.

The husband told the men, "The reason why I invited you, this wife of mine is going to sing a holy song so that we will have something to eat." The husband told her, "Is it true?" It is said the husband would poke her hard with his tamp stick. "Is it true?" He would tell her. "Yes," the poor woman would say.

The poor woman told her elderly sister, "Tell them to tell the people to try and get some grease and a piece of dried meat." The elderly sister told the men what she was told to say, so all the old men got up and went out for some grease and dried meat.

A very tiny piece of dried meat was found in old woman's food container and the grease was scraped off from the inside of the food container. The grease and the tiny piece of dried meat was given to the woman. "Those will do," the woman said. The woman took out the buffalo stone and greased it with the grease, then she sang a buffalo stone song. Some of these days we will sing these songs and whoever will listen to the songs will know the song.

When the woman sang, she set the buffalo stone down. Then she

put the piece of meat in front for the buffalo stone to eat while the woman was still singing. Her song was a buffalo stone song. She sang four songs, two buffalo stone songs and two holy man songs and the buffalo stone fell over on its nose. When the buffalo stone fell on its nose they all gave thanks. The woman was still in her position with her head hung down. The people didn't say a word. The woman didn't speak a different language. The reason why she didn't speak direct to their husband was through shame and fear. She knew if what she said is not true she will be put to death. She was depending on her sister. The woman told her sister, "Tell them to tie up every dog in the camps. A bull buffalo will come right into the camps. Pity me. Don't kill it, this bull buffalo. It will be scraping itself on wood piles. If you people kill that buffalo the herd won't come. If you don't kill it the herd will come at dawn."

The man told the men, "Go and tell the people to tie their dogs and a bull buffalo will come right into the camps and it will be scraping itself on wood piles. Beware. Don't kill that buffalo. If you kill that buffalo it will be our only food; it will not feed us all." One of the men went out and announced the message to the people. The lights went out in every tipi and the old people sat up all night in the man's tipi. They were singing holy man songs. The old men that were in the tipi sang various songs. Some sang stick-tapping songs. They were waiting for the morning to come.

We don't know what time of the night when the dogs started to bark and a blizzard came and noise was heard at one end of the

camps. Someone said, "The buffalo is here so don't bother it." The buffalo came right into the camps scraping himself on wood piles. The buffalo went around the camps and it took off. The people said, "What the woman predicted is true." The announcer said, "Hold your throats. You are going to have something to eat." The poor woman was still in the same position with her head down. Towards morning she said, "Now give me a smoke." She was given a smoke. She was still in the same bent over position as she was before. She took the pipe and held it up over her shoulder. People that pray with pipes will hold them this way.\* Her, she held the pipe backwards. Then she prayed; she prayed for the abundance of the buffalo. This is not the story of the man that chased one hundred buffaloes over the cut bank. This occurred after. The story of the poor woman is different. After she had prayed she held the pipe to the buffalo stone and said, "Here is your smoke. We are going to have something to eat."

The woman told her elderly sister, "Tell them to bring me a brisket, a kidney, the corner part of a liver, and a jaw muscle. They will bring me these four. These are the buffalo stone's food." This is called the taking of the jaw muscle; that's for the white buffalo stone to eat. When broad daylight came the people shouted, "The buffaloes are here." The blizzard drove the buffaloes to the camps. The men charged the buffaloes. It's not mentioned that it was a buffalo jump, it

was just mentioned that the buffaloes came right into the camps and they started to slaughter the buffaloes. Very few of the herd escaped but the rest was slaughtered.

The men started butchering their kill. The woman said, "Even if you are very hungry, don't eat yet. When these four things that I asked for are set before the buffalo stone, then you people can eat. The buffalo stone comes first. When everybody took their meat into their tipis, the food for the buffalo stone were then brought in to the woman. The poor woman was still in the same position. When the food was brought in she took them and set them in front of the buffalo stone. When the food were set before the buffalo stone it fell on its nose again; that means it ate. Then the people started to eat. The poor woman and her sister both sat with their husband and the woman that sits next to their husband took her place by the doorway. Their husband didn't sit with her any more.

Their husband sat with the poor woman from then on and her interpreter was next in favor. From then on the man had the

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\*When a person prays with a pipe he or she will hold the pipe bowl with the pipe stem pointing away from the person. That is praying with the pipe.

people as his children. The poor woman was the favorite wife. When the woman went to sing the holy man songs her husband would invite the people. The people of the past will get their meat supply when the flowers blossom. That's when the buffaloes get fat and the Holy Woman will get a supply of tongues. A Medicine Pipe owner will put his buffalo stone in his Medicine Pipe Bundle so that the buffaloes will come to his camp. The people in earlier times just use dogs for transportation. That is why they can't hunt and they had no rifles to shoot with. All they got was bow and arrows, daggers, and spears. That is what they use to get their food.

A man will not be hard up when he owns a buffalo stone. He gets his food with the buffalo stone so he puts it in his Medicine Pipe Bundle. A Beaver Bundle owner imitates the beavers. A beaver has no rifle so there is nothing he can do to get food. The Beaver Bundle owner will ask for a buffalo stone and he is given a buffalo stone. He puts it in his Beaver Bundle. He wanted plenty, so he has four buffalo stones. The Beaver Bundle owner will use one buffalo stone to get food and he will use the other buffalo stone the next day and the other on the third day and the other on the fourth day so he gets his food four days in a row. There are also buffalo stones in a Crown Water bundle and a man that has a designed tipi has nothing to get his food with so a buffalo stone is transferred to him; then he has something to get his food with. The buffalo stone is just like his rifle and like his fast horse.

A child is given a buffalo stone necklace to live a long life; the buffalo stone is holy. An oblong stone is used for

crushing dried meat. It came from the buffalo stone. This oblong stone is used by the Horn Society to crush dried meat which is used in their secret ceremony. The buffalo stone is also used by the Horn Society in their holy ceremonies. The buffalo stone is used in all holy ceremonies. It's always there; it makes it easy for the people to get food. When a child is given a buffalo stone as a charm means that he will grow up to old age. The buffalo stone will not get old. How can the buffalo stone get sick? That is how strong the child will be. I saw the buffalo stone that had a little buffalo stone baby. I was looking at the buffalo stone baby. The Horn Society has got that buffalo stone. That buffalo stone is kept in a paint bag with some paint and the paint bag is tied. The buffalo stone became two. When they looked at the other one it was a tiny buffalo stone; they wondered where the little buffalo stone came from. The next time they opened the bag and looked at it, the little buffalo stone got a little bigger. A year after, the baby buffalo stone was an inch high and today it must be still in one of the Horn Society bundles. I saw that buffalo stone. It was a strange thing.

I also saw the cowrie shell that also had a baby shell and it's still around. People will get their food with the buffalo stone. Some tipis that are transferred and are not designed, those are buffalo stone tipis. The song to a buffalo stone tipi is a buffalo stone song.

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