

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: GEORGE FIRST RIDER  
HORN SOCIETY 2  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BLOOD RESERVE  
CARDSTON, ALBERTA  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BLOOD RESERVE  
CARDSTON, ALBERTA  
TRIBE/NATION: BLOOD  
LANGUAGE: BLACKFOOT  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: MARCH 24, 1969  
INTERVIEWER: J.C. HELLSON  
INTERPRETER: DAVE MELTING TALLOW  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: PROVINCIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES  
OF ALBERTA  
TAPE NUMBER: IH-AA.076  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 54  
PAGES: 7  
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

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:

- Discusses the practice of exchanging wives in the Horn Society.

George First Rider: I explained the story that I told, when I transferred my Horn Society bundle. I got wise when I joined the Horn Society with my wife; everything was explained to me. Before that I didn't know very much about the Horns. I knew about everything when I joined the Horns with my wife. I thought I'd study it right through and I did. I know a lot about the Horn Society. There are a few that know more about the Horn Society than me. I don't mind saying, today, this winter of 1969, I don't mind saying that there is no Blood Indian or a Blackfoot Indian that know more Horn Society songs than me.

Now I will say when I went through, when I know all about the Horn Society, that is why I told the story. When I was given the authority to officiate, when I was educated, I named these old people that educated me then I managed to officiate it. I was home when Scraping White came. He told me, "Your son is in a hurry. He is going to sponsor the secret ceremony." He (Scraping White) said, "Don't refuse, the woman was a nice woman." I (First Rider) told him (Scraping White) yes and I gave him one week. He said, "You will go to Stand Off. You will be staying in a tipi which is already erected. There is water and wood. They'll give you some food."

I went when the one week was up. Before I went to Stand Off I went to town and I bought for this thing that you are going to take. When we got to Stand Off everything was ready for us so we went inside; the ceremony will start the next night. Food was brought in for us; I fed myself. Water was brought in too. The water was in a barrel and the wood were already chopped. I don't have to chop wood.

I was just sitting holy during the night. In the morning my breakfast was brought in. I was told, "Your daughter fed you these." When night came the Horn Society members just drank berry soup; myself, I didn't eat. Some wood were put on the north side of the door; those are going to be used to build a fire. And there was my woman, my partner. She is not my wife. I owned the bundle. It was given to me as a gift and I paid a horse on it. The horse was a roan and the woman was given some clothes and the horse. I walked for him and he gave it to me. He said, "It's yours now." Now I am my distant wife's father. The bundle is mine now and I am going to give it away.

When night came a messenger came in. He said, "How many are the payments? How are we going to pay?" I (First Rider) told him, "There are eight (8) dry goods and one (1) horse, that is what you will pay." So he went out. We just waited and they started to drum. Us here, we burned the incense when they drummed. We waited for them and we laid down after they had

finished drumming. My woman partner laid on the south side of the doorway and I (First Rider) laid on the southwest side. The man that I hired, the one who is going to pray for me, laid at the back.

I (First Rider) heard someone cough on the outside. He came in very quietly and he sat by the fireplace and he put the kindlings on the fireplace and he lit them. He saw the wood when the fire gave light. He went quietly to them and he took them. He didn't break a stick, he didn't make a noise, he just put them on the fire and they went up in flame and the inside was all lighted. There was a lamp which was turned low. He went to the lamp and he turned it up high and it gave light. He went out and a woman was brought in. She had no ring, she had no earrings, she had no necklace, she had no dress. She just wore a pair of holy moccasins. He took her in and he sat her down on a blanket; she was facing the altar. My woman

partner instructed me how I am supposed to work and what the woman was supposed to do. So he had her seated and he walked right around and he pulled the covers from the woman's face and he kissed her. He walked up to me and he also pulled the covers from my face and he kissed me too. He just made a downward brushing motions on each side of the man that slept at the back. Then he said, "There is your smoke," and he went out.

We all sat up after he went out for a time. The man took the pipe, and me, I (First Rider) got up and I sat down. The man just made a sign at the woman. She got up and she took a lighter stick. She held it into the fire and she lit the pipe for the man and the man smoked. When the pipe burned out, the woman, my woman partner, got up. She took the incense long and she burned incense; she took the sweet cicely. I (First Rider) got up and I stood at the doorway. My woman partner got up. She went to the woman. She held her hands over the incense and she touched her on the head. Again she held her hands over the incense and she touched her on her shoulders. She held her hands over the incense and she touched her on the stomach, on her ribs. She held her hands over the incense and she held her buttock and she pushed her up. She made a sound, ishpa, and the woman got up. I (First Rider) went out when she stood at my back.

