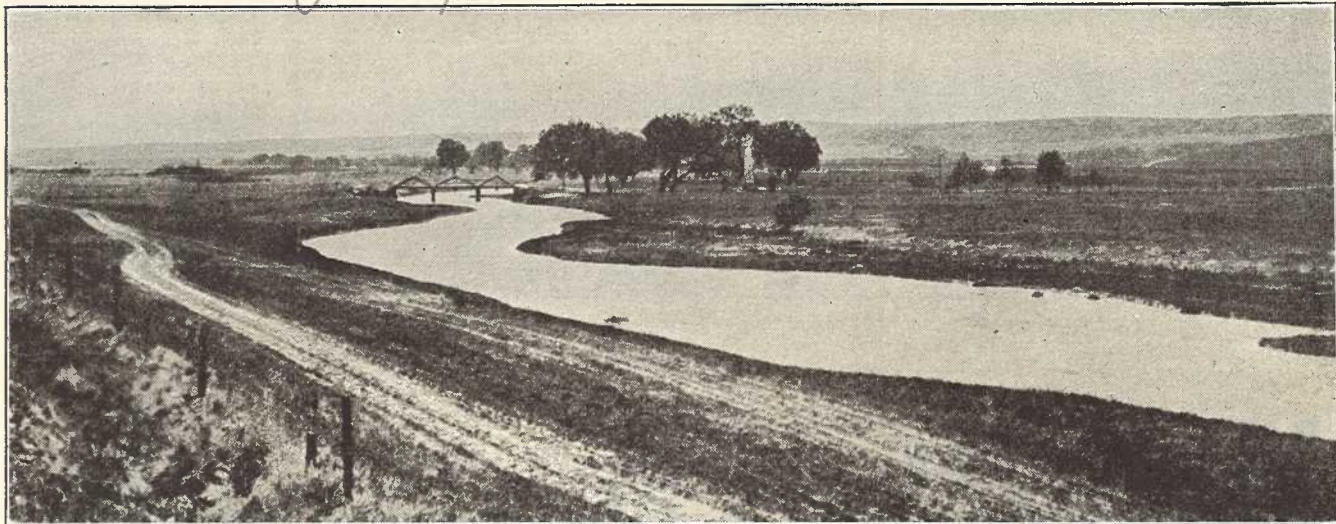


July 19 34



Valley of the Arickaree, where Forsyth's Scouts and Roman Nose's Cheyennes fought Sept. 17, 1868. Photo by Brininstool, 1917.

*A (not the) They were all heroes.*  
**The Hero of the Arickaree**

*Personal experience of John Hurst of Forsyth's Scouts at the Battle of Beecher Island.*

By E. A. BRININSTOOL

Author: "Capt. Benteen in the Custer Fight," A Trooper with Custer," "Capture and Death of Chief Crazy Horse," etc.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** During the summer of 1917 I became acquainted with John Hurst, a member of Forsyth's Scouts, who was then living at the Soldiers' Home, Los Angeles, at which time he related to me the following account of his personal experience in Forsyth's fight on the Arickaree Fork of the Republican River, in Eastern Colorado, in September, 1868. This nine-days' siege on Beecher Island (as it was later named) is without a parallel in American Indian warfare, 51 frontiersmen standing off some 700 Northern Cheyenne Indians, with no food but their dead horses about them.—E. A. Brininstool.

"I was born in Lisbon, St. Lawrence county, N. Y., Feb. 19, 1941, where my childhood days were spent on a farm. In 1859 I went to California and worked at the lumber business until the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1861, when I enlisted in the First California Volunteer Infantry, and was sent to Arizona with others to relieve the regulars who were guarding the Overland mail route. I was stationed at various army posts in Arizona and New Mexico during my three years' service, being mustered out at Los Pinos, New Mexico, August 31, 1864.

