

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: JOE GAMBLER
GHOST DANCE:DEER DANCE
CHIEF RED CROW:BEAVER BUNDLE

INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BLOOD RESERVE
CARDSTON, ALBERTA

INTERVIEW LOCATION: BLOOD RESERVE
CARDSTON, ALBERTA

TRIBE/NATION: BLOOD
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INTERVIEWER: J.C. HELLSON
INTERPRETER: DAVE MELTING TALLOW
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Origin of the Ghost Dance.
- Origin of the Blacktail Deer Dance.
- Origin of the Beaver Bundle.

Diane: Tell the story of the origin of the Ghost Dance.

Joe: Yes.

Diane: The origin.

Joe: I will start now?

Diane: Yes, you will start now.

Joe: A group of men went on the warpath. They went south. In those times people go a long ways on a raid. They were chased by the enemy and they fled for home. They came to the shore of what we call the big river (Columbia River). Their leader told them, "I think we will be abused on the other side. We will sleep here and we will go across in the morning." After they sat there for a while they saw a tipi across the river with a light inside. Their leader told them, "I told you that there would be somebody across the river. Now there is a tipi across there." A man came out from the tipi facing east and gave invitation calls to the people that are dead long ago and he called to the west and after a while there were a lot of

shadows in the tipi. The people were going to have a holy ceremony. They heard them praying and they saw them getting up to dance facing to the centre and turning around facing the wall and turning around again to the centre. They heard and memorized every song. The leader of the group of men told his comrades, "Don't make any noise; they are not normal people. They are dead people." So they just sat there. The ghosts danced four times then they dispersed. They all went home. Some went west and some went east. When the leader of the warriors slept he saw the man that sponsored the dance in his sleep. The man told him, "We call this dance the Ghost Dance so I am giving you the dance and you will know all the songs." So that is how the Ghost Dance originated. Men sat on one side and the women on the other side and there were two men, one had a mask and the woman also had a mask. When everybody starts dancing these two will come in dancing. Nobody will laugh. If a person laughs bad luck will come to this person. If a person laughs the ceremonialist will point at this person.

Diane: How many dancers are there?

Joe: The dancers?

Diane: The dancers.

Joe: They'll be of any number but not too many. They will sit in a single row; they will not sit in two rows.

Diane: If you put up a dance how many participants would you have?

Joe: There are nine participants, the ceremonialist and four men on each side. One burns the incense and serves the lunch and makes the fire.

Diane: Is there a slight difference the way they dance the Ghost Dance nowadays or do they still dance it the same way as the people of the past performed it.

Joe: They still dance it the same way as the people of the past dances the Ghost Dance and there is no change in the Ghost Dance today. Skunk (Bob Black Plume) was saying the one that transferred the Ghost Dance to me had his robe on and crawled to the centre and the participants dance around inside and I will perform in the same manner. That is not true.

Diane: How many masks are there? Why do they wear masks? What does that mean?

Joe: It is the same as anybody that wears a mask. The woman will put something under her dress to look like as if she is pregnant. They'll put on a funny act.

Diane: How many masks are there?

Joe: Only two. The woman will wear a mask and her husband.

Diane: Is there a story to that? It is to bring good luck to a person when he goes to war, that is what it is.

Joe: Yes.

Diane: Is there a Ghost Bundle?

Joe: A Ghost Bundle?

Diane: Yes, do the Ghost Dancers have bundles?

Joe: The ceremonialist will have a pipe he will paint it with ochre and he will fill it with tobacco and he will put it beside the incense burning place. They will dance and after the dance the orderly will pick up the pipe and he will give it to the ceremonialist. The ceremonialist will say a prayer and when he gets through praying they will all sit down. The pipe will be lit and they will all smoke. They will wait for the pipe bowl to cool off. The ceremonialist will refill it again when it cools off and he will put it beside the incense burning

place and they'll dance again. The pipe will be refilled with tobacco four times and they will dance four times, and they will quit. The Ghost Dance doesn't go on late into the night.

Diane: Do they ever have bundles?

Joe: No, they don't have bundles. The orderly is there to burn the incense. The incense will be burned and they will pray. After they get through praying the orderly will serve out the food. Each participant will be given a piece of a boiled beef tongue and they will break a small piece of the tongue and they will pray with it.

Diane: Is the incense burning place colored?

