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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:

- Indian stories which attempt to explain seasonal changes and other meteorological phenomena.

NOTE: This is the continuation and completion of the story about the thunder (IH-AA.104).

George First Rider: Okay, I have a story to tell. I am going to change the name of the story that I am going to tell. Now I am going to give you all kinds of wolf ears. This wolf ear means I will tell you some brief stories. As wolves are lively that's what giving wolf ears means. A news that is heard which is not true, we'll say, "I went around hearing news with a covered face." And now I am going to give you wolf ears.

The story that I told about the thunder, I forgot to mention everything. That miserable weather that came to that mountain,

the thunder was boiling but to no avail. The thunder roaring with all its might, the snow melted away very little around the tipi. The thunder was almost freezing and he gave up to release the woman. Now a person will be talking a lot for nothing. We'll say he is a coward, he never did gain anything. I am going to illustrate that too. The man, the white owl that had a wolf toque, when he charged the thunder who took a woman by force he was staying in the crow's lodge. When he (owl) charged at him he went forward to withstand him (thunder), the ruined weather that he attacked with, the cold spell. We say in the Eagle Moon (February) is the only moon that will not be seen for two nights and it will come out after two nights. It is called the wicked moon; it is also called Black Bear.

It gets cold for half a day and it turns warm for the other half day. A blinding storm comes and it subsides in the afternoon. That is the kind of weather that came and it is called Wolf Toque. It got its name from the owl that had a wolf toque, the owl that attacked. He went forward with the storm to withstand the thunder; he defeated him with that. When he got to him with the storm nothing could be seen in the blizzard and the thunder was almost freezing as a cold weather doesn't belong to him. The thunder was nearly freezing. When it occurred like that he then gave up the woman.

The owl advised the crow. He told him, "When you get back you will flee. Get close to the sun." So the crow fled and the owl approached the thunder, the married man. When the storm got there the thunder would roar and lightning flashes and the snow melts far out and it doesn't get cold any more. The owl that wore a wolf toque, the closer he gets to the thunder, he approached him with the blizzard. The closer he got to the thunder the snow would melt very little and the thunder surrendered. He told the owl, "Please let it clear up and there is the woman." The owl told him, "You go away yourself." The thunder fled. He went to the place where it doesn't have

winters. The crow flew back in the spring and he lived with his wife again.

Now the thunder handed down a pipe. The pipe is used until in the fall. It will never be used during the winter; the pipe is idle. It's winter; it's of no use any more. In the spring the Medicine Pipe owner started to get food supplies for the opening of his pipe. He is just waiting for the thunder. When the thunder roars in the spring, when it rains, the pipe is unwrapped immediately at that time. He hears the thunder roar and a dance starts with the pipe and it is put away after the celebration and it's for no use any more. It is opened in the spring again when the thunder roars again. So that's what the Medicine Pipe is. That's why there are not many Medicine Pipe owners. The thunder donated the pipe that he smoked in and the drums. Other things were added to it lately and finally the tripods were made.

I just completed the story and now the thunder was defeated by two birds, the crow. If it's raining, the thunder is roaring

and we'll be walking along, us people will be uttering a sound like a crow. This way we'll not be struck by lightning. And now the way the Indians experienced it, if it is going to rain they'll look at their hair. If their hair all stand on ends (I don't mean the braids), the people will flee. They'll say, "The thunder will be close to this place. Our hairs are sticking up." They get wise by that.

The thunder will catch anything that got a blood on it very quick. The people of the past are afraid of anything that is red and to sweat. If it is going to rain and his mount is sweating he'll tie it to something and he will not go near the horse. The heat ignites with the lightning, so that's what it is. The thunder will be roaring. I did that too in the past when I am out riding on horseback and a rain will hit me. I utter sounds like a crow and I don't get hit by lightning. The thunder is very scared of the crows.

The other story, the story that was told by a different tribe -- the thunder caught a seal. When he took it up the seal struggled and it came with him into the lake and there is that lake. It is called Sounding Lake. There are two stories about it. This story was told by the Bloods, Blackfoot and the Peigans. They told the story how Crow's Lodge existed and now the white men put it as Crow's Nest. The Indians didn't give the name Crow's Nest. The Indians gave the name Crow's Lodge, so that's what it is.

The Indians gave the name Belly Butte; the Indians gave the name Abomasum; the Indians gave the name Slashed on its Side --

that's where the Vacuum Beast was. There are a lot of these names that were given by the Indians. The Indians gave the name Porcupine Tails. I (First Rider) just added these to the story that I told about the thunder.

END OF THUNDER STORY

Okay, I am also questioned about why it blows around. Now this Wolf Toque, the blizzard. The people of the past know what the weather is going to be. They also know about this big snow storm. It comes on the eighth day of the month and the people will herd their horses to a suitable place. They say if it is severe it will last for four days and if it is not severe it will last for ten days. That's the big snow storm.

