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Custer Battle

Notes

By E. S. Paxson

Butte Mont.
Notes taken from Major Godfrey's article in "Our Army" June 1892, also from private letters from him to myself.

See Godfrey to Wallace on page 365.

What became of "witch" Bouyer & the half breed interpreter?

Also Clowery Knife chief of the Scowks I was told

also was he told with Carson?
also keep yellow face chief of our scouts.

At 5 AM, morning of 23rd Curie with two sergeants left camp going up the Rombud. Had Hugbs flag also Reg. Standard. Who wore the sergeant and describe flags.
The sides between the Little Big Horn and the Rose Bud was where the Indians discovered the smoke from the village and pony herds grazing in the Little Big Horn, about 15 miles from (Battle Field) where Curtis suicide the Indians could not see more of them probably than had already been reported by General stupid stuff incoming.
Indians had been camped two or three days when they were attacked, was not selected in view of and battle-field. They camp by
bunds and some distant apart. Village had moved in view of Sitting Bull's prophecy =

The Rie people seemed to think this was to be a fierce fight and that this was more strong than could be handled
The Indians had gained much information from some of them who had discovered a pack which was lost by Capt. Yates. This fact was immediately communicated to Custer, which caused his immediate procedure on the trail. This was morning of 25th.

Cross the dividing ridge between the Rosebud and Little Big Horn about noon. Rig was divided into sections immediately after. Capt. Major Reno - troop "M" Capt. Dunce = "A" Capt. Maynard
and Sunt De Ruses - "D"  
Sunt M. Intch & Allace  
The Indian scouting  
under Sunt Varnamyy  
Kenre & Sunt "Hazard" Sunt  
Hodgersson acting Adjutant  
(failed with Rino on the  
turks of the river.)  
Silvert & Porte medical off  
ners.  

Cutler's full alcove was  
as follows Troop "I" Cap  
Koch & Sunt Porter = "F"  
Cap Judd & Sunt Reely = "C"  
Cap Tom Bennett & Sunt Harr- 
ington = "E" Sunt Smith &  
Bingis = "L" Sunt Calhoun  
& Cutlenn = Corps Adjt  
Some medical officers =
Cap Bunting's Battalion was Troop "H" Bunting + Lt. Gibson = "D"
Cap Min. + Lt. Edgley. "K" Lt. Godfrey =

Pack train Capt. MacKay
in charge = escort was
"B" Cap McDougall.

Rino passed up the
Horse creek or
"Rodeo" Bunting creek. The
Indian trail passed
down this valley, and
fronted Rino + the
packs behind him.
Battles was to left 4
fort in high bluffs 2 or
3 miles distant, was
to continue on fighting
until he could see the
full Big Horn Valley.
From that march they
could occasionally see
Curtis who was marching
rapidly and firing
a few shots... When
Wine broke lead and
Rock from soon came
up—would fall to charge
when Rums was near
little Big Horn, when
Rums crossed river. Sir
Curtis had turned to
right and was hidden
by the bluffs—
Rino moved in in col. of fours about 1/2 mile then formed line of battle, with scouts on left, after advancing mile deployed as skirmishers. Success still eluding, stuck firing second, indians made a rush to the left toward the Rees who left the field mainly—Rino did not charge camp as ordered but advanced and fought on foot. His position was greatly much shielded by trees & steep bluffs. His forces were nearly surrounded but few killed & on man was killed from near who was standing near Rino who immediately gave the command to "march and get to the bluffs." This was not generally understood = owing to the firing and general disorder. Some remained concealed and came out when indians left. 4 remained until night & then escaped. This resulted from poor organization of column. Rino was foremost. Some were advancing laterally with revolvers after discharging them. To pursed on the right he could not cross when he
had entered valley - to get horse & over to cross on left or down river where he procured a good ford. "A pony trail led up a funnel shaped ravine to the bluffs" when they got jammed & lost all organization & seemed sure a heavy price would be paid little loss. Men climbed up the sides of the bluffs - in quite elite manner.

