

Dear friend:

I am coming up to see you this summer, probably, and there is one thing I want to find out about. I want you to tell me what you know about this thing. If you do not know, please try hard to find out, so that you can tell me when I get up there. It is a fight between the Indians and the white men I want to find out about. The white men call it the Hayfield fight, because the white men were making hay when it started.

This fight happened the summer after the hundred white men were killed, in August, 1867, about 69 years ago. It happened on August 1, at a fort on the Big Horn River, just about due west of the Custer Battlefield (where Long Hair was killed). The white men called this fort by the name of Fort C.F. Smith. It was nearly a hundred miles north of the place where the hundred white men were killed (Fort Phil Kearney, December 21, 1866).

The white men who lived in the fort on the Big Horn River were making hay two or three miles northeast of the fort, when the Indians charged them.

It happened that the Crow Indians were at peace with the Sioux that summer, and also at peace with the white men. The Crows kept coming to the fort and telling the white men what the Sioux and Cheyennes were doing all the time. These Crows told the white men that the Sioux and Cheyennes were camped only fifteen or twenty miles away, very many of them, and that they were planning to raid all the forts along the white men's road (the Bozeman Trail). These Crows finally told the white men that the Sioux and Cheyennes could not agree as to which fort to attack first, and so they split up into two parties.

One of these war parties went southwest to attack the fort where the hundred soldiers had been killed the summer winter before. This party had for leaders the Oglala Sioux Chief Crazy Horse, the Minniconjou Sioux chief High Backbone (High Backbone), the Without-Bows Sioux chief Thunder Hawk, and the Cheyenne chief Ice. Red Bear, another Cheyenne leader, went along too. This bunch attacked the white men on August 2, 1867, near the fort where the hundred white men were killed. This was what the white men call the Wagon Box Fight, because the white men saved themselves by hiding in a corral made of wagon boxes. In this fight Chief White Bull (~~White~~ Pte San Hunka) of the Minniconjou Sioux saved the life of a wounded Sioux named Hairy Hand or Sitting Eagle.

The day before this fight, the other bunch of Sioux and Cheyennes rode west and attacked the fort on the Big Horn River. That is what the Crows told the white men would happen, and that is what I want to find out about. This fight was on the Big Horn River, two or three miles northeast of the fort (C.F. Smith). I want to know what chiefs and what Indians were in this fight, what tribes, and who was killed and wounded. This fight was August 1, 1867. The white men call it the Hayfield fight. Now I will tell you what the white men have said about this fight. After that, I hope you will tell me what the Indians say. If you do, I will pay you.

There were nineteen white men out making hay. Some were soldiers, ~~some~~ some were civilians. The soldiers had breech-loading rifles, the civilians all had repeating rifles, sixteen-shot. The Crows had been telling these men that the Sioux and Cheyennes were coming to kill them, but they thought the Crows were trying to scare them. They had been having little fights with Indians nearly every day.