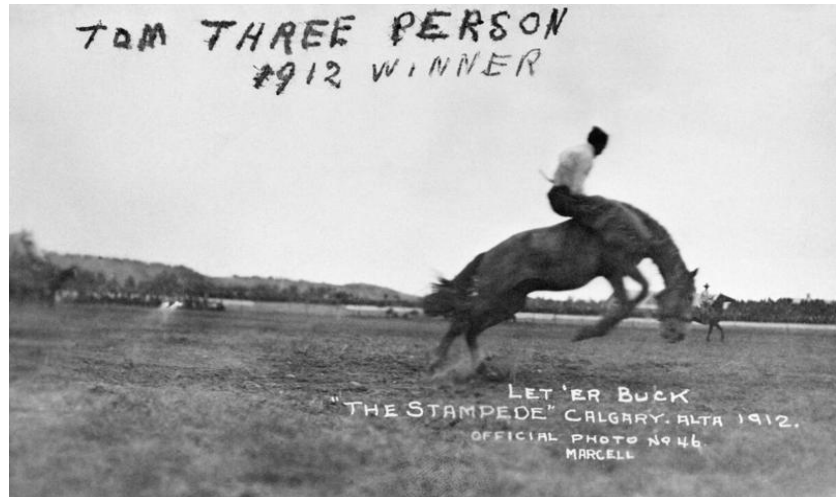# Tom Three Persons

When Tom Three Persons rode Cyclone to a standstill in the 1912 Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, the crowd held its breath.

Cyclone had thrown 129 cowboys before Tom Three Persons stood astride, feet in the stirrups and waited for the horse to leap to its feet. The two, locked in a battle of wits and muscle, put on a spectacular show. The horse twisted and corkscrewed, but the man stayed on until at last the horse gave in. They were both considered outlaws.

Tom Three Persons at Calgary Exhibition and Stampede grounds, Alberta
Glenbow Archives NA-335-79

Torn between Catholicism and Indigenous spirituality, pushed and pulled by white laws and traditional customs, Three Persons balanced on the edge between Niitsitapi tradition and European culture. This embodied the dilemma of many Indigenous people. Although he had a dark side that made others wary of him, Three Persons became one of the leading stockmen on the Kainai reserve.

When the dust cleared after he vanquished Cyclone, Tom Three Persons remained the only Canadian to win in an open competition at the 1912 Calgary Stampede. His horsemanship earned the admiration of all.

World's Bucking Horse Champion

Tom Three Person's skills as a cowboy led to his success in the rodeo arena. Because of his riding ability, some friends encouraged Tom to enter the bronc busting competition at the 1908 Lethbridge Fair.

When planning the rodeo for the 1912 Calgary Stampede, promoter Guy Weadick wrote to the First Nations reserves in Southern Alberta, looking for rodeo competitors. The Indian Agent on

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the Kainai reserve replied: "There is only one Indian here who has made up his mind to enter… the two bucking contests. He would like to know if the Stampede management provides the horses as it is impossible for him to get real bad ones down here… His name is Tom Three Persons."

Three Persons was crowned the World's Bucking Horse Champion at the first Calgary Stampede. He was awarded one thousand dollars, a saddle, and a gold championship buckle.

Born: March 19, 1888 – Died: August 13, 1949

Tom Three Persons,
Glenbow Archives NA-689-1

Additional Resources

- **Canadian Museum of History**
  https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/rode100e.html
- **Alberta Settlement**
  https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/pasttopresent/settlement/aa_Tom_Three_Persons.html

Our Collections

Glenbow Museum
https://www.glenbow.org

Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives
https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives

Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection
https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1

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