The time when the blizzard comes, the day is nice and mild. The ground is dry. The people don't know when the blizzard is coming. They say, "It is dangerous as the eighth of the month so you people don't go anywhere for a while." The weather gets warm for a while and the people don't put warm clothes on and the blizzard comes. It is called advance. It's called Advance by the one that advanced the thunder with the blizzard. That is why it is called Advance. We don't know the regular time when it comes. So that's what the bad weathers are. We also know when the long time rain comes. It is the same. If it is severe it lasts for four days; if it is not severe it will last

for ten days.

Now the winds. They all names where they comes from. This is how it is. They'll describe the names that they gave by what they think they are. Now our doors face east. The doorway on the southeast side, it's in the centre. We know that the wind blows from the west. The wind is called of the ground and what happened and then it's all a wind, the way the blizzard is. We'll say the wind is blowing just like a blizzard.

The wind will blow from the southeast of the doorway. That is called duck wind. The ducks go south when winter is coming and we think that they go southeast. The wind will blow from the south side of the doorway and that's a duck wind. If the wind blows from this direction it is called blowing in the opposite way. The wind will blow from here, we'll say it's a mountain wind. The wind will blow from the west, we'll say the wind is blowing from where the bachelor stood for a long time. This bachelor was standing there and when the woman looked out she saw her boy friend. Her lover was standing there. The young man who was standing there was not dead; some say that he was dead. It's in the direction where the sun sets in the summer. The wind will blow from that direction, we'll say it's a north wind, and the wind will from there. We'll say it's blowing

westward. The wind will blow from the north side of the doorway -- it's the wind that froze the secondary wife. A secondary wife slept and when she was not stirring in the morning the man said, "Tell her to get up." When she was moved to wake up she was frozen. The wind is very cold if it blows from that direction. The wind will blow direct from the east, we'll say it's a breast stabbing wind. These are the winds.

Okay, a cut bank is facing straight to the southwest, the place that is called where the wind blows from the mountains. The wind blows from there all the time. The cut bank is facing in that direction and there is a whirlwind at this cut bank. I just mentioned this place alone. There are a lot of whirlwind places besides. If a cutbank is facing east it also has a whirlwind. There are some... it is also called... let's say it's facing straight to the east and there is a coulee which is straight to the east and the wind will blow from the mountains. We'll say the wind blows down the coulee.

The ground is level from here and all of a sudden there is a downhill and it spreads out into a bend and the wind will blow from the mountains. Those are dodging wind. The wind blows over the hill and it drops to the ground. If the people of the past camp in those places their lodges will be blown down by the wind and the smoke from the fireplace circulates inside of their lodges. They don't camp in those kind of places.

Now there is another kind of wind; it is called wind woman. The wind twists women that are outside. The wind is not big; it twists. We'll tell the women that are outside, "Look out, here comes a twister." The women will fold their dresses and they'd sit down. They say the wind will go under the woman's

dress and it will blow into her vagina and the woman will get pregnant if the wind blows into her. The other wind is seen yes. There are no farms near here to raise a dust storm. It's all the rubbish around the place that made it a dust storm. The people don't know an obscene word. It says, "Dirt is going to be thrown on our sperms." The people of that time are the ones that wear wolf skin clothing. Their wolf skin clothing are their wolves and we'll say, "Dirt will be thrown on our sperms*." The word 'wolf' sounds bad to the people of recent years.

The reason why it is like that is, a man was going out to hunt. His wife that he sits besides told him, "I'll go along." He told her, "Don't come along for now I will go with my other wife." The woman hates her associates**. She is very jealous. She thinks to have sexual intercourse with her husband all the

*Sperms are called Wolves in Blackfoot.

**Associates -- other wives of a man.

time. That's why she gets mad. So she said to go with her husband. The man told her, "You will not come along I'll go with for this time." The woman is pregnant and she still wants plenty more. She told her husband, "Yes, tomorrow you two will be leaving."

They have slept at this point. She kissed her husband and told him, "Have pity on me. As I can't go along don't have an intercourse with the one that you are going with. If you're telling the truth, if you are kind to me, don't have an intercourse with her. As soon as you come back I will look at it and I will know if you didn't have an intercourse with it." The man told his wife, "No, I will not have an intercourse with her. I'll just go with her." So in the morning they went on the hunt. The main wife was made to go along with her husband so that he will not have an intercourse with the woman. So finally she couldn't go along and her husband went.

When the man slept out on the prairie he never stopped having intercourses with his wife. He was so glad to go and be alone with his other wife, he was having intercourses with her continually. When they were about to go home he told her, "Oh, my wife that I sit besides told me not have an intercourse and here I was having intercourse with you after another." The woman told him, "How can she find out?" The man told her, "How can she not find out about it?" The woman went away and she looked for a prairie turnip, those wild turnips, and she dug out one and she chewed it. She chewed it very soft and she told him, "Now hold out your penis." The man pulled the skin up and the head of his penis was sprayed with what the woman chewed and he pulled the skin down.