"I then started across the plains for Kansas by way of the Santa Fe trail, arriving in Leavenworth in November. Shortly after Price's Raid I went to work for the United States government at Fort Leavenworth, driving mules, hauling sup-

plies, etc., until 1867, when I was transferred to Fort Harker, Kansas, August 20, 1868. I there joined Forsyth's Scouts the latter part of the same month.

"Love of adventure, which is inherent in all American frontiersmen, and becomes a sort of second nature, prompted me to join the Scouts. I was young, hardy and strong, and eager for anything in the way

at that time was the western terminus of the Kansas-Pacific Railroad, and all freight going west was hauled there by wagon.

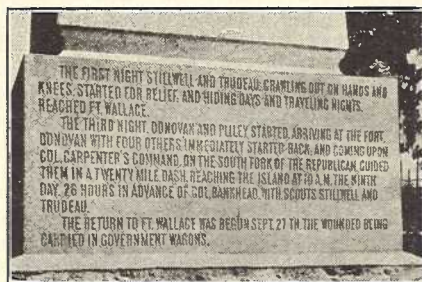
"As soon as the news of the killing reached Fort Wallace, we started in pursuit, with six days' rations. We found the Indian trail, and followed it for some distance; but finally it petered out, and we lost it, the Indians having scattered and broken up into small bands to elude pursuit.

"HOWEVER, we continued traveling northward, that being the general direction of the trail. We further expected we might run across another trail, or perhaps the Indians themselves; but we saw nothing until we reached the Republican river.

"After scouting around until the morning of the fourth day, we picked up a small trail running up the river, which we followed until evening, when we went into camp. The trail continued to grow warmer as we advanced, other trails leading into it.

"Next morning we continued the pursuit, and it soon became evident that we were not very far behind a large body of savages. Soon we discovered the marks of the lodge-poles dragging on the ground. Indians, when traveling, strap these lodge-poles on each side of a pony, making what they call a 'travois.' On these the savages carried their belongings.

"On the fifth day, as the trail kept enlarging and becoming more and more distinct, some of us became greatly concerned as to the wisdom of following such a large body of Indians with such a small



Inscription on one side of Beecher Island Monument. Photo by E. A. Brininstool.

of excitement—plenty of which I got during the ensuing six weeks!

"If I remember correctly, we went to Fort Wallace, Kansas, with eight days' rations and four pack mules loaded with doctors' supplies, axes, shovels and picks. We made a circuitous route, as far as Beaver Creek, following up that stream for some distance, and then bore south to Fort Wallace, where we rested a few days.

"From here we were hurried away because of an attack made on a Mexican wagon train near Sheridan, Kansas. It was encamped between Fort Wallace and Sheridan. Two men were killed and some of the stock run off by the Indians. Sheridan



force of scouts, as it was evident they had their families with them, and could not travel as fast as a war party. We realized that we would soon overtake them.

"Making known our anxiety to Colonel Forsyth, he halted the command and called us about him, asking us if we 'didn't enlist to fight Indians with him.' That ended the discussion, but, all the same, it did not convince us of the wisdom of the course we were taking.

"However, we followed in silence until the evening of that day, when we came through a narrow defile in the hills, which opened into a beautiful valley. We thought we were on the South Fork of the Republican, but it later proved to be the Arickaree branch of that stream.

"It was a lovely spot, with plenty of grass for our jaded horses, and we halted that afternoon about 4 o'clock and made camp. I am sure that providence must have had a hand in directing our operations that afternoon, for had we progressed half a mile more, we would have ridden directly into an ambush which had been skilfully prepared, and the command would doubtless have been slaughtered to a man.

"**B**UT aside from the trail we were following, we saw nothing whatever that would indicate there was an Indian in the country. I was on guard that night, and Thomas Murphy was my partner. We cooked some beans during our watch, for the men who were to relieve us, and had a square meal ourselves—our last, by the way, for nine long, dreary, exhausting days.

"After we had stood our watch out, we were relieved, and lay down with our saddles for pillows, and our guns at our sides, and were soon asleep. We had not heard a sound while on guard, that would indicate there was any danger near. Little did we dream of the awful peril that was right at our door!

