# "Rough Riders" of 1868 Won Fame At the Battle of the Arickaree

Seventieth Anniversary of the Successful Defense of Beecher's Island in Eastern Colorado by "Sandy" Forsyth and His 51 Citizen Scouts Against Attack of More Than 600 Indians Recalls One of the Classics of Frontier History.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON PEAK of the "Rough Riders" and most of us immediately think of the volunteer soldiers, led by Roosevelt, who "Teddy" made the much-publicized charge up San Juan Hill in Cuba during the Spanish-American war of 1898. But how many Americans have ever heard of "Sandy" Forsyth's "Rough Riders" who, 30 years earlier, fought a battle which became a classic in the annals of the western frontier but which, compared to the engagement that started "T. R." on the road to the White House, is almost unknown?

These "Rough Riders" of 1868 were also volunteers and they won a victory against greater odds than those which faced Roosevelt's men. Moreover, they fought with the certain knowledge that defeat meant death at the hands of a merciless enemy. For their adversaries were not Spanish soldiers, fighting according to the rules of "civilized" warfare. They were scalp-collecting Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapaho warriors. The Battle of the Arickaree (or Beecher's Island, as it is also called) resulted from the failure of both white men and red to abide by the provisions of the Medicine Lodge treaty of 1867. White hunters continued to tres-pass upon the Indians' hunting grounds and the red men continued to raid white settlements and elude army expeditions sent to punish them. Finally conditions became so

bad in the summer of 1868 that Gen. Phil Sheridan, commanding the Department of the Missouri, took the field in person. To him one day came Maj. George A. ("Sandy") Forsyth, a brevet-colonel on his staff, with the suggestion that a body of scouts be enrolled among the Kansas frontiersmen who could fight the red-skins in their own way.

Sheridan approved of the idea and authorized the major to enlist 50 first-class men in a company which Forsyth himself was to lead. Lieut. Frederick Beecher of the regular army was named second in command and Dr. J. H. Mooers of the medical corps was appointed surgeon. When For-syth went to Fort Hays to start the enlistment he found plenty of men eager to join his company. Some, like Tom Alderdice, were settlers who had returned to their homes to find them burned and the members of their family slaughtered. Others had been buffalo hunters, trappers, pony express riders and stage drivers. Two of them, Jack Stillwell and Sharp Grover, were already well known as scouts and guides.

"First-Class Fightin' Men."

Altogether, the half-hundred hard-riding, fast-shooting citizen soldiers who enrolled with Forsyth were as efficient an aggrega-

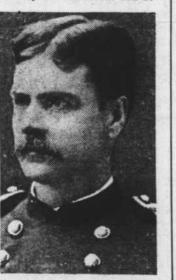


#### A CRUCIAL MOMENT AT THE BATTLE OF BEECHER'S ISLAND

ried word to the villages that the soldiers were coming. Before daylight the next morning a party of eight young braves tried to stampede the scouts' horses and pack mules by charging through them, waving blankets and robes and yelling like demons. However, they drove away only seven before the sharp fire of the scouts sent them shrieking out of range. In Savage Splendor.

## Forsyth ordered his men to saddle up and as they did so they saw a sight that might have daunted stouter hearts than theirs. Over a distant hill came a long line of yelling Indian war-riors, more than 600 of them, brandishing lances, bows and ar-rows and rifles, their feathered

war-bonnets fluttering in the morning breeze. Without a moment's hesitation, Forsyth made a decision that saved his command from annihilation. He led his men on a dash to the little island in the Arickaree where they jerked off the packs from their animals, heaped them up as breastworks and be



Up to this time Roman Nose had taken no part in the fight because the day previously, at a feast given by his friends, the Sioux, a squaw had served him with meat taken from the pot with an iron fork. This "broke the medicine" of his war-bonnet and the superstitious savage feared to go into battle without its protection. But the Chey-ennes, needing his leadership, kept insisting that he join them and in the afternoon he agreed.