Joe: No, it's not colored. The ground is scraped square. The dirt is put on the west side of this square and a small pipe is put on the dirt. Where the ground is scraped is where they burn the incense. It's not fancy make.

Diane: Is anybody painted in the Ghost Dance?

Joe: The one that prepared the tongue, the sponsor of the Ghost Dance will have his face painted. He will say, "I will put up a Ghost Dance," and he is the one that will have his face painted and the orderly will also have his face painted.

Diane: The one that said, "I will put up a Ghost Dance," is he the one that officiates the Ghost Dance?

Joe: No.

Diane: He is not the one?

Joe: Somebody will say, "I will put up a Ghost Dance," and his face will be painted because he made the vow. It's just like

the Big Smoke.

Diane: What kind of facial painting do they apply? How are they designed?

Joe: A person's face will be painted with ochre. The same ochre is used in facial painting of the Big Smoke and a line of black ochre is painted around the face.

Diane: His face?

Joe: His face. And it's also painted with black ochre here.

Diane: On his nose?

Joe: Yes, and around here is also painted with black ochre.

Diane: Around the wrists?

Joe: Yes, the wrists.

Diane: Yes, and what is the colour of the ochre?

Joe: It's red ochre.

Diane: It's red, yes. When do they have the Ghost Dance?

Joe: At this time when it's just getting dark.

Diane: Do they always have their dance in the spring?

Joe: I told it is scarce.

Diane: Yes.

Joe: A person will say, "I will put up a Ghost Dance," and they will have the Ghost Dance at any time. They will not have the Ghost Dance only in the summer; they have the dance at any time they want.

Diane: Do they use drums or rattles?

Joe: They will not use rattles or drums, they'll just sing. All the participants will sing. They use rattles in the Big Smoke.

(NOTE: A Ghost Dance doesn't last very long. The ceremonialist and the participants will dance four times and it will be all over. They will dance to four songs. Each song is repeated four times over, which makes four songs in one song. Four separate songs repeated four times over will add to 16 songs.)

RECORDING OF GHOST DANCE ENDED

Diane: Now he (John Hellson) is going to question you about the

Blacktail Deer Dance.

Joe: Yes.

Diane: He will tell you how did it originate and why do they celebrate the Blacktail Deer Dance?

Joe: I will tell it just the way I heard about it. People tell various stories. So is your tribe. They do different stories and the South Peigans will tell different stories and the South Peigans will tell different stories. Stories are not all the same. The way I heard it, the animals that they call blacktail deer, the mammals of the mountains, a male blacktail deer and his wife another blacktail deer walked around together. The female sneaked away. The male blacktail deer started looking for her.

The female blacktail deer found her father and mother. She told her parents, "My husband is always mad at me. That is the reason why I escaped; he abuses me." The father told her, "You got children by your husband so you will go back to him. He is looking for you; he will be here today." The blacktail deer came to them. He told her, "I am really tired in looking for you. Nothing happened to you and here you sneaked away. You must be going around with your lover." The woman denied. She told her husband, "I didn't do anything wrong. If you are right you will move this big tree. If I told the truth I will move this tree, which is a real big tree." The male blacktail deer agreed and he told his father-in-law, "Watch us." The woman told her husband, "You move it first. If you are right you will move it." The woman sang. Can I sing?

(NOTE: At this point the informant told the interviewer if he can sing the song of blacktail deer. The interviewer made no reply to the informant's question so the informant continues his story.)

Joe: The woman sang as she walked up to the tree. Her pet sank into the ground. She got a hold of the big tree and shook it. She shook it like a small tree and she backed away and sat down. The blacktail deer told his son-in-law, "It's your turn." The blacktail deer got prepared using his supernatural powers. He walked up to the tree and he butted the tree but he didn't even move it. He broke his antlers on the tree so the blacktail deer husband told his wife, "You told the truth that you travelled alone." That is how the Blacktail Deer Dance originated.