"The next thing I recollected was the sound of shooting, and the guards shouting 'Indians! Indians!' We all were on our feet in an instant, grabbing our rifles and preparing for action. In the dim morning light, we could see three or four Indians driving off several of our animals which had pulled their picket-pins.

"Colonel Forsyth gave orders to saddle up at once, and we were soon standing by our horses awaiting further orders. Just then a few of the men got permission to drive off a bunch of Indians who were hiding behind some rocks on the hillside to the north of our position. When these men got on high ground, they shouted to us to 'look up the creek'—and such a sight! Indians by the hundred were everywhere in view! They seemed to spring from the very earth; out of the tall weeds and bushes along the creek; from the depressions in the ground, and began swarming out over the hills! It was the most thrilling and awesome sight I ever saw, and I have often thought what a marvelous moving picture it would have presented on the screen.

"But to know it as it really was, and to realize that those savages were after our

scalps, gave us no time to think of anything but our own safety. The spectacle was appalling! Hundreds upon hundreds of Indians were pouring down upon us, all mounted on their war ponies, in full regalia, with feathers and plumes flying, and the sunlight glittering on spear, gun and lance! Was it any wonder that some of our men were fairly overcome at the thrilling panorama?

"Quickly we took in the situation. We knew instantly that we would be no match for that army of redmen in the open, for they outnumbered us, seemingly, twenty to one. We were encamped directly opposite a small island in the Arickaree, which



John Hurst in 1917. He has since passed away.  
Photo by E. A. Brininstool.

was covered with tall grass and small, scrubby trees.

"At the suggestion of Jack Stillwell, a beardless boy of but 19, but a veteran in frontiersmanship and plainscraft, and one of the brainiest, bravest and coolest of all the Scouts, Colonel Forsyth gave orders to 'make for the island.' I do not know how the order affected the other men, but to me it was the most welcome and timely one I ever received in all my army experience.

"In other historical accounts of this fight which I have read, it has been stated that we moved across to this little island in a solid body, with our horses in the center and the men in a circle about them. This is most decidedly erroneous. There was no regular order preserved at all, but we all made a grand rush for cover like a flock of scared quail.

"**I**MEDIATELY we were pretty well scattered over the island, which was, I should judge, about one hundred and fifty yards long and perhaps seventy-five yards wide, making plenty of room in which to hide from an enemy. Our horses, of course, we had to simply tie to the

bushes, and they were all killed in a very short time.

"It appeared to be a great surprise to the Indians how quickly we got out of sight, and we could tell from their yells of rage and disappointment that they were greatly exasperated in not having first taken possession of the island themselves. Had they done so, the fight would not have lasted fifteen minutes, and not a man would have been left to tell the tale, for out there in the open we would have been immediately surrounded and cut down. It was this getting out of sight so quickly, and keeping under cover, that saved the lives of every one of the survivors.

"Hardly were we located on the island before the Indians were charging through us—not in solid bodies, but either singly or in groups of a few warriors. Scouts Armstrong and Barney Day were by my side at the right and left, each by a small tree, and Jack Donovan and others were at the west end, while others were in the center, all pretty well hidden, and shooting whenever the Indians came within close range.

"Our bullets, coming among them from all directions, thus seemed to daze the savages. We were all armed with Spencer seven-shot carbines, and that was another thing which puzzled the Indians. They could not understand how we were able to load our guns and fire so rapidly.

"There were three men in our command who played the coward. Much as I hate to say this, it was a fact. They utterly refused to fire a shot, but kept themselves hidden. I shall not mention their names. One of them, who happened to reach the island at the same time as myself, and who tied his horse to some bushes near mine, was shaking like a man with the palsy, and seemed utterly unnerved at the awful predicament we were in.

"I tried to encourage this fellow by saying, 'Now, Frenchy, we are in for a devil of a fight, and so let us fight like men!' However, it was all to no avail. He made a run for the bushes and took no part in the fighting.