At the head of a party of warriors Roman Nose charged to-ward the island and was shot from his horse by the two scouts hidden in the grass on the mainland. He was carried away by his friends and died soon afterwards. The death of Roman Nose virtually ended the battle but the Indians settled down to starve out the whites. The first night Jack Stillwell and

Pierre Trudeau volunteered to try to slip through the Indian lines and go to Fort Wallace, 100 miles away, for help. After a series of hairbreadth escapes from death, the two scouts reached the fort and Colonel Bankhead started out to rescue Forsyth. Meanwhile, on the third night, Forsyth, not knowing whether Stillwell and Trudeau had succeeded in getting through, had sent two other scouts, Jack Donovan and A. J. Pliley, for help. When they reached the fort and found that Bankhead had already left, they immediately started back to rejoin their comrades.

The Island of Death. On the south fork of the Rem Like many other Indian battles, the fight on the Arickaree has been the theme of a number of writers with more power of imagi-nation than regard for fact. In their accounts, written from the white man's point of view, the number of Indians engaged and their losses have been gracitly extheir losses have been greatly ex-aggerated, as though the heroism of Forsyth's men might be en-hanced by such exaggerations and the addition of incidents which never happened.

The late George Bird Grinnell, one of the Old West's most con-scientious and fair-minded historians, did a valuable service in debunking some of these fairy tales in his book "The Fighting Cheyennes," published by Scrib-ners in 1915. In it he says:

"General Forsyth reported 35 Indians killed and believed that many more had been carried away on their horses, to which they were tied. He seems to make it appear that great num-bers of Indians were killed in an early charge-before two o'clock. He tells of volleys fired by his men, of falling Indians and horses, and of the killing of Roman Nose.

#### A Different Story.

"The story of the Cheyennes is quite different. They give many details of the fight, among them the names of six Cheyennes and one Arapaho who were killed, the names of the two Sioux being unknown .

'Their (the scouts') imagination colored the stories told by the whites. They were fighting for their lives against tremendous odds, and were excited, anxious, doubtful. The Indians' viewpoint was quite different. For years war had been their almost constant occupation, and the work of carrying it on had become commonplace. Fights such as this-not so large to be sure, but essentially similar-were of fre-quent occurrence. Sometimes they were successful; sometimes they lost men, were beaten and ran away. Whatever the event, they manifested neither special triumph in success, nor mortification at failure. The old-time In-dian was 'a far better observer than most white men. He saw more clearly what was happening, and usually reported facts more accurately. . .

"A number of Indians who took part in this fight have told me what they saw of it. Some of these live in Oklahoma, and others in



#### JACK STILLWELL

Montana. In the main incidents all the stories agree. All give the same names and numbers of the killed, and describe what took place in a matter-of-fact fashion, and with no apparent thought of making much of it. It was a hard fight, but one of the everyday hap-penings of the time. They do not know whether they killed any of the white scouts or not." . . . . .

Like other Indian battles, too, the Arickaree has had the usual

# -Speaking of Sports-Lively Ball Held Cause **Of Dead Arms** By GEORGE A. BARCLAY

SORE arms have the baseball world worried.

Pennants have been lost in the big leagues this year and ace ath-letes have become semi-invalids be-cause of an epidemic of chipped el-bows, pulled tendons, and strained muscles without precedent in the bictory of the same history of the game. Scan the list of pitchers involved

in arm trouble and you'll see why



#### CARL HUBBELL

### worried magnates are shaking their

heads. Well, there's Carl Hubbell and Hal Schumacher of the New York Gi-ants. They are the most recent victims and their absence from the lineup down the home stretch may well have cost the Giants the Na-tional league pennant. Lefty Grove's arm went dead a short time after he pitched in the All-Star game. Old age, you might say. But informed baseball men will tell you the Boston Red Sox veteran was good for several years yet.

#### Sad Case of Diz

Dizzy Dean's arm is apparently gone. He can't throw a ball over-hand without wincing and his speed is only a memory. He has been of practically no use to the Chicago Cubs this year. Rest may eventually v restore some of the cupring he ly restore some of the cunning, but meanwhile Owner Wrigley can ru-minate about the \$185,000 he paid St. Louis for Dean.

