

CAMP MOUTH OF GLENDIVE CREEK,

October 12, 1876.

SIR: In compliance with the verbal orders of the commanding officer, I have the honor to report that on the morning of the 10th instant, I started for Tongue River with a train of ninety-four wagons and one ambulance, escorted by four companies of infantry, strength as follows:

Company C, Seventeenth United States Infantry.....	39
Company H, Twenty-second United States Infantry }	
Company G, Twenty-second United States Infantry }	Strength not stated.
Company K, Twenty-second United States Infantry }	

That I moved from camp at the mouth of Glendive Creek at half-past ten in the morning. So soon as the head of my train appeared on the hills, on the west side of the camp, I saw a signal fire spring up on the opposite bank of the Yellowstone River, some ten miles above and opposite the camp I intended to make that evening. I arrived in camp—what is called Fourteen-mile Camp—about five in the evening. The camp is in the bed of the creek and commanded by hills at short range on all sides but the south, where it is open toward the Yellowstone, there is a good deal of brush and some timber along the banks of the creek. The corrals were made as compactly as possible for the night and secured with ropes. The companies were camped close to them, two on each side. Thirty-six men and four non-commissioned officers were detailed for guard. Two reserves were formed and placed on the flanks not protected by the companies. At 3 o'clock a. m. of the 11th the Indians made an attack on camp accompanied by yells and a hot fire, from a ravine about two hundred yards away. The fire was entirely directed on the corral and they had the range exactly. This fire excited the mules so that they broke the ropes of the corrals and stampeded, falling into

the hands of the Indians; forty-one from the government train and six from the R. One mule was shot through. The firing continued for about half an hour, when the Indians moved off, not only the party who had done the firing but another party on the other side of the camp, who had not fired, but who were heard to move off.

At six I prepared to move forward. The road here for about three miles runs up the bed of the creek camped on, and there are a number of cross ravines. After the train started, but before the rear guard had left camp, they were fired upon from the timber skirting the creek, and a large body of Indians, estimated at from two to three hundred, came over the foot-hills between the camp and the Yellowstone River, on the east side of camp. Three Indians engaged the rear guard, commanded by Captain McArthur, Seventeenth Infantry, at long range and kept up a continual skirmish, firing out of all the depressions, in the ground and from behind the crests of hills. This forced me to move at a snail's pace, so as to keep the train closed up, and that the rear guard should not be left too far behind. As soon as I reached the high prairie, I could see large numbers of Indians on my left coming up apparently from the Yellowstone River, and passing to my front; these were entirely distinct and in addition to those in my rear. My impression was that they intended to attack me at the next water, Clear Creek, eight miles from my camp of the night of 10th instant. Clear Creek is a deep ravine, very bad to get down to, and hard to pull up out of; it is so narrow that the hills on either side will command its entire width. At half-past 11 a. m., I had gotten within about half a mile of Clear Creek. My rear was still fired on, and Indians could be seen on all sides. I sent my wagon-master ahead to examine Clear Creek, if possible; he came back and reported that he saw twelve in the ravine through which he would be obliged to descend, and that he had heard firing on the creek itself and believed they were in force there. I at once decided that in the crippled condition of the train it would be best to return to the camp at the mouth of Glendive Creek. My reasons were these. So far the Indians had shown a force, as near as I could estimate, of from four to six hundred; their signal fire were springing up in all directions. I was satisfied that if I took the train into the bed of Clear Creek, that it would be attacked, and be so much further crippled as to necessitate the abandonment of some of the wagons. That the same performance would take place at the next creek and in all probability in much larger force, if I were not compelled to camp away from both wood and water. That with the force I had I could not cover the herd in its necessary grazing, that in going forward I should lose the major part of the train, and finally that if I turned at once I could take the train back to the supply camp in safety. I at once turned back up Clear Creek to reach the upper trail, and reached it in about two miles. This trail is on high open ground, and there are no intersecting ravines, so that it gave me all the advantage in moving. So soon as I reached the new trail, the attack in my rear ceased, although the Indians followed me at some distance and could be seen in small parties till late in the afternoon. I had no further trouble with them, and reached camp at 9 p. m., after a hard march of 29 miles. In closing I wish to state that it is my belief that a much larger force than four companies of about forty men each will be required to force the train through. That it should be supplied with a force of at least twenty-four good mounted men, plenty of water hogs kept constantly filled, and not used from except in case of real necessity, and at least one gun—two would be better.

In reply to the signal fire, I saw a dense smoke arise apparently in the little Missouri country about the head of Beaver, and believe that one of their many camps with their fami-