

**PASSAIC COUNTY TECHNICAL
INSTITUTE
US HISTORY II HONORS 2021-2022
Summer Project Assignment**

Welcome to US History II Honors!

Your Summer Assignment is due Friday, September 24, 2021.

Please read the following sets of documents this summer:

Chapter 17: Document Set 1: The Native American Presence: The Massacre at Sand Creek.

Answer all the “Questions for Analysis”. Please write each question first then the answer. Please type of all your work and use your own words to answer each question.

Have a great summer!!! See you in September.

**CHAPTER 17
DOCUMENT SET 1
The Native American Presence:
The Massacre at Sand Creek**

Questions for Analysis

1. What do the documents reveal about the Native Americans involved in the conflict at Sand Creek? How would you assess the military's understanding and perception of the Indians' intentions? To what extent were Chivington's and Evans's actions justified?
2. What do the events at Sand Creek tell us about the nature of Indian warfare on the Great Plains and the status of white relations with the Native American population in the nineteenth century? Do the documents speak to the matter of human weaknesses or strengths?
3. Why do you think Sand Creek became a political issue in 1864-1865? What do the documents suggest concerning the search for causes and the assignment of ultimate responsibility? Were the criticisms in the congressional report justified?
4. Why were Black Kettle, White Antelope, and their followers encamped at Sand Creek? What does their presence suggest about the Native American situation in 1864 and the white advance? Did the Cheyenne and Arapahos have a right to hold any land? What land? Why or why not? What realistic alternatives were there to Indian dependency on the white government?

5. Define ethnocentrism and explain how it was a factor in the Sand Creek incident. In what way do the documents demonstrate the inability of whites and Indians to move toward a successful cultural adjustment?

6. How can the views of Helen Hunt Jackson be best understood? What evidence suggests that her attitude toward Native Americans prevailed in the white community? How did the "friends of the Indians" propose to solve Native American problems? What was the ultimate result of their efforts?

I. A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE DECRIES THE VIOLENCE AT SAND CREEK, 1865

II. COLONEL M. CHIVINGTON DEFENDS HIS ACTIONS, 1865

III. CONFLICTING TESTIMONY, 1865

IV. MAJOR WYNKOOP EXPLAINS INDIAN INTENT, 1864, 1865

V. GOVERNOR JOHN EVANS RESPONDS TO THE CONGRESSIONAL REPORT

VI. HELEN HUNT JACKSON'S ACCOUNT OF SAND CREEK AND THE AFTERMATH, 1881

Chapter 17 focuses on the exploitation of the trans-Mississippi West, the last major frontier region in the United States. Before the immense resources of the interior could be developed, however, an important residual problem had to be dealt with—the Native American presence. Even before the Civil War, the Indian's fate had been sealed as a result of the federal government's aggressive land-acquisition policy. This action dismissed the original inhabitants of scarce land as obstacles to the march of "civilization."

The following documents describe an incident that tested American values. As the concentrated tribal reservations policy was implemented, the Plains Indians fought an unsuccessful rear-guard resistance, characterized by bitter hostilities, and as noted in your textbook, atrocities on both sides. One of the most brutal confrontations occurred in 1864 at Sand Creek, Colorado Territory, where the militia attacked a band of friendly Cheyenne and Arapahos in what became a vicious massacre. Within a few hours, nearly 500 were killed, many of them women and children. Public outrage ultimately led to a congressional investigation of the grisly event.

This incident provides the basis for a challenging exercise in historical analysis. Through an examination of the documents from the congressional investigation, try to make an interpretive judgment of the evidence. Your responsibility is first to determine exactly what happened at Sand Creek and then to explain how and why those events transpired. Act as your own historian.

The documents included in this set are the report of the Congressional Committee (1865), the response by Colorado's Governor John Evans, Col. J.M. Chivington's defense of his command, several eyewitness accounts, (Lieutenant Connor, Lieutenant Cramer and Captain Talbot) and second-hand reports from Major Wynkoop, Black

Kettle's Peace Pledge, and the account of reformer Helen Hunt Jackson. Your textbook provides background on the subjugation of the Plains Indians, government policy, and reform efforts undertaken by "friends" of the Indian. Your task is to extract the truth from the evidence.

As you approach the documents, consider the reliability of the source. Try to decide whether a witness is credible or suspect. Determine what a given document reveals about its author. Does the document contribute to your interpretation of the Sand Creek incident? Develop a clear picture of the events in question and a hypothesis to explain them. Then determine how the incident fits into the history of the westward movement.

