

## Arickaree history collection

### Section 1, Pages 1 - 30

This collection contains originals and copies of correspondences, articles, notes and related materials regarding the Battle of Beechers Island, also known as the Battle of Arickaree Fork, on September 19, 1868.

Date: [Not given]

Callnumber: Manuscript Collection: M94; Miscellaneous An-Ay; Arickaree history collection

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Most Important  
Leaves from note book Sept. 1868  
Sent by scouts to Gen. Banthead  
by General George A. Foyth  
On "Island of Death" Kansas.

Hist

Arickaree

Box 1

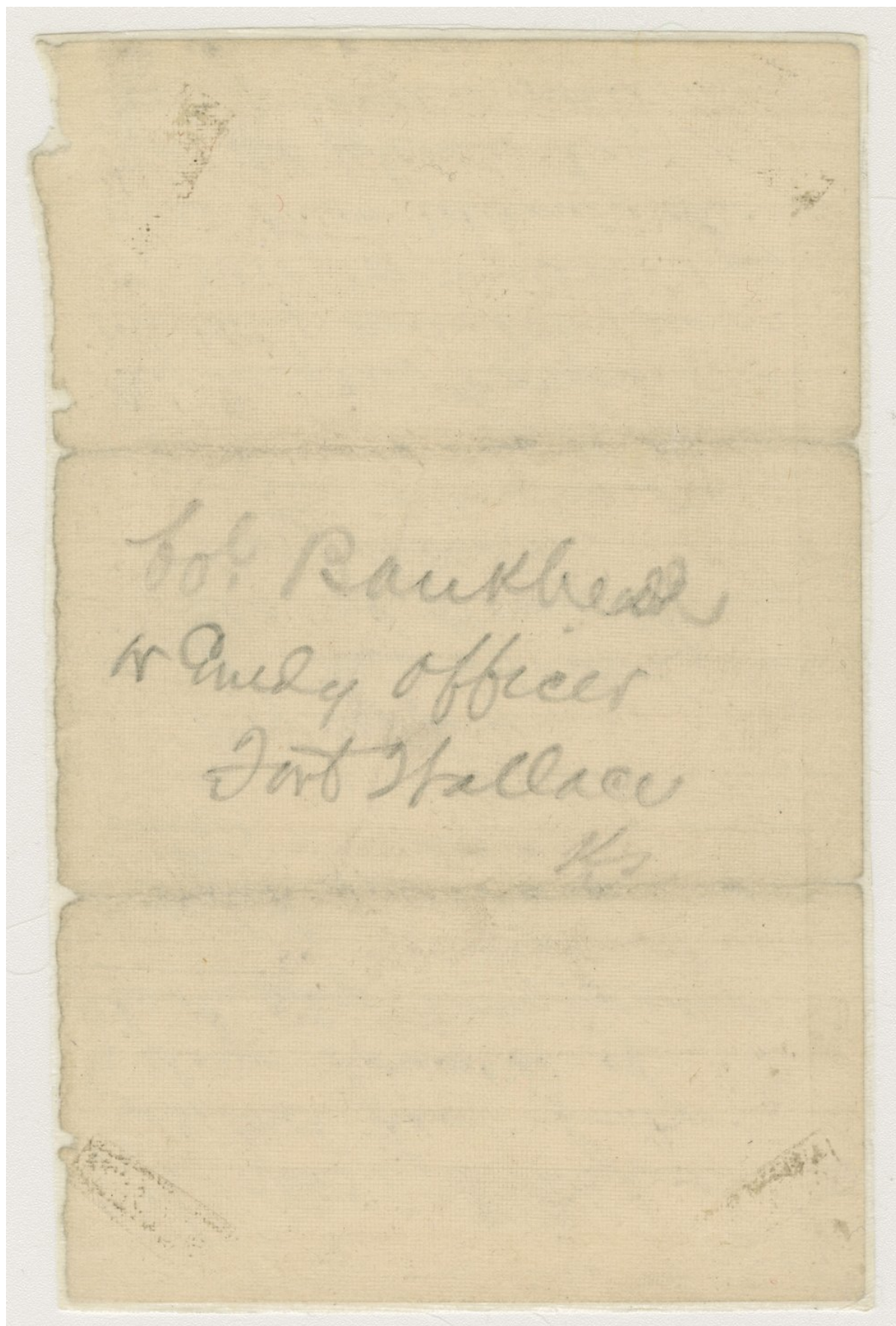
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Forsyth, George H. estate

Original letter to Col. Bankhead or  
commanding officer at Fort Wallace  
telling of the conditions on Beecher's  
Island and the imperative need of  
immediate help. Sep. 19, 1868.

