

Sand creek massacre

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The Sand Creek Massacre: A Ruthless Slaughter of the Cheyenne and Arapaho People On November 29, 1864, possessed by the belief that Native Americans were horrid, distrustful creatures, an attack was led at dawn on Cheyenne and Arapaho lodges encamped at Sand Creek in Colorado Territory, approximately forty miles from the army post of Fort Lyon. Colonel John Chivington led the Third Colorado Cavalry and was supported by Major Anthony, commander of Fort Lyon, along with over 700 soldiers and four howitzer guns¹. Chivington and the soldiers mercilessly killed every Cheyenne and Arapaho that he could find, including women and children². It was shown by the actions of the soldiers that most felt Native Americans and anyone that helped and/or sympathized with them had to be killed.

Though there was chaos and panic upon the start of the attack, some Native Americans refused to fight. Chief Black Kettle and Chief White Antelope of the Cheyenne stood with their arms folded, having unsuccessfully tried to stop the raid, signifying that even now they would not take up arms or move against the attacking soldiers³. Chief Black Kettle also hoisted the American flag atop his lodge, along with the white flag of surrender, as he had been promised by Colonel Greenwood, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, that should he fly the American flag he would be under the protection of the soldiers and kept safe⁴. However, on that day, it did not help to save his people. Men, women, and children were killed without reason or sympathy, even those that put white cloth on sticks and showed their surrender⁵. Nothing mattered to Chivington but clearing out the Native Americans, and their hatred knew few bounds.

Chivington wasted no time in celebration. He gleefully sent a telegram that informed his superiors of his victory, stating that between 400 and 500

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Native American warriors were killed (in reality, it was 105 women and children, and 28 men)⁶. However, Chivington took delight in making it sound as though it had been the result of a very long and hard-won battle, praising his officers lavishly as he did so⁷. He had lost only nine men and had 38 wounded, mostly from friendly fire⁸. The encampments of both tribes were burned to the ground, on the orders of Colonel Chivington, before the soldiers rode away⁹. Though the bloodlust for Native Americans had been satisfied, the results would damage Native American relations for years to come.

Chivington, as well as others, were called to testify before Congress, to the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. According to the published report, it was found that his acts were not only reprehensible, but disgraceful. Testimony was presented that the Native Americans had previously surrendered their arms and had been promised protection, coming of their own accord to peace councils. It was stated in their report that “ prompt and energetic measures should be taken, at once, to remove from office those who have thus disgraced the government whom they serve”. Though it was too late to save the Native Americans of Sand Creek, some small measure of comfort could be taken in the rebuking words of the Committee.

The Sand Creek Massacre would gather other names over time. These included the Chivington Massacre, Massacre of the Cheyenne Indians, and the Battle of Sand Creek¹⁰. Eventually, the Native Americans would agree to settle on reservations, while others would continue to fight the settlers that they believed had stolen their lands. History would be rife with conflict between Native Americans and encroaching farmers for years afterwards, <https://assignbuster.com/sand-creek-massacre/>

but it would also carry the records of the Sand Creek Massacre, and the tragedy that occurred there that day.

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