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:

- How First Rider's father got his name.
- Account of Dog Child's riding escapades.
- Story of powers given to Dog Child by the bears, the eagles and the ghosts.
- Examples of Dog Child's healing powers.
- Dog Child's role in the Horn Society; the transfer of various articles to him.

George First Rider: Now I am talking about our lives. I am talking about my father, Dog Child. My father is a person that acts foolish. He doesn't act foolish because he is crazy; he acts foolish because he has supernatural powers. He knows his physical body. He hasn't a body like us. He has a strange life. This is the life of the earlier people that lived. They perform with what they had dreamed - like the mysterious
shooter and the bug eater. And there is Calf Shirt who gets his strength through his supernatural powers. This kind of life is not practised any more and now life is in a turmoil, I will say, with white man's water (liquor). We are constantly going crazy with liquor. My father's childhood name is Singing Amongst. The people of the past go capturing ducklings. My father's elderly brothers killed some ducks. His elderly sister strung the feet and beaks of the ducks and she tied them around my father's neck and he was called Duck Necklace.

Now his relative was called White Weasel Calf. My father told his relative, "I will take your name, White Weasel Calf." His relative told him, "You're crazy. I will not give you my name; you will spoil it." My father told him, "I don't care for not giving me your name but I am going to take it anyways. My name will be Little White Weasel Calf. Your name is White Weasel Calf." So he got the name Little White Weasel. Later on, the people were going to get their treaty money. My father was rejected to be registered in his name to get his treaty money because his name was an English name. His stepfather was a white man and his mother was an Indian woman. His mother married this white man when my father was a child and he took his stepfather's name. Before my father got his treaty money he went to the Blackfoot people and they gave him a name. He will get his treaty money when he gets a real people's name (Indian name). So again he got another name, Dog Child. So he got his treaty money by the name of Dog Child.

My father fooled around with his life. My father will do anything in bronc riding. My father is so good in bronc riding. I had a brother who's older than me and I didn't know him. My brother was able to sit up; he was not fit to be wrapped in baby blankets. My father took the child and went out for a walk. This was at a Sun Dance. A man by the name of Swan Old Man had a horse, a black mare with white socks. The boys practice riding on the horse and everyone gets thrown off from the horse; they couldn't stay on the horse. The boys had nothing to do at the Sun Dance so they got on the horse and put a saddle on her. The black mare was a big horse. They had the saddle on her and blindfolded her and they said, "Who will ride the horse?" None of the boys agreed to ride the horse. My father was walking towards the boys with the child. They said, "Here comes Duck Necklace. He will ride the horse." When my father got to the crowd, he gave the child to another man and he got on the horse. The man that he gave the child to told him, "What am I going to do with the child?" My father told the man, "Give me the child." The man was crazy; he gave the child to my father. The name of the man that gave the child to my father is Many Chiefs. When my father took the child he held him securely in his arm, then he told the boys, "Now let her go," and the horse was turned loose. When the horse started to buck, my father just stretched his legs hard with the stirrups to prevent the child from moving. Nobody rides the horse because she was a great bucking horse but my father rode the horse with the child in his arm. The child's head didn't even move like the child's head to swing back and forth.
The women that were around were struck with fear because my father was on the bucking horse with the child. My mother's next of kin was a woman. Her name is Many Camps; my mother's name is The Only Pretty Woman. She saw my father riding with their son and the women all cried because my father rode with the child. My mother ran to my father. The women will beat up my father if he hurts the child. When the horse stopped bucking and before it started to run wild my father jumped off from the horse with the child. He just sat the child on the ground while the women were on the chase. Some had sticks in their hands. They were going to beat up my father. My father just sat the child on the ground and he fled. The child was not hurt. My father is a hard rider.

The reason why he got to be like that, it's because he was raised in the old man way (white men). My father would put one 25 cent piece on each stirrup and he'd get on the horse and the horse will start bucking and when he gets off from the horse the 25 are still there; he never loses the money. My father goes on the warpath. Once he stole a horse and the police got after him. My father took off. His hiding place was on top of the outer Belly Butte. He said, "Whenever I see a rider I hide in the crevices down the side of the butte." When my father slept on top of Belly Butte a bear walked by him on the south side. When the bear got to his feet it gave a snort. My father thought, "A bear is coming." He looked up but there was no bear. He laid down again and the bear came from the same direction and the bear came close to him. He looked up again and there was no bear. He laid down again and this time he almost didn't look up when the bear came to him. He looked up again; there was nothing. Then he knew that it was false; it was just a dream. He laid down again and the bear approached him and the bear jumped on him and threw my father over the cut bank. The bear followed him down to the bottom and the bear treated my father. The bear sang a song. I (First Rider) know the song. Then the bear had many mercy on my father. The bear told my father, "Us bears, if we get shot, a bullet will not penetrate our skins. So you will be like that. If you get shot the bullet will not penetrate your body."