KANSAS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 1855  
On Kawaraz. Forks  
Republican River

To Col. Bankhead  
or Army Officer at  
Fort Wallace -

I sent you  
two messengers on the  
night of the 17<sup>th</sup> inst  
informing you of my  
actual situation, I  
tried to send two more  
last night but they  
did not succeed in  
passing the Indian  
pickets & returned.  
If the other have not  
arrived, then hasten  
at once to my assistance



[2]

I have eight badly  
wounded & 10 slightly  
wounded men to take  
in & every animal I  
had my killed save  
seven which the Indians  
stomped. At Beaver  
is dead & Acting Asst  
Sargen Moore probably  
cannot live the night  
out, He was hit in the  
head on Thursday &  
has spoken but one  
word since.  
I am wounded, twice in  
two places, in the right  
thigh & my left leg  
broken below the knee.  
The Chyones numbered  
the wounded and



[3]

450

fifty <sup>alone</sup> or more. Mr  
Greer says they  
never fought before  
they were splendidly  
armed with Spencer and  
Henry rifles. He killed  
at least thirty five  
of them & wounded  
many more, besides  
killing & wounding a  
quantity of their stock.  
They carried off most  
of their killed during  
the night but some of  
their men fell into  
our hands. I am now  
a little weary & have  
still plenty of ammunition  
left. We are living  
on mule & horse meat.



[4]

I am entirely out of  
 letters - If it was  
 not for so many  
 wounded I would  
 come in & take the  
 chance of shipping  
 them if attacked, they  
 are evidently sick of  
 their bargain - I had  
 two of the members of  
 my company killed  
 on the 17<sup>th</sup> viz Jim  
 Wilson and George  
 H. Calver -  
 You had better stand  
 not not less than 50  
 men & bring all the  
 money & your balance  
 you can spare - Bring  
 a 6 pds Stewitzer



[5]

with you, I can  
hold out here for  
6 days longer if  
absolutely necessary  
but please come in  
time!

My copy  
Yours of 10th  
Geo. A. Smith  
Bob Bob Uda  
Wing Co. Scouts  
O.S.

My Surgeon having been  
mortally wounded, some  
of my wounded have  
had their wounds dressed  
yet so please bring  
get a Surgeon with you

Hist.  
Arickaree  
Forsyth

Forsyth, George A[lexander]  
[Letter] 1868 Sept. 19. 5p.  
(with env. and typescript)





Sept. 19th 1868

On Delaware Fork

Republican River

To Col Bankhead  
or Comdg officer at  
Fort Wallace -

I sent you two messengers on the night of the 17th inst. informing you of my critical situation. I tried to send two more last night but they did not succeed in passing the Indian pickets & returned. If the others have not arrived, then hasten at once to my assistance. I have eight badly wounded & 10 slightly wounded men to take in & every animal I had was killed save seven which the Indians stampeded. Lt. Beecher is dead & Acting Asst Surgeon Moore probably cannot live the night out. He was hit in the head on Thursday & has spoken but one rational word since. I am wounded in two places, in the right thigh & my left leg broken below the knee. The Cheyennes numbered Four hundred and fifty<sup>450</sup> alone or more. Mr. Grever says they never fought so before they were splendidly armed with Spencer and Henry rifles. We killed at least thirty five of them & wounded many more, besides killing & wounding a quantity of their stock. They carried off most of their killed during the night but three of their men fell into our hands. I am on a little Island & have still plenty of ammunition left. We are living on mule & horse meat & are entirely out of rations. If it was not for so many wounded I would come in & take the chances of whipping them if attacked. They are evidently sick of their bargain - I had two of the members of my Company killed on the 17th viz Wm Wilson and George W. Culver -

You had better start with not less than 75 men & bring



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all the wagons & ambulances you can spare - Bring a 6 pdr.  
Howitzer with you. I can hold out here for 6 days longer if  
absolutely necessary but please loose no time.