[Return to top](#)

I. A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE DECRIES THE VIOLENCE AT SAND CREEK, 1865

The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War submit the following report:

In the summer of 1864 Governor Evans, of Colorado Territory, as acting superintendent of Indian affairs, sent notice to the various bands and tribes of Indians within his jurisdiction that such as desired to be considered friendly to the whites should at once repair to the nearest military post in order to be protected from the soldiers who were to take the field against the hostile Indians.

All the testimony goes to show that the Indians, under the immediate control of Black Kettle and White Antelope of the Cheyenne, and Left Hand of the Arapahoes, were and had been friendly to the whites, and had not been guilty of any acts of hostility or depredation. The Indian agents, the Indian interpreter and others examined by your committee, all testify to the good character of those Indians. Even Governor Evans and Major Anthony, though evidently willing to convey to your committee a false impression of the character of those Indians, were forced, in spite of their prevarication, to admit that they knew of nothing they had done which rendered them deserving of punishment.

These Indians, at the suggestion of Governor Evans and Colonel Chivington, repaired to Fort Lyon and placed themselves under the protection of Major Wynkoop. They were led to believe that they were regarded in the light of friendly Indians, and would be treated as such as long as they conducted themselves quietly.

Major Anthony having demanded their arms, which they surrendered to him, they conducted themselves quietly, and in every way manifested a disposition to remain at peace with the whites. At the suggestion of Major Anthony {and from one in his position a suggestion was equivalent to a command) these Indians went to a place on Sand creek, is about thirty-five miles from Fort Lyon, and there established their camp, their arms being restored to them.

Upon observing the approach of the soldiers, Black Kettle, the head chief, ran up to

the top of his lodge an American flag, which had been presented to him some years before by Commissioner Greenwood, with a small white flag under it, as he had been advised to do in case he met with any troops on the prairies. Mr. Smith, the interpreter, ~supposing they might be strange troops, unaware of the character of the Indians encamped there, advanced from his lodge to meet them, but was fired upon, and returned to his lodge.

And then the scene of murder and barbarity began—men, women, and children were indiscriminately slaughtered. In a few minutes all the Indians were flying over the plain in terror and confusion. A few who endeavored to hide themselves under the bank of the creek were surrounded and shot down in cold blood, offering but feeble resistance. From the sucking babe to the old warrior, all who were overtaken were deliberately murdered. Not content with killing women and children, who were incapable of offering any resistance, the soldiers indulged in acts of barbarity of the most revolting character; such, it is to be hoped, as never before disgraced the acts of men claiming to be civilized. No attempt was made by the officers to restrain the savage cruelty of the men under their command, but they stood by and witnessed these acts without one word of reproof, if they did not incite their commission. For more than two hours the work of murder and barbarity was continued, until more than one hundred dead bodies, three-fourths of them of women and children, lay on the plain as evidences of the fiendish malignity and cruelty of the officers who had so sedulously and carefully plotted the massacre, and of the soldiers who had so faithfully acted out the spirit of their officers.

It is difficult to believe that beings in the form of men, and disgracing the uniform of United States soldiers and officers, could commit or countenance the commission of such acts of cruelty and barbarity as are detailed in the testimony, but which your committee will not specify in their report. It is true that there seems to have existed among the people inhabiting that region of country a hostile feeling towards the Indians. Some of the Indians had committed acts of hostility towards the whites; but no effort seems to have been made by the authorities there to prevent these hostilities, other than by the commission of even worse acts. The hatred of the whites to the Indians would seem to have been inflamed and excited to the utmost; the bodies of persons killed at a great distance—whether by Indians or not, is not certain were brought to the capital of the Territory and exposed to the public gaze for the purpose of inflaming still more the already excited feeling of the people. Their cupidity was appealed to, for the governor in a proclamation calls upon all, "either individually or in such parties as they may organize," "to kill and destroy as enemies of the country, wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians," authorizing them to "hold to their own private use and benefit all the property of said hostile Indians that they may capture". ...

As to Colonel Chivington, your committee can hardly find fitting terms to describe his conduct. Wearing the uniform of the United States, which should be the emblem

of justice and humanity; holding the important position of commander of a military district, and therefore having the honor of the government to that extent in his keeping, he deliberately planned and executed a foul and dastardly massacre which would have disgraced the veriest savage among those who were the victims of his cruelty. Having full knowledge of their friendly character, having himself been instrumental to some extent in placing them in their position of fancied security, he took advantage of their inapprehension and defenceless condition to gratify the worst passions that ever cursed the heart of man. ...