Later on there were a group of camps. My father told my mother, "Go out and visit the camps. I will sit in here alone." So my mother went out. My father filled his pipe with tobacco. He ochred the pipe and laid it in front of him, then he painted his forehead with real paint. My father broke off a moccasin lace and tied it together like a garter. After, he loaded a .44 calibre rifle. Those were the first big rifles. After he cocked the hammer, he hooked the leather thong that he tied like a garter onto the trigger and onto the tip of his foot and he pointed the rifle to his chest, then he sang. I (First Rider) know the song. The words in the song are, "Bears in a dream pitied me." When the people heard him they said, "There is that crazy guy. Now he sings his war song." After he sang he stretched his leg with the thong that was hooked onto the trigger and the gun fired and my father shot himself in the chest. Just as he started to pull the trigger he made a
sound like a bear. When the people heard the sound of the rifle they all ran to my father's camp. A man by the name of Not Marvelled was the first one to jump in. Blood came out from my father's mouth. When the man jumped in my father pointed to the pipe. Not Marvelled was wise. He saw the ochred pipe, he picked it up and then stuck it into the fire and he puffed on it and gave it to my old man. My father took the pipe and smoked and the blood stopped coming out from his mouth. I (First Rider) saw the bullet that hit my father's chest; it was just like as if it smashed on a rock. I saw the mark where my old man shot his chest. The bullet didn't penetrate his chest but he was burned with the gunpowder. The burn was shaped like a tattoo. My father kept the bullet and when he died the bullet went to the grave with him.

My father is the one that I know that will cure a sick person with the powers of a bear. His drum is not very big. He ochred it with real paint around the border and the head and the chest of a bear is drawn in the centre of the drum. I know my father's medicine songs. When my father cures a sick person with the powers of a bear, a rock will be put in the fire and when it gets red hot the rock will be taken out from the fire. First my father will dip his right hand forefinger in a hot water and then he puts his finger on the red hot rock. I also know the song that he sings. He will put his finger on the ailing spot of the sick person. His finger gets hot just as the red hot rock. Sometimes he'd just have his bare foot ochred and he'll put his foot first in the hot water and then he will put his foot on the hot rock. His foot would give a hissing sound, then he'll put his foot on the spot where the pain is of the sick person. Even if others are on the verge of death, a sick person will be just breathing, he will not be able to help himself - I saw a lot of people that were in that condition. They will be dying but once my father promises that you will not die, the dying person will not die. First he will put his foot in the water and then he puts his foot on the red hot rock. His foot would give a hissing sound then he will move over to the dying person. The sick person is just lying there helpless. He'll step on him. His foot is that hot. The patient that is dying cannot speak and can't hear any more. He stepped on the sick person's chest and the dying person will open his eyes. If the heat is too much for him he will jump up and when he jumps up he will be recovered. That is how my father cures people with the powers of the bear. I witnessed the other part of his curing. He'd lick a red hot rock with his tongue and then he'd lick where the pain is on the patient. I was having a headache; my father licked me on the right temple. There is not heat that I ever know to be so hot. If we get burned with something the thing will get on your skin fast and the flesh will be cooked. My father's tongue is real hot but it didn't burn my skin. If my father is going to fail to revive a sick person, when he steps on him the heat of his foot will burn the skin of the sick person. And if he burns the skin of a sick person with his heated tongue the sick person will not recover.
All of you always see Chief Mountain. Behind it there are two small sharp-peaked mountains. Some bald eagles had a nest on the first one. My father was invited by those bald eagles. He went and slept by the bald eagles. The bald eagles gave him the power to perform an incision on a sick person. My father will find where the pain is on a sick person, he will cut the skin open with a small piece of sharp stone, and then he will suck the sickness out and he will spit it out in the palm of his hand and he will show the people the thing that is making the person sick. And after they have looked at it my father will eat it and he will swallow it. My father cures people with the powers of the bald eagles. Bald eagles will eat anything. There is an old woman; her name is Beaver Woman. She also cures sick people with the powers of the bald eagles.