They got home. The woman just looked at the meat and she told her husband, "What did you do?" The man told her, "Let's go out on the prairie." So they went. He told her, "I never did have an intercourse with her." The woman told him, "You are not telling the truth." The man told her, "Look at it." As

the woman looked at the penis that was held out to her, the man pulled the skin up and it was white with that white substance. That's how they look when we don't have an intercourse for a time; it looked white. As the woman looked at it, it was white. The man didn't have an intercourse. The woman jumped at her husband and told him, "You are very kind to me. You didn't have an intercourse with her. You have a lot of wolves."

That's why people think that the word, dirt is going to be thrown on our wolves, is an obscene word. It's on account of what they saw, that is why they think it's an obscene word.

It's what the winds are. It's the dust that is going to be blown on our wolf clothing. Okay, the winter wind. It's a wind driven snow; it is very cold. A cold wind is different. A cold blizzard is also different. Okay, some will say it's a warm wind. The wind that will melt the snow away hasn't come yet. It's just a warm wind. When the warm wind comes the heat waves will come up immediately and there is little water in the snow. It's not water. It's just slushy and then it turns cold and a cold wind comes.

Horses will skin their shins in the snow. The name snow is changed. It is not called snow then; it is called "It's just like a bone." As dry bones dry up white so the snow is now called "It's just like a bone." That skins the shins of horses because the snow is sharp. There are a lot of animals that go lame like antelopes and other game animals because their dew claws get cut in the sharp snow. Okay, there is another wind I have mentioned, the duck wind, and all the winds have been mentioned. Now this is the wind at the end. They'll say Napi is running down the hill. Clouds blew up in the mountains. What blew up is very dark and immediately a wind comes, even if the snow is about two feet deep. They'll say Napi is running down the hill and a wind comes. They say the wind is just like a broth. If the wind comes during the night the snow will be all gone in the morning. That's what we will call the melting wind*. When that comes it is summer. It is also called the big melting wind, and it is also called the broth wind.

The reason why we say Napi is running down the hill. This is a story of Napi. The one that makes winters, Napi met him. He (Napi) told him, "Is it going to be summer yet?" The one that makes winters told Napi, "There are seven of us that make winters and there are seven others that look after summer and now we haven't completed the winter yet and now the Wicked Moon** is making the cold spells. We gave him the leftover cold weather spells that we have so he completed the winter with them. We gave him the bad weathers of this spring."

The days of the month of February are half warm and half cold. It gets warm in the morning and turns cold in the afternoon. That moon that is supplied with weapons, it's the spring moon. Napi was told that, "That moon will have to complete the winter with the leftover cold spells." The people were hungry because of the continuous cold spell. They couldn't do anything. As Napi was a wicked person, he was almost freezing with the

people so he sought for it. He saw the melting wind. The

*Melting wind - Chinook

**Wicked Moon - February

chinook is just like a staff. The staff is bind with a wolf skin; that's a chinook. He was trying to seize it. The people all went away out watching. They're all out watching at something. They were the ones that make winters. The ones that make summers have now met.

In the Indian count, there are seven cold months and there are seven summer months. In the English count there are twelve months in one year. In the Indian count there are seven months in one year. We count the moon. In thirty nights it breaks itself all up and it will not be seen until after four nights. Those four nights are called the gap. It's a full moon and it starts to break itself again. When it reappears again after four nights those are called the gap. The Indians count the moon, so seven moons will appear and it is summer. There are seven moons in one year and the summer moons are also seven. There are twelve months in one year in the English calendar year. The days are counted. The Indians count the moons. An Indian woman that is pregnant counts the moons; white women that are pregnant count the days.

An Indian woman that is pregnant will count her own days from the time she got pregnant. A white woman that is pregnant will go to a doctor and the doctor will tell her the time she'll be going to the hospital. White women will be put to sleep and their babies are squeezed out. An Indian woman will not be put to sleep. She'll be given a medicine brew and she'll give birth to her child. White women will get up as soon as they have their babies; that is why they have pot waists. Indian women will not get up for four days, that is why their waists don't expand. That's what it is.

So they met those, when they all went to watch. The lance is going to be used to break the snow. Napi grabbed the lance and he ran down the mountains. That is why the chinook wind comes from the mountains. So he ran down the mountain side with it. When they looked they said, "He has run away with it. It is summer. We thought that we'd be cruel to the people. We were thinking to be cruel to the birds so they'll be extinct. Napi has ran down the mountain with the summer." So Napi ran down with the melting wind which is bind with a wolf skin so the snow was all gone and the land was dry. So that is summer.

The other incident is different. Those weasel tails leggings, they had red flicker feathers on them. The owner sets prairie fires with them and Napi approached the man crying for the leggings. He put them on when they started to blow and walked proudly and the grass started to burn. He tore them off from his legs and he threw them in the river.

If Napi didn't steal the summer, if he didn't run with it to us, we'd always have winter here. So that's why we have summer. It never winters in California and it never summers up north. The reason why we have summers here it's because Napi stole the summer. He ran down with it over the mountains. These are Indian stories. So I close my story here.

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