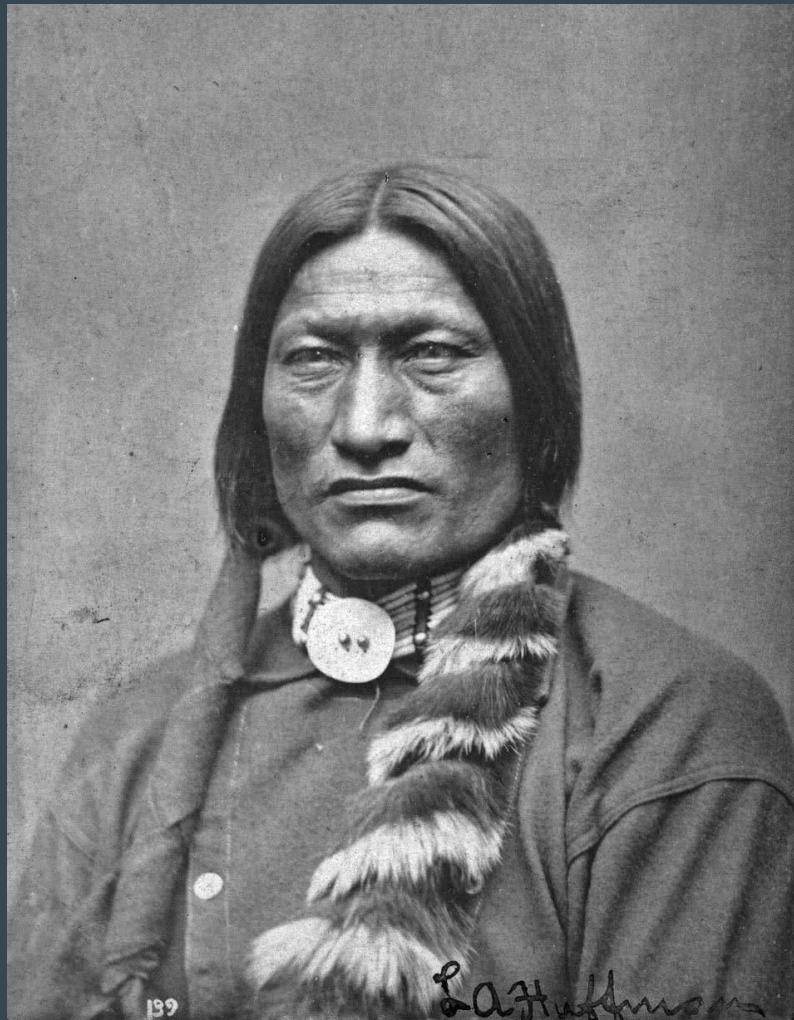


BLACK KETTLE:
CHEYENNE PEACE CHIEF



John Turner



Early Life

- Very little is known about Black Kettle prior to him being named to the Council of forty-four
- This council worked to govern the Cheyenne Tribe since being moved onto a reservation prescribed by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851.
- As American settlers continued to push westward Cheyenne were pushed further out of their lands
- This made tribal leaders split into two groups 1) Peace Chiefs and 2) War Chiefs or Dog Soldiers
- Black Kettle and his followers adopted a peaceful approach on the encroachment of settlers.

Peace Chief Ideology

Cheyenne tradition holds that the first peace chief was appointed by Sweet Medicine, who established a code of conduct for all such future chiefs. This code indicates that a peace chief was to abandon all violence, even in the face of imminent danger. Yet he was to stand firm, even non aggressively, against all opponents of his people, maintaining this position even after the soldier societies might have retreated. Though the younger generation of Cheyenne warriors might defy the peace chief, they were to persist in peacemaking efforts. This policy was not restricted by race; peace was to be sought in this manner with both Native and White. The peace chief was educated to show generosity in dealing with his own people, especially the poor.