I walked to the right of the tipi. When I got far enough I started to count my steps. I walk southeastward. I walked a real long steps; I counted one hundred (100) steps. My counting came to one hundred when I came to a hollow place and I sat down facing to where the sun rises. I didn't know the back of me. She coughed behind me, I (First Rider) got up when she coughed. I walked around to the right hand side and when I got to her feet the woman was lying there nude and I prayed. I

prayed like this:

"Now, Old woman Night Moon, you are looking down on me. May things that are going to occur with this woman be easy. May the thing that she is going to do will not fail. May she be wise. May she understands her instructor."

Then I (First Rider) held her by her toes and I pulled her legs a little apart. I walked around her again and I stood at the same place and I prayed again:

"May we see each other for a long time and may our children live long and our relatives."

Then I held her again on her toes and again I pulled her legs apart, wide apart. She was just lying there. I was seeing her. She had her eyes closed. I walked around her again and I stood at the same place and by this time I've seen everything between her legs. Again I held her by the toes and I lifted her legs. I pulled her legs back real plenty and she laid there in that position. I walked around her again and I stood again at the same place and there she was lying in front of me.

I had her legs folded back and I prayed again:

"May she not mind what I am going to do to her. May we have the same blood."

I knelt down after I got through praying and I unbuttoned my pants. I already had an erection. The woman wiggled herself into position as I shoved it into her and right away she hugged me and every time I push down she would push up against me. When she got me real satisfied I kissed her and I pushed the sweet cicely root with my tongue into her mouth and I told her, "You got a facial painting," and I got through with the intercourse. I wiped myself with a muskrat skin and I just put it between her legs and I went home and she went home too.

When I (First Rider) got inside, the woman told me, "Did you set up a good trap?" I told her, "Yes, I did set a good trap. Our daughter is wise." Her, she went home. Someone was peeping out for her from her lodge. When she was noticed that she was coming, the person went inside and said, "She is coming." They listened and she told the man that brought her in my lodge, "You got a facial painting," and the people all ran out and they kissed her. They took her inside. They made a bed ready for her and she laid down and she was given her dress. And we here, we went to sleep. Very early in the morning they were set up. Now the facial paintings are just

like displays. The sweet cicely roots we mixed the purple paints in clam shells. Purple paints are hard to mix; they are mixed in clam shells. We had them all set so that they will soak, the mixtures that are going to be used for facial paintings. My mother had already prepared the pemmican. It is now a pemmican and there is a supply of good water. There is water and the real food.\* Then they are all covered. Twigs are laid across the wooden bowl so that the cloth will not sink in. The same thing is done to the paints that are going to be used for facial paint. Sticks are laid over them and then they are covered with a cloth.

They came over. Us, we sat there. We'll never go out and we will not move. Just the two of us sat in the tipi, me and the woman. The Horn Society members came in; the woman that sat by the doorway had the pemmican set ready. When the woman came in, all the men came in, in just their moccasins and breechcloths. As they came in they'd make a downward brushing motion on each side of her and they'd kiss her and they'd come up to me and they make a downward brushing motion from my head and down each side of me and they'd kiss me too. The woman that walk at the rear didn't kiss us, she just sat down.

As the woman came in she gave the pemmican to the other woman and she gave our pemmican to the woman that just came in and came to the back and she set it down. The Horn Society members all got up and ran out. They all hired one man to paint their faces. The one that sat at the back also brought in a woman. He went and invited Scraping White who was going to sit at the back. When Scraping White came in, the grandfathers started to

come in; they all sat on the south side and the ceremony started. The members were getting up and they were kissing me. The pipe was prepared. The pipe that was just brought in was smoked; it was handed around. The rock was ochred after the smoking. The rock was handed around after it was ochred and we purified ourselves with it. The water was ochred crosswise with black ochre which was greased. The Horn members that brought in the woman were initiated into drinking from this water. When I (First Rider) looked at the woman she only wore just a dress and her fur robe. After the members drank they walked around and they greeted us again and the pemmican was fed to them. The pemmican that they came in with was handed down to the woman by the doorway and she served me some in a wooden bowl; so we exchanged food with the Horn members.

-----

\*Dried meat and pemmican are called real food in Blackfoot.

