

Red Cloud's men came in and surrendered and reported that the old chief was practically a prisoner and wanted the soldiers to come and rescue him from the hostiles, who were trying to force him into the war. They reported further that there was much suffering from cold and hunger in the Indian camp, and that all the Ogalala (Red Cloud's people of Pine Ridge) were intending to come in at once in a body.

On the 3d of January General Miles took up his headquarters at Pine Ridge and directed General Brooke to assume immediate command of the troops surrounding the hostile camp. Brooke's men swung out to form the western and northern part of a circle about the hostiles, cutting them off from the Bad Lands, while the troops under General Carr closed in on the east and northeast in such a way that the Indians were hemmed in and unable to make a move in any direction excepting toward the agency.

On January 3 a party of hostiles attacked a detachment of the Sixth cavalry under Captain Kerr on Grass creek, a few miles north of the agency, but were quickly repulsed with the loss of four of their number, the troops having been reinforced by other detachments in the vicinity. In this engagement the Indian scouts again distinguished themselves. (*War, 21.*) The effect of this repulse was to check the westward movement of the hostiles and hold them in their position along White Clay creek until their passion had somewhat abated.

On January 5 there was another encounter on Wounded Knee creek. A small detachment which had been sent out to meet a supply train coming into the agency found the wagons drawn up in a square to resist an attack made by a band of about 50 Indians. The soldiers joined forces with the teamsters, and by firing from behind the protection of the wagons succeeded in driving off the Indians and killing a number of their horses. The hostiles were reinforced, however, and a hard skirmish was kept up for several hours until more troops arrived from the agency about dark, having been sent in answer to a courier who managed to elude the attacking party. The troops charged on a gallop and the Indians retreated, having lost several killed and wounded, besides a number of their horses. (*Colby, 7.*)

Amid all these warlike alarms the gentle muse Calliope hovered over the field and inspired W. H. Prather, a colored private of troop I of the Ninth cavalry, to the production of the ballad given below, one of the few good specimens of American ballad poetry, and worthy of equal place with "Captain Lovewell's Fight," "Old Quebec," or anything that originated in the late rebellion. It became a favorite among the troops in camp and with the scattered frontiersmen of Dakota and Nebraska, being sung to a simple air with vigor and expression and a particularly rousing chorus, and is probably by this time a classic of the barracks. It is here reproduced verbatim from the printed slip published for distribution among the soldiers during the campaign.