Bill Dietrich, who pitched a no-hit game for the Chicago White Sox last year and his colleague Clint Brown, who specializes in able re-lief pitching, have been out of uniform since early in the season because of arm trouble.

Bobby Feller, Monte Stratton, Tex Carleton, Johnny Allen, Van Lingle Mungo and Charley Ruffing are other mound notables who have been plagued off and on by sore arms. Down in the minors Paul Dean and Schoolboy Rowe—youngsters burned out long before their time—are try-ing a pitching comeback that is still a big question mark. What is the reason for this pitch-ing a pitching

ing situation?

There are a variety of answers, but if you sum them all up, you'll find the trouble is due to an accumulation of restrictions that have stacked the cards against the pitchers. It all goes back to the days when Babe Ruth started making home runs stylish and the game was remade into a sluggers' free-for-all.

First there was the lively ball. Baseball bigwigs introduced it to encourage hitting. Then they be-gan to put one restriction after an-other on pitchers. They prohibited the spitball that had brought im-

# **Bonus Ball Players**

A BAD case of "every man for himself" aggravated by the much-discussed bonus system is be-ing blamed for the pathetic collapse of the Cleveland Indians in the drive for the American league pennant race. Insiders say that most of the players were signed to contracts this year calling for bonuses con-tingent on players reaching stipu-lated batting averages, or plichers winning a certain number of games.

The arrangement, so the story goes, tended to make the players too individualistic and ruined unified team play. Oscar Vitt, the new manager, complained about this system when he took charge. He insisted early in the season that all the team knew was "slug."

How much of a difference the bo-nus system made is difficult to tell. The probabilities are that the Indians could not have continued to lead the league as they did in the first half of the season. But contracts without bonus provisions might have had a tendency to make the Indi-ans more of a team.

Most managers disapprove of the bonus system. It was tried with rather discouraging results by the Chicago Cubs a couple of seasons back.

One of the most outspoken critics of the system is Burleigh Grimes, manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

"Suppose," says Burleigh, "that a player signs a contract giving him \$1,000 or \$2,000 more if he hits .300 for the season. Well, he might be going along at a .310 pace until the last month of the season and then start to protect that average. He might complain about a charley horse and have his leg taped up and stay out of the lineup for a few weeks.

"Or the same fellow might do things that conflicted with his manager's strategy, such as missing a signal to sacrifice when he thinks he can hit."

Burleigh's contentions, however, are purely hypothetical.

#### 600 Stalwarts

TRAINING camp technique which to some extent resembled the spring training system of the ma-jor league baseball clubs has prepared the teams in the National Pro-fessional Football league for its seventeenth season.

Six hundred brawny young stalwarts-candidates for places on va-rious teams-labored under a hot midsummer sun in training camps from the Atlantic seaboard to the Middle West to condition themselves for a strenuous season.

The champion Washington Red-skins, including the brilliant "Sling-in' Sam" Baugh who met the Col-lege All Stars selected in a nationlege All Stars selected in a nation-wide poll in a pre-season title meet in Soldier field, Chicago, did their fall conditioning at the Ballston baseball park at Arlington, Va. The Pittsburgh Pirates, rated as the team to beat in this year's race since they acquired Byron "Whiz-zer" White and the Cleveland Rams





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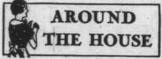
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rials needed. To obtain this pattern, send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) to The Sewing Circle, Household Arts Dept., 259 W. 14th St., New York City.



For Long Sheets.-When buying sheets, always allow at least 10 inches on each side and top and bottom, as the bed will never stay neat with sheets that are too short. . . .

Teaching the Child,-The best way to help a child develop at-tractive manners and genuine courtesy is to set a good example.

A Tempting Dish. - Mashed. sweet potatoes seasoned with pow-dered cinnamon or nutmeg are a favorite dish in some parts of the country. . . .

Cuts High Floor Gloss.-To re-duce the gloss of a too highly pol-ished floor finish, rub the surface with oil and pumice powder. Pum-ice and water may also be used with success.