Very respy

Your obt Svt

Geo. A. Forsyth

Bvt Col. U. S. A.

Comdg Co. Scouts

P. S.

My Surgeon having been mortally wounded, none of my wounded  
have had their wounds dressed yet so please bring out a Sur-  
geon with you.

Col Bankhead  
or Comdg officer  
Fort Wallace  
Ks





Gilbert E.A.  
Arickaree

KANSAS STATE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
41861

Hortana Miami Co Kansas

April 8 1907

ans  
Amico

Hon Geo Martin Dear sir your esteemed favor of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst received and in reply I will say that in the forepart of May that is on the 5<sup>th</sup> I expect to be in Topeka to attend the encampment of the Department of Kan G. A. R. I am a Post Commander of A. J. Smith Post 102 and an Airdlecamp of National Commander Brown and Department Commander Conroy Staffs and a Member of the Committee on Credentials I may be Coconidate for one of the Vice Commanders position I will be there until Sunday I expect to bring up some relics the 11<sup>th</sup> and expect to put in considerable time in your quarters I expect to bring up and donate to the Society the gun I had on the Arickaree also some photographs some of them of the scouts I expect several of them to meet me there J. J. Peate of Beverly Chalmers Smith of Beverly Howard Minton of Wood Thomas Murphy and Alder dice from Sumner Co and Captain Alison Riley of the 19<sup>th</sup> Kan who was scout for the 18<sup>th</sup> and the only survivor of the 4 that went from Beechers Island for assistance his P. O. Address is Apt Bldg Kansas City Kansas Mr Jack Dalton is not here now





his 2 brothers and 2 sisters that were with him during the early days of the Klondike live near here on farms I shal soon see them and git a history of those days also a history of him and probably a photograph I am much better than a while back and expect to attend the next meeting of the society I would like to meet Head formerly of Towanda I met him a few time in 66 and 67 and Mr Robert Wright of Dodge City I dont think I ever met him but he writes the most truthful statements of any person I know many things he writes I know positively to be true and I believe his statements are correct all through I wrote him a letter after reading his article in the 9<sup>th</sup> volume but have not received any answer as yet Thomas Hoppaker of Council Grove looks natural in the 9<sup>th</sup> volume I knew him well

The reason I have the 2 names is this my first employment in the west was in the secret service watching to find out who were selling arms and ammunition <sup>to the Indians</sup> I went to the Territory in March 66 and was with the Indians until the last of June 67 I found out all about it and a company of soldiers arrested and broke up a gang of desperadoes and deserters that harbored near where Augusta now is part of them got away Jack Fawton was helping me they killed him at Neads ranche





in the forks of the Arkansas river and I found out they were after me but I got away and got to Ft Riley from there I went on a train to Leavenworth and was paid off and by the advice of some of the older officers changed my name I was sent back to Ft Riley and was employed as scout for Robertson Brown & Co who went to Ft Wallace to put up hay that was the year the Cholera was so bad there were several died with it I finally took it and I got one of those boxes of black pepper and mixed it up with water in a tin cup and took a whole box of it at one dose there must have been not less than 4 ounces of it it cured the Cholera but for the next week my breath would burn my hand after that when a man would take the Disease he would take the pepper cure. We were twice Correlled on the road at Chalk Bluffs they the Indians kept us Correlled a whole day and 2 nights and at Castlesock we were two days surrounded by them there were several men killed by the Indians and 5 or 6 died with the Cholera and one was drowned in Salomon well I must close hoping to see you in may I remain yours E A Gilbert

## Arickaree history collection

Hist,  
ARICKAREE

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### The Battle of the Arickaree

Pfoem — ?

