

### **Sand Creek Massacre: Colonel John Chivington's Account**

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 back 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 other connexion [sic] with the banks, were evidently designed to protect the occupants from the fire of the enemy. The Indians took shelter in these trenches as soon as the attack was made, and from thence resisted the advance of my troops.

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 and 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.

I had no reason to believe that Black Kettle and the Indians with him were in good faith at peace with the whites.

Source: United States Congress, House of Representatives. "Massacre of Cheyenne Indians," Report on the Conduct of the War, 38<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865, p. 48-50.

### **Sand Creek Massacre: George Bent's Account**

The following is an account of the attack by George Bent, an Indian-American (his mother was a Cheyenne), who was living with the Indians at Sand Creek.

At dawn on the morning of November 29 I was still in bed when I heard shouts and the noise of people running about the camp. I jumped up and ran out of my lodge. From down the creek a large body of troops was advancing at a rapid trot, some to the east of the camps, and others on the opposite side of the creek, to the west. More soldiers could be seen making for the Indian pony herds to the south of the camps; in the camps themselves all was confusion and noise—men, women, and children rushing out of the lodges partly dressed....

The Indians all began running, but they did not seem to know what to do or where to turn. The women and children were screaming and wailing, the men running to the lodges for their arms and shouting advice and directions to one another. I ran to my lodge and got my weapons, then rushed out and joined a passing group of middle-aged Cheyenne men.... So after a short time we broke and ran back toward the creek, jumping into the dry bed of the stream, above the camps. Hardly had we reached this shelter under the high bank of the creek when a company of cavalry rode up on the opposite bank and opened fire on us. We ran up the creek with the cavalry following us, one company on each bank, keeping right after us and firing all the time. Many of the people had preceded us up the creek, and the dry bed of the stream was now a terrible sight: men, women, and children lying thickly scattered on the sand, some dead and the rest too badly wounded to move.

We ran about two miles up the creek, I think, and then came to a place where the banks were very high and steep. Here a large body of Indians had stopped under the shelter of the banks, and the older men and the women had dug holes or pits under the banks, in which the people were now hiding. Just as our party reached this point I was struck in the hip by a bullet and knocked down; but I managed to tumble into one of the holes and lay there among the warriors, women, and children.

Source: George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent: Written from his Letters* (Ed. By Sovie Lottinville.) Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968. Pp. 151-152.

### **Sand Creek Massacre: John Smith's Account**

Question: How many Indians were there there [at Sand creek]?

Answer: There were 100 families of Cheyennes, and some eight lodges of Arapahos.

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

Answer: About 500, we estimated them at five to a lodge.

Question: 500 men, women, and children?

Answer: Yes, sir.

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

Answer: It is my opinion that he did.

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 not 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: 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 laying 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: From 800 to 1,000 men.

Question: What amount of resistance did the Indians make?

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 the way as they best could.

Source: United States Congress, House of Representatives. "Massacre of Cheyenne Indians," Report on the Conduct of the War, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865, p. 6-9.

### **Sand Creek Massacre: Lieutenant Joseph Cramer's Account**

Question: Were most of the Indians killed and scalped at Sand creek warriors?

Answer: They were not; I should think two-thirds were women and children.

Question: Did any of the Indians escape during the attack upon Black Kettle's camp?

Answer: I should judge they did, a good many.

Question: At anytime during the attack on Black Kettle's camp did the Indians appear in line of battle?

Answer: Not that I saw.

Question: How did the Indians resist the attack upon them?

Answer: By fighting back. They fought singly or a few in a place when the ground would give them shelter from our fire, and fought bravely. A great many started towards our lines with hands raised, as if begging for us to spare them.

Question: Were the Indians followed and killed while attempting to escape?

Answer: They were, some of them.

Question: Were any of the Indian women and children killed and mutilated while attempting to escape?

Answer: They were; they were followed and killed, but I do not know when they were mutilated. They were mutilated, though.

Source: United States Congress, Senate, "Sand Creek Massacre," Report of the Secretary of War, Sen. Exec. Doc. 26, 39th Cong., 2nd Sess. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1867, pp. 50-51.