"I recollect that as the last of our horses was shot down, I heard a voice from the Indians exclaim, in good English, 'There goes their last damned horse, anyway!'

"Soon after the fight began, our surgeon, Dr. Mooers, was struck in the forehead by a bullet, and although he lived three days in an unconscious state, he never spoke a rational word. Lieutenant Beecher was also shot in the side, and after lingering in agony until nightfall, he, too, passed away.

"It was unfortunate that some of our horses were located within the zone of fire near where many of the men were fighting. This brought the latter in range of bullets that were intended for the horses. Colonel Forsyth stood up giving orders and encouraging the men, until shot down twice. The last order I remember hearing him give was, 'Men, dig holes in the sand and make banks for protection!'

"While looking through the tall grass, I saw an Indian run his pony into an old buffalo wallow that was partially filled with water, and it seemed to tax the



strength of the pony to extricate itself. This gave me a good chance to take a pot shot at the Indian, but I did not see him fall. Another warrior, coming from the north, almost charged over me on horseback, and certainly would have done so had not his pony shied to one side, which made it so hard for the Indian to keep his seat that he had no chance to shoot at me. I was glad his pony carried him along, for had he fallen, it would have meant death for one of us. I took a shot at him as his pony raced by, but did not see him tumble.

"My near neighbors, Armstrong and Barney Day, were both wounded in the early part of the engagement, and ran to other comrades to have their wounds attended to. That made me feel mighty lonely. I was afraid the Indians would get between me and the other men.

"There was much shooting at the east end of the island, and I thought it was the Indians, as I did not know at the time that Stillwell and some of the others were there.

"I KEPT close watch, and soon saw an Indian creeping through the grass toward our horses, and then I felt sure that all this firing was from the Indian ranks, and that they were closing in around us. This idea proved erroneous, but I am merely giving you my impressions as things appeared at the time. I thought we were all going to be killed and scalped, or captured and held for torture. I think this belief was quite general among all the men.

"I recall hearing Colonel Forsyth call out and ask if anyone could pray. He said, 'We are beyond all human aid, and if God does not help us, there is no chance for us.' I have since thought, in the light of subsequent events, what an awe-inspiring thing it would have been to the Indians if a man of God had broken out in a loud appeal to the Great Spirit for aid. However, nobody volunteered to offer prayer.

"When I saw that Indian creeping toward our horses, I fired at him, and then, without waiting to see the effect of the shot, I jumped to my feet and rushed to where some of my comrades were located. I think it was a healthier location than the one I was in. I found that some of the men had dug holes and made banks of sand around them, while others were using the dead horses for breastworks. So I dropped down behind a dead animal and went to digging myself, thrusting my hands feverishly into the loose sand in my haste to create a shelter from the bullets which were whistling all around me. Digging was easy after I had worked down through the grass roots, and I soon had a place deep enough for protection.

"While I was at work, Sergeant McCall and Scout Culver came in, and getting down behind another dead horse, they started digging. They had been at it but a very short time, when some of the men on the inside of the circle shouted, 'If you fellows on the outside don't get up and shoot, the Indians will be charging right over us!' At this criticism, both McCall and Culver arose to look for Indians. Their heads were fully exposed to the enemy. Suddenly 'Bang!' went a rifle. The bullet grazed McCall's neck and struck Culver in the head, killing him instantly. That was the last exposure of heads during the fighting!

"Shortly after this, Scout Harrington came staggering in, covered with blood from head to foot. He had been shot in the head with an arrow, and the barb was yet sticking in his skull. Some of the men tried to pull it out, but the barb was imbedded so deeply that it could not be extricated.

"Scout Burke then came in where we were and began to dig a hole near us. He kept at it until he had dug down to water. As we were very close to the stream, water was located very close to the surface. The hole soon filled, and he took his canteen

and filled it and passed it around several times until all within reach had been supplied. It was a boon to us, particularly to the wounded, who were becoming feverish and very thirsty.