The frontier which has had a profound influence upon

American life is gone forever. The present generation faces the dawn of a new age. The solution of the problems of this new age will demand a dauntless courage, a spirit of self-reliance, and a firm conviction in the devotion to duty which enabled our ancestors to endure the hardships of the western wilderness that they might win the land to build the nation which they hand on to us.

One of the stories of their sacrifices and achievements is included in the article that follows. It is one of the thrilling passages of Indian warfare as met on the western frontier in 1868.

Tom Murphy, who tells the story, is the only living survivor of the battle with Indians on Beecher Island on September 16, 1868. This was the most unequal contest in numbers ever fought on American soil where the minority was victorious.

The author lived much on the fontier; from the close of the Civil War until 1872, when he located a homestead in southern Kansas, his present ranch home.

The story of the terrific struggle between a horde of Indian warriors and a handful of Anglo-Saxon scouts of the plains by the river Arickaree is the old, old story of the white man's civilization against the untamed life of the American wilderness. The ultimate outcome is ever the same.

July 15, 1929  
Spring Creek Ranch, Corbin, Kansas

Dorothy Murphy  
Secretary for her father.



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### The Battle of the Arickaree

on Beecher Island

September 16, 1868

by

Tom Murphy

Spring Creek Ranch, Corbin, Kansas

The Forsythe Scouts was made up at Ft. Harker and Ft. Hayes late in the summer of 1868. The occasion for this organization was the repeated raids and depredations of the Indian tribes on the frontier settlements in spite of the Peace Treaty signed at Medicine Lodge the year previous.

This troupe of brave Indian fighters under the command of Gen. Geo. A. Forsythe consisted of fifty-one picked men, selected from available material stationed at these two forts on the western frontier, the western part of Kansas being at this time, the front line of western civilization.

Qualifications essential to acceptance into this command were indomitable courage, wonderful endurance, perfect marksmanship, and a knowledge of the Indian character as well as the plains over which he roamed.

Gen. Forsythe had for his lieutenant, F. H. Beecher of the 3rd infantry, a particular friend of Forsythe and a nephew of the celebrated Brooklyn preacher, Henry Ward Beecher. Our surgeon was J. H. Mooers, a man of ability both as a surgeon and as a fighter. First Sergeant was William H. McCall who had been colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment in the Civil War.

All indications were that there was a large number of Indians, and that they had been there in camp all summer. This was in the center of a fine buffalo range as far from civilization as



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The expedition was fitted out at Ft. Harker and no unnecessary equipment formed any part of our supplies. No tents nor wagons were taken; pack mules carried the commissary stores which were of the simplest character. Major Henry Inman was quartermaster in charge of the commissary department as well as paymaster, at Ft. Harker at this time.

Each man was mounted on an excellent horse, his arms consisting of a breech-loading rifle or a carbine and a revolver, and in some instances, two. I myself had a trusty carbine and a Colts 44 pistol. In our belts we carried probably from fifty to seventy-five rounds of ammunition and in our saddle pockets a reserve quantity, the general supply of ammunition being carried on pack mules.

On the first trip out we worked between the Republican and the Smoky Hill rivers for several days, until our provisions gave out. Between the two rivers we had investigated all tributaries of any size for signs of Indians over a wide scope of country about one-hundred-fifty miles in length.

We then went to Ft. Wallace for supplies. In a few days we went to Sheridan, then the terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad where the Indians had recently made a raid. The redskins had all disappeared before we reached Sheridan. We went from here north until we were near the Republican river, Then northwest until we came to the confluence of the three streams that make the Republican river. We crossed this and went across the valley and got on higher land. We found where an Indian village had been close to a big spring of fine water. All indications were that there was a large number of Indians, and that they had been there in camp all summer. This was in the center of a fine buffalo range as far from civilization as



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they could get, not less than one hundred miles from any human habitation in any direction you could go.

We continued west on the north side of the river five or six miles. The trail crossed the North Fork of the river and went across to the Arickaree fork. All indications pointed to the fact that a great number of Indians had recently passed over the trail.

When we found the summer camp we knew that there was a large body of Indians, and in following the trail, facts corroborated this conclusion. To follow this trail without provisions was extremely dangerous. Our commander, Gen. Forsythe, proved to be unacquainted with the western country and Indian warfare in particular.