McCullough killed in after leaving bluffs - sold while climbing bluffs. Neelyhoffer's horse stupid from buck & fell dead into river Neelyhoffer wounded in knee &
Bintlin's Battalion soon after leaving "malt hole", a sergeant came up with message for "Packs" soon after a Tom path came up with message from Crow<x insinuating that packs be formed - marching at trot - going in front continuing fire furious they then met forward at gallop pistols drawn supposing they would meet hostile who Custom was driving in among in sight of Soldier Big Horn valley these men were seen in all parts of valley through dust & smoke recurred by the firing of the grass by Indians - in bluffs to right was sun troops engaged (possibly Reno's) also others down valley (who were they?) Crow scouts informed Bintlin who was in bluffs and he proceeded to them while proud to be Reno who had gained the hills after his retreat. "Reno had lost his hat and had a handkerchief tied around his neck was much excited" Bintlin deployed on edge of bluffs to the left. Indians withdrew soon after - Bintlin
decided ammunition with
Reno, while waiting for
ammunition pick train.
Reno immediately re-
covered the hill, presently
also procure mine.
This was a failure as
the Indians, who were
engaged in scurrying
dead cross their backs
(while at foot of hill)
Mayhew said to other
officers: "gentlemen! I think
Custer has made the
mistake of his life
by not taking the whole
way into first attack"
Some of Reno’s men
had seen Custer’s men
on bluff about time
Indians had appeared.
in Reno’s front this was
perhaps the last read
of Reno or his men.
(See A on map.) From
this point Custer could
probably see the whole or
most of the Indian camp
and think realized that
the chances were desper-
ate. From here the mus-
eterage was probably sent
by Cook to hurry up
 quartz. (Dunlap’s Martini.)
Reno was then engaged
Custer expected time
to finish his attack and
support him vigorously.
Dining was heard a long
time toward Custer’s com-
abor junction of Buell
Indians had appeared.
They should be doing some thing for this. They had two volleys which was no doubt a signal of distress & to indicate where he was - More & Edgerly inclined to go toward the bodies of the dead - This was probably 4:30 P.M. (See page 375) Brinton Daniel Reno about 2:30 about 5:00 the command moved toward Earp's supposed position. They went as far as high stuff and halted. From there we ran in valley to lift also a large fire of ponies toward Earp's field two miles away could be seen many indians - number of shots were fired concluded Earp have been reported and the firing came from rear guard. Firing caused Indians to come
toward our position (no doubt it was all over at this time with Curtin). The men were now dismounted to fight on foot. Weirs & Funkes troop on bluffs in their front. Godfrey's on east of bluffs must to move the next to the rear. (They were all getting to rear) at this time Weir & Funkie was being attacked. Godfrey rode out to join main command he had not proceeded far when it occurred to him that a retreat would disarray everything & cause a stampede. He dismounted his men & supposed there to the rear, (among them was my friend Jack Donoughue who was wounded in leg while by side of Godfrey.) Weirs & Funkie's troops came leaning by to their left while Godfrey was trying frantically to mount his horse which he succeeded in doing. Sue Mee (acting Ad.) concluded to stay with Godfrey until while the rest horses were going to rear they repeated the Indians who went to cover it was then again ordered to rear. They then began to retreat & soon joined command.
Indians were at this time gaining reinforcements rapidly. When they got to ridge in front of Reno a party of enemy endeavored to get position of high hill to right, but were held by 10 mm. 2nd took position. Indians took possession of all high points and opened heavy fire. By 7 PM they were entirely surrounded. Position just to rear was protected by rugged steep bluffs which declined gradually away from river, on north a short ridge sloping toward river front 4 pm. On this ridge first day was 5 troops in rear of ridge small hill in ravine south of this hill was the hospital of horses & pack mules secured, across this ravine cavalry troop was posted. The packs & dead horses used for traversing the high hill on south was occupied by Buntin, they had lay down and kept shots were required to fire. 4th firing continued until 10 PM. "Where the mules were Curta" was frequently heard. The Indians kept up fire burning all night and shooting, feeling
Continued shooting all night—M. knew by this that a scalp dance was in progress (many human heads were found in skin camps after fight) but Varnum volunteered to go to battle but was undoubtedly forbidden to go. The hours of night were employed in digging rifle pits and constructing breastworks. Some were still digging when they were overthrown firing at early dawn. One had some shells with the exception of some of Varnum's men the Indians around them were by standing on full view and drolling at the crack of a rifle also using devices to draw the fire—but they found it too dangerous and discontinued it. Varnum suffered the greatest loss, three men being exposed to the long range fire from the East French "M" troop returned.

Private on South side just previous to this one of Gibson's men was shot by a Indian who rushed up and touched the body with his "coot stick" on starting back he was killed. This was the only "good" Indian left in their possession. This volume
headed Buntun to make a charge. The enemy returning to more carrying many dead & wounded with them after much persuasion by Buntun, Reno decided on a charge, Buntun giving the word, every man but one going out. The Indians poured in a rapid fire on them & gave way no one was hurt but strange to say the one who remained in the fire was soon shot in the head & killed, up to this time no man - at 11 AM the firing slackened & volunteers succeeded in getting water, several men was wounded in the attempt, three men all received medals of honor, about 2 am they were again driven to the trenches & at 3 firing had ceased, the dead one buried as best they could under circumstances 13 killed & 52 wounded on the hill.

Chief Cyril and the wife of "Yellow Horn Bull" have communicated the following regarding Custer's fight:

