

# Papers of the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts



## Document Metadata

Document Type	Letter
Date	18 December 1877
Brief Description	Details of the November 28, 1877 skirmish between Seminole Negro Indian Scouts, 8 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> Calvary, 25 <sup>th</sup> Infantry and band Mescalero Apaches. This document is referenced in Col. Young's Dec. 18, 1877 letter to the Acting Assistant Adjutant General
Keywords:	November 1877, Thanksgiving Day, Col. Young, Companies A and K 8th Calvary, Company C, 10th Calvary, 25 <sup>th</sup> Infantry, Seminoles, Lieut. Beck, Lieut. Bullis, Lieut. Clay, Col Shafter, Capt. Lebo, Capt. Wells, Lieut. Phelps, Lieut. Geddes, Lieut. Guest, Assistant Surgeon Comegys, 1 <sup>st</sup> Sgt Wilson, Juan, Mexican guide, Indians

<<SOURCE TEXT BEGIN>>

Nov 29  
Thanksgiving Day

At 4 Am Juan the Mexican guide was sent up to the high peak with a glass and came in about 7 a.m. saying he could see 5 Indian fires at a point about 3 miles South (across country) and nine miles by trail. Immediately Col Young with Capt A.B. Wells and 2 Lieutenant F.E. Phelps, 8 Cav with 30 men, Co "A" Lt Geddes, 25<sup>th</sup> Inf with 25 men Co K, 8 Cav. Lt Beck with (...) men Co C 10<sup>th</sup> Cav and Lieut. Bullis with 15 Seminole scouts left camp on foot to attack this camp. 2 Lt Guest, 8 Cav and Asst Surg Comegys (..) were left in charge of campground and animals. The column at once commenced unseen ascending a very steep mountain in rear of camp which was overcome only after 2 hours hard work. When nearly at top 2 Seminoles were seen riding into camp on a run, shouting and firing their pistols. Lt Bullis who was in advance was sent down to ascertain what they said and it was soon learned that (60.jpg)

three of the Seminoles were cut off and surrounded by Indians. Lt Geddes, K Co, at once returned to camp on double time and the remainder proceeded.

Arriving at top of Mesa the level ground was quickly passed over and the edge of a ravine reached. Here the command halted while Juan and Capt Wells crept up to the edge to reconnoitre and discovered Indians moving up canon with their animals packed. The ravine formed a horseshoe and Lt Beck with his Co was at once deployed on one crest, the Seminoles deployed to cover the head while Capt Wells was ordered to occupy the other side - the two first got into position without being discovered, and Capt Wells was moving to his position in double time concealed by a rocky crest when Indians suddenly appeared leading their ponies about 200 yards distant and discovering Capt Wells and Lt Phelps fired on them. Lt Phelps fired back, being the first shot from our side. The Indians at once took to rocks and for several minutes fired rapidly with Winchester guns, but being charged by "A" Co 8 Cav. fled down the hill hotly pursued by all (61.jpg)

the Cos. Such of the Indians as got their ponies down fled across a broad bottom covered with rocks and cut up the ravines while those on foot fled to the underbrush in the same direction followed by our men who could get down the steep cliff. Lt Geddes made his appearance at this junction and promptly dismounting followed the Indians closely who fled up a narrow and precipitous cañon to the top of a cliff whence they fired rapidly but only struck one man 1<sup>st</sup> Sergt Wilson Co K 8 Cav who received a slight wound in cheek. Capt. Wells having joined Lt. Geddes with men of the various Cos the whole advanced up the cañon, all efforts to outflank the Indians and surround them was unsuccessful the men getting on a



# *Papers of the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts*

cliff equally high with that on which were the Indians but separated by an immense chasm over which no crossing could be made. The joining of the troops however was so rapid and accurate as to entirely silence the Indians and finally the troops were withdrawn. When retreating up the cañon, the Indians were forced to abandon every horse they had gotten down the hill where first attacked but one. (62.jpg)

<<SOURCE TEXT END>>



## **National Archives Microfilm Publications Reference**

Collection	"Special Files" of Headquarters, Division of the Missouri, Relating to Military Operations and Administration, 1863-1885
Microfilm Publication Number	M-1495
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of us to look for Indian signs with orders to return and report. This night was exceedingly cold, canteens freezing solid and bursting. Distance marked 17 miles.

Nov 29  
Thanksgiving Day  
[At 4 A.M. from the previous guide was sent up to a high peak with a glass and came in about 7 am. saying he could see 5 Indian fires at a point about 3 miles south (across country) and nine miles by trail. Immediately Col Young with Capt A B Wells and 2 Lt F C Phelps & Co with 30 men, Co A Lt Greaves, 25th Inf with 25 men Co K, & Co. Lt Beck with 15 men Co C 10 Co and Sgt Bullis with 15 Seminole Scouts left camp on foot to attack this camp, 2 Lt Greaves, & Co and Asst Surg Conroy's aft. were left in charge of camp guard and animals. The column at once commenced ascending a very steep mountain in rear of camp which was overcome only after 2 hours hard work. When nearly at top 2 Seminoles were seen riding into camp on a run, shouting and firing their pistols. Lt Bullis who was in advance was sent down to ascertain what they said and it was soon learned that



# Papers of the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts

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Arriving at top of mesa the level ground was quickly passed over and the edge of a ravine reached. Here the Command halted while Jew and Capt Wells crept up to the edge to reconnoiter and discovered Indians moving up cañon with their animals packed. The ravine formed a horseshoe and St. Beck with his Co. was at once deployed on one crest, the Seminoles deployed to cover the head while Capt Wells was ordered to occupy the other side - the two first got into position without being discovered and Capt Wells was moving to his position in double time concealed by a rocky crest when Indians suddenly appeared leading their ponies about 200 yards distant and discovering Capt Wells and St. Phelps fired on them. St. Phelps fired back being the first shot from our side - The Indians at once took to rocks and for several minutes fired rapidly with Winchester guns, but being charged by A. Co & B. Co. fled down the hill hotly pursued by all

061.jpg



# Papers of the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts

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ponies down fled across a broad bottom covered  
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followed by all men who could get down  
the steep cliffs. St. Guedes made his appear-  
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mounting followed the Indians closely who  
fled up a narrow and precipitous cañon to  
the top of a cliff whence they fired rapidly  
but only struck one man - 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Wilson  
be killed who received a slight wound in  
check. Capt. Wells having joined St. Guedes  
with men of the various Co's the whole  
advanced up the cañon. All efforts to  
outflank the Indians and surround  
them was unavailing the men getting  
on a cliff equally high with that on  
which were the Indians but separated  
by an immense chasm over which no  
crossing could be made. The firing of  
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