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INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BRAVE DOG SOCIETY
BLOOD RESERVE
CARDSTON, ALBERTA
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CARDSTON, ALBERTA
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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 the Brave Dog Society.

George First Rider: Okay, we imitate. We tell legends of the life of the people of the past. These brave dogs are not a society. The origin of the brave dogs, it's not our life, us Indians. It's like this. A bunch of dogs were running around and suddenly they piled on one dog but they couldn't kill it. The dog went wild. The dog was out of its mind. It didn't feel the bites any more; it just lived to fight.

The dog wasn't neighborly to the other dogs any more and the dogs that he bit also go crazy and if it bites a human the human will go crazy too. So that's what they are, they went insane from bites. The All Brave Dog Society have dances and they enjoy themselves, the Brave Dog just fights. The dog kept walking around and it fights any dog that it meets, whatever

it'll meet. It bites horses and the horses will go crazy too. If it bites a human, the human will also go crazy. That is what the dog is.

A man saw the dog in his dream and the dog gave him a song. These songs are the songs of the Brave Dogs. When the dog gave him the song it used its tail for a rattle. When the human was given to him, when he saw it in his dream, he made it into a rattle. That is why these rattles are different. The rattles of the All Brave Dog Society are smaller. The rattles of the Beaver Society are too large. The Brave Dog rattle is bigger than the All Brave Dog Society rattle. The Brave Dog rattle is smaller than Beaver Society rattle.

The man made the rattle and he went around dancing. When he went around dancing a young man decided to take the rattle. He looked at him and he decided to take the Brave Dog rattle. So he approached the man and asked for the rattle. The man told him, "The rules of this rattle are hard." The young man said, "That's no problem." The man told him, "When I transfer the rattle to you, you will not be a relative to your home for four days." The man told him, "I'll take the rattle."

The people of the past don't make payments like we make payments nowadays. Their payments are parfleches and knives, etc. The man told him, "I give it to you." So the rattle was transferred to the young man. His face was painted and the rattle was given to him. Then he was made to get up and dance with the rattle; he had his own way then.

The ceremonialist was just telling him what to do. The ceremonialist told him, "Now you are through dancing the initiation dance and now you are going out to dance." He taught him the song that he was going to dance to. So he went walking among the camps. The songs are not the kind to dance to. It won't be long when you will hear them; they will be sung.

When the people saw him that he had been dancing for a length of time, he was fed the way dogs are fed. What is fed to him are thrown at him. He picks them up and he eats them. He was noticed when he got thirsty and the people gave him some water to drink in a water container. He didn't take it to drink the water; he went down on his knees and hands and he drank.

He went away when night came. He look for the place where the dogs all curled up and he slept there. He had no clothes, just a breechcloth. He curled up among the dogs. The dogs will scatter and he lays there alone. He gets up and he'd walk away. He'd be heard singing way out on the prairie. People will say, "There's that Brave Dog." He went into the camps in the morning and he just danced around in the camps. He doesn't dance, he sings and shaking his rattle. He never slept in a tipi during the nights. He never was sowed in a plate to eat. We'll say he'll eat out of a garbage where leftovers are disposed of and that is where he finds something to drink.

He went into his lodge when the four day and four nights were over and then he put his rattle away. It was heard there are some people that are going on the warpath. When the war party started, he didn't even take an extra pair of moccasins. He didn't carry a knife, he didn't carry any weapons, he didn't have a rope, he just took his rattle and his robe and he started off and he joined the war party. He walked at the rear.

When the war party were going to go across the river he didn't help in building a raft. The Brave Dog just hung onto the raft; he was towed across the river. The men will build shelters and he doesn't help in building a shelter. He'll crawl in any shelter and he'll go to sleep; the others can't send him away.

The men will cook and he won't help in cooking. He will be just watching them and he'll take the first cooking that is taken out from the fire. In the past all they eat is meat. He'll look at the men and he'll take the knife of one of the men and he'll use it to eat his meat. He just lived the way he wanted. That's the Brave Dog; so he lived just like that. He kept walking in the rear of the war party and when they kill something he'll take what he wants and he'll eat them. When they got to the enemy camps, when they saw the camps, when they were going to fight, he took the rope of one of the men, the knife of another man and the bow and arrows of another man and he started walking to the camps. He didn't stop. He walked to the tipi and cut the rope with which the horse was tied.

He led the horse back to his comrades. Nobody saw him. The people fled; he followed them. They fled a long ways and they

slept. The enemy found out that their horses were gone and they tracked them down and they found them. "Here they are." They found the tracks. So they slept. When they awoke the horses were herded away and then the enemy fired at them and they all fled. When he himself jumped up he just took his rattle and song and danced. There he was, walking around. One of the men ran back. He (Brave Dog) was still dancing. He started to whip him and then he fled. If nobody whips him he will be killed right there.

