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 butchering techniques.
- Tells the story of a shield that was given to him.

George First Rider: Okay, this is just the same as if I am going to illustrate a Group Smoking ceremony. I know I was camping at a farm, my father went to the Blackfoot Reserve. And now I lost the person that gave him the shield. The shield is a Crow Indian shield. The one that owns the shield, who gave the shield, his name is... Woman Pregnant's son's name is Sleeping. He is the one that owns the shield.

The shield... Sleeping was going to strike. As he was going to strike, his opponent had a gun; his opponent shot him. He threw his shield in front of him. His shield was hit in the
centre; he was hit with it in his stomach. As he was on horseback his opponent shot up at him. He stooped over on his horse and turned around. He wasn't taken by the enemy; his own people took him back. Sleeping rode with his son in front of him on his horse; he was dead by this time.

When they were almost surrounded by the enemy, Sleeping got out from the trench. No, Woman Pregnant got out from the trench, charges at the enemy and they back away from him. So Sleeping was not taken by the enemy. Woman Pregnant kept the shield. That shield was new. The Blackfoot Indian that I don't remember was a friend to Sleeping and he takes Woman Pregnant as his father. Sleeping told his father, "Give the shield to my friend," so the shield was given to this Blackfoot Indian and I don't remember his name.

My old man went to the Blackfoot Reserve and he gave the shield to my old man. When my old man came with it the shield had a bullet hole in it. There is a deceased old man, his name is Red Band Design. His other name is Precious Old Man; he is called in English by the name of Precious Old Man. He said, "This shield is odd. Let it be this way. My shield doesn't exist. My shield is the Never Sitting Shield. When I had the Never Sitting Shield my name was Miserable Boy and now I give First Rider the name Miserable Boy. I'll give him the shield. I still own the shield, the Never Sitting Shield. I gave it to Precious Pipe, alias Many Mules. The shield was purchased by other people and now Long Faced Crow (R.N. Wilson) owns the shield now; it is not owned by the Indians any more. The ones I (First Rider) gave the shield to are all dead, as the Never Sitting Shield doesn't exist any more. The young man Miserable Boy will keep the shield for a long time. I will re-construct the Never Sitting Shield and I will transfer it to him." My father agreed to the plan right away. He told me, "Take it, my son. He gave you the name Miserable Boy and he will also give you his shield and I agreed to take it."

I (First Rider) took two buffalo horns. So I took them, I came home with them, the old man sawed them off. They were sawed off to the length of the finger that we point with (index finger), they were burned black and they were polished and holes were burned on them and they were attached to the shield underneath. The shield is about covered with tail feathers. There is a bird that is sketched on the shield. It is like a thunder bird and the bird was hit dead centre; the horns were on each side of the bullet hole.

After the horns were attached then the Never Sitting Shield was ochred and it was packed away again; it was covered with a deer skin. The shield is fringed in the centre; the fringes were ochred with yellow ochre. The yellow-ochred part was just brightened and it was hung on a tripod outside. My father's friends are the Fast Horse Owner's society; the Fast Horse Owners were all there. One's name is Three Bulls, the other one's name is Running Crane, the other one's name is Elk Standing In The Centre, the other one's is Bottle. His name is
Scabby Young Bull, and there is Little Shield. The other one's name is Running Antelope, the other's name is Bull Plume, and the other one's name is Cropeared Wolf, and a Peigan Indian -- his name Bull Head. These men all came.

Red Band Design transferred the shield to me. After I was seated my father fed the participants. Prayers were said before meal. The shield was brought in when they got through eating; incense was burned and then it was brought in. The shield was held to the incense and the cover was taken off. It was put by the incense, folded. There was a stick driven into the ground and that is where the shield was hung.

I (First Rider) stripped myself of my clothes; my moccasins were taken off too. I just had my breechcloth on, and the ceremony started. We started performing before the shield was taken down. My wife... Red Band Design had no wife. His woman helper was Cropeared Wolf's wife; her name is Long Time Pipe Woman. Her and my wife sat towards the door. My wife's face was just painted. She performed just the way we performed.

I was painted after we had performed. I was painted all over my body with yellow paint and then I put on my moccasins. Then my face was painted with real paint with yellow paint on my forehead and on my chin. As my body was all painted with yellow ochre, my hands were daubed with real paint, and then we performed again.

