The Buffalo Go (Use with Lesson 1)

In the mid-nineteenth century, professional hunters severely thinned the herds of buffalo on the Great Plains; a single hunter might kill as many as 150 animals a day. Carriage owners in the East had developed a rage for buffalo hide lap robes, and smoked buffalo tongue had become a delicacy. To Indian buffalo the near extinction of the buffalo meant the disappearance of their way of life, as a Kiowa woman named Old Lady Horse describes in this folktale.

Everything the Kiowa had came from the buffalo. Their tipis were made of buffalo hides, so were their clothes and moccasins. They ate buffalo meat. Their containers were made of hide, or of bladders or stomachs. The buffalo were the life of the Kiowas.

Most of all, the buffalo was part of the Kiowa religion. A white buffalo calf must be sacrificed in the Sun Dance. The priests used parts of the buffalo to make their prayers when they healed people or when they sang to the powers above.

So, when the white men wanted to build railroads, or when they wanted to farm or raise cattle, the buffalo still protected the Kiowas. They tore up the railroad tracks and the gardens. They chased the cattle off the ranges. The buffalo loved their people as much as the Kiowas loved them.

There was war between the buffalo and the white men. The white men built forts in Kiowa country, and the woolly-headed buffalo soldiers [the Ninth and Tenth Cavalries, made up of black troops] shot the buffalo as fast as they could, but the buffalo kept coming on, coming on, even into the post cemetery at Fort Hill. Soldiers were not enough to hold them back.

Then the white men even hired hunters to do nothing but kill the buffalo. Up and down the plains those men ranged, shooting sometimes as many as a hundred buffalo a day. Behind them came the skinners with their wagons. They piled the hides and bones into the wagons until they were full, and then took their loads to the new railroad stations that were being built, to be shipped east to the market. Sometimes there would be a pile of bones as high as a man, stretching a mile along the railroad track.

The buffalo saw that their day was over. They could protect their people no longer. Sadly, the last remnants of the great herd gathered in council, and decided what they would do.

The Kiowas were camped on the north side of Mount Scott, those of them who were still free to camp. One young woman got up very early in the morning. The dawn mist was still rising from Medicine Creek, and as she looked across the water, peering through the haze, she was the last buffalo herd appear like a spirit dream.

Straight to Mount Scott the leader of the herd walked. Behind him came the cows and their calves, and the few young males who had survived. As the woman watched, the face of the mountain opened.

Inside Mount Scott the world was green and fresh, as it had been when she was a small girl. The rivers ran clear, not red. The wild plums were in blossom, chasing the red buds up the inside slopes. Inside this world of beauty the buffalo walked, never to be seen again.
Old Lady Horse, Kiowa
AT WHAT COST WILL THE WEST BE WON? (USE WITH LESSON 2)

SECTION ONE: MOVING WESTWARD

Directions: Brainstorm with a small group what you remember about westward expansion (either from your other history classes or from our discussion/lecture) and then answer the questions.

1. Why did people head west – what were they hoping to find for themselves and their families?

2. What was the experience like – what hardships did they face as they moved across the continent?

SECTION TWO: THE LAND OF EDEN?

Read the attached excerpts from the Daily Rocky Mountain News and the Weekly Rocky Mountain News.

1. What is the tone of the articles; does the tone change over time?

2. What view do the editors of these newspapers have of the First Peoples; how do they feel about them? Underline words within the excerpts that help you answer this question.

3. Why might they feel this way; think back to your study of cultures of the plains yesterday, does it seem that they may have misinterpreted some of the actions of the Native Americans?

4. Do you think that the newspapers (published by the same editors) are a fair assessment of how most settlers viewed Native Americans? Why or why not?
EXCERPTS (USE WITH LESSON 2)

“To dream of deaths they say, augurs of weddings. If so, we’re in for bride cakes and champagne and things.”

Weekly Rocky Mountain News, June 29, 1864

“...the Cheyennes tried to stop the coach fifteen miles this side of Fort Learned (Pawnee Fork) the week before last, and shot one of the mules...Captain Hardy and a few of his men ‘went for’ those red skins and sent six of ‘em to their long homes in the ‘land of hereafter.’ Cheyennes arrived on the lower Arkansas having those scalps of the Hungate family.”

Daily Rocky Mountain News, July 5, 1864

“The city has been full of Indian rumors all day. Many exaggerated stories are in circulation to-day. The following is the most accurate information we can obtain. There is every probability that the soldiers have already driven the red devils far way from the road...Since going to press last evening, we have additional news...Indians were lurking in the bluffs between the Junction and Beaver Creek, all day yesterday...they killed three men...horse was stolen from Valley Station last night, but no Indians have been seen in that neighborhood to-day. There is good reason to believe that they have skedadded.”

Weekly Rocky Mountain News, July 20, 1864

“...a party of six Cheyennes dashed in between their wagons and horses, which were picketed a few yards distant. The horses stampeded and were driven off...Following down the road, they attacked four freight wagons on their way up... they killed the drivers of the next two and drove the teams away. After killing them, the savages scalped and mutilated their bodies most horribly. The driver of the fourth wagon was shot through the body with an arrow.”

Weekly Rocky Mountain News, July 27, 1864

“Eastern humanitarian who believe in the superiority of the Indian race will raise a terrible howl over this policy, but it is no time to split hairs nor stand upon delicate compunctions of conscience. Self preservation demands decisive action and the only way to secure it is to fight them in their own way. A few months of active extermination against the red devils will bring quiet and nothing else will.”

Daily Rocky Mountain News, August 10, 1864

“For President, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, Vice President, ANDREW JOHNSON. State Ticket. FOR THE CONSTITUTION For Congress, John M. Chivington...”
Interrogatories propounded to John M. Chivington by the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, and answers thereto given by said Chivington reduced to writing, and subscribed and sworn to before Alexander W. Atkins, notary public, at Denver, in the Territory of Colorado.

1st Question. What is your place of residence, your age and profession?

Answer. My place of residence is Denver, Colorado; my age, forty-five years; I have been colonel of 1st Colorado cavalry, and was mustered out of the service on or about the eighth day of January last, and have not been engaged in any business since that time.

2d question. Were you in November, 1864, in any employment, civil or military, under the authority of the United States; and if so, what was that employment, and what position did you hold?

Answer. In November, 1864, I was colonel of 1st Colorado cavalry, and in command of the district of Colorado.

3d question. Did you, as colonel in command of Colorado troops, about the 29th of November, 1864, make an attack on an Indian village or camp at a place known as Sand creek? If so, state particularly the number of men under your command; how armed and equipped; whether mounted or not; and if you had any artillery, state the number of guns, and the batteries to which they belonged.

Answer. On the 29th day of November, 1864, the troops under my command attacked a camp of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians at a place known as Big Bend of Sandy, about forty miles north of Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory. There were in my command at that time about (500) five hundred men of the 3d regiment Colorado cavalry, under the immediate command of Colonel George L. Shoup, of said 3d regiment, and about (250) two hundred and fifty men of the 1st Colorado cavalry; Major Scott J. Anthony commanded one battalion of said 1st regiment, and Lieutenant Luther Wilson commanded another battalion of said 1st regiment. The 3d regiment was armed with rifled muskets, and Star's and Sharp's carbines. A few of the men of that regiment had revolvers. The men of the 1st regiment were armed with Star's and Sharp's carbines and revolvers. The men of the 3d regiment were poorly equipped; the supply of blankets, boots, hats, and caps was deficient. The men of the 1st regiment were well equipped; all these troops were mounted. I had four 12-pound mountain howitzers, manned by detachments from cavalry companies; they did not belong to any battery company.

4th question. State as nearly as you can the number of Indians that were in the village or camp at the time the attack was made; how many of them were warriors; how many of them were old men, how many of them were women, and how many of them were children?
Answer. From the best and most reliable information I could obtain, there were in the Indian camp, at the time of the attack, about eleven (11) or twelve (12) hundred Indians: of these about seven hundred were warriors, and the remainder were women and children. I am not aware that there were any old men among them. There was an unusual number of males among them, for the reason that the war chiefs of both nations were assembled there evidently for some special purpose.

5th question. At what time of the day or night was the attack made? Was it a surprise to the Indians? What preparation, if any, had they made for defence or offence?

Answer. The attack was made about sunrise. In my opinion the Indians were surprised; they began, as soon as the attack was made, to oppose my troops, however, and were soon fighting desperately. Many of the Indians were armed with rifles and many with revolvers; I think all had bows and arrows. They had excavated trenches under the bank of Sand creek, which in the vicinity of the Indian camp is high, and in many places precipitous. These trenches were two to three feet deep, and, in connexion with the banks, were evidently designed to protect the occupants from the fire of an enemy. They were found at various points extending along the banks of the creek for several miles from the camp; there were marks of the pick and shovel used in excavating them; and the fact that snow was seen in the bottoms of some of the trenches, while all snow had disappeared from the surface of the country generally, sufficiently proved that they had been constructed some time previously. The Indians took shelter in these trenches as soon as the attack was made, and from thence resisted the advance of my troops.

6th question. What number did you lose in killed, what number in wounded, and what number in missing?

Answer. There were seven men killed, forty-seven wounded, and one was missing.

7th question. What number of Indians were killed; and what number of the killed were women, and what number were children?