"Burke then related to us a somewhat laughable experience. It seemed that he did not get across to the island with the rest of us when we made the first grand rush for safety. During the fighting he saw an Indian some distance away—too far, he figured, for a successful shot, so he commenced to crawl to a hummock of sand which lay between him and the Indian, and from which vantage he thought he could nail the red devil. Burke hitched carefully along until he reached the sand hummock, and then slowly straightened up. Suddenly, to his surprise and horror there arose from the other side of this identical hummock that same warrior! Burke said he was so surprised that he forgot all about shooting. He stated that he merely punched his gun at the Indian, shouting 'BOOH!' and then ran for the island, expecting every second to feel a bullet in his back. No shot was fired, however, and he glanced back over his shoulder, to see the Indian running in the opposite direction as fast as he could leg it.

"THE next excitement was when a white flag was displayed by the Indians for a parley. We had quite a controversy over the advisability of recognizing it, finally concluding it would not do to trust them, as they might take advantage of an armistice to rush our lines. I have since thought that as there were a couple of dead Indians lying at that end of the island whose bodies they had not been able to rescue, they may have attempted this ruse to obtain possession of them.

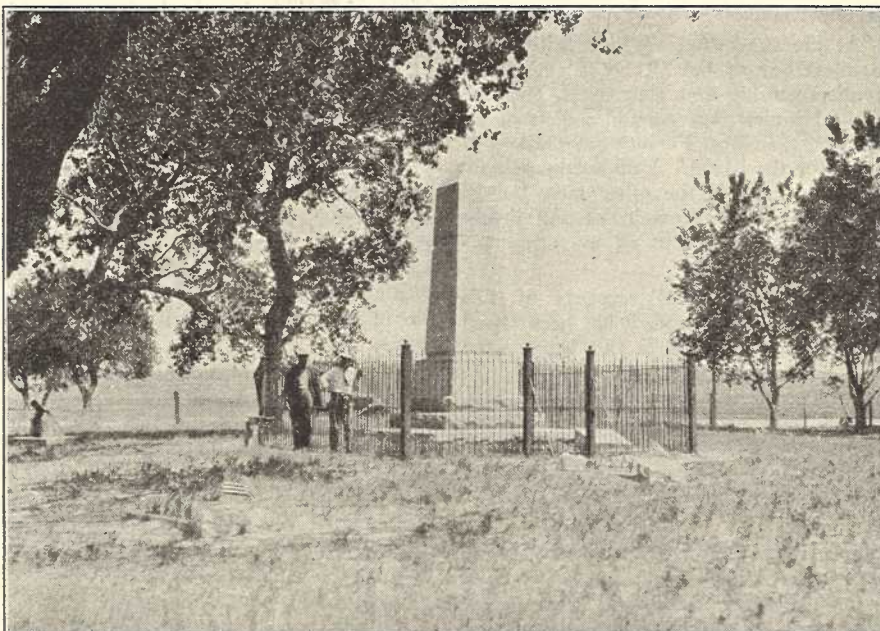
"These two Indians had been shot by Lewis Farley, the best rifle shot in the whole command. Farley had been lying in the tall grass on the north bank of the stream, with a broken leg. Both these warriors were in plain view of him as they crept along a ridge of sand. Farley shot them both through the head, and when I saw the bodies, both Indians carried rifles as well as bows and quivers full of arrows.

"The killing of these two warriors had an intimidating effect on the others, and stopped that mode of warfare. Farley was brought into our rifle pits about dark that night. When the relief command reached us, his leg was in such an awful condition that amputation was immediately necessary, but he died that same night. No braver frontiersman ever lived than Lewis Farley.

"After the white flag incident, the fight was resumed with sharpshooting, but there was no more charging across the island. The songs of their squaws, which, in the early part of the fight, had been joyful and exultant, with the expectation of an easy victory, were now turned into sorrow and doleful lamentation over the loss of their own braves.