Then it was said the shield will be taken down for a gun. My rifle was a No. 30-30. The shield was taken down for that rifle and then we did some performance and then it was put on my back. A different song was sung. We got up. We stood to the north side from the back of the tipi and we danced there facing to the centre and then we turned around dancing facing to the wall and then we turned around towards to the centre and again we turned facing the wall. When we turned around they stopped singing.

We went to the east side towards to the door and we danced again in the same manner and then we went across to the south of the door and we danced there again. We danced twice one way and twice the other way then we went to the back. We stood on the southwest side and we dance there again. We danced in the same manner. We stopped and danced four times in a circle. We danced facing towards to take the shield off from me. After war exploits were told the shield was hung up again. After it was hung up the men sang whatever they think is important, the sacred things that they were painted for. My father sang about the headpieces of the Holy Woman. My father went to war with those. He roped some horses. He tied the neck of a bald-faced horse with a dark roan horse. Those are the horses that my father roped.

The headpieces are the main feathers of a peregrine falcon and the rattlers of a snake is attached to it; that is how the headpieces are. When Cropeared Wolf sang he sang of his
bunched up feathers that he dances with. He went to war with them. Little Shield sang of his crow headpiece. He went to war with the crow headpiece; he had a horse with it. And the one that transferred the shield to me sang of the shield; he went to war with it. These four men each gave me a song.

After the men sang, payment were then brought forward and I (First Rider) covered it up. Me and my wife both worked on it and then it was put away; it wasn't taken out it was just put away. And now I know the song to the shield. I know it because I was made to get up and dance to it. Later on I just unwrapped it and we went into the Holy Sundance Lodge. My friends were the Gray Horse society and we danced the dugout dance. So we went in. I (First Rider) danced the dugout dance with my shield; I danced with it once.

I must have been two years with it. My father went to the town of The Men With Many Wives (Cardston), he came back a little intoxicated. Not long after came Many Head Pieces -- that is Frank Red Crow. He put down forty to buy with.* My father didn't even tell me, "I am going to sell your shield." My father just took it and he gave the shield to Many Head Pieces and today that person took the shield and he sold it to a white man. I don't know how much he got for it. So that shield, it was just constructed like the Never Sits Down Shield.

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*Forty to buy with are forty dollars ($40.00).
I don't know how that recent Never Sits Down Shield is but I (First Rider) will recognize it by the way it was illustrated to me. That one that was transferred to me was a remake; it was constructed like the original one.

Okay, I (First Rider) didn't see how the buffaloes are butchered. Centre Speak (Mr. Iron) lived down along the river. He is my father's friend and a man named White Bear, his other name is Heavy Runner, he lived by a crossing. That is where they killed his steer. He (Centre Speak) spread out some blankets on the ground for his friends and the women built a fire. He (Centre Speak) spread out some blankets by the fire for his friends. Centre Speak put his tobacco cutting board by the fire and his pipe, his tamp stick, and a stick for lighting the pipe. My father filled the pipe with tobacco and he lit the pipe with the stick and they started to smoke and Centre Speak was all alone butchering. When he (Centre Speak) shot down the steer my father told him, "It must be fat." Centre Speak told him, "Okay, you have got your share. You will take the intestines."

Heavy Runner told him (Centre Speak), "We don't see the ones that go for aid, I came for aid." Centre Speak told him (Heavy Runner), "You've got your share, the top." I (First Rider) don't know what the top means. Centre Speak started to butcher. When he cut the legs he skinned them with the hoofs and he cut off the cords right away and he pounded them on the hoofs and he gave the cords to his friends. The men got through smoking. They took their knives and they started to
eat, they ate the cords raw.

When he (Centre Speak) had the carcass bare he cut the brisket. He chopped them for his friends and he fed them the briskets, then he took out the intestines. I (First Rider) thought when he told him (Dog Child) the intestines, he (Centre Speak) was going to give him (Dog Child) some of the intestines and half of the rump and the ribs and he'll give him some of the intestines. The one that he told the top, he gave him the ribs and the neck; that's what he (Centre Speak) gave him (Heavy Runner).

When he cut the ribs he (Centre Speak) told Heavy Runner, "Heavy Runner, where is your skin?" Heavy Runner said, "Ah, I am glad to have something to eat," and the ribs were set before him. There were a lot of meat that he cut separate. He (Centre Speak) named everything that he cut. I (First Rider) didn't understand what he was naming and where the meats were located. I (First Rider) know the blade roast and the blade roast sinew. When he was going to cut the intestines he also said, "Prepare these spleen* right away so that they will not get bad. I also know where the spinal cord is located and the flank and the stomach tissue. I (First Rider) got these parts that he all named.