Answer. From the best information I could obtain, I judge there were five hundred or six hundred Indians killed; I cannot state positively the number killed, nor can I state positively the number of women and children killed. Officers who passed over the field, by my orders, after the battle, for the purpose of ascertaining the number of Indians killed, report that they saw but few women or children dead, no more than would certainly fall in an attack upon a camp in which they were. I myself passed over some portions of the field after the fight, and I saw but one woman who had been killed, and one who had hanged herself; I saw no dead children. From all I could learn, I arrived at the conclusion that but few women or children had been slain. I am of the opinion that when the attack was made on the Indian camp the greater number of squaws and children made their escape, while the warriors remained to fight my troops.
8th question. State, as nearly as you can, the number of Indians that were wounded, giving the number of women and the number of children among the wounded.

Answer. I do not know that any Indians were wounded that were not killed; if there were any wounded, I do not think they could have been made prisoners without endangering the lives of soldiers; Indians usually fight as long as they have strength to resist. Eight Indians fell into the hands of the troops alive, to my knowledge; these, with one exception, were sent to Fort Lyon and properly cared for.

9th question. What property was captured by the forces under your command? State the number of horses, mules and ponies, buffalo robes, blankets, and also all other property taken, specifying particularly the kinds, quality, and value thereof.

Answer. There were horses, mules, and ponies captured to the number of about six hundred. There were about one hundred buffalo robes taken. Some of this stock had been stolen by the Indians from the government during last spring, summer and fall, and some of the stock was the property of private citizens from whom they had been stolen during the same period. The horses that belonged to the government were returned to the officers responsible for them; as nearly as could be learned, the horses and mules that were owned by private citizens were returned to them on proof of ownership being furnished; such were my orders at least. The ponies, horses, and mules for which no owner could be found, were put into the hands of my provost marshal in the field, Captain J.J. Johnson, of company E, 3d Colorado cavalry, with instructions to drive them to Denver and turn them over to the acting quartermaster as captured stock, taking his receipt therefor. After I arrived in Denver I again directed Captain Johnson to turn these animals over to Captain Gorton, assistant quartermaster, as captured stock, which I presume he did. Colonel Thos. Moonlight relieved me of the command of the district soon after I arrived in Denver, that is to say, on the ______ day of ________, A.D. 186-, and I was mustered out of the service, the term of service of my regiment having expired. My troops were not fully supplied with hospital equipage, having been on forced marches. The weather was exceedingly cold, and additional covering for the wounded became necessary; I ordered the buffalo robes to be used for that purpose. I know of no other property of value being captured. It is alleged that groceries were taken from John Smith, United States Indian interpreter for Upper Arkansas agency, who was in the Indian camp at the time of the attack, trading goods, powder, lead, cap, &c., to the Indians. Smith told me that these groceries belonged to Samuel G. Colby, United States Indian agent. I am not aware that these things were taken; I am aware that Smith and D.D. Colby, son of the Indian agent, have each presented claims against the government for these articles. The buffalo robes mentioned above were also claimed by Samuel G. Colby, D.D. Colby and John Smith. One bale of Buffalo robes was marked S. S. Soule, Ist Colorado cavalry, and I am informed that one bale was marked Anthony, Major Anthony being in command of Fort Lyon at that time. I cannot say what has been done with the property since I was relieved of the command and mustered out of service. There was a large quantity of Indian trinkets taken at the Indian camp which were of no value. The soldiers retained a few of these as trophies; the remainder with the Indian lodges were destroyed.
10th question. What reason had you for making the attack? What reasons, if any, had you to believe that Black Kettle or any other Indian or Indians in the camp entertained feelings of hostility towards the whites? Give in detail the names of all Indians so believed to be hostile, with the dates and places of their hostile acts, so far as you may be able to do so.

Answer. My reason for making the attack on the Indian camp was, that I believed the Indians in the camp were hostile to the whites. That they were of the same tribes with those who had murdered many persons and destroyed much valuable property on the Platte and Arkansas rivers during the previous spring, summer and fall was beyond a doubt. When a tribe of Indians is at war with the whites it is impossible to determine what party or band of the tribe or the name of the Indian or Indians belonging to the tribe so at war are guilty of the acts of hostility. The most that can be ascertained is that Indians of the tribe have performed the acts. During the spring, summer and fall of the year 1864, the Arapaho and Cheyenne Indians, in some instances assisted or led on by Sioux, Kiowas, Comanches and Apaches, had committed many acts of hostility in the country lying between the Little Blue and the Rocky mountains and the Platte and Arkansas rivers. They had murdered many of the whites and taken others prisoners, and had destroyed valuable property, probably amounting to $200,000 or $300,000. Their rendezvous was on the headwaters of the Republican, probably one hundred miles from where the Indian camp was located. I had every reason to believe that these Indians were either directly or indirectly concerned in the outrages which had been committed upon the whites. I had no means of ascertaining what were the names of the Indians who had committed these outrages other than the declarations of the Indians themselves; and the character of Indians in the western country for truth and veracity, like their respect for the chastity of women who may become prisoners in their hands, is not of that order which is calculated to inspire confidence in what they may say. In this view I was supported by Major Anthony, lst Colorado cavalry, commanding at Fort Lyon, and Samuel G. Colby, United States Indian agent, who, as they had been in communication with these Indians, were more competent to judge of their disposition towards the whites than myself. Previous to the battle they expressed to me the opinion that the Indians should be punished. We found in the camp the scalps of nineteen (19) white persons. One of the surgeons informed me that one of these scalps had been taken from the victim's head not more than four days previously. I can furnish a child captured at the camp ornamented with six white women's scalps; these scalp must have been taken by these Indians or furnished to them for their gratification and amusement by some of their brethren, who, like themselves, were in amity with the whites.

11th question. Had you any, and if so, what reason, to believe that Black Kettle and the Indians with him, at the time of your attack, were at peace with the whites, and desired to remain at peace with them?

Answer. I had no reason to believe that Black Kettle and the Indians with him were in good faith at peace with the whites. The day before the attack Major Scott J. Anthony, lst Colorado cavalry, then in command at Fort Lyon, told me that these Indians were hostile; that he had ordered his sentinels to fire on them if they attempted to come into the post,
and that the sentinels had fired on them; that he was apprehensive of an attack from these Indians, and had taken every precaution to prevent a surprise. Major Samuel G. Colby, United States Indian agent for these Indians, told me on the same day that he had done everything in his power to make them behave themselves, and that for the last six months he could do nothing with them; that nothing but a sound whipping would bring a lasting peace with them. These statements were made to me in the presence of the officers of my staff whose statements can be obtained to corroborate the foregoing.

12th question. Had you reason to know or believe that these Indians had sent their chief and leading men at any time to Denver city in order to take measure in connection with the superintendent of Indian affairs there, or with any other person having authority, to secure friendly relations with the whites?

Answer. I was present at an interview between Governor Evans on the part of the whites, and Black Kettle and six other Indians, at Camp Weldmar, Denver, about 27th of September, 1864, in which the Indians desired peace, but did not propose terms. General Curtis, by telegraph to me, declined to make peace with them, and said that there could be no peace without his consent. Governor Evans declined to treat with them, and as General Curtis was then in command of the department, and, of course, I could not disobey his instructions. General Curtis's terms of peace were to require all bad Indians to be given by the Indians for their good conduct. The Indians never complied with these terms.

13th question. Were those Indians, to your knowledge, referred by the superintendent of Indian affairs to the military authorities, as the only power under the government to afford them protection?

Answer. Governor Evans, in the conference mentioned in my last answer, did not refer the Indians to the Military authorities for protection, but for terms of peace. He told the Indians "that he was the peace chief, that they had gone to war, and, therefore, must deal with the war chiefs." It was at this time I gave them the terms of General Curtis, and they said they had not received power to make peace on such terms, that they would report to their young men and see what they would say to it; they would like to do it, but if their young men continued the war they would have to go with them. They said there were three or four small war parties of their young men out on the war path against the whites at that time. This ended the talk.

14th question. Did the officer in command of Fort Lyon, to your knowledge, at any time extend the protection of our flag to Black Kettle and Indians with him, and direct them to encamp upon the reservation of the fort?

Answer. Major E.W. Wynkoop, lst cavalry, Colorado, did, as I have been informed, allow some of these Indians to camp at or near Fort Lyon, and did promise them the protection of our flag. Subsequently he was relieved of the command of Fort Lyon, and Major Anthony placed in command at that post, who required the Indians to comply with
General Curtis's terms, which they failed to do, and thereupon Major Anthony drove them away from the post.

15th question. Were rations ever issued to those Indians either as prisoners of war or otherwise?

Answer. I have been informed that Major Wynkoop issued rations to the Indians encamped near Fort Lyon while he was in command, but whether as prisoners of war I do not know. I think that Major Anthony did not issue any rations.

16th question. And did those Indians remove, in pursuance of the directions, instructions, or suggestions of the commandant at Fort Lyon, to the place on Sand creek, where they were attacked by you?

Answer. I have been informed that Major Anthony, commandant at Fort Lyon, did order the Indians to remove from that post, but I am not aware that they were ordered to go to the place where the battle was fought, or to any other place.

17th question. What measures were taken by you, at any time, to render the attack on those Indians a surprise?

Answer. I took every precaution to render the attack upon the Indians a surprise, for the reason that we had been able to catch them, and it appeared to me that the only way to deal with them was to surprise them in their place of rendezvous. General Curtis, in his campaign against them, had failed to catch them; General Mitchel had met with no better success; General Blunt had been surprised by them, and his command nearly cut to pieces.

18th question. State in detail the disposition made of the various articles of property, horses, mules, ponies, buffalo robes, &c., captured by you at the time of this attack and by what authority was such disposition made?