A person was going to shoot some blacktail deer. He was laying in ambush. He went to sleep in the position he was with his rifle. He was put to sleep by the animals. The female blacktail deer told him, "This is our dance. It is given to you. It is called the Blacktail Deer Dance. It will consist of a man and then a woman, a man and a woman, in single file and dance in a circle. You will cure people with this dance

that are going to die. They'll get up, they will recover, they will get better with this dance. That is the reason why it is called the curing dance." I have a father who is deceased. His name is White Man Sleep. He officiates the Blacktail Deer Dance. The other is Eagle Black and my grandfather Wolf Shirt; they have supernatural powers. They do miracles in the Blacktail Deer Dance. A song will be transferred to a person. Everybody that is inside will get up, even a child. They will all be burning the incense. Every one will burn the incense. There is not one that sits inside that will not burn the incense. They will pick up a hot charcoal and put it in the incense burning place and they will take the sweetgrass and break off some of it and put the pieces on the hot charcoal. The ones that have a song will all sit at the back. They will take turns in taking the lead of the dance. That is what it is. It is mysterious.

Diane: Who do they pray for?

Joe: They will pray for the person that is sick. A person was sick; he had stomach trouble. His stomach was all bloated up. His legs were skinny and his arms. He was at the verge of death. Two Guns, his other name is Bird Rattle, Bird Rattle said, "I will cure him. I will put up a Deer Dance." Bird Rattle and his friend, Weasel Tail, both sat at the back. Weasel Tail told his friend (Bird Rattle), "You look after the man first." There was snow on the ground. Bird Rattle got up and said, "I will sing four songs. There will be a lightning on the third song and on the fourth song the thunder will roar." The participants were poking at each other saying, "It's winter, how can the thunder roar?" Bird Rattle got up and sang one song and another song and when he sang the third song a blue lightning flashed into the house and on the fourth song the thunder roared. He (Bird Rattle) said, "Nothing will happen to the man. He will recover."

Weasel Tail got up. He had a black bandana. He held it with both hands and sang. He danced. After he had danced he said, "Nothing will happen to him. I saw the sick man in a vision. He was sitting under the shade of a tree and he will be dancing with us towards morning." Weasel Tail said, "Don't help him. He will get up by himself." The sick man was in bed at the verge of death. Towards morning he threw his robe and he started to get up. He was staggering. He got up. His legs were skinny. His legs were almost the size of my walking cane. He got up and danced with the others. In the morning the sick man went out to relieve himself. When he came in he said, "I am cured. There is nothing wrong with me any more." His stomach was back to normal size again. That is why they are called curing dances.

RECORDING OF THE BLACKTAIL DEER DANCE ENDED

Diane: Do you know... do you know if your chief ever owned a sacred bundle? Red Crow? Is that his name?

Joe: Yes.

Diane: What bundle did he own?

Joe: Red Crow?

Diane: Yes.

Joe: He owned the Long Time Pipe. Only the head chiefs will purchase the Long Time Pipe. In the past before the white men came the head chiefs are the ones that will own the Long Time Pipe. Times went by and when Owns Many Horses became head chief he took the Long Time Pipe. When he died his son Crop Eared Wolf also became the head chief and he took the Long Time Pipe. It's the rich people that purchase the Long Time Pipe.

Diane: Did Red Crow own any other bundle?

Joe: He is the great chief. He owned every sacred bundle.

Diane: Name the bundles that you know.

Joe: The one that is in the photograph?

Diane: Yes.

Joe: First he owned a tipi. This tipi is famous. It's the Band Designed Tipi* was his chieftain tipi and he joined the Horn Society. He took what we call the Bundle With A Rattle. Red Crow and Fish Eater owned the Bundle With A Rattle. The ones that dance the opposite way, one wears a trailer headdress and dances with a rattle; he owned that.

And he is a Medicine Pipe owner. He must have owned four Medicine pipes and he purchased a lot of weasel tail suits. Weasel tail suits are transferable and he also owned a shield. Shields are transferable too.

Diane: Did he also own a blanket with weasel tails attached to the blanket?

Joe: A blanket?

*The Band Designed Tipi is designed with a band right around in the middle with the ochre. The color of this band was not mentioned by the informant.

Diane: Yes.

Joe: The weasel tail robe?

Diane: Yes, that is the one.

Joe: Owned by the same man (Red Crow). That is why Fish Eater owned it. It's handed down from relative to relative. They

keep the robe for a memorial. He (Red Crow) also owned the weasel tail robe and another which is called the calf robe. My sister in Montana has that calf robe. The hide is a buffalo calf hide. A mink is on this side and on the other side there is a squirrel and on the back there is a circular thing which we call the hoop which is also blessed. And fungi are sewn on the robe and there are what we call shield shaped are also attached to the robe. This robe is ancient. The calf robe was transferred to my elder brother. His wife was a heavy drinker so they took the robe and went across the border with it and sold it for \$40 and they just drank up the money. My sister took it. She owns a bar. She took the robe and she still has the calf robe.