Okay, he (Centre Speak) cut the hide. He told him, "We don't tan with the... we'll cut out the hump." He cut it where the shoulders joined and down where the mane is; they are going to use that for moccasin soles. He (Centre Speak) told my old man, "Here it is." He cut the hide at the stomach part, he didn't cut the hide up to the back. He told White Beaver, "You are going to make a food container, here is where the hide is thin." The woman said, "I am very glad to have this hide."

The hides that are going to be used for food containers are not stretched out and pegged down with pegs into the ground; they are threaded through holes so that they won't stain. The woman immediately punched holes so that they won't stain. The woman immediately punched holes into it as she took the hide then she cut a strip from around the same hide; she will lace the hide with that. She told me, "Son, please go and cut me a willow." I (First Rider) took the ax, I cut a willow. She bend the willows into a circle. She spread out the skin then she put the willows that she bend into a circle over the skin. The circle was bigger than the skin. She threaded the strip of thong through one of the holes and she tied it and she started to lace the skin onto the circle of willows. When she come around to the other side, the skin got taut. So the skin was laced. The hair wasn't scraped off and it's a green hide and it was not treated.

When they were ready to go, she just loaded her lace hide just the way it was. Her home was not far. The next day she peeled off the tissue from the skin. She didn't treat it, she just peeled off the tissue. She refined it when it got dry. She had it all refined and it was real white, then she oiled it
after she had refined it. She just oiled it. She didn't put it where it's warm, she put it in a cool place. Then she designed it and she folded it. After she folded it, it wasn't pinned with anything or anything to tie it with. Then she tied it over on top and she put it away. As it was just recently oiled, the hide was saturated with the oil. When it was unfolded it was done. It was nicely designed and then they put food in them; that is why they take them.

*Spleens get spoiled very fast if they are not cooked right away. That is why the Blackfeet say prepare the spleens right away so that they will not get bad.

When me and my mother got home with the blade roast she didn't cut it she just scraped the meat off and she took the sinew and she stuck it onto a board to dry. When it got dry she took a strand of it and it was a sinew; that is how they are prepared.

The covering of the heart is a tissue. She also had that tanned and she puts fat in it. The bladders are different; porcupine quills are wrapped in the bladders. Okay, the hoofs are boiled. The shin bone is cut at the knee joint and at the fetlock joint and it is broken in two on the hoof. A stick is chewed soft at one end and marrow is pumped out with the stick. I (First Rider) ate some of them. The abomasum will be washed and the marrow will be scooped out onto it and the marrow will be wrapped in the abomasum and they are eaten. The marrow squirts out; they are very delicious. So that is how we eat them. Now the hoofs are boiled. After a hard boiling, the water was changed and fresh water was poured into the pot and when it came into a boiling point, the water was changed again and now they will be done.

The outer bark of a chokecherry wood is scraped off and the inner layer is then scraped off too and it is put in the pot to season the hoofs. They were boiled real soft. I ate some. The chokecherry bark made them taste real good. The main hoofs were pulled out and holes were made at the toes and sticks were inserted into the holes and they are tied together and were inserted into the holes and they dried up and the rest were eaten.

The coronet bones were also boiled and they were soft and we can eat them. The coronet bone is not thrown away, it is given to a child to play with. The child will have for a horse. The hoofs were washed after they got dry and then they were oiled and the stick was taken out and a strip of rawhide was threaded through the holes with a knot at the inside so that it will not go right through. They are all strung together and if we want to tie them above the inside of the door, when we come in the hoofs will be moved and they'll jingle. They are also tied onto the smoke flaps and when the wind blow they jingle. The hoofs are also give to the Beaver Society and they use them in the white buffalo dance with them. They are associated to the beaver pipe. I also saw some that were attached to a pipe;
I also saw some that were attached to a shield. The Never Sits Down shield that was transferred to me, the covering of it, an old man said that four single hoofs will be attached onto the covering of the shield at four places. The hoofs will jingle when it is carved out. They are not on the shield. When I owned the shield the hoofs were not attached yet. So I illustrated those, and I don't know about butchering very good. That's all.

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