Answer. The horses and mules that had been stolen from the government were turned over to the officer who had been responsible for the same; and the animals belonging to Atzins was returned to them upon proof being made of such ownership. The animals not disposed of in this way were turned over to Captain S.J. Johnson, 3d regiment Colorado cavalry, with instructions to proceed with the same to Denver, and turn them into the quartermaster's department. After the command arrived in Denver, I again directed Captain Johnson to turn over the stock to Captain C.L. Gorton, assistant quartermaster, at that place. The buffalo robes were turned into the hospital for use of the wounded as before stated.

19th question. Make such further statement as you may desire, or which may be necessary to a full understanding of all matters relating to the attack upon the Indians at Sand creek.
Answer. Since August, 1863, I had been in possession of the most conclusive evidence of the alliance, for the purposes of hostility against the whites, of the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Camanche River, and Apache Indians. Their plan was to interrupt, or, if possible, entirely prevent all travel on the routes along the Arkansas and Platte rivers from the States to the Rocky mountains, and thereby depopulate this country. Rebel emissaries were long since sent among the Indians to incite them against the whites, and afford a medium of communication between the rebels and the Indians; among whom was Gerry Bent, a half-breed Cheyenne Indian, but educated, and to all appearances a white man, who, having served under Price in Missouri, and afterwards becoming a bushwacker, being taken prisoner, took the oath of allegiance, and was paroled, after which he immediately joined the Indians, and has ever since been one of their most prominent leaders in all depredations upon the whites. I have been reliably informed that this half-breed, Bent, in order to incite the Indians against the whites, told them that the Great Father at Washington having all he could do to fight his children at the south, they could now regain their country.

When John Evans, governor of Colorado Territory, and ex officio superintendent of Indian affairs, visited by appointment the Cheyenne Indians on the Republican fork of the Kansas river, to talk with them in regard to their relations with the government, the Indians would have nothing to say to him, nor would they receive the presents sent them by the government, but immediately on his arrival at the said point the Indians moved to a great distance, all their villages appearing determined not to have any intercourse with him individually or as the agent of the government.

This state of affairs continued for a number of months, during which time white men who had been trading with the Indians informed me that the Indians had determined to make war upon the whites as soon as the grass was green, and that they were making preparations for such an event by the large number of arrows they were making and the quantity of arms and ammunition they were collecting; that the settlers along the Platte and Arkansas rivers should be warned of the approaching danger; that the Indians had declared their intention to prosecute the war vigorously when they commenced. With very few troops at my command I could do but little to protect the settlers except to collect the latest intelligence from the Indians' country, communicate it to General Curtis, commanding department of Missouri, and warn the settlers of relations existing between the Indians and the whites, and the probability trouble, all of which I did.

Last April, 1864, the Indians, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and others, commenced their depredations upon the whites by entering their isolated habitations in the distant parts of this territory, taking therefrom everything they desired, and destroying the balance; driving off their stock, horses, mules and cattle. I sent a detachment of troops after the Indians to recover the stolen property, when the stock &c., being demanded of them they (the Indians) refused to surrender the property so taken from the whites, and stated that they wanted to fight the troops. Again, when a few weeks after the country along the Platte river, near Fremont's orchard, became the theatre of their depredations, one Ripley, a ranchman, living on the Bijon creek, near camp Sanborn, came into camp and informed Captain Sanborn, commanding, that his stock had all been stolen by the Indians, requesting assistance to recover it. Captain Sanborn ordered Lieutenant Clark Dunn, with a detachment of troops, to pursue the Indians and recover the stock; but, if possible, to avoid a collision with them. Upon approaching the Indians, Lieutenant Dunn
dismounted, walked forward alone about fifty paces from his command, and requested the Indians to return the stock, which Mr. Ripley had recognized as his; but the Indians treated him with contempt, and commenced firing upon him, which resulted in four of the troops being wounded and about fifteen Indians being killed and wounded, Lieutenant Dunn narrowly escaping with his life. Again, about one hundred and seventy-five head of cattle were stolen from Messrs. Irwin and Jackman, government freighters, when troops were sent in pursuit toward the headwaters of the Republican. They were fired upon by the Indians miles from where the Indians were camped. In this encounter the Indians killed one soldier and wounded another. Again, when the troops were near the Smoky Hill, after stock, while passing through a canon, about eighty miles from Fort Larned, they were attacked by these same Cheyenne Indians, and others, and almost cut to pieces, there being about fifteen Indians. Again, when on a Sunday morning the Kiowas and Camanches were at Fort Larned, to obtain the rations that the commanding officer, on behalf of the government, was issuing to them, they, at a preconcerted signal, fired upon the sentinels at the fort, making a general attack upon the unsuspecting garrison, while the balance of the Indians were driving off the stock belonging to the government, and then as suddenly departed, leaving the garrison afoot excepting about thirty artillery horses that were saved; thus obtaining in all about two hundred and eighty head of stock, including a small herd taken from the sutler at that post.

Again, a few days after this, the Cheyennes and Arapahoes Indians, with whom I had the fight at Sand creek, meeting a government train bound for New Mexico, thirty miles east of Fort Larned, at Walnut creek, who, after manifesting a great deal of friendship by shaking hands, &c., with every person in the train, suddenly attacked them, killing fourteen and wounding a number more scalping and mutilating in the most inhuman manner those they killed, while they scalped two of this party alive, one a boy about fourteen years of age, who has since become an imbecile. The two persons that were scalped alive I saw a few days after this occurred within sight of Fort Zarah, the officer commanding considered his command entirely inadequate to render any assistance. But we think we have related enough to satisfy the most incredulous of the determined hostility of these Indians; suffice it to say that during the spring, summer, and fall such atrocious acts were of almost daily occurrence along the Platte and Arkansas routes, till the Indians becoming so bold that a family, consisting of a man, woman, and two children, by the name of Hungate, were brutally murdered and scalped within fifteen miles of Denver, the bodies being brought to Denver for interment. After seeing which, any person who could for a moment believe that these Indians were friendly, to say the least, must have strange ideas of their habits. We could not see it in that light. This last atrocious act was referred to by Governor Evans in his talk with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes Indians on about the 27th day of September, 1864, at Denver, Colorado Territory. The Indians then stated that it had been done by members of their tribe, and that they never denied it. All these things were promptly reported to Major General S. R. Curtis, commanding department, who repeatedly ordered me, regardless of district lines, to appropriately chastise the Indians, which I always endeavored to do. Major General S. R. Curtis himself and Brigadier General R. B. Mitchell made campaigns against the Indians, but could not find them; the Indians succeeded in keeping entirely from their view. Again, Major General J. P. Blunt made a campaign against the Indians; was surprised by them, and a portion of his command nearly cut to pieces.
Commanding only a district with very few troops under my control, with hundreds of miles between my headquarters and rendezvous of the Indians, with a large portion of the Sante Fe and Platte routes, besides the sparsely settled and distant settlements of this Territory, to protect, I could not do anything till the 3d regiment was organized and equipped, when I determined to strike a blow against this savage and determined foe. When I reached Fort Lyon, after passing over from three to five feet of snow, and greatly suffering from the intensity of the cold, the thermometer ranging from 28 to 30 degrees below zero, I questioned Major Anthony in regard to the whereabouts of hostile Indians. He said there was a camp of Cheyennes and Arapahoes about fifty miles distant; that he would have attacked before, but did not consider his force sufficient; that these Indians had threatened to attack the post, &c., and ought to be whipped, all of which was concurred in by Major Colley, Indian agent for the district of the Arkansas, which information, with the positive orders from Major General Curtis, commanding the department, to punish these Indians, decided my course, and resulted in the battle of Sand Creek, which has created such a sensation in Congress through the lying reports of interested and malicious parties.

On my arrival at Fort Lyon, in all my conversations with Major Anthony, commanding the post, and Major Colley, Indian agent, I heard nothing of this recent statement that the Indians were under the protection of the government, &c.; but Major Anthony repeatedly stated to me that he had at different times fired upon these Indians, and that they were hostile, and, during my stay at Fort Lyon, urged the necessity of any immediately attacking the Indians before they could learn of the number of troops at Fort Lyon, and so desirous was Major Colly, Indian agent, that I should find and also attack the Arapahoes, that he sent a messenger after the fight at Sand creek, nearly forty miles, to inform me where I could find the Arapahoes and Kiowas; yet, strange to say, I have learned recently that these men, Anthony and Colly, are the most bitter in their denunciations of the attack upon the Indians at Sand creek. Therefore, I would, in conclusion, most respectfully demand, as an act of justice to myself and the brave men whom I have had the honor to command in one of the hardest campaigns ever made in this country, whether against white men or red, that we be allowed that right guaranteed to every American citizen, of introducing evidence in our behalf to sustain us in what we believe to have been an act of duty to ourselves and to civilization. We simply ask to introduce as witnesses men that were present during the campaign and know all the facts.

J.M. CHIVINGTON,
Lieu't Col. 1st Cavalry of Colorado, Com'd'g Dist. of Colorado.
Sworn and subscribed to before me this 26th day of April, 1865.
ALEXANDER W. ATKINS,
Notary Public.

TEXT: Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, Massacre of Cheyenne Indians, 38th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1865), pp. 4-12, 56-59 and 101-108.]
Full Congressional Testimony of Mr. John S. Smith (Use with Lesson 3)
Washington, March 14, 1865

Mr. John S. Smith sworn and examined.

By Mr. Gooch:
Question. Where is your place of residence?

Answer. Fort Lyon, Colorado

Question. What is your occupation?

Answer. United States Indian interpreter and special Indian agent.

Question. Will you state to the committee all that you know in relation to the attack of Colonel Chivington upon the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians in November last?