Here's good advice for a woman during her change (unually from 88 to 52), who fears she'll lose her appeal to men, who worries about hot finahes, loss of pep, dirary spells, upset nerves and moody spells. Tot more fresh air, 8 hrs. sleep and if you need a good general system tonic take Lydis E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made specially for somers. It helps Nature build up physical mediature thus helps give more than the

"first-class fightin' men' as the frontier had ever known. The only exception-so far as experience was concerned-was a sixteen - year - old Jewish lad named Sigmund Shlesinger, who had left his home in New York City in 1865 to work on the railroad then pushing westward through Kansas. This "tenderfoot" was accepted reluctantly but Forsyth testified later that during the battle Shlesinger "most worthily proved himself a gallant soldier among brave men."

Forsyth's "Rough Riders" left Fort Hays on August 29 and, after scouting several Indian trails in western Kansas which failed to lead them to the hostiles, on the evening of September 16 they reached the Arickaree fork of the Republican river in what is now eastern Colorado.

They found the Arickaree a dry sand-flat with a few pools of water here and there. On the south side, separated from the mainland by a narrow sandy channel, was an island about 100 yards long on which grew a few willows, some stunted plum trees and one cottonwood of considerable size. They pitched camp there that night, little realizing that two villages of Sioux an one of Cheyennes were only 12 miles down the river. With these Cheyennes was Roman Nose a great warrior, but not a chief who had led many of the raids against the Kansas settlements. The Indians were unaware of

the scouts' presence until a war party of Sioux, returning to camp, saw Forsyth's men on the march and, circling around them, car-

#### MAJ. GEORGE A. FORSYTH

gan frantically to scoop out holes in the sand into which they crouched. Stillwell and another scout, who had been sent down to the lower end of the island, crossed the narrow channel and hid in some high grass under a low sand bluff on the east side of the stream.

As the whooping savages swept down upon the little band of scouts, Forsyth's men immediately began shooting. The Indians had intended to ride over the soldiers but when they came close to the island they were greeted with such a hot fire from the repeating rifles that they split into two sections which streamed past on each side

After the first charge the Indians began circling around the island, shooting and yelling, and during this time they suffered their first losses, several of them being killed by Stillwell and his comrade hidden in the grass. After they had lost six or seven men, the Indians dismounted

and began creeping on foot toward the island under cover of the willows that fringed the bank. But the fire of the scouts soon drove them back.

lican they fell in with a detachment of the Tenth cavalry, led by Capt. L. H. Carpenter, and guided them on a 20-mile dash to the "island of death." Carpenter reached the beleaguered command on the ninth day after the battle had begun, 26 hours before Bankhead guided by Stillwell and Trudeau, arrived there.

Forsyth's command was in a pitiable condition. Five were dead and 16 wounded and since Dr. Mooers had been killed on th first day, their wounds had only such care as they themselves could give them. For nine days they had been living on mule and horse meat.

One of the worst wounded was their young commander. A bullet had lodged in his thigh, a second had struck him between the knee and the ankle, shattering the bone, and a third, glancing across his forehead, had slightly fractured his skull. So terrible was the pain from the bullet imbedded in his thigh that he begged his men to cut it out. They refused to take the risk of having him bleed to death. So he took his razor and performed the operation himself.

When Carpenter arrived with his rescuing party, he found For-syth lying in his rifle pit pretending to read an old novel he had found in one of the saddle bags. He was afraid to trust himself greet his rescuer, afraid that the magnificent nerve which had sus tained him through the ordeal of those starving, feverish nine days would fail him when he realized that at last they were saved.

quota of "last survivors" and the usual number of impostors have bobbed up from time to time to claim membership in Forsyth's "Rough Riders."