"Night came at length, as a welcome shadow to hide us more securely from our dread enemies, and enable us to care more

(Continued on page 31)



Battle monument of Beecher Island where Colonel Forsyth with 50 scouts fought a large body of Indians and was besieged for eight days until relief arrived and the Indians retired. Photo June 2nd, 1931, by Emil Kopac.



Straight away he swims slowly but doggedly and with alarming strength. In vain do I thumb the reel. He goes out relentlessly. The sun is beating down hot and strong on my neck and perspiration is running into my eyes. There is no breeze. Jess keeps the boat headed just right. He has pulled in his tackle long ago and is now helping me bring the monster to net. The line slackens and I reel in frantically while I can safely do so. Soon deep, down under the boat we see a long, white twisting belly. It is a Great Northern pike and he rolls and shakes his great body, opening and shutting his shovel nose jaws like some prehistoric creature of another world. Up, up he comes. Too big for the net. Where's the gaff? As usual, in the tackle box unjointed and no time to put it together. The big fish comes alongside the boat, Jess reaches over and grasps it firmly behind the gills and pulls it into the boat a splashing, thrashing thing that quickly tangles all lines and lures together as he fights for the freedom he will never again enjoy. Enough fish here for three days, hungry as we are. We slip the noose through his lip and tow him gently behind to the live box before our cabin. Here we release him. More thrashing then sulking in a dark corner while two smaller black bass weighing three pounds seek the safe seclusion of the opposite corner.

WE hastily eat a lunch of cold bass and bread washed down with hot tea made from spring water. We find we have time to fish the north branch of the Au Sable before fly fishing for bass in the evening. We jump into the car and twenty minutes later we are wading the north branch while brook trout leap to the flies we offer. The run is all to fish about seven or eight inches long, though Jess hooks one that gives him a good battle before breaking loose. This is a game preserve and deer cross our river again and again ahead and behind us while partridge feed on the wintergreen berries in the open, sunny patches beneath the white birches. At the big rock a mile below the ford Jess tangles with a big brook trout which he finally lands in the shallows. We each have a half dozen nice trout, enough for any fisherman. As the sun casts long shadows across the sparkling waters of the old North Branch we turn our way homeward. It is hot in the closed car that has been standing all the afternoon in the sun high on the west bank of the river. But with a good speed we soon have a refreshing breeze blowing in. A big buck deer, with antlers well out of the velvet, stands not sixty feet from the road and wheels and leaps away as we near, his white flag aloft, head back and heels flying. He makes for the swamp at the head of the river near dam two. Far to the left on the jack pine plains we see other deer moving into the hills for the night's feeding.

Home again through the gathering dusk. Home to the old log cabin by the lake shore. This old cabin is made of logs we pulled from the lake—old boom sticks of pine that were used to encircle the saw logs of the late seventies and early eighties,

for once there was a mill at the north end of this lake. These old boomsticks which had lain in the water a half century, when dried out on land, made good timbers, sound as a dollar. It is a cozy old place, not elaborate, but fitting the surroundings of tall pines and murmuring waters. We are alone on this lake, as wild as it was ten centuries ago. We have two weeks' supply of food, bacon, flour and canned goods. A spring back of the cabin and a pump at the door furnish our water. We are too far back to have electric lights or power, but a Coleman Sportlite lantern in each room makes night as bright as day. We also have a Coleman cook stove which we use when the days are exceptionally hot and we do not want a fire in the big range.

IN these days of heartache, bank failures and depression, it seems to me more people in the crowded cities would seek the quiet peace and solitude of such places as this. North of Saginaw Bay, on the east side of the lower peninsula clear to the straits of Mackinac, may be found abandoned farmhouses and neglected farms, rich and ready for the workman to produce a living. Marshes furnish wild grass for stock until clover can get a start and logs are plentiful for fuel. This land is held by defunct banks now in receivership or by individuals who have too much of this type of property and are ready to sell it cheap on most any terms. Even improved farms of all sizes are for sale now. There are wild berries by the hundreds of thousands of bushels going to waste each year in this section that might be canned or dried for winter food. Deer could be killed and the meat jerked for winter as was the meat of our pioneer ancestors. When suckers run in spring they may be caught by thousands and salted in barrels for winter food. The land will produce if properly selected in hardwood areas. Even if the markets are a bit dull now at least the worker can raise enough for his of breadline and eviction. It will pay to own use. And the wild beauty of the country is such that that alone should compensate one for the change for here at least one has security free from the fear of breadline and eviction. It will pay to investigate this summer. Bring your fishing tackle and come along.

