

Ailes to Nicholson, Aug. 4, 1876 (3)

and make his way out through the hills on the opposite of the river but was unable to do so from the fact of the steepness of the bank. Failing in this move and as the Indians believe fully realizing the trap into which he had been drawn he recrossed the river thinking that he might possibly cut his way back through the Indian camps and escape by the way he came in. But the Indians claim to have had 40 warriors to every one of Custer's men and once demoralized were an easy prey to the enraged Sioux and Cheyennes only waiting to exterminate the whole party. After the return from the attempt to cross the river - the struggle was a hand to hand fight - Custer leading his band to the right & then back down the river to the point where they first forced into the "Slough" where they were so completely surrounded as to be unable to escape in any direction and most of these remaining living were dragged from their horses & killed. Custer and a few others did succeed in riding through & over his enemy and reached an eminence near by only to be met by thousands on the surrounding hills where he met the same fate of his whole command.

The Indians say that after the troops were driven into the Slough they were completely demoralized and were an easy prey/sic/ showing or giving but little resistance - each one seemed trying to escape ~~with~~ instead of trying to fight. They report that Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull were not killed & that less than 60 Sioux and Cheyennes were killed. The greater portion being killed