Then he fled. When he fled he went on the lead. He was far out ahead and the others got him and they went home. The people said, "Let's go to a different place, we don't want to go home empty-handed." When they got to the other place they grabbed the Brave Dog and tied a rope around his neck so that he will not go into the enemy camps again. He was led away and he was tied up and the others approached the camps.

He was given a horse to ride and he fled on that horse. When they went home the men come up on the ridge victorious but himself (the Brave Dog) just made himself dance into the camps. He didn't join in in the victory singing, he was just making himself dance. Some got alerted. They said, "A different

tribe is here," and they charged and the Brave Dog followed.

This is the life of the Brave Dog. He just kept on walking and he jumped into the enemy foxhole and he killed them just with a knife. He didn't take any scalps, he didn't capture any weapons, he just killed them. The people came back with captured weapons and they sang the victory song. But he didn't, he just made himself dance.

Everything was hard. Where there is danger and where people will die the Brave Dog will approach it; he will not retreat from it. That is why they get killed, that is why there are not too many of them, because they have no fear. It's not because that they are fearless. It's a rule. Is there a dog that has a gun? Is there a dog that has a knife? They are just like dogs, they just have teeth. How can a dog call for help? That is why they don't call for help.

I (First Rider) saw only one. He is a South Peigan; that is where I saw this Brave Dog. He made himself dance. There was a dance. He himself was walking and singing among the camps. He went to the dance. While he walked to the dance, some of the grub for lunch were covered. He took what was exposed and he went out of the camps and he ate that. So that is the one that I saw. He just had a rattle and he painted his face with yellow ochre and his mouth with red ochre.

The All Brave Dog Society, we see the All Brave Dog Society. A Brave Dog is painted the same as the leaders of All Brave Dog Society. They have yellow facial painting with a line across the face of red ochre. Recently the All Brave Dogs were dressed in full regalia. I (First Rider) saw some that wore medicine hats. They didn't dress like that. There are no All Brave Dog Riders. You know that dogs don't ride on horseback. It's through a feat that they have riders in the society; that's what it is. The transferable artifacts, the Brave Dog, it's not just a Brave Dog item. I (First Rider) have told you that they were dogs that were fighting. The dog that went insane from bites is the one that transferred the Brave Dog rattle. The others are different. They were chasing each other and they got together with women amongst them; the All Brave Dog women existed.

Things have changed. The drums existed recently. Hard rawhides were generally used; we drum on them. The ones that walk in front -- they are called that walk in front and they are called the item to go ahead with* -- those are the ones that have feathers, they have horns on them. Those are the major bundle owners. They are called to go ahead with; their bodies are ochred and they paint their faces. When I saw it again, some don't strip themselves; they still have their clothes on. They just go around dancing by tipis for food. That's the All Brave Dogs.

The Brave Dogs are just fighters. They take by force. It is called they swap food away. So that is how the All Brave Dog

Society is used, the society of the All Brave Dogs. The Brave Dogs are alone, but it occurs they are transferable and gradually the Brave Dogs increased. But they don't all dance in the same place and it occur when the Brave Dogs die they go to the burial place with their rattles and they started to extinct.

I (First Rider) think that there is no Brave Dog on the Blood Reserve. There is still one on the Peigan Reserve and I think that there are no more Brave Dogs on the Blackfoot Reserve but there are a lot of All Brave Dogs. Those societies are still going strong. The reason why they are like that, the way they have dances is too exciting and the people have a joyous feeling to be an All Brave Dog member.

The Brave Dogs are operating now, because they'll suffer especially if they go through a transferal during the winter.

*The item to walk ahead with is the headdress of the All Brave Dog Society with split horns.

They are half naked, they have no chance of sleeping in a home, and now the Brave Dogs are going extinct. And now the All Brave Dog Society is changing. Now the Brave Dogs, a lot of All Brave Dog Society rattles are sold and some reconstructed them and so they are not the first rattles.

Now it's changing continually. The Brave Dogs and the All Brave Dogs are the same. The All Brave Dog members are putting themselves away. They don't dance any more like they used to dance. Now they dance in white man clothing and then they paint their faces. The All Brave Dogs have all the same facial painting and they have feather headpieces and they don't use their headpieces any more and they don't paint their faces any more; they just dance barely.

Now they ride. The first All Brave Dog Society don't ride on horseback. I (First Rider) have told you the reason they ride is through a feat. All these artifacts that have riders is through a feat. And the Horns, the Black Seizers' pipe has no rider yet; they walk around the camps on foot with it.

The All Brave Dogs bundles are starting to extinct now. They operate the white way. They are not operating by the Indian artifacts. They have operated the white way and now they will extinct.

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