We followed the trail until night and went into camp just north of the little sandy island. The last of our provisions had been consumed the preceding morning, so we went into camp, and to rest hungry and tired. To meet a large body of savages in our destitute condition was very unwise.

There was a long hill or ridge just west of the camp; a rough elevation with some scrubby timber at the east side. Both elevations reached close to the south bank of the island, the space between the hills being about fifty yards, the open space running north with slight elevation on smooth ground.

Our camp gave the Indians a chance to hold the scouts there with very little exposure.

In the early dawn of the morning of September 16, 1868, our little camp was suddenly aroused. With wild whoops a small group of Indians rushed into our camp making all the commotion possible to stampede our horses and locate our camp



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in anticipation of their attack soon to follow.

Every scout was on the alert. We dashed to our picketed horses to quiet them and save them from stampede and loss.

A stampede is always the Indians customary preliminary attack. In this instance they were successful in driving off one horse and six pack mules, which later proved a most serious loss to us.

and firing as they ran. They came upon the island from the west. After pacifying and saddling our horses, we were standing in a group holding our horses and awaiting orders. One man said: "What are we going to do?" Another answered, "We are going after those pack mules." At this, we looked up the river to the west and over the hills and saw Indians, hundreds of them rushing toward us, their camp being about a mile above ours. It was at this time that Jack Stilwell and I called simultaneously, "Go on to the island." Instantly every man made a dash for the island, only one stopping to mount, the other scouts leading their horses on the run.

That horde of savage Indians, near one thousand strong, had overlooked one thing, and that was, they failed to anticipate any thought or desire of ours to occupy the island as a means of defense.

Upon reaching this little stronghold we quickly tied our horses. The Indians had divided their forces into two groups, the smaller one coming down from the west, crossing the river and sweeping across the island to the northeast. The main body of Indians came down the open canyon from the north between our camp and the island, and continued down the valley between the long line of hills running parallel with the valley on the west.

It is evident their idea was to surround us in our camp and thereby make short work of our annihilation. They had mis-

contests ever waged in human warfare. The conflict was for the



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possession of this place and was as fierce and furious as it calculated their prey.

While we were in the little stream that was about six times as wide as it is now, the water being shallow, not more than four or six inches deep at the deepest place, the Indians that crossed just west of where the monument now stands went on to the island sweeping on to the east side, riding in a swift gallop and firing as they ran. They came upon the island from the west, then turned to the northeast side, right in front of us while we were in the stream that runs north of the island. They kept up this movement until about two or three hundred of them had all passed and left a gap which the scouts took advantage of and rushed on to the island, losing no time in doing so.

If the Indians had stopped there on the island while we were in the stream we could not have been successful in securing our location which we had thought of for defense, another instance of Anglo-Saxon ingenuity pitted against savage tactics.

Fortunately, not one of the scouts nor our horses was wounded while getting on to the island. Providence seemed to be with us this day.

Upon reaching this little stronghold we quickly tied our horses to the cottonwood saplings which grew plentifully on the island at this point, there being a fringe of willows growing on the outskirts of the island which proved a great protection to the Indians as it concealed their movements in the battle. We secured our horses in a group as near together as we could to form a circular enclosure which would afford us some protection in the fray which was imminent.

Just here began one of the fiercest and most unequal contests ever waged in human warfare. The conflict was for the

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possession of this place and was as fierce and furious as it were possible for both sides to make it, the firing being at very close range.

Soon after the battle began our horses began to fall and not many hours elapsed before they were all killed except one that had been tied about fifty yards from the main group. When this horse, the last of our fifty, fell, we heard someone from the enemy ranks say: "There goes the last damned horse anyway." Whether this was from an Indian or from a white renegade among them we did not know.