As I had a sexual intercourse with the woman the night before and now I am apologizing them I exchanged a meal with them and I have smoked with them and they have brought in what they paid me. They greeted me after they were initiated into eating. Okay, I (First Rider) laid down facing the wall. I didn't see her when her dress was taken off again. Her dress was taken off and she was ochred all over her entire body. After she was ochred -- the old man ochred the woman all over her body - after he got through painting he took the purple paint. It's those sticks (paint pencils). He made a line around her face with his little finger then he took the stick and he stirred the paint and he drew a line around her face in the line that he scraped off.

The sun was on her right cheekbone and a cross on her left cheek. The sun was drawn between her breasts. She just had her dress on over her shoulders so that the paintings will not erase and I (First Rider) sat up. Okay, they got up again and they greeted me again after they were painted. The incense was burned when they were all seated again. Okay, then I spoke at this point. I said, "Okay, my children, my son is wise, my daughter is wise. You got that bundle good. You will get that other artifact when the leaves start to fall." And they all give thanks.

Okay, they were given authority to take some food home. The stick is now given to the woman; I didn't give away the clam shell, just the stick was given away. Lately the clam shells were given away with the stick. At this point everyone gave thanks for the stick and they prayed with it. They all prayed for me. They take those, their circular facial paints. What they took during the summer are painted down. The ones that came only went through the secret ceremony twice. Only two paintings were drawn; they participated twice in the secret ceremony.

Okay, they started to go out at the conclusion. We packed everything when they all went out. It wasn't long after, the

same old man came in again. He said, "I came for a very important thing. Your son wants to start again." When they were taking their stuff in, the pipe dropped. When the pipe dropped it that misfortune will come to the members. They dropped the pipe and he made a vow to go through the ceremony again. Okay, my woman, the different woman, couldn't do anything. I had to go and get the other one who didn't live very far. I (First Rider) did the errand for the Swan Staff owner. At that time the Swan Staff owner's name was Heavy Head, his other name is White Elk; his wife's name is First Killer.

I walked up to her. I told her, "Old woman, our son made a vow." She said, "I have no objections. You own the things that was given away." So I went back home and I told the man, "Yes, they will also take it." When he went back the Horns sang, they danced, and then they dispersed. And us, we had things prepared when the woman came in. The one that I gave away belonged to the Lighter Staff and the other one belonged to the Swan Staff. Now I am going to give them away. Sixteen (16) dry goods in payment and two head of horses. Everything was brought and two sticks representing the horses.

We made our beds the same way as before. That woman operated the same way as before; she followed the same instructions that were given to her before. It differed with me at this time. The woman told me, "You will not have an intercourse with that woman again. You remembered that time we took the bundle I was pregnant, so you will not overdo it yourself. Now you will spread her legs and all you have to do is lie on top of her and give her the sweet cicely root and tell her, 'You have a facial paint.' The time we took the bundle, the man couldn't have an intercourse with me because I was pregnant; so that is how you are going to give it away." So that is how I (First Rider) gave it away. I didn't have an intercourse with her; I just kissed her with the sweet cicely. I just saw everything between her legs and I gave her the sweet cicely.

The facial paintings differ a lot; they are not all the same. Okay, if the ones that are going to give it away the stick get excited they will take the woman just the way they want and the woman will have no objections. The other walk I (First Rider) made was the same. I know the woman that I was going to give the facial paint had a bad sickness, she had a bad blood. I didn't have an intercourse with her. I just gave her the sweet cicely root. I remembered a woman... this man had syphilis. His holy son's name is Big Nose; his wife's name is Sleeping In The Water. The man had an intercourse with her and that woman had a bad sickness. She died of, we'll say of being eaten. She had syphilis in her stomach; she died of that. So that is what it is. They ruin themselves and they kill themselves of what they do. So that is what the Horn Society is.

The people that join the Horns cannot tell the story of the secret ceremony. If they tell the story to a person and if the person is stingy with his wife he will not join the Horn

Society. And to this day they say that it is holy, we don't tell the story. How can we know that it is holy if the story is not told? And myself, I (First Rider) illustrate it and I call it. It is not holy because we have intercourses in it. That is the Horn Society. I conclude my story here. That's all.

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
SEX				
-ceremonial	IH-AA.076	HORNSOCIETY2	54	2-7
SOCIETIES				
-Horn Society (Blood)	IH-AA.076	HORNSOCIETY2	54	2-7