Answer. Major Anthony was in command at Fort Lyon at the time. Those Indians had been induced to remain in the vicinity of Fort Lyon, and were promised protection by the commanding officer at Fort Lyon. The commanding officer saw proper to keep them some thirty or forty miles distant from the fort, for fear of some conflict between them and the soldiers or the traveling population, for Fort Lyon is on a great thoroughfare. He advised them to go out on what is called Sand creek, about forty miles, a little east of north from Fort Lyon. Some days after they had left Fort Lyon when I had just recovered from a long spell of sickness, I was called on by Major S.G. Colley, who asked me if I was able and willing to go out and pay a visit to these Indians, ascertain their numbers, their general disposition toward the whites, and the points where other bands might be located in the interior.

Question. What was the necessity for obtaining that information?

Answer. Because there were different bands which were supposed to be at war; in fact, we knew at the time that they were at war with the white population in that country; but this band had been in and left the post perfectly satisfied. I left to go to this village of Indians on the 26th of November last. I arrived there on the 27th and remained there the 28th. On the morning of the 29th, between daylight and sunrise - nearer sunrise than daybreak - a large number of troops were discovered from three-quarters of a mile to a mile below the village. The Indians, who discovered them, ran to my camp, called me out, and wanted me to go and see what troops they were, and what they wanted. The head chief of the nation, Black Kettle, and head chief of the Cheyennes, was encamped there with us. Some years previous he had been presented with a fine American flag by Colonel Greenwood, a commissioner, who had been sent out there. Black Kettle ran this American flag up to the top of his lodge, with a small white flag tied right under it, as he had been advised to do in case he should meet with any troops out on the prairies. I then left my own camp and started for that portion of the troops that was nearest the village,
supposing I could go up to the m. I did not know but they might be strange troops, and thought my presence and explanations could reconcile matters. Lieutenant Wilson was in command of the detachment to which I tried to make my approach; but they fired several volleys at me, and I returned back to my camp and entered my lodge.

Question. Did these troops know you to be a white man?

Answer. Yes, sir; and the troops that went there knew I was in the village.

Question. Did you see Lieutenant Wilson or were you seen by him?

Answer. I cannot say I was seen by him; but his troops were the first to fire at me.

Question. Did they know you to be a white man?

Answer. They could not help knowing it. I had on pants, a soldier's overcoat, and a hat such as I am wearing now. I was dressed differently from any Indian in the country. On my return I entered my lodge, not expecting to get out of it alive. I had two other men there with me: one was David Louderbach, a soldier, belonging to company G, 1st Colorado cavalry; the other, a man by the name of Watson, who was a hired hand of Mr. DD Coolly, the son of Major Coolly, the agent.

After I had left my lodge to go out and see what was going on, Colonel Chivington rode up to within fifty or sixty yards of where I was camped; he recognized me at once. They all call me Uncle John in that country. He said, "Run here, Uncle John; you are all right." I went to him as fast as I could. He told me to get in between him and his troops, who were then coming up very fast; I did so; directly another officer who knew me - Lieutenant Baldwin, in command of a battery - tried to assist me to get a horse; but there was no loose horse there at the time. He said, "Catch hold of the caisson, and keep up with us."

By this time the Indians had fled; had scattered in every direction. The troops were some on one side of the river and some on the other, following up the Indians. We had been encamped on the north side of the river; I followed along, holding on the caisson, sometimes running, sometimes walking. Finally, about a mile above the village, the troops had got a parcel of the Indians hemmed in under the bank of the river; as soon as the troops overtook them, they commenced firing on them; some troops had got above them, so that they were completely surrounded. There were probably a hundred Indians hemmed in there, men, women, and children; the most of the men in the village escaped.

By the time I got up with the battery to the place where these Indians were surrounded there had been some considerable firing. Four or five soldiers had been killed, some with arrows and some with bullets. The soldiers continued firing on these Indians, who numbered about a hundred, until they had almost completely destroyed them. I think I saw altogether some seventy dead bodies lying there; the greater portion women and children. There may have been thirty warriors, old and young; the rest were women and small children of different ages and sizes. The troops at that time were very much scattered. There were not over two hundred troops in the main fight, engaged in killing this body of Indians under the bank. The
balance of the troops were scattered in different directions, running after small parties of Indians who were trying to make their escape. I did not go so see how many they might have killed outside of this party under the bank of the river. Being still quite weak from my last sickness, I returned with the first body of troops that went back to the camp.

The Indians had left their lodges and property; everything they owned. I do not think more than one-half of the Indians left their lodges with their arms. I think there were between 800 and 1,000 men in this command of United States troops. There was a part of three companies of the 1st Colorado, and the balance were what were called 100 days men of the 3rd regiment. I am not able to say which party did the most execution on the Indians, because it was very much mixed up at the time.

We remained there that day after the fight. By 11 o'clock, I think, the entire number of soldiers had returned back to the camp where Colonel Chivington had returned. On their return, he ordered the soldiers to destroy all the Indian property there, which they did, with the exception of what plunder they took away with them, which was considerable.

Question. How many Indians were there there?

Answer. There were 100 families of Cheyennes, and some six or eight lodges of Arapahoes.

Question. How many persons in all, should you say?

Answer. About 500 we estimate them at five to a lodge.

Question. 500 men, women and children?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Do you know the reason for that attack on the Indians?

Answer. I do not know any exact reason. I have heard a great many reasons given. I have heard that that whole Indian war had been brought on for selfish purposes. Colonel Chivington was running for Congress in Colorado, and there were other things of that kind; and last spring a year ago he was looking for an order to go to the front, and I understand he had this Indian war in view to retain himself and his troops in that country, to carry out his electioneering purposes.

Question. In what way did this attack on the Indians further the purpose of Colonel Chivington?

Answer. It was said - I did not hear him say it myself, but it was said that he would do something; he had this regiment of three-months men, and did not want them to go out without doing some service. Now he had been told repeatedly by different persons - by myself, as well as others - where he could find the hostile bands.
The same chiefs who were killed in this village of Cheyennes had been up to see Colonel Chivington in Denver but a short time previous to this attack. He himself told them that he had no power to treat with them; that he had received telegrams from General Curtis directing him to fight all Indians he met with in that country. Still he would advise them, if they wanted any assistance from the whites, to go to their nearest military post in their country, give up their arms and the stolen property, if they had any, and then they would receive directions in what way to act. This was told them by Colonel Chivington and by Governor Evans, of Colorado. I myself interpreted for them and for the Indians.

Question. Did Colonel Chivington hold any communication with these Indians, or any of them, before making the attack upon them?

Answer. No, sir, not then. He had some time previously held a council with them at Denver city. When we first recovered the white prisoners from the Indians, we invited some of the chiefs to go to Denver, inasmuch as they had sued for peace, and were willing to give up these white prisoners. We promised to take the chiefs to Denver, where they had an interview with men who had more power than Major Wynkoop had, who was the officer in command of the detachment that went out to recover these white prisoners. Governor Evans and Colonel Chivington were in Denver, and were present at this council. They told the Indians to return with Major Wynkoop, and whatever he agreed on doing with them would be recognized by them.

I returned with the Indians to Fort Lyon. There we let them go out to their villages to bring in their families, as they had been invited through the proclamation or circular of the governor during the month of June, I think. They were gone some twelve or fifteen days from Fort Lyon, and then they returned with their families. Major Wynkoop had made them one or two issues of provisions previous to the arrival of Major Anthony there to assume command. Then Major Wynkoop, who is now in command at Fort Lyon, was ordered to Fort Leavenworth on some business with General Curtis, I think.

Then Major Anthony, through me, told the Indians that he did not have it in his power to issue rations to them, as Major Wynkoop had done. He said that he had assumed command at Fort Lyon, and his orders were positive from headquarters to fight the Indians in the vicinity of Fort Lyon, or at any other point in the Territory where they could find them. He said that he had understood that they had been behaving very badly. But on seeing Major Wynkoop and others there at Fort Lyon, he was happy to say that things were not as had been presented, and he could not pursue any other course than that of Major Wynkoop except the issuing rations to them. He then advised them to go to some near point, where there was buffalo, not too far from Fort Lyon or they might meet with troops from the Platte, who would not know them from the hostile bands. This was the southern band of Cheyennes; there is another band called the northern band. They had no apprehensions in the world of any trouble with the whites at the time this attack was made.

Question. Had there been, to your knowledge, any hostile act or demonstration on the part of these Indians or any of them?
Answer. Not in this band. But the northern band, the band known by the name of Dog soldiers of Cheyennes, had committed many depredations on the Platte.

Question. Do you know whether or not Colonel Chivington knew the friendly character of these Indians before he made the attack upon them?

Answer. It is my opinion that he did.

Question. On what is that opinion based?

Answer. On this fact, that he stopped all persons from going on ahead of him. He stopped the mail, and would not allow any person to go on ahead of him at the time he was on his way from Denver city to Fort Lyon. He placed a guard around old Colonel Bent, the former agent there; he stopped a Mr. Hagues and many men who were on their way to Fort Lyon. He took the fort by surprise, and as soon as he got there he posted pickets all around the fort, and then left at 8 o'clock that night for this Indian camp.

Question. Was that anything more than the exercise of ordinary precaution in following Indians?

Answer. Well, sir, he was told that there were no Indians in the vicinity of Fort Lyon, except Black Kettle's band of Cheyennes and Left Hand's band of Arapahoes.

Question. How do you know that?

Answer. I was told so.

**By Mr. Buckalew:**

Question. Do you know it of your own knowledge?

Answer. I cannot say I do.

Question. You did not talk with him about it before the attack?

Answer. No, sir.

**By Mr. Gooch:**

Question. When you went out to him, you had no opportunity to hold intercourse with him?