During the first hour of the battle, Scout Harrington with Pat Burke, myself and two others were fighting from the shelter of a little bank when an arrow from an Indian close by hit him in the middle of the forehead and stuck fast. The man nearest Harrington Jerked the wood of the arrow out leaving the spike intact, and within a few minutes a bullet hit the spike remaining and dislodged it. The blood from the wound flowed profusely down and over his beard covered face, his body, and into his shoes. Such a bloody man I never saw in any other battle or war. In spite of the annoyance and suffering occasioned by this, Harrington was game for the full day's battle and never flinched from duty on the firing line, but fought to the finish. When surgeons in the relief party eight days later, dressed this wound they found it infested with multitudes of screw worms. Such fortitude and nerve as displayed by this hero in the defense of civilization is worthy of the admiration of all. This brave man passed the declining years of his life at his home at Mountain View, Oklahoma.

For several hours this fierce and furious fighting continued. Then our savage foe perceived that we had some





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advantage in outwitting them in regard to occupying this strategic point.

Now came a lull in the fight; the Indians evidently decided to resort to heavy charges, thinking to crush us with numbers and combined strength in the savage onrush of their charges.

The great horde of Indians scattered about the hills, in our camp which we had so hastily quitted in the early dawn, and all those about the valley had taken part in the attack of the morning. We had been able thus far to keep them back with the accurate work of our rifles and the grim hardihood of our men.

This lull was only a check to prepare for the charges to follow. The charges were organized in the little sand hills to the south of the island. Farther back in the hills the squaws with their wails and warcries were using every means to get their warriors to the front and ready for the charge.

Roman Nose, reputed to be the most perfect savage chief in respect to physical superiority as well as cruel hate, wearing his great war bonnet of eagle feathers and heron plumes, crested with two shining black buffalo horns; wearing his moccasins, and a scarlet sash, and painted in hideous barbarity, led the charge. He urged his warriors on to furious onrushes thinking to exhaust our ammunition.

The fact that their formation in battle front was in the nature of single file, the warriors dashing down upon us, one following another, gave the scouts a wonderful opportunity for their skill in marksmanship. With wild war whoops, riding as fast as their horses could run, they charged

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upon us at such close range that our rifles did a telling slaughter. Every charge proved a heavy loss to the Indians. Roman Nose, superb and wicked Cheyenne chief, fell, leading his bravest warriors in their grandest charge. We could have executed double the fatalities in the ranks of our foe had it not been for our shortage in ammunition, for as they were driven back and shied off we ceased firing to save our ammunition, which we knew would be badly needed before the seige was over. The charges continued up to mid afternoon when the Indians, after the loss of their leader, realized that they were getting the worst of their bargain. When the charging ceased the Indians fell back to sniping all around us. This continued until the darkness of evening made it impossible to shoot a rifle with effect. When the battle ceased we immediately sought out our dead horses for the ammunition stored in our saddle-pockets. I recall that I was aware of the extreme shortage of my own supply on my person. We then took inventory of our little band to determine the casualties and relieve the suffering as best we could among our wounded comrades. Seventeen of our men were wounded and five were dead. Twenty-two of our little band of fifty-one, out of commission, and five of them forever. Our surgeon, Mooers, fell early in the battle, and our medical and surgical supplies had been left behind so there was little we could do to alleviate the suffering of the wounded men.

Lieutenant Beecher suffered a broken back, and after



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intense suffering died a few hours after the close of the first day's battle.

General Forsythe received two severe wounds, one a scalp wound, the other, a rifle ball through his ankle.

No man engaged in this battle knew the number of Indians killed except the Indians themselves. Only three dead Indians were left on the battle field and they were close together and so near the scouts that they could not be gotten away with their other dead.

The next day after the battle a large number of Indians warriors, squaws, and children, came up under a flag of truce. We made no reply but lay quietly in our rifle pits. They came within one hundred-fifty yards of us and remained for a half hour at least, hoping to secure their three dead warriors. One of our men fired a shot at them. At this they rallied and seemed to be getting ready for another charge, but gave this up as they had had enough of a losing game. The loss of three hundred sixty of their bravest warriors a fact I learned from their interpreter later was a terrible execution, proof that our plainsmen scouts were expert riflemen. I am confident the execution would have been doubled if we had not felt the necessity of saving our ammunition, our only life guard in this fearful contest for the mastery of the plains.