[T]he truth is that he surprised and murdered, in cold blood, the unsuspecting men, women, and children on Sand creek, who had every reason to believe they were under the protection of the United States authorities, and then returned to Denver and boasted of the brave deeds he and the men under his command had performed.

[Return to top](#)

II. COLONEL M. CHIVINGTON **DEFENDS HIS ACTIONS, 1865**

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. ...

I had no reason to believe that Black Kettle and the Indians with him were in good faith at peace with of the whites. The day before the attack Major Scott J. Anthony, 1st 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....

I took every precaution to render the attack upon the Indians a surprise, for the reason that we had been chasing small parties of them all the summer and fall without being 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. ...

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. ...

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 the 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 my immediately attacking the Indians before they could learn of the number of troops at Fort Lyon, and so desirous was Major Colley, 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 Colley, are the most bitter in their denunciations of the attack upon the Indians at Sand creek...

J. M. CHIVINGTON,

Lieu't Col.. 1st Cavalry of Colorado, Com'd'g Dist. of Colorado.

[Return to top](#)

III. CONFLICTING TESTIMONY, 1865

[F]rom the time that Major Wynkoop left this post to go out to rescue the white prisoners until the arrival of Colonel Chivington here, which took place on the 28th of November last, no depredations of any kind had been committed by the Indians within two hundred miles of this post; that upon Colonel Chivington's arrival here with a large body of troops he was informed where these Indians were encamped, and was fully advised under what circumstances they had come into this post, and why they were then on Sand creek; that he was remonstrated with both by officers and civilians at this post against making war upon , these Indians; that he was informed and fully advised that there was a large number of friendly Indians there, together with several white men, who were there at the request of himself (Colley) and by permission of Major Anthony; that notwithstanding his knowledge of the facts as above set forth, he is informed that Colonel Chivington did, on the morning of the 29th of November last, surprise and attack said camp of friendly Indians and massacre a large number of them, (mostly women and children,) and did allow the troops of his command to mangle and mutilate them in the most horrible manner.

S. G. COLLEY, United States Indian Agent.

Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory, January 16, 1865.

Personally appeared before me Lieutenant James D. Connor, first New Mexico volunteer infantry, who, after being duly sworn, says: That on the 28th day of November, 1864, I was ordered by Major Scott J. Anthony to accompany him on an expedition (Indian) as his battalion adjutant; the object of that expedition was to be a thorough campaign against hostile Indians, as I was to understand. I referred

to the fact of there being a friendly camp of Indians in the immediate area and remonstrated against simply attacking that camp, as I was aware that they were resting there in fancied security under promises held out to them of safety from Major E.W. Wynkoop, former commander of the post of Fort Lyon, as well as by Major S.J. Anthony, then in command. Our battalion was attached to the command of Colonel J.M. Chivington, and left Ft. Lyon on the night of the 28th of November, 1864; about day break of the morning of the 29th of November we came in sight of the camp of the friendly Indians aforementioned, and were ordered by Colonel Chivington to attack the same, which was accordingly done.

The command of Colonel Chivington was composed of about one thousand men; the village of the Indians consisted of from one hundred to one hundred and thirty lodges, and, as far as I am able to judge, of from five hundred to six hundred souls, the majority of which were women and children; in going over the battle-ground the next day I did not see a body of man, woman, or child but was scalped, and in many instances their bodies were mutilated in the most horrible manner—men, women, and children's privates cut out, &c; I heard one man say that he had cut out a woman's private parts and had them for exhibition on a stick; I heard another man say that he had cut the fingers off an Indian to get the rings on the hand; according to the best of my knowledge and belief these atrocities that were committed were with knowledge of J. M. Chivington, and I do not know of his taking any measures to prevent them; I heard of one instance of a child a few months old being thrown in a feed-box of a wagon, and after being carried some distance left on the ground to perish; I also heard of numerous instances in which men had cut out the private parts of females and stretched them over the saddle-bows, and wore them over their hats while riding in the ranks. All these matters were a subject of general conversation, and could not help being known by Colonel J. M. Chivington.

JAMES D. CONNOR,

First Lieutenant First Infantry New Mexico Volunteers.

Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory.