Answer. None whatever; he had just commenced his fire against the Indians.

Question. Did you have any communication with him at any time while there?

Answer. Yes, sir.
Question. What was it?

Answer. He asked me many questions about a son of mine, who was killed there afterwards. He asked me what Indians were there, what chiefs; and I told him as fully as I knew.

**By Mr. Buckalew:**

Question. When did you talk with him?

Answer. On the day of the attack. He asked me many questions about the chiefs who were there, and if I could recognize them if I saw them. I told him it was possible I might recollect the principal chiefs. They were terribly mutilated, lying there in the water and sand; most of them in the bed of the creek, dead and dying, making many struggles. They were so badly mutilated and covered with sand and water that it was very hard for me to tell one from another. However, I recognized some of them - among them the chief One Eye, who was employed by our government at $125 a month and rations to remain in the village as a spy. There was another called War Bonnet, who was here two years ago with me. There was another by the name of Standing-in-the-Water, and I supposed Black Kettle was among them, but it was not Black Kettle. There was one there of his size and dimensions in every way, but so tremendously mutilated that I was mistaken in him. I went out with Lieutenant Colonel Bowen, to see how many I could recognize.

**By Mr. Gooch:**

Question: Did you tell Colonel Chivington the character and disposition of these Indians at any time during your interviews on this day?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. What did he say in reply?

Answer. He said he could not help it; that his orders were positive to attack the Indians.

Question. From whom did he receive these orders?

Answer. I do not know; I presume from General Curtis.

Question. Did he tell you?

Answer. Not to my recollection.

Question. Were the women and children slaughtered indiscriminately, or only so far as they were with the warriors?

Answer. Indiscriminately.

Question. Were there any acts of barbarity perpetrated there that came under your own observation?
Answer. Yes, sir; I saw the bodies of those lying there cut all to pieces, worse mutilated than any I ever saw before; the women cut all to pieces.

**By Mr. Buckalew:**
Question. How cut?

Answer. With knives; scalped; their brains knocked out; children two or three months old; all ages lying there, from sucking infants up to warriors.

**By Mr. Gooch:**
Question. Did you see it done?

Answer. Yes, sir; I saw them fall.

Question. Fall when they were killed?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Did you see them when they were mutilated?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. By whom were they mutilated?

Answer. By the United States troops.

Question. Do you know whether or not it was done by the direction or consent of any of the officers.

Answer. I do not; I hardly think it was.

**By Mr. Buckalew:**
Question. What was the date of that massacre?

Answer. On the 29th of November last.

Question. Did you speak of these barbarities to Colonel Chivington?

Answer. No sir; I had nothing at all to say about it, because at that time they were hostile towards me, from the fact of my being there. They probably supposed that I might be compromised with them in some way or other.

Question. Who called on you to designate the bodies of those who were killed?
Answer. Colonel Chivington himself asked me if I would ride out with Lieutenant Colonel Bowen, and see how many chiefs or principal men I could recognize.

Question. Can you state how many Indians were killed - how many women and how many children?

Answer. Perhaps one-half were men, and the balance were women and children. I do not think that I saw more than 70 lying dead then, as far as I went. But I saw parties of men scattered in every direction, pursuing little bands of Indians.

Question. What time of day or night was this attack made?

Answer. The attack commenced about sunrise, and lasted until between 10 and 11 o'clock.

Question. How large a body of troops?

Answer. I think that probably there may have been about 60 or 70 warriors who were armed and stood their ground and fought. Those that were unarmed got out of the way as they best could.

Question. How many of our troops were killed and how many wounded?

Answer. There were ten killed on the ground, and thirty-eight wounded; four of the wounded died at Fort Lyon before I came on east.

Question. Were there any other barbarities or atrocities committed there other than those you have mentioned, that you saw?

Answer. Yes, sir; I had a half-breed son there, who gave himself up. He started at the time the Indians fled; being a half-breed he had but little hope of being spared, and seeing them fire at me, he ran away with the Indians for the distance of about a mile. During the fight up there he walked back to my camp and went into the lodge. It was surrounded by soldiers at the time. He came in quietly and sat down; he remained there that day, that night, and the next day in the afternoon; about four o'clock in the evening, as I was sitting inside the camp, a soldier came up outside of the lodge and called me by name. I got up and went out; he took me by the arm and walked towards Colonel Chivington's camp, which was about sixty yards from my camp. Said he, "I am sorry to tell you, but they are going to kill your son Jack." I knew the feeling towards the whole camp of Indians, and that there was no use to make any resistance. I said, "I can't help it." I then walked on towards where Colonel Chivington was standing by his camp-fire; when I had got within a few feet of him I heard a gun fired, and saw a crowd run to my lodge, and they told me that Jack was dead.

Question. What action did Colonel Chivington take in regard to that matter?
Answer. Major Anthony, who was present, told Colonel Chivington that he had heard some remarks made, indicating that they were desirous of killing Jack; and that he (Colonel Chivington) had it in his power to save him, and that by saving him he might make him a very useful man, as he was well acquainted with all the Cheyenne and Arapahoe country, and he could be used as a guide or interpreter. Colonel Chivington replied to Major Anthony, as the Major himself told me, that he had no orders to receive and no advice to give. Major Anthony is now in this city.

By Mr. Buckalew:
Question. Did Chivington say anything to you, or you to him about the firing?

Answer. Nothing directly; there were a number of officers sitting around the fire, with the most of whom I was acquainted.

By Mr. Gooch:
Question. Were there any other Indians or half-breeds there at that time?

Answer. Yes, sir; Mr. Bent had three sons there; one employed as a guide for these troops at the time, and two others living there in the village with the Indians; and a Mr. Gerry had a son there.

Question. Were there any other murders after the first day's massacre?

Answer. There was none, except of my son.

Question. Were there any other atrocities which you have no mentioned?

Answer. None that I saw myself. There were two women that white men had families by; they were saved from the fact of being in my lodge at the time. One ran to my lodge; the other was taken prisoner by a soldier who knew her and brought her to my lodge for safety. They both had children. There were some small children, six or seven years old, who were taken prisoners near the camp. I think there were three of them taken to Denver with these troops.

Question. Were the women and children that were killed, killed during the fight with the Indians?

Answer. During the fight, or during the time of the attack.

Question. Did you see any women or children killed after the fight was over?

Answer. None.

Question. Did you see any Indians killed after the fight was over?

Answer. No, sir.
By Mr. Buckalew:
Question. Were the warriors and women and children all huddled together when they were attacked?

Answer. They started and left the village altogether, in a body, trying to escape.

By Mr. Gooch:
Question. Do you know anything as to the amount of property that those Indians had there?

Answer. Nothing more than their horses. They were supposed to own ten horses and mules to a lodge; that would make about a thousand head of horses and mules in that camp. The soldiers drove off about six hundred head.

Question. Had they any money?

Answer. I understood that some of the soldiers found some money, but I did not see it. Mr. D. D. Colley had some provisions and goods in the village at the time, and Mr. Louderback and Mr. Watson were employed by him to trade there. I was to interpret for them, direct them, and see that they were cared for in the village. They had traded for one hundred and four buffalo robes, one fine mule, and two horses. This was all taken away from them. Colonel Chivington came to me and told me that I might rest assured that he would see the goods paid for. He had confiscated these buffalo robes for the dead and wounded; and there was also some sugar and coffee and tea taken for the same purpose. I would state that in his report Colonel Chivington states that after this raid on Sand creek against the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians he traveled northeast some eighty miles in the direction of some hostile bands of Sioux Indians. Now that is very incorrect, according to my knowledge of matters; I remained with Colonel Chivington's camp, and returned on his trail towards Fort Lyon from the camp where he made this raid. I went down with him to what is called the forks of the Sandy. He then took a due south course for the Arkansas river, and I went to Fort Lyon with the killed and wounded, and an escort to take us in. Colonel Chivington proceeded down the Arkansas river, and got within eleven miles of another band of Arapahoe Indians, but did not succeed in overtaking them. He then returned to Fort Lyon, re-equipped, and started immediately for Denver.

Question. Have you spent any considerable portion of your life with the Indians?

Answer. The most of it.

Question. How many years have you been with the Indians?

Answer. I have been twenty-seven successive years with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Before that I was in the country as a trapper and hunter in the Rocky mountains.
Question. For how long time have you acted as Indian interpreter?

Answer. For some fifteen or eighteen years.

Question. By whom have you been so employed?

Answer. By Major Fitzpatrick, Colonel Bent, Major Colley, Colonel J.W. Whitfield, and a great deal of the time for the military as guide and interpreter.

**By Mr. Buckalew:**
Question. How many warriors were estimated in Colonel Chivington's report as having been in this Indian camp?
Answer. About nine hundred.

Question. How many were there?

Answer. About two hundred warriors; they average about two warriors to a lodge, and there were about one hundred lodges.

TEXT: Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, Massacre of Cheyenne Indians, 38th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1865), pp. 4-12, 56-59 and 101-108.
**Close Reading of Testimonies and Questions to prompt Student Comprehension**  
*(Use with Lesson 3)*

*If at all possible, read these excerpts as students follow along; voice inflection really helps to drive home some of these points and gets students to recognize some of the nuance of the questioning and not just what the answers are.*

**Chivington Testimony:**
**Question:** State as nearly as you can the number of Indians that were in the village or camp at the time the attack was made; how many of them were warriors; how many of them were old men, how many of them were women, and how many of them were children?
**Answer:** From the best and most reliable information I could obtain, there were in the Indian camp, at the time of the attack, about eleven (11) or twelve (12) hundred Indians: of these about seven hundred were warriors, and the remainder were women and children. I am not aware that there were any old men among them. There was an unusual number of males among them, for the reason that the war chiefs of both nations were assembled there evidently for some special purpose.

