



# Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site



# Junior Ranger



# Activity Book

Welcome to Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

At this site on November 29, 1864, the 1st and 3rd Regiments of the US Volunteer Cavalry, led by Colonel John Chivington, attacked a peaceful camp of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. There is not a simple explanation as to why the attack occurred. As with all stories, there are many perspectives, and within these pages we will explore the different parts of the Sand Creek Massacre story.

While you are here, you will learn about the Arapaho and Cheyenne, who lived off the land and followed the roaming herds of buffalo; the soldiers who were directed to keep the peace with the Native tribes while securing land opened to settlers from the east; and the settlers in search of gold in the 1800s. Use the interpretive signs and the park brochure to help you answer the questions in this book.


The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes consider Sand Creek to be a sacred place, so stay on the established trails at all times.

Many animals also call the Sand Creek area home. Keep your eyes open for birds, deer, and sometimes snakes. Never try to approach, touch, or feed wild animals.

As you explore, keep in mind that most of the signs are outside. The weather at Sand Creek can be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Make sure you dress appropriately for the weather and carry water with you.

If you have questions, you can always ask one of the park rangers!

To earn a Junior Ranger badge  
complete the set of book activities listed:

Grades K - 3:  
complete all  activities

Grades 4 - 8:  
complete all  activities

Grades 9 & up:  
complete all  activities

What did you do in the park today?

Check the boxes to keep track:

- Complete a set of book activities
- Complete all book activities
- Visit the Eads Visitor Center
- Attend a Ranger Talk
- Walk one mile in the park



The Big Sandy Creek (or Sand Creek) is **intermittent** - meaning there isn't water flowing through it all the time. In the 1860's, when the water wasn't flowing in Sand Creek, Native American tribes camped here would dig a hole or trench into the **creek bed** – the bottom of the creek. Water was usually just under the ground and would collect in the hole. Today, water at Sand Creek is usually under the ground.

Plants absorb underground water through their roots. The bigger the plant, the more water it needs to survive. What big plants at Sand Creek grow along the course of the creek?

---

### **BONUS QUESTION**

What kind of plants grow near where you live? Do you think they would need a lot of water or only a little water?



Many tribes on the plains were **nomadic** - meaning they would move from place to place throughout the year. Tribes were nomadic to make sure they had enough **resources** - the items they needed to live: food, water, and materials to build shelters like tipis. Sand Creek was one of the places where the tribes knew they could find the resources they needed.

In November of 1864, the people from two tribes were camped at Sand Creek. In addition to finding resources, the people were camped here waiting for officers from the U.S. army to come talk to them about making peace.

Which two tribes were camped at Sand Creek in November 1864?

---

### **BONUS QUESTION**

What resources do you need or use at home?





The weather at Sand Creek can be quite different from season to season. In summer, it is sunny most of the time and it gets very hot. In the winter the temperature can drop below 20 degrees, but it usually doesn't snow much. In spring and fall, it can be hot during the day and cold during the night.

The people camped at Sand Creek in 1864 were here in November. What do you think the weather was like for the tribes at that time of year?

---

### **BONUS QUESTION**

What is the weather like at your home in November?





What do you think the camp at Sand Creek looked like in November 1864? What would the people have needed in their camp?  
Use the space below to draw your ideas.

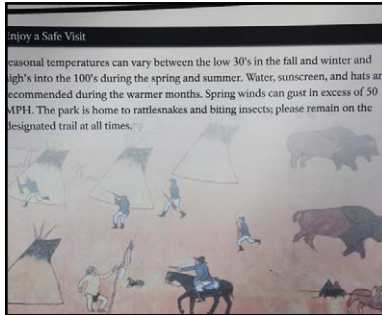
A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing ideas about a camp.

# Activity 5

# Where is it?



How many of the things in the pictures below can you find?  
Circle the ones you find and try to get 3 in a row!



## BONUS ACTIVITY

The things below can only be found on our trails. Take a walk to find them.  
Make sure you have enough time and are ready to hike.  
Bring plenty of water, a hat, and close-toed shoes.





Even though the Cheyenne and Arapaho used to call many parts of Colorado “home,” few people from the two tribes live in Colorado today. Take a look at the map inside the park brochure that shows the boundary of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty (the red area). This is where most of the Cheyenne and Arapaho lived in the 1800s. After the massacre, the Arapaho and Cheyenne were forced to move away from the land they were familiar with onto reservations where they live today.

What are two of the three states where these tribes live today?

---

### **BONUS QUESTION**

Have you ever moved to a new place? How did the experience make you feel?

---

### **CONSIDER THIS**

If you haven't moved to a new place, what do you think would be the hardest part about it?





The camp at Sand Creek in November 1864 was considered a chief's camp because of the number of tribal leaders in it. There were 33 chiefs and headmen in the camp. This was a large number of tribal leaders for one camp. The chiefs at Sand Creek were waiting for officers of the U.S. Army to come and continue discussions about peace.

When the soldiers first arrived at Sand Creek, many of the chiefs thought they had come to continue those discussions. Some chiefs walked toward the soldiers as they approached.

During the attack, many chiefs were killed.

