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 incense in ceremonialism.
Diane Hellson: This must be the one that we tried to play with.

George First Rider: Okay, we are going to tell a different story. We illustrate the stories that we tell. We have told the story of the materials that are used for burning, the incense. Now we are going to talk about the altars. The things that I illustrate were told to me by a number of people but I'll explain and illustrate what I actually saw. Now we are going to talk about the scraped incense burning places. We are not going to give an illustration on the incense burning place. I'll put the scraped incense burning place to the Horn Society scraped incense burning place. Now the Horn Society
scraped incense burning place is going to be transferred to me. I am going to join the Horn Society. I'll tell a man who is a former Horn Society member, "I am scrape the incense burning place." Something is given to me. The thing that was given to me, I'll put it this way, the associated staff is given to me.

A corral was made with wagons and the inside was lined with tipi liners. I was told where is the bed of the owner of the associated staff and I was told the owner of the associated staff has his bed against the pole to which the top of the tipi is tied. I took an axe which I will use to scrape the ground and then is an incense tong. The sweetgrass are complete and a fireplace. I took the incense tong and I went with it to the fireplace and I picked up a hot charcoal. The old man made a temporary incense burning place. I placed the hot charcoal in the ground and he burned the incense then I sat beside him and I held my hand to the incense and then to the axe. Again I held my hand to the incense and then to the axe, and again I held my hand to the incense and then to the axe, and again I held my hand to the incense for the fourth time and then I picked up the axe. The axe was held to the incense and then towards the ground and again I held the axe to the incense. We both held the axe and on the fourth time I held the axe alone. I scraped the ground west towards me and I raked up the dirt that I scraped to the west side of this point. I prepared the incense burning place beforehand. The associated staff is not transferred to me yet but I scraped the incense burning place before the time came. The incense tong was placed by the incense burning place; all the Horn members will use it. Each one of the Horn members scraped an incense burning place. I (First Rider) paid a horse for scraping the incense burning place and all the Horn Society members paid too. At this point the scraping of the incense burning place was transferred to me. Sweetgrass was used for incense. The ones that sat on the north side scraped and raked the dirt to the north and the ones that dance in the opposite way scraped their incense burning places towards the centre. The incense burning places are not square; they're scraped in an oblong shape. The Holy Woman's incense burning place is not scraped. It is dug to a certain depth and then it is filled with clay and the sundogs are drawn on it. The sundogs are not drawn on the Horn Society incense burning places. Okay, in the winter the Horns cannot scrape the ground. Especially if they assemble in a house they built their altar with white clay. The incense burning place is oblong and on the east side of the incense burning place some of the soil is placed separate from the incense burning place in a row. That is how the Horns built their altars. The incense burning place for a tipi is scraped. The incense burning place for the Holy Woman's tipi is not scraped it is dug and the scrapings are on the west side, stacked up in a row in the west side of the incense burning place. The crescent of the moon is drawn. At the sharp end of the incense place a hole is made and the incense is burned in this hole with creeping cedar -- not with cedar needles nor sweetgrass but with creeping cedar in both corners.
The incense burning place in the Sundance lodge is not scraped. A hole is just made in the ground. The lodge dancer burns his incense in this hole. The incense burning place in a Medicine Pipe tipi is square; it is not scraped. Soil is used to build the incense burning place. There are two incense burning places in a Medicine Pipe tipi. That one that is nearest to the fireplace is for the Medicine Pipe incense burning and the other one in the back is the Horn Society incense burning place. The Pigeons also scraped their incense burning places. The axe that they used to scrape the ground is their payment. They did the same; they rolled up the dirt scrapings in a row and they also have power roots and they scrape their incense burning places towards their beds. They didn't use soil. The Holy Woman is the one that was used white clay for her incense burning place.

In a Group Smoking ceremony the ground is not scraped for the incense burning place; white clay is used for the incense burning place. The shaman faces east and the incense burning place is oblong. On the right side there is a dried manure. The small pipe is laid on this dried manure beside the incense burning place and sweetgrass is used to burn the incense. There are two incense burning places in a Medicine Pipe tipi. Cedar needles are used for burning the incense in one of the incense burning places and sweetgrass is used for burning the incense in the other. The incense burning places in all tipis are all the same.

I (First Rider) own that tipi with a marten flag. The way I pick up the dirt I use an axe and cut out a crescent shape in the ground just like the crescent of the moon is drawn and dug it at four fingers wide. And I take out the dirt very gently and set it at the foot of the incense burning place. Then I'll take a small baking powder can and press it down on the end of the crescent shape of earth that I dug out and a hole is made in the crescent shape of earth and creeping cedar is used to burn the incense in the hole. So there are two incense burning holes of crescent shaped earth. And the one next to the one in the back, sweetgrass is used for burning the incense. And the one in the back, sage grass is used for burning the incense. Another tipi has also two incense burning places. It has an elk design. Sage is used for burning the incense in the small incense burning place that is in the back of the other one. Sweetgrass is used for burning the incense in the one that is in front. This is made the same way as the one in the back. White clay is used. My father was a Black Seizer member. The Black Seizer bundle was transferred to my mother and me. The incense burning place of the Black Seizers is also scraped and the axe that I used belonged to the one that was going to transfer the bundle to us. That is the Black Seizers' Society. I know that the Black Seizers have two incense burning places. The Crow Carriers' incense burning place is just one. There only two kinds of incense burning places, the scraped incense burning place and the other one is made with clay kneaded out in square. The incense materials are not very many. The
sweetgrass are the most and there are the cedar needles. The creeping cedar and sage grass is also used for burning the incense.