**Smith Testimony:**
**Question:** How many Indians were there there?
**Answer:** There were 100 families of Cheyennes, and some six or eight lodges of Arapahoes.
**Question:** How many persons in all, should you say?
**Answer:** About 500 we estimate them at five to a lodge.
**Question:** 500 men, women and children?
**Answer:** Yes, sir.

**What are the major differences between these two estimates?**
**Who is more reliable here? Why?**
**What about the atmosphere in Colorado in the months leading up to the massacre could account for such a large difference?**

**Chivington Testimony:**
**Question:** What number of Indians were killed; and what number of the killed were women, and what number were children?
**Answer:** From the best information I could obtain, I judge there were five hundred or six hundred Indians killed; I cannot state positively the number killed, nor can I state positively the number of women and children killed. Officers who passed over the field, by my orders, after the battle, for the purpose of ascertaining the number of Indians killed, report that they saw but few women or children dead… I myself passed over some portions of the field after the fight, and I saw but one woman who had been killed, and one who had hanged herself; I saw no dead children. From all I could learn, I arrived at the conclusion that but few women or children had been slain. I am of the opinion that
when the attack was made on the Indian camp the greater number of squaws and children made their escape, while the warriors remained to fight my troops.

**Smith Testimony:**

**Question.** Were the women and children slaughtered indiscriminately, or only so far as they were with the warriors?

**Answer.** Indiscriminately.

**Question.** Were there any acts of barbarity perpetrated there that came under your own observation?

**Answer.** Yes, sir; I saw the bodies of those lying there cut all to pieces, worse mutilated than any I ever saw before; the women cut all to pieces.

**By Mr. Buckalew:**

**Question.** How cut?

**Answer.** With knives; scalped; their brains knocked out; children two or three months old; all ages lying there, from sucking infants up to warriors.

**By Mr. Gooch:**

**Question.** Did you see it done?

**Answer.** Yes, sir; I saw them fall.

**Question.** Fall when they were killed?

**Answer.** Yes, sir.

**Question.** Did you see them when they were mutilated?

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**Question.** By whom were they mutilated?

**Answer.** By the United States troops.

**Question.** Do you know whether or not it was done by the direction or consent of any of the officers.

**Answer.** I do not; I hardly think it was.

**Question.** Were there any other barbarities or atrocities committed there other than those you have mentioned, that you saw?

**Answer.** Yes, sir; I had a half-breed son there, who gave himself up...when I had got within a few feet of him [Chivington] I heard a gun fired, and saw a crowd run to my lodge, and they told me that Jack was dead.

**Question.** What action did Colonel Chivington take in regard to that matter?

**Answer.** Major Anthony, who was present, told Colonel Chivington that he had heard some remarks made, indicating that they were desirous of killing Jack... Colonel Chivington replied to Major Anthony, as the Major himself told me, that he had no orders to receive and no advice to give.

**Could Chivington have missed the slaughter of women and children?**

**After learning of the death of Jack, is Mr. Smith still a credible witness?**

**What does Chivington’s actions toward Jack tell us about his prejudices?**

**Chivington Testimony:**

**Question.** What reason had you for making the attack? What reasons, if any, had you to believe that Black Kettle or any other Indian or Indians in the camp entertained feelings
of hostility towards the whites? Give in detail the names of all Indians so believed to be hostile, with the dates and places of their hostile acts, so far as you may be able to do so.

Answer. My reason for making the attack on the Indian camp was, that I believed the Indians in the camp were hostile to the whites. That they were of the same tribes with those who had murdered many persons and destroyed much valuable property on the Platte and Arkansas rivers during the previous spring, summer and fall was beyond a doubt. When a tribe of Indians is at war with the whites it is impossible to determine what party or band of the tribe or the name of the Indian or Indians belonging to the tribe so at war are guilty of the acts of hostility. The most that can be ascertained is that Indians of the tribe have performed the acts. During the spring, summer and fall of the year 1864, the Arapaho and Cheyenne Indians, in some instances assisted or led on by Sioux, Kiowas, Comanches and Apaches, had committed many acts of hostility in the country lying between the Little Blue and the Rocky mountains and the Platte and Arkansas rivers. They had murdered many of the whites and taken others prisoners, and had destroyed valuable property, probably amounting to $200,000 or $300,000. I had every reason to believe that these Indians were either directly or indirectly concerned in the outrages which had been committed upon the whites. I had no means of ascertaining what were the names of the Indians who had committed these outrages other than the declarations of the Indians themselves; and the character of Indians in the western country for truth and veracity, like their respect for the chastity of women who may become prisoners in their hands, is not of that order which is calculated to inspire confidence in what they may say. We found in the camp the scalps of nineteen (19) white persons. One of the surgeons informed me that one of these scalps had been taken from the victim's head not more than four days previously. I can furnish a child captured at the camp ornamented with six white women's scalps; these scalps must have been taken by these Indians or furnished to them for their gratification and amusement by some of their brethren, who, like themselves, were in amity with the whites.

Smith Testimony:

Question. Had there been, to your knowledge, any hostile act or demonstration on the part of these Indians or any of them?

Answer. Not in this band. But the northern band, the band known by the name of Dog soldiers of Cheyennes, had committed many depredations on the Platte.

Question. Do you know whether or not Colonel Chivington knew the friendly character of these Indians before he made the attack upon them?

Answer. It is my opinion that he did.

Question. On what is that opinion based?

Answer. On this fact, that he stopped all persons from going on ahead of him. He took the fort by surprise, and as soon as he got there he posted pickets all around the fort, and then left at 8 o'clock that night for this Indian camp.

Question. Was that anything more than the exercise of ordinary precaution in following Indians?

Answer. Well, sir, he was told that there were no Indians in the vicinity of Fort Lyon, except Black Kettle's band of Cheyennes and Left Hand's band of Arapahoes.

What does this line of questioning suggest about Chivington?
How contradictory are these accounts?

Smith Testimony:

Question. Do you know the reason for that attack on the Indians?

Answer. I do not know any exact reason. I have heard a great many reasons given. I have heard that the whole Indian war had been brought on for selfish purposes. Colonel Chivington was running for Congress in Colorado, and there were other things of that kind; and last spring a year ago he was looking for an order to go to the front, and I understand he had this Indian war in view to retain himself and his troops in that country, to carry out his electioneering purposes.

Question. In what way did this attack on the Indians further the purpose of Colonel Chivington?

Answer. It was said - I did not hear him say it myself, but it was said that he would do something; he had this regiment of three-months men, and did not want them to go out without doing some service. Now he had been told repeatedly by different persons - by myself, as well as others - where he could find the hostile bands.

The same chiefs who were killed in this village of Cheyennes had been up to see Colonel Chivington in Denver but a short time previous to this attack. He himself told them that he had no power to treat with them; that he had received telegrams from General Curtis directing him to fight all Indians he met with in that country. Still he would advise them, if they wanted any assistance from the whites, to go to their nearest military post in their country, give up their arms and the stolen property, if they had any, and then they would receive directions in what way to act. This was told them by Colonel Chivington and by Governor Evans, of Colorado. I myself interpreted for them and for the Indians.

What do you think prompted this line of questioning?

How might Chivington’s political ambitions have clouded his judgement?

Do you feel that Congress has made a connection between his ambitions and his actions? Examine questions about what loot was taken in the Chivington Testimony…

Do you feel that Congress has made a connection between his ambitions and his actions? Will questions of this nature tarnish his name?
**The East Reacts to the West** (Use with Lesson 3)

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<td>View on who lived at Sand Creek</td>
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<td>View on the temperament of the inhabitants</td>
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Timeline of Major Events and Trends of the Nineteenth Century
The Era of Manifest Destiny

1839  John L. O’Sullivan coins the phrase Manifest Destiny in an article published in *The United States Democratic Review*. His words define an era of conquest and conflict.

1841  Western Emigration Society is formed.

1842  Lt. John C. Fremont of the Army Topographical Corps leads an expedition into the Rocky Mountains with Kit Carson as a guide.

1842  Responding to years of harassment along the Texas border, Mexican troops strike San Antonio in what became known as Dawson’s Massacre.

1843  The Oregon Trail is formed and settlers stream westward.

1846  Britain and the United States set the northern boundary of the Oregon Territory at the 49th parallel.

1846  The United States enters into war with Mexico. Two years later when the war ends, the United States gains most of Mexican lands north of the Rio Grande.

1849  After gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill the previous year, over 80,000 fortune-seekers had made their way to California.

1851  The United States and representatives of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Arikara, Assiniboin, Mandan, Gros Ventre and other tribes sign the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. The treaty is intended to insure peace on the Great Plains as an increasing number of gold seekers, settlers, and traders trek westward with violent reactions from Native Americans. The treaty divides the plains into separate tracts assigned to each tribe as long as they agreed to remain on their own land, cease attacks on white migrants and other tribes, and recognize the right of the United States to establish roads and military outposts within their territories. The United States pledged, in return, that each tribe would retain possession of its assigned lands forever, that they will be protected by U.S. troops from white intruders and that they will each receive $50,000 in supplies and provisions annually for the next fifty years. Both sides agree to settle any future disputes, whether between tribes or between Indians and whites, through restitution. The chiefs who sign the Fort Laramie Treaty do not have the authority over their tribes that the United States negotiators assume, and the negotiators themselves cannot deliver the protections and fair treatment they promise.
1851 Federal commissioners attempting to halt the brutal treatment of Indians in California negotiate eighteen treaties with various tribes and village groups, promising them 8.5 million acres of reservation lands. California politicians succeed in having the treaties secretly rejected by Congress in 1852, leaving the native peoples of the state homeless within a hostile white society.

