

February 4, 1933

Chief White Bull  
Cherry Creek, South Dakota

Dear Friend:

I was glad to get the story of the fight when you saved Hairy Hand. Now I want to ask you a few questions.

The white men tell about a fight with Indians about that same time near the same fort. Now I am going to tell you what the white men say about this fight, then I want you to tell me what you know about it and whether or not it was the same fight in which you saved Hairy Hand.

This is what I was told by the white men. The last day of July, 1867, the soldiers at the fort Where-the-Hundred-Soldiers-Were-Killed began to cut timber. They hired some civilians to cut it and sent soldiers along to protect them from the Indians. Every day they cut timber. These woodcutters made two camps. They made one camp about five miles from the main fort in the pine woods near the creek and not far from the mountains at a place they called Piney Island. They put an officer and twelve men in this camp to protect the woodcutters. They made the other camp across the creek nearly a mile away on the open prairie. This camp on the prairie they made into a little fort by putting the wagon beds on the ground in a circle on the highest part of the prairie. They pitched their tents outside this circle close to the wagon boxes all around. They put twenty-six men and an officer in this fort made of wagon boxes.

On the morning of August 2nd, two days after they made these two camps, the men in the camp in the pine woods saw seven Indians coming across the divide from the north on a run in single file. One of the soldiers fired at these Indians and hit the pony of the Indian in front. This Indian then got up behind one of his friends and they all kept coming. Pretty soon the white men saw a lot of Indians coming on the north side of the creek. They decided to run. Some of them ran to the camp on the prairie where the wagon boxes were. Some of them ran towards the mountains. Two of the men who wanted to run to the mountains were killed by the Indians.

The Indians took after the men who were running to the wagon boxes and there was some shooting on both sides, but the white men all got there safely. That made thirty-two men in the wagon boxes altogether. These men had new breech-loading rifles so they could shoot fast. They hid in the wagon boxes and stood off the Indians. Some of the Indians rode round the wagon boxes shooting at them and some of the Indians were shot down there, they say. Then the Indians stopped fighting and began to save their dead and wounded, and the white men tore down their tents so they could see better to shoot. While they were doing this some Indians had run off the herd of oxen. Maybe there were some mules and horses in this herd too.

After a while more Indians came and attacked the wagon boxes. They killed and wounded an officer and four men and wounded two men at the wagon boxes. They fought on foot until afternoon and then pulled out. The white men were nearly out of ammunition