My father’s other supernatural power, he’d attach a quartzite onto a stick and uses that to puncture a vein on the inside of the elbow and let the blood run for a while. There was a slaughterhouse where we used to get our rations. This slaughterhouse shack and behind the trees there is a burial place. My father went to this place and slept there and the ghosts gave him the power to extract the thing that a person was mysteriously shot with by the ghosts*. He said, "When I got to the tipi there was a light inside. The people were singing; they having a tea drinking party." My father said, "I heard a voice from the inside who said, 'Why did you bring him here? Let him come in.' So they told me come in, so I went in and I sat down by the doorway."

"The Indians claim that a ghost will shoot a burr at a person. The burr will go right into the flesh and will not leave a mark on the skin. It will put the person out like a tranquilized animal. Only the shaman that has the power of a ghost can remove the burr which, if not removed, will kill the person.

My father said there was not a sound in the tipi. All of a sudden someone said, "Why did you bring him in?" My father said, "I heard a drum being beaten with a fast beat then I saw the beds and I saw the men up to their knees. The drum was beaten again with a fast beat and I saw the people up to their waists. And again the drum was beaten to a fast beat and I saw the men up to their necks. The drum was beaten again to a fast beat then I saw their faces." My father said, "I recognized some of the men that just died recently but I didn't know the others. One of the men said, 'Now we will give him something.' There was a red hot rock that was taken out from the fireplace." My father said, "I saw a burr that was bound with human hair right in the centre inside of the red hot rock. The man said, 'If anyone can take that burr out he has supernatural powers. Some of the men sang good songs but they failed to take the burr out from the rock.'" My father gave the name of the man that took the burr out from the rock. He said, "The man sang and after he sang he had his mouth on the red hot rock and the man sucked on the rock." My father said, "I saw the
burr move and it started to move up and it went into the mouth of the man and the man took the burr out from his mouth. The man said, 'This is how to take out our mystery shots. Now I give you the power to extract mystery shots.'"

A man by the name of Big Eagle (Steven Fox) was shot with a burr by a ghost. Big Eagle couldn't talk any more so we went to his home. My father was to take out the burr that was mysteriously shot into him. There was nobody to drum for my father so I (First Rider) drummed for my father. My father took out the thing that was mysteriously shot into Big Eagle but Big Eagle still couldn't speak. My father tried again. This time he took out something from under the tongue close to the throat; then Big Eagle spoke. When Big Eagle spoke, a fire was built in the fireplace and the things that was mysteriously shot into him were thrown into the fire to burn. Big Eagle told his son, "Round up the cattle and herd them over here." Big Eagle went out with his rifle and shot down a two-year-old steer. Big Eagle told my father, "That is your reward." Big Eagle told me (First Rider), "Let us go inside." When we got into his house he said, "Your father couldn't get anybody to drum for him and you drummed for your father." So Big Eagle gave a pair of beaded gauntlets and $5 for drumming for my father. So these are the supernatural powers of my father (Dog Child).

Now the other may all the sacred bundles that are transferable were all transferred* to my father. A Water Bundle Pipe was transferred to my old man; the transferal lasted four days. My father realized everything after the four day transferal. He is the one that knows a lot of Water Bundle songs. My father is the one that said the Blackfoot people were to use the pipe in their tobacco planting. The Bloods will just put up a dance with the Water Bundle Pipe. Different tribes use the Water Bundle Pipes in various ways, that is why the histories of the pipes are not the same. People told stories about the pipes in different ways. My father had two pipes before he died. He got one Water Bundle Pipe from a north Peigan Indian by the name of Single Camp. That pipe was sold in Fort Macleod and I can't get it back. The other pipe that my father had was the pipe that was constructed by a man. The name of that pipe is Hair Lock Pipe. It was given to Calling Last. That pipe was sold in Montana, was not transferred. I was an orphan and the two pipes were left with me and I owned the lynx tails from each bundle and I also know a lot of the Water Bundle songs.