It is difficult to see how any of those impostors dared make such claims for the roster of Forsyth's company was printed in his ac-count of the battle which appeared in Harper's Monthly Mag-azine in 1895 and on one side of the monument, which was erected by the states of Colorado and Kansas in 1905 on the site of the battle, appears this inscription:

'Sacred to the memory of those who fought and died here. Killed: Lieut, Fred H. Beecher, U. S. A.; J. H. Mooers, Surgeon, U. S. A.; Louis Farley, William Wilson, George W. Chalmers. WOUND-ED: Col. George A. Forsyth, U. S. A.; W. Armstrong, G. B. Clarke, T. K. Davis, Harry Davenport, Bernard Day, Hudson L. Farley, Richard Gantt, John Haley, Frank Harrington, Louis Mc-Laughlin, W. H. H. McCall, Howard Morton, Thomas O'Donnell H. H. Tucker, Fletcher Violett. UNINJURED: Thomas Alderdice, Wallace Bennett, Martin Burke, John Donovan, Alfred Dupont, A. J. Entler, George Green, Abner T. Grover, John Hurst, J. H. Ket-terer, M. R. Lane, John Lyden, Joseph Lane, M. R. Mapes, H. T. McGrath, Thomas Murphy, C. B. Nichols, George Oakes, C. C. Piatt, A. J. Pilley, Thomas Rana-han, William Reilly, Sigmund Shlesinger, Edward Simpson, Chalmers Smith, William Stew-art, J. S. Stillwell, Isaac Thayer, Pierre Trudeau, C. B. Whitney, John Donovan, Alfred Dupont, A. Pierre Trudeau, C. B. Whitney, John Wilson, Eli Ziegler."

tality to such old-timers as Ed Walsh, Red Faber, Urban Shocker and Burleigh Grimes. They made other trick deliveries illegal.

In the old days an entire ball game would be played with as few as half a dozen balls. Now it takes at least 50. New balls are always in play and because of their shiny smoothness they are hard for pitch ers to put any stuff on. Formerly if a ball was slightly scuffed, it wasn't thrown out of play. This gave a pitcher a chance to get by. Modern training trip schemes now work an unnecessary hardship on the pitcher. Years ago big league teams didn't meet until the season teams didn't meet until the season opened. The exhibition games were played solely against minor league outfits and pitchers could take their time rounding into form. Now there are exhibition games between ma-jor league teams almost as soon as the training season opens. Pitch-ers have to 'ace tough batters right away. Their arms aren't ready and away. Their arms aren't ready and away. Their arms aren't ready and soreness can easily develop. They want to win and they bear down be-fore they should. It is quite possi-ble that injuries that pop up sud-denly during the regular season have their origin in just such games. When the National league an-nounced last winter that it had adopted a deader ball for the 1938 season many fans hailed it as the beginning of organized baseball's return to a normal basis. But somewhere along the line there was a hitch. The experience of this sea-son has indicated that the new National league ball is practically the same as the one formerly used. At least such a conclusion is sug-gested by the hitting in the two leagues and hitting is the only basis for comparison.

designated as the most improved team in the league did their training in their respective cities.

The Brooklyn Dodgers pitched camp at the New York Agricultural college, Farmingdale, N. Y., while the Detroit Tigers trained at Bloom field, Mich. The New York Giants trained at the Blue Hills Country club in Orangeburg, N. Y.; the Green Bay Packers at Green Bay, Wis.; the Chicago Bears at Dela-field, Wis.; and the Chicago Cardinals at Morgan Park, Ill.

Heading toward its majority, pro-fessional football is now definitely grown up and would like to forget its barn-storming, one-night stand ori-gin of the early twenties. Nearly 2,000,000 people attended pro games in nine different cities last year. Promoters are looking for an even bigger attendance this year.

### Here and There

GERMANY has 14,500 G clubs with 1,250,000 playing members. During international consoccer tests the immense Olympic stadium in Berlin is jammed with 120,000 spectators. Tickets for big matches are frequently sold out six months in advance . . Bernie Moore, foot-ball coach at Louisiana State, says Booth will be the best blocking back in the country this year . . . Nine members of the Newark Bears 1937 club played in the big leagues this season .\*. . The average double play, by way of second baseman, requires 4½ seconds from the time the ball leaves the bat until it lands in the first baseman's with in the first baseman's mitt. • Western Newspaper Unit

ty to enjoy life and as often accompany change of life. WELL WORTH TRYING!

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