The loss by serious wounds of our commanding general from duty, of our lieutenant and our surgeon by death in battle, more than one third of our command wounded, and all of our horses killed, left us in very bad straits, to say the least. And to this, add the lack of food, medical supplies and tools, and you have a tragic situation. One hundred miles from the effects of it.



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nearest help: Comrades whose suffering we had no means to alleviate! An ambushed foe all around about us: This was the grim situation for our men to face.

The next thing to do was to fortify ourselves as best we could for the siege we knew was to follow. The island was almost a clear bed of sand so we dug out with our hands, the only tools at our command, the loose sand and made holes or pits to be ready for the morning. We worked throughout the night at our improvised entrenchments. The dead bodies of our horses had served us well as a screen or breastworks all throughout the battle, where they fell.

At dawn the next morning a small band of Indians came upon the island to ascertain the strength of our position. They readily saw how we were fortified and made no attempt afterward to come upon the island nor within such close range of our rifles. However, sniping was continued throughout the day, in fact, for the next two or three days.

It was our fortifications that saved us.

Being without rations the scouts had suffered about as heavy a load as they could carry. Fighting throughout the day with no food, and no supper the previous night was telling on the endurance of the strongest.

The night following the battle was dark, cloudy, and rainy. The second night was also dark and stormy. The scouts were scantily supplied with clothing and bedding. We had nothing in this line except what we wore and carried on our horses. Being hungry and tired we were in a pitiful condition to withstand the rain and storm and suffered much from the effects of it.





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Many of us divided our scant supplies of both clothing and bedding with the badly wounded men. I gave the only coat I had to a scout named Armstrong who was severely wounded in the back. This left me with an ordinary army shirt for protection from the cold and rain these mid September nights on the western plain. The two dark nights were greatly to our advantage in getting scouts out with messages for relief. However, we suffered much in our ill-protected condition from the inclement weather with our sand pits our only shelter.

During the two days following the battle little was done in the way of warfare except the continual sniping by Indians on every side. The scouts kept on the alert, sending many an Indian to his happy hunting ground by means of our trusty rifles. We suffered few injuries from this sniping as our fortifications made with arduous labor the night following the battle, afforded us ample protection from the enemy's fire for we observed all caution and kept ourselves concealed in our sand pits behind the breastwork of the bodies of our fifty cavalry horses that fell during the first half day of the battle.

On the third day we saw on the ridge about a mile away a small group of horsemen whom we knew to be Indians taking observation. Scout Louis Farley, raising the sights of his rifle, gave them a parting shot. The Indians immediately beat a hasty retreat. Farley's aim was true even at that range. This was the last appearance of Indians during our eight anxious and weary days of waiting for relief from the fort. The remainder of the fight was for life from starvation, from infection, and contamination.

An empty commissary is a hardship at any time, but to game country, all living animals of food value were driven out

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us, in our<sup>dire</sup> distress, was appalling indeed. It was after breakfast of the morning we consumed the last of our provisions that we found the location of the Indian's summer camp where they had been tanning robes and drying meat. We followed the trail all day going into camp without anything for supper and commenced the battle at daylight the next morning without anything to eat and fought all day without food. It was endurance and reserve energy that carried us through. No time was there to try to secure any food that night nor the day following as our time was consumed in beating off the Indians. The third day we began to eat the flesh of our fallen horses and were hungry enough to relish such unsavory food in our dire need. We built fires in our pits and broiled the meat. We had no salt nor seasoning for this meat from carcasses three days dead, but starvation must be avoided and our strength reserved for whatever was to follow. After the departure of the Indians on the third day we cut from the carcasses of the meat and dried this, hoping to have enough to subsist upon until relief should reach us.

The dried meat did not contain nourishment enough to satisfy our hunger and too, our supply of this was exhausted two or three days before relief came, so we had to fall back upon the remains of the dead carcasses such as the wolves and flies had left for us and select the best of this putrid flesh. Such a ration was well nigh impossible but life was dear to us. Some of our men tried eating the seed balls of the cactus growing on the island but with very unsatisfactory results. In spite of the fact that this was considered a big game country, all living animals of food value were driven out



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except prairie dogs, and these, when shot would fall back into their holes, so it was impossible to get them, our tools having been left in our old camp site. One man was successful in getting a yellow-hammer; another, a prairie wolf the meat of which was scarcely more wholesome than the putrid horseflesh which had been our daily ration while awaiting the relief we were trusting soon to come.