My father looks after the Horn Society. My father looks after the Horns in a different way. He works a Beaver Bundle transferal in a different way; he works it for four days. My father looks after the offering in a Group Smoking ceremony in a different way; he paints the offering. My father officiated a Water Bundle sweat lodge. I (First Rider) participated and I also know how to go about a Horn Society offering. My father taught me how to officiate a Horn Society offering ceremony.
My father roped two horses at once in one of his raids. One was a bald-faced horse and the other was a dark roan. My father's elder brother, Striped Wolf, told him, "Give me that bald-faced horse that you stole from the enemy and I will give you this medicine hat." The medicine hat that was transferred to my father was one of the medicine hats in the Horn Society. So he paid on the Horn Society medicine hat with the horse that he stole. Later on, a bundle which authorizes a person to be an announcer was also transferred to my father in a dance hall and a woman's straight up medicine hat was also transferred to my father in a dance hall. The reason why it was transferred to him is he is the announcer in dances and later on a shield was also transferred to my father. I (First Rider) know when all these bundles were transferred to my father.

*All the sacred bundles were not transferred to Dog Child all at once. They were transferred to him individually, at times.*

My old man had no taboos in his curing. It will not matter to him even if someone opens the door while he is curing a sick person and even if somebody knocks on the place in where he is curing a sick person. One thing my father is scared of is for somebody to scratch his foot while he is asleep. My father said, "My life will not be normal if somebody scratches my foot. I might turn into a bear." My father had no taboos on himself. It is a restriction for the Horn Society members not to strike a cow's head but my father chops them up into pieces. My father transfers what was given to him in his sleep. There are a lot of tipis that were transferred to my father. He officiates what is transferred to him; that is why he officiates all the Indian holy ceremonies. How I came to know all about Indian holy ceremonies because I always watch my father, how he officiates an Indian holy ceremony. And also my knowledge about holy ceremonies was given to me in my dream. I (First Rider) am like my father in this one thing. My father cures mysterious shots from the ghosts and heals sores or wounds.

I (First Rider) rode a horse at a fast gallop. The horse stumbled and fell with me in the saddle and my right leg broke in three places. My leg was already treated by some white men before I got home. When I got home my father told me, "If someone hadn't touched your leg you would be up today." My father told me, "If you're up in 30 days that means I have no supernatural." My father said, "You will be up in 27 days." A brown weasel skin is tied on my leg with its head down and when my leg is untied in the morning the brown weasel would be the other way round with its head point up. My father would just make a sound of praise. My leg was broken in three places but on the 27th day I walked to town. I just used a cane. My leg was broken in three places but my father had supernatural powers. He promised me to be up on the 27th day and I got up on that day.

In the other accident I fell on a pitchfork and the prongs of
the fork punctured my stomach. My father made a mixture with water and yellow ochre and he dropped the rattles of a snake into the mixture and I drank it. The mixture was not boiled and today there is just a scar on where my stomach was punctured and today it doesn't bother me. My neck bone was dislocated. My father treated me; he just touched my neck and I was better. My father had a live snake inside of him and in the spring the snake would shed its winter skin inside of him. My father would start coughing and he spits out pieces of the snakeskin. The pieces of snakeskin will look like fish skins that have been scraped. I was the only child to my parents on account of that snake inside my father. My father said,

"Before I die this snake will come out." I didn't see the snake when it came out. I was in jail when the snake came out and my father died. Everybody knows how mysterious my father was. There is nothing that he doesn't know about life. My father sleeps out in the wilderness to get a vision. My father has an experience all about transfersals. I am just like my father. I was a shaman too but I quit it and now I am telling the story of my father's life. I gave my father's curing bundle to Brown. It was not long after I gave it to him, the curing bundle, he sold it at Waterton Lakes and he gave my father's drum to Covered Shelter (Christ Bull Shield). I don't see that drum any more. I don't know what he did with the drum.

Here I conclude my story about my father's life. There is a lot more about my father's life but I cannot tell the story all of my father's mysterious life. Another thing that I know about my father - a Blackfoot Indian by name of Sun Calf shot him in the chest. The bullet didn't penetrate his skin. My father didn't seek any revenge. Instead he got in good relationship with him after Sun Calf apologized to my father. So I conclude my story about my father. That is all.
-powers of
NAMES (PERSONAL)
-origins of
PIPES AND SMOKING
.pipe transfer
POWER
-from dreams and visions
POWER
-vision quests
SOCIETIES
-Horn Society (Blackfoot)
SPORTS
-rodeoing
STORIES AND STORYTELLING (GENERAL)
-dreams and visions
STORIES AND STORYTELLING (GENERAL)
-medicine men and women
STORIES AND STORYTELLING (GENERAL)
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