

entire equipment back in the little draw that morning. We picketed our horses to let them graze, and we laid down on the ground, using our saddles for pillows and saddle blankets for cover, the only protection we had.

Next morning (Sept. 8th) just at day light we started again, a little rested but still hungry. Late in the afternoon, near Sweetwater Creek on which Fort Elliott was later built, we ran onto an old buffalo which I killed. We cut out a big chunk from his hump, which we ate raw. None of us had any matches and if we had had any we would not dare to use them, as we were afraid to build a fire. We rested for a while and let the horses rest and graze.

About 4:00 P.M. when we came to a ridge between Gageby Creek and the Washita, we saw spread out on the hill across the Washita a large herd of animals about a mile away. We stopped for council. Lieut. Baldwin said, "That must be a herd of buffalo." I said, "Lieut., did you ever see any white buffalo?" "No," he said, "then it must be mules and horses of Maj. Lyman's supply train." I said, "Maj. Lyman wouldn't have over one hundred wagons, that would mean about six hundred horses and mules. There must be at least fifteen hundred head of horses there." He said, "That's right, but what is it?" I said, "There are Indians near and those are their ponies." We went on about a quarter of a mile and just over a little knoll, we looked down into a big camp. He said, "That is Maj. Lyman's camp." I said, "That's an Indian camp." He said, "No, it can't be, there are not that many Indians behind Gen. Miles." We drew a little nearer and I showed him they were tepees and he was convinced they were Indians.

Then the question was, what shall we do? Lieut. Baldwin said, "We will keep on and ride right through them and strike the plains beyond Washita." I said, "No, there are too many of them. They will run right over us, tromp us into the ground and kill us all without ever firing a shot." Baldwin said, "Well, what shall we do?" I said, "We will circle off to the right, work over and strike the Washita farther down. If they discover us we will separate -- every man to himself -- get into the swamp and maybe some of us will get to Camp Supply." The argument lasted several minutes. Lieut. Baldwin said, "I am in command; follow me." I said, "I for one will not go. Lieut., you are in command but you can not make me go into certain death. I refuse to follow and will not put my head into a halter that means sure death." The Lieutenant's eyes flashed fire. He surely was an angry man. Finally he said, "Come on, all who want to go to Camp Supply, all who want to go to Camp Supply follow me," and he mounted his horse. I said, "Come on all who want to go to Camp Supply follow me," and I mounted my horse. Baldwin started one way and Wing went with him. I started the other way and Schmalsle followed me. After going a few hundred yards I said to Schmalsle, "Let's take the last look at Baldwin and Wing we will ever have." We turned and looked only to see that they had stopped also. When they saw we had stopped, they turned and came towards us. Upon reaching us, Lieut. Baldwin still angry and his voice trembling said, "Wilson, if you are going to take command of this outfit, lead on." "Lieutenant," I said, "I don't wish to take command, but if you will follow me, I will take you to Camp Supply." He said, "All right, lead on, I'll follow." Thus we started my way, the scouts in the lead because they knew the way.

That was one of the occasions that he afterwards many times mentioned and said that I had saved his life. He said, our good luck of the day before in fighting our way through had made him over-confident. We had not gone very far,