1853 California begins confining its remaining Indian population on harsh military reservations, but the combination of legal enslavement and near genocide has already made California the site of the worst slaughter of Native Americans in United States history. As many as 150,000 Indians lived in the state before 1849; by 1870, fewer than 30,000 will remain.

1853 Mexico agrees to the Gadsden Purchase, selling a strip of land running along Mexico's northern border between Texas and California for $10 million. Intended as the route for a railroad connecting the Mississippi to the Pacific, the territory goes undeveloped when the approach of the Civil War causes the project to be put aside.

1854 After much bitter debate, Congress approves the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repeals the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by allowing these two territories to choose between slavery and free soil.

1859 Gold is discovered in Boulder Canyon, Colorado, sparking the Pikes Peak gold rush which brings an estimated 100,000 fortune-hunters to the Rockies under the banner "Pikes Peak or Bust."

1860 A Homestead Bill, providing federal land grants to Western settlers, is vetoed by President Buchanan under pressure from the South. The veto divides Buchanan's Democratic party, clearing the way for Abraham Lincoln's election in a three-way race.

1861 Colorado and Nevada Territories are organized as Congress begins to consolidate federal control over the West, establishing strong local governments loyal to the Union across the region.

1861 Crews working to complete a coast-to-coast telegraph line meet at Fort Bridger in Utah Territory. Completion of a transcontinental telegraph line signals the end for the Pony Express.

1861 Confederate forces fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, unleashing the Civil War.

1861 The Kansas Jayhawkers, a supposedly pro-Union guerrilla band organized by Charles J. Jennison, begin marauding across the Missouri border. In December, they attack and occupy Independence, Missouri, burning much of the city and killing many citizens.

1862 Congress passes the Pacific Railroad Act, which authorizes the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Companies to build a transcontinental rail line along the 42nd parallel and provides public lands and subsidies for every mile of track laid.

1862 Congress passes the Homestead Act, which allows citizens to settle on up to 160 acres of surveyed but unclaimed public land and receive title to it after making improvements and
residing there for five years. Acts that are friendly to the needs of the North pass easily through a Congress with little Southern representation.

1862 The Civil War divides the Five Civilized Tribes, who brought slaves west with them when they were forced from their homelands in the South. Most side at once with the Confederacy, contributing a brigade to the cause. But the Creek Nation splits into pro-Union and pro-Confederate factions, who battle against one another throughout the war.

1862 Sibley's Brigade, an army of Texas Confederates commanded by General Henry J. Sibley, invade New Mexico, moving up the Rio Grande. They defeat a Union force at Valverde, advance through Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and then turn north toward Colorado's gold fields. But at Apache Canyon they are ambushed by a squad of Colorado volunteers commanded by the "Fighting Parson," John M. Chivington, and two days later they are defeated by a Union force at Glorieta Pass, where Chivington's irregulars rappel down a cliff face to destroy their supply wagons. The Texans retreat in disarray, their hopes of conquest shattered at "the Gettysburg of the West."

1863 President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.

1863 Union forces prevail at the Battle of Gettysburg.

1864 Quantrill's Raiders, a Confederate guerrilla band operating out of Missouri, terrorize Lawrence, Kansas, killing 150 residents and burning much of the town. Among the Raiders are Frank and Jesse James, and Cole and Jim Younger, who will use the hit-and-run tactics taught by their leader, William Clarke Quantrill, to create vicious outlaw gangs in the post-war West.

1864 Congress organizes the Montana Territory and admits Nevada into the union, completing the political organization of the West under local governments loyal to the Union.

1864 A second Pacific Railroad Act is passed by Congress, one that aims to stimulate investment in the enterprise by doubling the size of the land grants and improving the subsidies offered for every mile of track laid.

1864 Sent to punish Navajo raiding parties in northwest New Mexico, Colonel Kit Carson leads a campaign of destruction by burning crops and killing livestock. When the Navajo surrender, he marches 8,000 of the tribe on a grueling "Long Walk" across New Mexico to a parched reservation on the Pecos River, where they are held as prisoners of war until 1868.

1864 Meeting with army officers at Fort Weld outside Denver, the Cheyenne chief, Black Kettle, agrees to lead his people back to their Sand Creek reservation in order to restore peace after Indian raids on ranches in the area. He is attacked there by a volunteer force led by John M. Chivington, the "Fighting Parson" of Glorieta Pass, which sweeps down on the Cheyenne encampment at dawn and massacres nearly two hundred men, women and children. Later Congressional and military investigations condemn the slaughter.

1865 The Confederate surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, brings an end to the Civil War.
1866  General Philip H. Sheridan takes command of U.S. forces in the West, proposing to bring peace to the plains by exterminating the herds of buffalo that support the Indians' way of life: "Kill the buffalo and you kill the Indians," he says.

1866  A Lakota war party led by Chief Red Cloud attacks a wagon train bringing supplies to newly-constructed Fort Phil Kearny on the Powder River in northern Wyoming. The Lakota see the fort, situated to protect travel to Montana mining country along the Bozeman Trail, as a threat to their territory. When a patrol led by Captain William J. Fetterman rides out to drive off the war party, it is lured far from the fort and destroyed to the last man.

1866  Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving blaze the first cattle trail, driving a herd of 2,000 longhorns from Texas to New Mexico in what will become an annual tradition across the southern plains.

1867  The first cattle drive from Texas up the Chisholm Trail arrives at the railyards of Abilene, Kansas.

1867  The United States and representatives of the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho and other southern Plains tribes sign the Medicine Lodge Treaty, intended to remove Indians from the path of white settlement. The treaty marks the end of the era in which federal policymakers saw the Plains as "one big reservation" to be divided up among various tribes. Instead, the treaty establishes reservations for each tribe in the western part of present-day Oklahoma and requires them to give up their traditional lands elsewhere. In exchange, the government pledges to establish reservation schools and to provide resident farmers who will teach the Indians agriculture. This same principle of restricting the Plains tribes to reservations will help shape the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. In both cases, the tribes' refusal to give up their free-ranging traditions and remain confined within the territory assigned to them leads to devastating warfare.

1868  Chief Red Cloud and General William Tecumseh Sherman sign the Fort Laramie Treaty, which brings an end to war along the Bozeman Trail. Under terms of the treaty, the United States agrees to abandon its forts along the Bozeman Trail and grant enormous parts of the Wyoming, Montana and Dakota Territories, including the Black Hills, to the Lakota people as their exclusive territory.

1868  General Philip Sheridan sends Colonel George Armstrong Custer against the Cheyenne, with a plan to attack them during the winter when they are most vulnerable. Custer's troops locate a Cheyenne village on the Washita River in present-day Oklahoma. The village is home to Black Kettle and his people, the victims of the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864. Custer's cavalry attacks at dawn, killing more than 100 men, women and children, including Black Kettle.

1869  A Golden Spike completes the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point, Utah.

1870  Buffalo hunters begin moving onto the plains, brought there by the expanding railroads and the growing market for hides and meat back east. In little more than a decade, they reduce the once numberless herd to an endangered species.

1871  More than 100 Apaches -- most of them women and children -- are murdered outside Camp Grant, Arizona, where they had been given asylum, when members of the Tucson
Committee of Public Safety arrive with a force of Papago Indians, the Apaches' long-time enemies. The committee members claim they acted in retaliation for raids by various Apache bands at distant points across the region, but public opinion, particularly in the East, links the event to the recently investigated Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 as further evidence of Westerners' deep-seated hatred for Indians.

1871 Congress approves the Indian Appropriations Act, which ends the practice of treating Indian tribes as sovereign nations by directing that all Indians be treated as individuals and legally designated "wards" of the federal government. The act is justified as a way to avoid further misunderstandings in treaty negotiations, where whites have too often wrongly assumed that a tribal chief is also that tribe's chief of state. In effect, however, the act is another step toward dismantling the tribal structure of Native American life.

1873 Although federal authorities estimate that hunters are killing buffalo at a rate of three million per year, President Grant vetoes a law protecting the herd from extermination.

1874 George Armstrong Custer announces the discovery of gold in the Black Hills of Dakota, setting off a stampede of fortune-hunters into this most sacred part of Lakota territory. Although the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty requires the government to protect Lakota lands from white intruders, federal authorities work instead to protect the miners already crowding along the path Custer blazed for them, which they call "Freedom's Trail" and the Lakota call "Thieve's Road."

1875 The Lakota War – A Senate commission meeting with Red Cloud and other Lakota chiefs to negotiate legal access for the miners rushing to the Black Hills offers to buy the region for $6 million. But the Lakota refuse to alter the terms of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, and declare they will protect their lands from intruders if the government won't.

1876 Federal authorities order the Lakota chiefs to report to their reservations by January 31. Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse and others defiant of the American government refuse. General Philip Sheridan orders General George Crook, General Alfred Terry and Colonel John Gibbon to drive Sitting Bull and the other chiefs onto the reservation through a combined assault. On June 17, Crazy Horse and 500 warriors surprise General Crook's troops on the Rosebud River, forcing them to retreat. On June 25, George Armstrong Custer, part of General Terry's force, discovers Sitting Bull's encampment on the Little Bighorn River. Terry had ordered Custer to drive the enemy down the Little Bighorn toward Gibbon's forces, who were waiting at its mouth, but when he charges the village Custer discovers that he is outnumbered four-to-one. Hundreds of Lakota warriors overwhelm his troops, killing them to the last man, in a battle later called Custer's Last Stand. News of the massacre shocks the nation and Sheridan floods the region with troops who methodically hunt down the Lakota and force them to surrender. Sitting Bull, however, eludes capture by leading his band to safety in Canada.