Diane: Is that all the bundles that you know that he owned?

Joe: Oh, you can't name all the bundles that he owned. He owned so many bundles. Everything that is transferable must have been transferred to him (Red Crow). The bundles that I mentioned are the famous sacred bundles. Red Crow also owned the Cree Medicine Pipe and another Medicine Pipe is called the Eastern Person Medicine Pipe and another one is called the Small Medicine Pipe. He purchased all those Medicine Pipes and there is another pipe on the Peigan Reservation which is called the Short Medicine Pipe. It is about this long. A man owns it; they call him Slobby Mouth Joe. A lot of sacred bundles were transferred to him (Red Crow).

RECORDING OF CHIEF RED CROW ENDED

Diane: Tell a story of how the sacred Water Pipe Bundle originated.

Joe: It's a long story. I'll tell a short story of it. A man had two wives. The wife that sits next to the husband told the secondary wife, "You just sit there doing nothing. You go and get some water." The secondary wife got up and took the water buckets. There were some beavers that had a hut on the other side of the water. The woman went to the water and when she was about to get a bucket of water a bachelor stood beside her. The man told her, "I came to get you. You are going to come

home with me." The woman told the bachelor, "You have no business on me, you have no business on me. Why are you asking me to go home with you?" The woman was put under a spell by the man and the man told her, "I admire you. You will have to come home with me." The shore was sandy and there were the pails and her tracks led into the water and she was taken into the water and into the beaver hut. The husband told his story that she was gone a long time to the other wife and told her, "It's time go and check on her." The wife went and where she came back she came in crying. She said, "My sister's tracks led into the water. She is drowned." The husband told his wife, "Wait. Don't cry yet. She is not drowned, she is under a spell." Her sister came in just at daylight. "Get up now," the woman was told by her sister, "and have everything neat in

the tipi. Someone is coming over to transfer a bundle to our husband." The beaver man told his son, "Take the girl home. That man is our neighbor. Why did you bring his wife to? Take her home with my sacred bundle." The girl told her elderly sister, "Tell our husband not to get mad." The man was a trapper. He kills of every various kinds of animals and birds. The girl said, "My husband will be wording his songs. Our husband will know the words in his songs and he will make a payment with what he trapped."

The man had already put everything in order and he told his wife, "Be on the lookout." "Here they are coming," the woman told her husband. They walked in single file. They walked in single file. The husband told his wife, "Tell the boy to sit there and when they turn again in a circle he will shoot up into the air and he will put the rifle down where he is." The boy sat where he was told to sit and when they walked in a circle again he fired a shot then he put down the rifle and walked away. The beavers entered the tipi and sat down. The beaver man started singing. The husband had everything ready and when the beaver man asks for anything that he wants in his songs he produces what the beaver man asked for. He made payments with various kinds of animal pelts and bird skins. The beaver man told the others, "Each one of you will donate a song."

And there were two people sitting by the doorway, an old man and an old woman. The man told them, "Go out. You people stink." They said, "We came to give him a song." The old man and the old woman were lizards. The old man got disappointed. He said, "I am being sent out. I will get out." So he went out and he put a curse on them and it started to with a downpour and soon they were sitting in a pool of water. The man told the old woman lizard, "Please stop the rain." The old woman said, "My husband is not considered as a powerful man.

You will give me this and that and I will stop the rain." Payments were given to the old woman and she sang. The words in her song were, "I am asking for a nice day." The sky cleared and it was very hot.

His friend the beaver man told him, "Now I give you my sacred bundle. I transferred all my songs with the bundle to you. You will know them. These are called Water Bundle Pipes. If you want to give it away you will transfer it exactly the same way as I transferred it to you." So that is how the sacred Water Bundle originated. His friend the beaver man told him, "Your wife that you are sitting with will be associated to the bundle. Both of your wives will be associated to the bundle." The beaver man said, "The young one has more rights to the bundle." The man told his older wife, "From now on you will be sitting on the other side and your sister will be sitting next to me and you will be working for her."

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