Custer separated from Reno before the latter had crossed the Little Big Horn under orders to charge the village, Custer took the high ridge to the right a ridge of high bluffs
and the nine separated the commands on the ridge. Curtis of staff was seen to move from front to rear just as Reno was joining the attack. Curtis troops at this time were a mile or more to the right (see map). At this point the situation was such that Curtis could see only a few miles above and a short distance below Reno, could not see all of village. The rear of the main part of village was cut off from view by the highest point of ridge a short distance from him. If he had gone to this point he could have seen what and under what he was cutting and probably have changed his plans. He must have counted on Reno’s success if he was rightly informed. When Reno’s advance was checked, and his left began to face back, Gill undertook to cut off Reno’s retreat to the Bluffs, on his way “Iron Horse” called to him from a high point and said “more soldiers are coming.” This was the last remnant of Curtis’s column. They supposed Reno was the only one to convince that Curtis then had crossed.
The valley of the dry creek.
(Paso Creek) and was
proceeding up the slope
of the bluff forming the
second ridge back from
river, and nearly parallel
with it. They were in
column of fours and
moving rapidly with
much disorder among
some horses. Strutt dice
not go to Lord (Trumpein
Rinell & Godfrey page 180)
but with this information
Hall made his dispositions.
The great body of marines
had left Reno and
attempted to attack the
troops of Curtis. This
was why Reno was not
unconquered at the
crossing of river. Soon
after a strong force
had assembled on Curtis
he turned his column
to the left and adlected
north toward village
near a spring (rue map)
located at the junction
of the ravines just be-
low it and dismounted
Kibby & Calhoun to fight
on foot, they advanced in
double time to a hollow
(Citizens movement)
the other troops followed
in

The troops dismounted
When Kibby & Calhoun got
to knock the others turned
Tonight, Smith's troop deplored mounted, and took position on a ridge which ended in Kloup's position (Culmundo Hill) on the left, and on his right which ended in the hill which was occupied by Ensign Hulse.

Hulse

Kloup

C. Hill

Smith

Culmundo

Red

Culmundo

Smith's skirmish line

Gray horses in groups of four. The position which Culmundo occupied was the first high ridge next to river nearest point ½ mile from river. Extent of his front about ½ mile, or in plain view of village a few hundred yds. in front of his line was another ridge which was not occupied on the further slope, 0.5 miles the maroons under Crazy Horse from lower village among who was the "chieftain" formed for the charge on Culmundo Hill and moved up a ravine south of...
Keogh & Calhoun as they [pace] was turning this flank they discovered led horses with no guard except horse soldiers, they were soon killed and horses stampeded. These were caught by the squaws. Keogh & Calhoun were out of ammunition which was in saddlebags. Gall moved up to foot of hill held by Calhoun dismounted they moved up until they could the soldiers, then they protected themselves by squatting jumping up & shooting. The cavalry much waste of ammunition & the soldiers as they were sure to draw their fire without exception. In the meanwhile Gall was massing his forces under the slope. At a signal from Gall the mounted Indians raised up and fired. The mounted ones making a grand charge on Calhoun. The males soon crushed the men in the dust. Calhoun was followed by Keogh. When all was over on that part of field.

In the meanwhile the same tactics was pursued on Custer Hill. The warriors under the leadership of Crow King, Crazy Horse.
White Bull, Hump and others moved up the hill west of Custer and concentrated under the shelter of the ridge on his right flank, and back of his position. Custer’s work was finished before the annihilation of Custer and his men. Hunkpava moved forward to the hot encounter and the massacre was completed. Smith’s men had gone from the ridge, but soon enough was left to mark their alignment about 25 bodies of this and other troops was found in one ravine near the river, many corpses were found scattered over the field between Custer line of defense and the river and in the vicinity of Ringo Hill — perhaps of men who tried to get away—some of whom may have been sent as messengers to Reno or Benteen by Custer. A half battle of Ironclad troop was found near the fort. He was a good soldier and perhaps was sent as courier and died fighting. There was no close fighting except on the Senate. White Custer and his men were killed. The battle was nitely finished the Indians evidently made
We advance from the river in form of attack although they had a force along of it to which may be ascribed the fall of those who may have tried to get away from the main line. Many men fell and sick with arrows after the fight was finished by young men & boys.

"About 9:30 am of 27th a cloud of dust was seen down river." It was concluded that they were Curtis and his men but where was the gray horse troops? If it was not Curtis where was Dungy & if the Curtis would certainly.

Send Mr. Klein, Harris a scout came in who was out all night, could not get in. Note from Dairy to Curtis. Soon after due - Bradley at 7:30 really came in, who said Curtis was probably killed as they had counted 197 dead bodies and he did not suppose any had escaped (Sut Bradley I see in 877 after Big Hole Battle he was wounded in foot & guided Ambulance to stage road). This was first information of the fall of Curtis & his true boys. On the morning of 28th the com-
mand left to bury the dead of Curtis' Troops. Bright morning from bluffs had a good view of Curtis' battle field, all the bodies with few exceptions were stripped and all were horribly mutilated with the exception of Colonel, who lay in his back with hands across stomach.

It was said, "Rain in the face" have eat the feet of one of the men, probably Tom Curston. 212 killed were buried here, in all 266 were killed & 52 wounded.
Dear Mr. Bannister,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concern regarding the recent events in the area.

The recent news of the "witch" sightings has raised many questions in the community. Many are skeptical, but I believe there may be something more to this.

I recall a conversation with Mr. Smith, who mentioned a similar incident some time ago. He described a figure that appeared to be a witch.

I would like to request your assistance in investigating this matter. If possible, I would like to hold a meeting with you and some local leaders to discuss the situation.

Please let me know your availability for a meeting. I am available at your convenience.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

P.S. The meeting will be held on [Date].