Lieutenant Cramer sworn:

I am stationed at this post, 1st lieutenant company C, veteran battalion Colorado cavalry. I was at this post when Colonel Chivington arrived here, and accompanied him on his expedition. ...Colonel Chivington moved his regiment to the front, the Indians retreating up the creek, and hiding under the banks. There seemed to be no organization among our troops; everyone on his own hook, and shots flying between our own ranks. White Antelope ran towards our columns unarmed, and with both arms raised, but was killed. Several others of the warriors were killed in like manner. The women and children were huddled together, and most of our fire was concentrated on them. Sometimes during the engagement I was compelled to move my company to get out of the fire of our own men. Captain Soule did not

order his men to fire when the order was given to commence the fight. During the fight, the battery on the opposite side of the creek kept firing at the bank while our men were in range. The Indian warriors, about one hundred in number, fought desperately; there were about five hundred all told. I estimated the loss of the Indians to be from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and seventy-five killed; no wounded fell into our hands, and all the dead were scalped. The Indian who was pointed out as White Antelope had his fingers cut off. Our force was so large that there was no necessity of firing on the Indians. They did not return the fire until after our troops had fired several rounds. We had the assurance from Major Anthony that Black Kettle and his friends should be saved, and only those Indians who had committed depredations should be harmed. During the fight no officer took any measures to get out of the fire of our own men. Left Hand stood with his arms folded, saying he would not fight the white men, as they were his friends. I told Colonel Chivington of the position in which the officers stood from Major Wynkoop's pledges to the Indians, and also Major Anthony's and that it would be murder, in every sense of the word, if he attacked those Indians. His reply was, bringing his fist down close to my face, "Damn any man who sympathizes with Indians." I told him what pledges were given the Indians. He replied, "That he had come to kill Indians, and believed it to be honorable to kill Indians under any and all circumstances"; all this at Fort Lyon. Lieutenant Dunn went to Colonel Chivington and wanted to know if he could kill his prisoner, young Smith. His reply was, "Don't ask me; you know my orders; I want no prisoners." Colonel Chivington was in position where he must have seen the scalping and mutilation going on. ...

My name is Presley Talbot. I was in the third regiment Colorado cavalry, and held the position as captain of company M. I was at the battle of Sand creek; I was ordered to go into the fight by Colonel Chivington; ordered to cross Sand creek to the right side of the bank. There I received so very galling a fire from the Indians under the bank and from ditches dug out just above the bank that I ordered my company to advance, to prepare to dismount and fight on foot. ...I furthermore state that the Indians were hostile, and acted with desperation and bravery; that Colonel John M. Chivington, commanding, acted with discretion and bravery. ...

[I] had several consultations with Major Colley, Indian agent, and John Smith, Indian interpreter; stated that they had considerable sympathy for me, being wounded; would give me all the attention and assistance in their power, but they would do anything to damn Colonel John M. Chivington, or Major Downing; that they had lost at least six thousand dollars each by the Sand creek fight; that they had one hundred and five robes and two white ponies bought at the time of attack, independent of the goods which they had on the battle-ground, which they never had recovered, but would make the general government pay for the same, and damn old Chivington eventually.

[Return to top](#)

IV. MAJOR WYNKOOP EXPLAINS INDIAN INTENT, 1864, 1865

Wynkoop's Original Report (September 28,1864), Before the November 29 Massacre

His excellency Governor Evans asked the Indians what they had to say:

Black Kettle then said: On sight of your circular of June 27, 1864, I took hold of the matter, and have now come to talk to you about it. ...I want you to give all the chiefs of the soldiers here to understand that we are for peace, and that we have made peace, that we may not be mistaken by them for enemies. I have not come here with a little wolf's bark, but have come to talk plain with you. We must live near the buffalo or starve. When we came here we came free, without any apprehension, to see you, and when I go home and tell my people that I have taken your hand and the hands of all the chiefs here in Denver, they will feel well, and so will all the different tribes of Indians on the plains, after we have eaten and drunk with them.

Wynkoop's later report (1865), after the event:

In conclusion, allow me to say that from the time I held the consultation with the Indian chiefs on the headwaters of the Smoky Hill, up to the date of the massacre by Colonel Chivington, not one single depredation had been committed by the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians; the settlers of the Arkansas valley had returned to their ranches, from which they; 51 had fled, had taken 10 their crops, and had been resting in perfect security, under assurances from myself that they would be in no danger for the present-by that means saving the country from what must inevitably become almost a famine were they to lose their crops. The lines of communication to the State were opened, and travel across the plains rendered perfectly safe through the Cheyenne and Arapahoe country.