### THE HERO OF THE ARICKAREE

(Continued from page 20)

properly for our own wounded. It was a dark, rainy night, and our first work was to get the wounded all in and dig a place for them where they would be protected from the rifle fire of the Indians, which we knew would be renewed with greater fury than ever on the morrow. The Indian loss already had been heavy, and we knew they would make a desperate attempt to end the matter with the light of another day.

"After digging a pit, in which the wounded all were placed, we got the saddle blankets off our dead animals, and made as comfortable beds for the men as



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possible. We then secured all the ammunition in our saddle-bags, after which we cut the hams off the dead horses, into small strips, which we hung up in the trees to dry, as our food supply was all gone. Next, we dug trenches connecting all our rifle pits.

"Colonel Forsyth then called a council to determine what was to be done. Our guide was Sharp Grover, an experienced frontiersman and Indian fighter, and Forsyth asked him what the chances were of sending men through the Indian lines to Fort Wallace, for reinforcements. The distance was about 125 miles. Every mile of such a journey would be fraught with danger, even if men could slip through the Indian cordon about us.

"GROVER said it would be impossible for a man to get through the lines. He went on to explain what the Indians did in such a situation as we were in. He said that as soon as it became dark, the Indians would creep in closer and form a circle about us so small that it would not be possible for a man to get through without being detected.

"We all stood around listening to the dark picture he painted. After he had finished, young Jack Stillwell, the boy of 19, but who had all the nerve and courage of a Spartan, spoke up and said, 'Colonel, I'll go if I can get someone to go with me, providing anybody wants to take the chance.'

"An old scout named Pierre Trudeau—old enough to be Stillwell's father—replied, 'I'll go with you, Jack.'

"Thereupon, Colonel Forsyth wrote a message to Colonel Bankhead, the commanding officer at Fort Wallace, explaining the terrible plight we were in. He then inquired of Grover if wagons could be brought directly across country from the fort to us. The scout replied that the country was so rough that it would not be possible to do that. Stillwell was thereupon directed to return by the way of Custer's trail, made in 1867, which ran directly north from Fort Wallace to the Republican River, and then to follow the river to our position. This made a distance of about 130 miles, and accounts, in a measure for the long time occupied by Stillwell on the way, as well as the fact that he had to travel slow for the first day or so to get entirely clear of the Indians.

"It turned out, however, that Grover's description of the country was all wrong, for we returned to Fort Wallace straight across the country. Sharp Grover was the man who ought to have volunteered to carry the message, but my opinion is that he was afraid to take a chance.

"We expected to get relief—if at all—in about six days, providing the scouts got though all right. After Stillwell and Trudeau left, we just settled down to business, for we did not know what the Indians might do before morning, and so we kept diligent watch all that first night. There was no attack, however.

The next day was one of watching, for instead of any more attacks such as the Indians pressed on the first day, the fight-

ing was all confined to desultory firing by the Indian sharpshooters.

"When night fell, Colonel Forsyth deemed it advisable to try and get two more scouts through, not knowing, of course, if Stillwell and Trudeau were successful. I do not remember the names of the two who volunteered on the second night, but anyhow, they were unable to get through the lines, as every avenue of escape was too closely guarded, and the scouts soon returned.

"The third day was a repetition of the second—very little firing, but close watching on the part of the Indians. Evidently they were going to try and starve us out. And it certainly looked like their plans would carry out.

