

Charles Crawford

Charles Crawford appeared in several places in the original draft. He was a mixed breed, and an adopted son of the Peace Party Chief Akipa. At the start of war, Akipa sent him to find of the Brown family, but they had already left for the fort. As Crawford searched their empty farm house, he discovered Joseph Brown's army uniform jacket and put it on because he was wet and cold from swimming the Minnesota River. He wore it throughout the war as he scouted for the Peace Party, which led to the following historical incident when the Dakota were attacked by a mob in the town of Henderson.

Charles Crawford was astride his horse riding at the tail end of the column. Like the rest of his people, he was astounded by the hatred and violence of the crowd once he entered town. Objects flew at him from every direction, and everywhere he looked he saw red-faced whites shaking their fists at him and cursing. For some reason he seemed to draw the attention of the mob to himself as he passed by, and at first he could not understand why. All he could do was dodge the missiles and keep his head down. The soldiers were trying their best, but there were too many angry townspeople for them to handle, and the column was moving terribly slowly.

About halfway through town, Crawford saw a man dash out of the crowd and run toward him waving a hoe above his head. Crawford tried to pull his horse to the side but there was nowhere to go. He could only raise his arms in front of him helplessly as the man lifted the hoe and swung it towards him. Then suddenly the hoe went flying off into the air and the attacker was left with only a foot-long piece of the handle in his hand.

A soldier chief holding up his saber stepped in and pushed the man back towards the crowd. "Get that damn jacket off you fool!" the soldier chief shouted, grabbing at Crawford's sleeve. Though he had a very poor command of English, Crawford knew right away what the man was talking about. He had had a blanket over his shoulders earlier that morning, but before entering the town he had given it to a female relative to protect one of her children. Now he realized why he had been a magnet for so much of the crowd's antipathy; he was still wearing Joe Brown's army jacket. Though it was cold, and he had nothing on

underneath but a sleeveless leather vest, he immediately ripped off the jacket and threw it into the dirt. He turned to thank the soldier chief but he was now a dozen yards away hollering at the soldiers to keep back the crowd. Crawford did not realize that it was Colonel William Marshall who had saved him that morning, but he could certainly appreciate that the officer had many other things to attend to besides rescuing one foolish man.

