

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: GEORGE FIRST RIDER
TIPI CONSTRUCTION
- EARLY
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BLOOD RESERVE
CARDSTON, ALBERTA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BLOOD RESERVE
CARDSTON, ALBERTA
TRIBE/NATION: BLOOD
LANGUAGE: BLACKFOOT
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JUNE 10, 1969
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:

- Brief description of tipi construction.
George First Rider: Okay, now lodges are illustrated, and I will illustrate the tipi, the reason why it became to be a tipi. The lodges are wigwams.

The people of the past will take their oblong stones -- they have big oblong stones. They will look at the trees. They don't use any kind of trees, they use aspen poplars. So he goes into woods and he cuts some berry bush. He leans the berry willows against a tree that is arched and he takes a silver berry tree and peels the bark off. He ties with the bark; they make ropes out of those. He tied the berry trees

onto the arched tree.

He takes the oblong stone. The structure was his crotch, now he makes his crotch. He takes his oblong stone and he goes to the aspen poplars. There are other poplars. They have white barks and they look like as if they are all grooved but not too much. They start to pound them and they loosen the bark. Then they cut them and they peel off the bark; the bark is wide when it's cut. They cut lines on the inside and they spread out flat. When they have enough barks they go to their crotch. They had already cut some reeds so they started to weave the reeds into the poles and they started to insert the barks into the weavings. If there is an opening they'll patch it up and that is their home.

Some build their homes with reeds; those are called pinned shelter. So those are their homes. So those are shelters. Later on come the tripping. They kick the tree stumps down. They use those for fortifications. They build their shelters when there is a suitable place to make a buffalo jump. That is why there are so many bones at these buffalo jumps. That is why it is said, "It smells like my brother-in-law's old buffalo jump." When the buffalo jumps are really bad and stinky they look for another place and they build their homes there and that is where they have their homes.

When they move camps, they moved camps with rotted wood and some dried dungs. They burn the dungs and a person will walk with it and he'll keep moving it to keep it smoldering. He'll use that to build a fire when they camp. In the wintertime when they break camps that's when they always carry the burned dungs with them. The only time they'll break camp is when the buffalo jumps get real stinky. So those are their homes.

Later on when they had the buffaloes... before that the jumps were deer jumps and they make their clothings with the skins. They never wash their clothes, they just scrape them white. That is why white clay come to be in use. The white clay was recently called white clay; before that they were called 'their

dirt' and after that they were called 'my earth.' That's the white clay. Later on they were called white clay. The people that made deer jumps will just scrape his clothes with his clay when he gets them dirty. They don't wash them. They still build shelters when they had the buffaloes and their fortifications, they still had houses in the same way. When they had horses, and when they started to chase the buffaloes on horseback, that's when they started to tan hides and made their homes with hides and they had tipi poles.

The mountain people pack their belongings on horses; the prairie people use travois. That is our way of living. How can the mountain people use travois in the mountains?

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