"After dark on the third night, Colonel Forsyth again called for volunteers, and Jack Donovan and A. J. Pliley started out, with directions to come back straight across the country with soldiers and an ambulance and medical supplies, together with plenty of food. They had many thrilling escapes, but after many privations they met Colonel Carpenter of the Tenth Cavalry who was out on a scout, and guided him to our position.

"While the scouts were out trying to bring relief to us, we who were left on the island, were having a serious time. The Indians gave up the siege after the fifth day, and some of the men were prompted to advise saving the lives of those who were uninjured by striking out for the fort, and leaving the wounded to their fate, thinking none of the volunteers would be able to get through.

"WHEN this talk of abandoning the wounded reached Colonel Forsyth's ears, he called us together and made a nice talk. It was very touching and soldier-like—so much so that I did not hear anything further said about abandoning the wounded. Forsyth told us he expected us to remain with the command until the men he had sent out, had had time to reach Fort Wallace, and that it was our duty, from a humanitarian standpoint, to stick together at least until we felt sure the men had failed to reach the fort.

"'After that,' he concluded, 'I will have no further claims on you, and you can do the best you can to save your own lives.'

"We then all swore we would never leave the wounded, but would remain and die with them, if necessary.

"Our dried meat gave out in six days, and then we had nothing to eat but the dead horses, which were festering and decaying all about us, and when we cut into the meat, the stench was frightful, the meat having green streaks running through it. The only way it was made at all available for eating, was by sprinkling gunpowder over it while it was cooking, which partially took away the bad odor. We had no salt, and our systems were craving it.

"I recollect that one of the men found a small pork rind in his haversack. He chewed on it until he thought he had sucked all the goodness out of it; then he spat it out. Another man then found it, and he, too, chewed on it awhile, and then

threw it away. Later on, I discovered it kicking about in the sand, and tried my hand at it. It seemed to me that nothing ever tasted so delicious.

"ON the eighth day several of us made quite a march about the near country, looking for game. We located quite a prairie dog town, but none of them came out of their holes. I made up my mind that I would return in the morning, and try and kill one.

"Accordingly, the following forenoon, which was the ninth day of the siege, I went out to the prairie dog colony and watched for quite a bit, but none of the animals appeared, and I began to feel pretty discouraged. I had kept up fairly well to this point, as I was 28 years old and a pretty husky youngster; but I now began to think we would all starve.

"I was having the blues mighty hard as I started back for the island, empty-handed, and with a stomach that fairly seemed to touch my back, so empty it was. I had not gone far before I saw some of the men running toward me, and motioning for me to hurry. I thought the Indians were returning, and I started on a dead run for my comrades. I was too faint and exhausted, however, to run very far, and soon fell to the ground, completely all in, scarcely caring whether it was the Indians or not, so discouraged and disheartened was I.

"Happening to look up, I saw three horsemen riding toward me. They did not look like Indians, and I gazed long and earnestly at the advancing riders, soon discovering that they were white men. It proved to be Jack Donovan and the relief party. Never before or since have I been so glad to see the face of a friend, and the sudden transition from despair to safety was too much for my overtaxed nerves, and I broke down and wept like a child.

"There was great rejoicing that day, I can assure you. Donovan had to tell his experience over and over again. We moved the wounded back a half mile or so from the river, to escape the terrible stench of the dead horses. If I remember correctly, we remained there three days after Stillwell's relief party came in. He was one day behind Donovan, but of course had further to go considerably. After we had taken care of all the wounded and rested a few days, we started back for Fort Wallace.

"In due time we arrived at the post, where we were most hospitably received, and given the freedom of the fort. General Sheridan issued an order to give any of Forsyth's men any position they were qualified to fill in the Quartermaster's Department. In a few days I went to Fort Harker and secured a position as wagonmaster, hauling supplies to Camp Supply, in the Indian Territory, while Custer was operating further south.

"But in all my experience fighting redskins on the Plains, and the Apaches down in Arizona, I never went through anything that compared to the terrible fight on that little island in the Arickaree, where Death stood at our side for nine awful days."