

Indian ideas of numbers were vague when outside particular families or tribes. So that I would say that an exact figure of 1137 casualties is even more absurd than your figure of 6 and 6. I say absurd because you count only the six bodies remaining directly in front of the corral. These bodies as you say, were not moved during the fight because of the firepower of the whites. You also say that except for this, they all would have been carried away. Inasmuch as you are minimizing Indian losses, why not wait until the following day when the bodies were all gone including the headless one?

Another error I might mention is that you say the troops were armed with new repeating rifles. I think you know better now. But that statement as it stands, makes matters worse for both Indians and whites.

Further, you are not always consistent regarding guns obtained by the Indians. It depends on the situation. One time you say the Interior Department supplied guns to the Indians to kill soldiers of the War Department. At another time you show Jim Bridger saying the Sioux did not have one gun in a hundred. I can't recall exactly but it seems to me about 1,000 firearms of various sorts--Winchesters, Spencers, old muskets and hunting rifles, were surrendered by the Sioux. And some Army men felt sure they had retained and hidden the best of their weapons.

Perhaps you are influenced a bit by hero worship too. For I notice you have ascribed to Jack Stillwell and his trenchmates most of the (nine?) Indian casualties in the fight on the Aricka-ree. He was a lad of only nineteen then and while experienced, probably not nearly as much as the rest of Forsyth's hard-bitten crew. Years later he became one of the lesser Texan notables and you may have felt his aura.

Indian casualties at the Wagon Box fight will always be a guess. But you appear to take Indian side stories verbatim while discounting Powell's official report and other accounts made at an early day. Powell was no tyro. He was a sergeant in the First Dragoons at the start of the Civil War and in 1867 had in about twenty years service which should make him a competent witness. You discount General Dodge. Yet I note you draw on him freely. You discount Brady entirely. Yet you cite Drannan who in his Seattle hangouts, was considered an amusing spieler. Rev. Brady made mistakes but that doesn't mean all his work should be discredited. He was sincere and tried to get the stories accurately set down, openly asking for comment, correction and criticism. What do you say of the letter to Brady by R.J. Smyth a participant in the Wagon Box fight; and for other events, people like Godfrey, Miles, Hughes, Woodruff and Carrington? These were cited by Brady as having given him first hand information or having tried to get it for him; and at a far earlier competent date than you show. Is later Indian testimony to be considered more reliable?