The Medicine Pipe incense burning place is not always used. It is used only at an opening of a Medicine Pipe. The crescent of the moon is drawn on the incense burning place and the sundogs are drawn on it too. There is a young tree in the Holy Woman's tipi. The Holy Woman rubs her cheek on the tree; before she does that the incense is burned. The cutting of the hide has its own incense burning place; this is in the Holy Woman's tipi. The hide doesn't have to be taken to the back and to be blessed by the main incense burning place. That is why there is a special incense burning place for the hide and it is painted with white clay and the tree in the Holy Woman's tipi is also painted. The Holy Woman's tipi has the most incense burning places. The main incense burning place is in the back. Creeping cedar and sweetgrass is used for burning the incense. At this point the Medicine Pipes are used for offering smokes. Water Bundle Pipes, Little Medicine Pipes and all various pipes are used in offering smokes. The only time that the Medicine Pipe incense burning place is used is at a Medicine Pipe dance. The sundogs are drawn on it. The Water Bundle Society will draw on their incense burning place at their transferals. The Crow Water Bundle Society will also draw on their incense burning place at their transferals. The Horn Society use only the cedar needles. Huh! I am mistaken. The sweetgrass for burning the incense and the Medicine Pipe owners are the use the cedar needles. The Holy Woman uses sage grass for burning the incense and there are more scraped incense burning places in the Holy Woman's tipi. The incense burning place for the Little Medicine Pipe is just scraped; clay is not used. The incense burning place in the sweat lodge is just made hollow with the fingers; the ground is not scraped for the incense burning place.

All various tipis have their own incense burning places are all of various kinds. The ground didn't have to be scraped for the incense burning in the place where an offering is going to take place. The hide that is going to be offered is painted with feathers attached on top of its wooden frame and the sundogs are drawn on the hide. The incense burning place is in the tipi and there is no design on it, the tipi. Soil is used for the incense burning place in a Group Smoking ceremony. The incense burning place is oblong and it is drawn with yellow ochre, purple and real paint. There is only one song for the taking of the black ochre. The words in the song are, "Black ochre, I take the black ochre. I not give you," and the other purple paint is not mentioned. The song is just worded with the sundogs and the purple paint is used. Now the other one. Before a person's face is painted a song is sung about the black ochre. The words in the song are, "The black ochre I now give you." The same song is sung for a shield. The incense burning place for the shield is also scraped. A shield was transferred to me (First Rider). The incense burning place is scraped; soil is not used.
In every transferal ceremony the ground is scraped for the incense burning place. A person that is going to go through a transferal soil scrape the ground for the incense and the axe that he used to scrape the ground is his payment. He will leave it on the ground and the ceremonialist will take the axe. When the medicine hats are going to be transferred the ground is scraped for the incense burning places and the knife and the axe -- the knife is left where it is used and the ceremonialist will take it. The scraped incense burning places are all of various kinds and they are all made the same and the payments are all the same and the song for the burning of the incense is one. The black ochre has a paint bag and the words for the black ochre are, "The black ochre I now take. The black ochre I now give you." Then it is different. The red ochre is not worded in the song. When a person is going to be painted with red ochre across the face, the song is just about the sundogs. Then the red ochre is taken and a line is painted across the person's face with the red ochre. Now here are some Black Covered Pipes. Even if a Black Covered Pipe is not going to be transferred in a tipi the recipient will scrape the ground just the same. Wherever the Black Covered Pipes are going to be transferred the ground will be scraped for the incense burning place. The only difference is the Black Seizers' Pipe. The incense burning place for the Black Seizers' Pipe is scraped. The incense burning place for the Crow is not scraped. A hollow place is just made with the fingers where the incense is burned for the Crow; the hollow place represent its nest. There are other sacred bundles that are transferred. Their incense burning places are scraped. A sacred bundle that has a scraped incense burning place, soil is used in the wintertime to build the incense burning place. Soil is used for the incense burning place for the sweat lodge. A person will ask another person, "How many times have you used soil for your incense burning place?" The person that is questioned will know how many times he had built sweat lodges for the sacred bundle that was transferred to him and he will answer the man's question, "I have used soil to make an incense burning place a number of times." "Yes, that is good. Now I am going to make an incense burning place with soil for you." The man meant that he is going to build a sweat lodge for him. The soil is making incense burning places is transferable. In every small transferal the incense burning place is scraped and in major transfers the incense burning place soil is used.

The facial painting of the Medicine Pipe owners is transferable. Now some people will say, "I didn't use soil to make my incense burning place." Those are the ones that don't build sweat lodges. That is how many the sweat lodges are and the incense burning places that build up with soil. Soil is not used to make the incense burning place for cursing. The ground is just scratched big enough to burn the incense. People will hide when they're going to put a curse on somebody. They use their sacred objects for cursing. The Horn Society are the only ones that will draw a man on their incense burning place and they will empty the ashes in the pipe bowl on the
drawing of the man on the incense burning place. There are
songs to all of these but I am not permitted to sing, that is
why I don't sing, but when I am allowed to sing then I will
sing and illustrate the songs. The incense burning place for
the Black Seizers' Pipe is also built up with soil. The ground
is not scalped for the incense burning place. The Medicine
Pipe incense burning places are square; so's the Black Seizers'
Pipe incense burning place. The sweat lodge incense burning
place is dug into a square. Those are used for cursing. Now I
conclude my information on the incense burning places. Incense
is burned for all songs. The incense burning places are just
made hollow. That's all.

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