Fort Laramie Treaty 1851

- Signed in 1851 to establish reservation bounds
- 8 Native American groups agreed to specific limited geographic boundaries in return for the US government promising to honor those boundaries forever.
- Natives felt that had no other choice than to sign the treaty
- Government never paid the tribes.
- Peace lasted for a short period of time



Sand Creek Massacre

- Happened in Colorado in November of 1864
- Cheyenne, under Black Kettle, came to the US fort to negotiate
- Colonel John Chivington arrives at the fort and ignores attempts to negotiate
- Executes all men, women, and children
- Over 200 people were killed.
- [Link to article for more information](#)



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Robt. Anderson
1936

New Reservation and Washita River Village

- Black Kettle escaped the massacre. Even after this outrage, he continued to counsel pacifism, believing that military resistance was doomed to fail. The majority of Cheyenne tribes disagreed, and launched all-out warfare in alliance with the Comanche and Kiowa. Black Kettle instead moved south and continued to negotiate.
- This led to the Treaty of Little Arkansas River in 1864
- Black Kettle's dwindling band proclaimed their desire to live peacefully alongside Americans. Black Kettle signed yet another treaty, the Medicine Lodge Treaty in 1867.

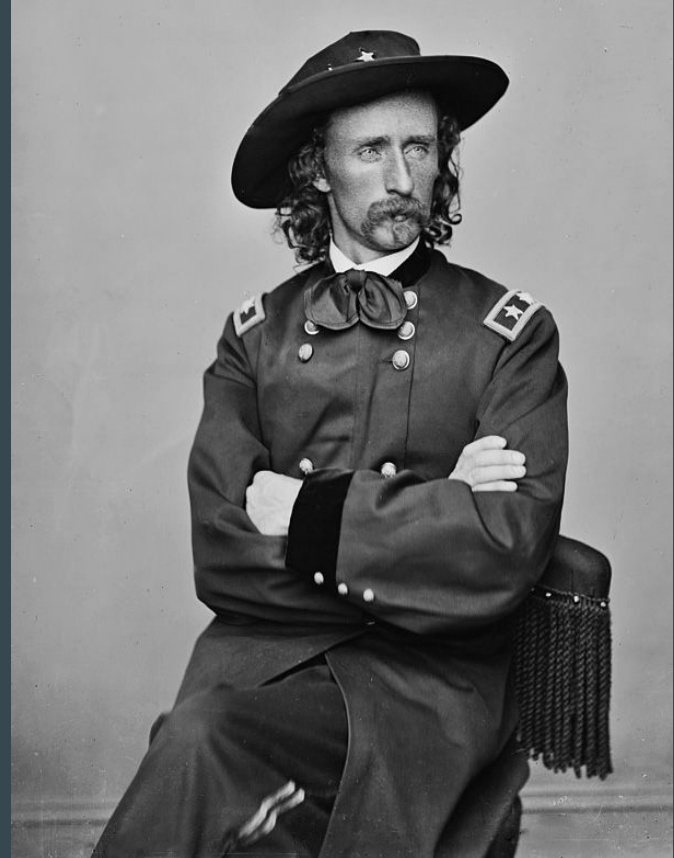


“Battle of the Washita”

- The “battle” of the Washita River occurred on November 27, 1868 when Lt. Col. George Custer’s 7th Cavalry attacked Black Kettle’s Cheyenne camp.
- Custer attacked the sleeping village and within 15 minutes over 103 Cheyenne were killed.
- Black Kettle and his wife were among the dead
- Black Kettle had met with the US military the day before the attack as a show of peace
- 53 women and children were captured

Aftermath

- Custer was awarded with permanent command of the 7th Cavalry
- He also became a hero in eastern newspapers as a victor over “savage” natives.
- Black Kettles work for peace was never mentioned.
- Custer led the 7th Cavalry to his death at the Battle of Little Bighorn
- The site of the “Battle” is a part of the National Park Service



Collective Memory and Name Change

Collective memory refers to the shared pool of memories, knowledge and information of a social group that is significantly associated with the group's identity. In historical studies it is the collective consciousness

- This lesson will work to show why the name of the Washita Battle should be changed to represent the actual event.
- The battle was a massacre of indigenous people and the site should represent that truth
- A society must learn to own the truth of history if it is confront it and then change the future