Jack Stilwell, one of the youngest scouts, a fair haired boy of eighteen, and Pierre Trudeau went out the night following the battle with messages from Gen. Forsythe to Ft. Wallace for help. We were in doubt about their safety or success in running the gauntlet of the watchful savages and during the second night two more men tried to get through, but came back reporting that they had run upon Indians close by.

On the third night of our siege Jack Donovan and Pli- ley went forth with dispatches to Col. Bankhead at Ft. Wallace. Several hours out they came upon an Indian herd near an Indian camp and met up with the Indian in charge of the herd.. Donovan, knowing that dead Indians tell no tales, of necessity made short work of him and hastened on on his p erilous mission.

Time dragged heavily in our famished and suffering plight on the island during the last four days of our waiting for help. We spent considerable time in searching for food but without success.

Being accustomed to scouting about the frontier with a small amount of food in my saddle-pockets, I thought to investigate to see, if, by chance I might find some morsel of nourishment in my saddle-pocket. To my great satisfaction I found a small piece of bacon, probably two inches in length



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and very hard. I chewed this hard scrap of cured bacon until it was white, with scarcely anything left of it. I then tossed it into a sand pit. My friend, John Hurst, seeing it and noting its resemblance to food he so much craved said: "I believe I will chew this awhile." He did so, and others of the scouts observing the satisfaction derived from it, chewed on this poor bacon rind until a dozen of the poor fellows in turn, had a chance at it. Such were the pangs of hunger that beset us in our siege. The decaying carcasses of our one time splendid cavalry horses made our location almost unbearable. Added to this tragic dilemma was the torture of our wounded comrades whose wounds were badly infested with screw worms. The burning heat of the September sun at midday was torture indeed, to those of our fevered and languishing party who were unable to move about. However, the coolness of evening gave welcome respite to this hardship. Jack Donovan who had gone out with dispatches from Gen. Forsythe to the fort on the third night after the battle was returning to us four days later. He came upon Col. Carpenter and his company of colored troopers twenty miles to the south of us. Colonel Carpenter had received the information that we were surrounded on the Republican river instead of the Arickaree. Donovan piloted Col. Carpenter and his command to our little stronghold on Beecher's Island, he being the first to reach us with aid of those who had gone for relief. Reuben Waller of Eldorado, Kansas is the only living survivor of Col. Carpenter's 10th cavalry. He is a man





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eighty-nine years of age, in excellent health and spirit. He says that had Col. Carpenter and his men been a few hours later, help would have been of no avail to the famished scouts. sent hospi Jack Stilwell and Pierre Trudeau, the first messengers sent with dispatches by Gen. Forsythe, arrived at Beecher Island in the evening after Col. Carpenter's arrival in the morning of Sept. 24, 1868. Stilwell conducted the wagon train with supplies, ambulances, and several companies of soldiers from Ft. Wallace under the command of Col. Bankhead. A small relief party from the Platte river arrived the same evening. Creek, ne The wounded, suffering, and emaciated scouts were cared for as well as possible by the surgical and medical staff of the rescue party. They were removed from the contaminated atmosphere of the island to an eminence overlooking the valley. Tents were erected for their comfort, food provided, and after another day of rest prepared to return to Ft. Wallace. The wounded in ambulances, the rest of us in government wagons up with the exception of a few of the scouts who came in on cavalry horses. unequal contest it was, in respect to the numbers engaged. On the way back to Ft. Wallace the advance guard of mounted soldiers and a few scouts met up with three Indians, two on horses and one a-foot: he evidently had lost his horse. These Indians carried packages procured from a well known store in Denver. In the skirmish which ensued on meeting them, the two horsemen got away but the soldiers shot the one a-foot. He fell near the scaffold (Indian tomb) of a fallen chief who wore on his breast a large silver medal awarded in President Madison's administration. One of the scouts took possession of the medal which was three or four times larger than a silver dollar.