[Return to top](#)

V. GOVERNOR JOHN EVANS RESPONDS TO THE CONGRESSIONAL REPORT

Before leaving this subject, I desire to call attention to the following significant fact; the part of my proclamation from which the committee quote reads as follows: "Now, therefore, I, John Evans, governor of Colorado Territory, do issue this, my proclamation, authorizing all citizens of Colorado, either individually or in such parties as they may organize, to go in pursuit of all hostile Indians on the plains, scrupulously avoiding those who have responded to my call to rendezvous at the points indicated. Also to kill and destroy, as enemies of the country, wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians."

The language which I have italicized in the foregoing quotation shows that I forbade, in this proclamation, the disturbance of the friendly Indians and (only

authorized killing the hostile. ...

I have thus noticed such portions of the report as refer to myself, and shown conclusively that the committee, in every mention, they have made of me, have been, to say the least, mistaken.

First. The committee, for the evident purpose of maintaining their position that these Indians have not been engaged in the war, say the prisoners they held were purchased. The testimony is to the effect that they captured them.

Second. The committee says that these Indians were and always had been friendly, and had committed no acts of hostility or depredations. The public documents to which I refer show conclusively that they had been hostile, and had committed many acts of hostility and depredations.

Third. They say that I joined in sending these Indians to Fort Lyon. The published report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and of the Indian council, show that I left them entirely in the hands of the military authorities.

Fourth. They say nothing seems to have been done by the authorities to prevent hostilities. The public documents and files of the Indian bureau, and I of my superintendence, show constant and unremitting diligence and effort on my part to prevent hostilities and protect the people.

Fifth. They say that I prevaricated for the purpose of avoiding the admission that these Indians “were and had been actuated by the most friendly feelings towards the whites.” Public documents cited show conclusively that the admission they desired me to make was false, and that my statement, instead of being a prevarication, was true, although not in accordance with the preconceived and mistaken opinions of the committee.

[Return to top](#)

VI. HELEN HUNT JACKSON'S ACCOUNT OF SAND CREEK AND THE AFTERMATH, 1881

The Governor of Colorado called for military aid, and for authority to make a campaign against the Indians, which was given him. But as there was no doubt that many of the Indians were still peaceable and loyal, and he desired to avoid every possibility of their sharing in the punishment of the guilty, he issued a proclamation in June, requesting all who were friendly to come to places which he designated, where they were to be assured of safety and protection. This proclamation was sent to all the Indians of the plains. In consequence of it, several bands of friendly Arapahoes and Cheyenne came to Fort Lyon, and were there received by the officer in charge, rationed, and assured of safety. Here there occurred, on the 29th of November, one of the foulest massacres which the world has seen. ...

In October of the next year some of the bands, having first had their safety assured by an old and they true friend, I. H. Leavenworth, Indian Agent for the Upper Arkansas, gathered together to hold a council with United States Commissioners on

the Little Arkansas. The commissioners were empowered by the President to restore to the survivors of the Sand Creek massacre full value for all the property then destroyed; "to make reparation," so far as possible. To each woman who had lost a husband there they gave one hundred and sixty acres", of land; to each child who had lost a parent, the same. Probably even an Indian woman would consider one hundred and sixty acres of land a poor equivalent for a murdered husband; but the offers were accepted in good part by the tribe, and there is nothing in all the history of this patient race more pathetic than the calm and reasonable language employed by some of these Cheyenne and Arapahoe chiefs at this council. Said Black Kettle, the chief over whose lodge the American flag, with a white flag tied below, was floating at the time of the massacre, "I once thought that I was the only man that persevered to be the friend of the white man; but since they have come and cleaned out our lodges, horses, and everything else, it is hard for me to believe white men any more. All my friends, the Indians that are holding back, they are afraid to come in; are afraid that they will be betrayed as I have been. I am not afraid of white men, but come and take you by the hand." Elsewhere, Black Kettle spoke of Colonel Chivington's troops as "that fool band of soldiers that cleared out our lodges and killed our women and children. This is hard on us." With a magnanimity and common-sense which white men would have done well to imitate in their judgments of the Indians, he recognized that it would be absurd, as well as unjust, to hold all white men in distrust on account of the acts of that "fool-band of soldiers."

[Return to top](#)

[Return to Assignment page](#)