1876 Colorado enters the Union.

1876 Crazy Horse finally surrenders to General George Crook at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, having received assurances that he and his followers will be permitted to settle in the Powder River country of Montana. Defiant even in defeat, Crazy Horse arrives with a band of 800 warriors, all brandishing weapons and chanting songs of war. By late summer, there are rumors that Crazy Horse is planning a return to battle, and on
September 5 he is arrested and brought back to Fort Robinson, where, when he resists being jailed, he is held by an Indian guard and killed by a bayonet thrust from a soldier.

1877 Congress votes to repeal the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty and take back the Black Hills, along with 40 million more acres of Lakota land.

1877 With the threat of Indian attack removed, mining camps and boom towns -- French Creek, Whitewood Gulch, Black Tail Gulch -- crowd the Black Hills.

1877 Chief Joseph, leader of the Nez Percé, surrenders to General Oliver Howard, bringing to an end his four-month-long circuitous retreat from the Wallowa Valley in eastern Oregon toward Sitting Bull’s encampment in Canada -- one of the most remarkable military feats of the Indian Wars. Eluding or defeating army troops at every turn, Joseph and a band of fewer than 200 warriors bring nearly 500 women and children over 1,500 miles of mountainous terrain to within forty miles of the border before they are finally stopped by a force of 500 troopers led by Colonel Nelson A. Miles. Reduced by this time to just 87 men, Joseph still holds out for five days in a pitiless snowstorm, and then surrenders only because his people have no food or blankets and will soon die of cold and starvation. “I am tired of fighting,” he declares as he holds out his rifle to General Howard. “I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.”

1879 The first students, a group of 84 Lakota children, arrive at the newly established United States Indian Training and Industrial School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, a boarding school founded by former Indian-fighter Captain Richard Henry Pratt to remove young Indians from their native culture and refashion them as members of mainstream American society. Over the next two decades, twenty-four more schools on the Carlisle model will be established outside the reservations, along with 81 boarding schools and nearly 150 day schools on the Indians’ own land.

1881 Sitting Bull returns from Canada with a small band of followers to surrender to General Alfred Terry, the man who five years before had directed the campaign that ended in the Lakota Chief’s victory at Little Bighorn. After insulting his old adversary and the United States, Sitting Bull has his young son hand over his rifle, saying, “I wish it to be remembered that I was the last man of my tribe to surrender my rifle. This boy has given it to you, and he now wants to know how he is going to make a living.”

1881 Helen Hunt Jackson publishes *A Century of Dishonor*, the first detailed examination of the federal government’s treatment of Native Americans in the West. Her findings shock the nation with proof that empty promises, broken treaties and brutality helped pave the way for white pioneers.

1881 Late summer brings the last big cattle drive to Dodge City. With livestock plentiful on the plains, the long trek up the Western Trail is no longer profitable, and most states now prohibit driving out-of-state cattle across their borders. The increasing use of barbed wire to enclose farms and grazing land has ended the era of the open range. In the fifteen years since Texas cowboys first hit the trail, as many as two million longhorns have been driven to market in Dodge.
1883 A delegation of U.S. Senators meets with bitter resistance from Sitting Bull when they propose opening part of the Lakota's reservation to white settlers. Despite the old chief's objections, the land transfer proceeds as planned.

1883 Buffalo hunters gather on the northern Plains for the last large buffalo kill, among them a Harvard-educated New York assemblyman named Theodore Roosevelt, who hopes to bag a trophy before the species disappears. Hunters have already destroyed the southern herd, and by 1884, except for small domestic herds kept by sentimental ranchers, there are only scattered remnants of the animal that more than any other symbolizes the American West.

1883 A group of clergymen, government officials and social reformers calling itself “The Friends of the Indian” meets in upstate New York to develop a strategy for bringing Native Americans into the mainstream of American life. Their decisions set the course for U.S. policy toward Native Americans over the next generation and result in the near destruction of Native American culture.

1886 Geronimo, described by one follower as “the most intelligent and resourceful...most vigorous and farsighted” of the Apache leaders, surrenders to General Nelson A. Miles in Skeleton Canyon, Arizona, after more than a decade of guerilla warfare against American and Mexican settlers in the Southwest. The terms of surrender require Geronimo and his tribe to settle in Florida, where the Army hopes he can be contained.

1887 Congress passes the Dawes Severalty Act, imposing a system of private land ownership on Native American tribes for whom communal land ownership has been a centuries-old tradition. Individual Indians become eligible to receive land allotments of up to 160 acres, together with full U.S. citizenship. Tribal lands remaining after all allotments have been made are to be declared surplus and sold. Proponents of the law believe that it will help speed the Indians’ assimilation into mainstream society by giving them an incentive to live as farmers and ranchers, earning a profit from their own personal property and private initiative. Others see in the law an opportunity to buy up surplus tribal lands for white settlers. When the allotment system finally ends, Indian landholdings are reduced from 138 million acres in 1887 to 48 million acres in 1934. And with their land many Native Americans lose a fundamental structuring principle of tribal life as well.

1889 Wovoka, a Paiute holy man, awakes from a three-day trance to teach his tribe the Ghost Dance, with which they can restore the earth to the way it was before the whites arrived in the West. His teachings will soon touch many tribes across the West, stirring a spiritual revival that whites nervously misinterpret as a return to hostilities.

1889 President Benjamin Harrison authorizes opening unoccupied lands in the Indian Territory to white settlement, an order put into effect on April 22 at noon, when a gunshot gives settlers the signal to cross the border and stake their claims. Within nine hours, the Oklahoma Land Rush transforms almost two million acres of tribal land into thousands of individual land claims.

1890 Congress establishes the Oklahoma Territory on unoccupied lands in the Indian Territory, breaking a 60-year-old pledge to preserve this area exclusively for Native Americans forced from their lands in the east. 1890 Wyoming enters the Union.
1890 Sitting Bull is murdered in a confrontation at the Standing Rock Reservation when Lakota policemen attempt to arrest him as part of a federal crackdown on the Ghost Dance.

1890 Federal troops massacre the Lakota Chief Big Foot and his 350 followers at Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation in a confrontation fueled by the government’s determination to stop the spread of the Ghost Dance among the tribes. The incident stands in U.S. military history as the last armed engagement of the Indian Wars.

1892 Under the Dawes Act, nearly two million acres of Crow tribal land is opened to settlers in Montana.

1893 Experts estimate that fewer that 2,000 buffalo remain of the more than 20 million that once roamed the Western plains.

1893 More than 100,000 white settlers rush into Oklahoma's Cherokee Outlet to claim six million acres of former Cherokee land.

1894 Frederick Jackson Turner, a 31-year-old instructor at the University of Wisconsin, declares the closing of the Western frontier in his seminal lecture, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, delivered at a meeting of the American Historical Association held in conjunction with the Chicago Columbian Exposition.

Timeline is comprised from information found at [http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/osulliva.htm](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/osulliva.htm) and [http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/events/](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/events/).
Talking Points for Teachers
Timeline and Historical Background

Overview

The events at Sand Creek are not unique to the era and are also not unique to the region. From the time of “discovery” of the Americas, the people that were “found” have been misunderstood and their actions misinterpreted. While the actions seem similar, the motives of the perpetrators of these crimes are radically different.

It is during the Jacksonian Era that the United States reached puberty. The overwhelming sentiment during the time was nationalism as new nations were born and existing nations rejoiced in what made them unique (and, of course, better than everyone else). It is not surprising that it is during this period that the Cherokee Nation was forced on the “Trail of Tears” to make room for patriotic Americans. The concept of Manifest Destiny was strengthened as thousands of Americans pushed westward to create a nation “from sea to shining sea.”

During the Civil War, Manifest Destiny was not displaced; however, the prevailing need of the North to secure support led an effort to fast-track statehood by providing lands in the West free of charge for everyone from poor citizens to grossly rich robber barons. This effort allowed for the capitalization of the Plains in the years after the war. The economic windfall of the bonanza farms led the government to quickly support the white settlers.

By the end of the 19th century, science had categorized and classified the animal kingdom including human beings. Although debunked in the twentieth century, scientists had classified human beings into races based on superficial characteristics. At this same time western nations began to amass large empires. It was commonly believed in the empire-building nations that to be strong a nation had to ensure that all members were striving for the common good. For these reasons as well as the dominant concept of Social Darwinism, many westerners supported the eugenics movement that sought to strengthen the prevailing culture by removing undesirable elements from society by, at times, drastic measures. Many of the policies of the United States during this era towards Native Americans sought to remove them as tribal/cultural groups as to assimilate them into the larger culture.

Thought-Provokers

- Compare/contrast the religious/social/political/cultural aspects of Native Americans and the colonists/settlers.
- Connect the violence of the Pequot Wars and the Anglo-Powhatan Wars as a precursor to the 19th century.
- Connect manifest destiny – the idea that the United States has the God-given right to spread across the continent – with the attacks on defenseless Native Americans on the Plains.
- Examine the role of the US Civil War in the increasing violence on the Plains.
- Research the background of the military commanders who were sent west after the Civil War.
• Connect between the eradication policies on the Plains – both legislative and military – and the eugenics movement.

*These discussion points provide ways to create a larger unit around the mini-unit on the massacre at Sand Creek or to even use parts of the mini-unit to enhance another unit of study if time is limited.*