Reading the park signs and brochure, find the names of two chiefs who were in the camp at Sand Creek.

A representative of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, speaks at the Colorado state capitol building in Denver during the 2014 Spiritual Healing Run.





In September 1864, several Arapaho and Cheyenne chiefs met with Major Wynkoop of the 1st Regiment Colorado Cavalry (U.S.) Volunteers. The chiefs wanted to talk about making peace. Major Wynkoop did not have the authority to bring the discussion to a conclusion, so instead he escorted seven Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs to Denver to meet with someone who did: the Territorial Governor.

In 1864, the job of the Territorial Governor of Colorado was to protect the settlers moving to the territory from the east and to make the decisions that best helped the territory. This meant that the Governor was also in charge of relations with the Native tribes in the Territory.

The meeting between the Governor and the Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs took place at Camp Weld, near Denver, on September 28, 1864.

Who was the Territorial Governor of Colorado at the Camp Weld meeting?



Former Colorado Governor  
John Hickenlooper visits Sand  
Creek Massacre National  
Historic Site in 2018



Can you find all the words linked to Sand Creek?

C	D	D	P	Y	W	H	A	N	F	J	Z	C	J	C
H	S	A	N	D	C	R	E	E	K	E	K	H	J	R
E	W	R	S	O	U	L	E	F	L	X	W	I	D	A
Y	K	W	L	B	W	R	R	T	B	H	T	V	A	M
E	G	E	N	O	Y	L	T	C	Q	Y	Y	I	R	E
N	F	F	Y	N	N	E	E	P	N	Z	J	N	T	R
N	G	J	I	S	K	E	W	F	C	P	R	G	C	R
E	L	G	B	K	O	U	B	O	T	W	Z	T	A	Q
K	H	Z	C	S	O	N	I	E	Y	H	B	O	K	W
R	J	A	D	P	P	S	Q	B	A	Q	A	N	X	W
N	L	K	C	A	V	A	L	R	Y	R	U	N	E	F
B	Z	P	R	Y	M	A	S	S	A	C	R	E	D	A
U	L	R	C	U	X	W	M	A	W	I	D	F	U	R
B	K	K	Q	S	A	Y	O	Q	J	A	E	B	U	D
O	A	R	A	P	A	H	O	E	B	C	V	Q	R	D

CHEYENNE  
 SOULE  
 CRAMER  
 CHIVINGTON

ARAPAHO  
 MASSACRE  
 SANDCREEK  
 CAVALRY

BLACKKETTLE  
 LONEBEAR  
 LEFTHAND  
 WYNKOOOP



On November 29, 1864, there were about 750 Cheyenne and Arapaho people camped at Sand Creek. During the massacre, about 230 of them were killed. The people who survived the massacre made their way to other Arapaho and Cheyenne camps to the north.

George Bent was the son of frontier businessman William Bent and his Cheyenne wife Owl Woman. He survived the massacre and wrote about it in letters many years later. Below is his description of how the people in the northern camps reacted when they heard about what happened at Sand Creek:

*"...everyone was crying, even the warriors, and the women and children were screaming and wailing...nearly everyone present had lost some relations or friends..."*

Have you ever lost someone close to you? How do you think the Cheyenne and Arapaho felt about their friends and family at Sand Creek?



Youth of the Northern Arapaho Tribe participate in the annual Spiritual Healing Run in remembrance of their ancestors who were killed at Sand Creek.



What you can hear in a place is just as important as what you can see. The sounds that are regularly heard in a place are called a **soundscape** and can consist of both natural sounds (like bird calls or wind) and human-made sounds (like cars or planes). In many national parks, loud or disruptive human-made noises are minimized as much as possible to protect the environment and let visitors experience nature.

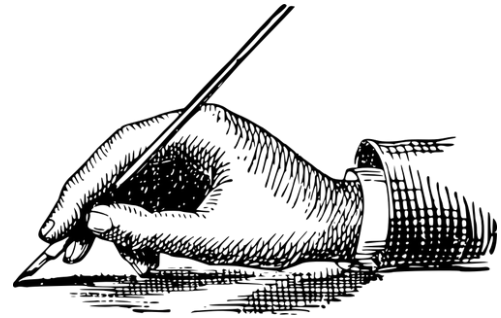
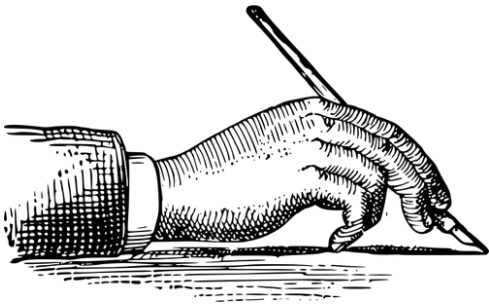
Today the soundscape at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site consists of sounds that the Native Americans would have heard back in 1864 and modern sounds we hear today. Listen quietly for one to three minutes and write down the sounds you hear below in the column where you think they belong.

<b>Sounds the Cheyenne and Arapaho might have heard in 1864</b>	<b>Sounds we can only hear today</b>

**BONUS QUESTION**

What sounds do you hear in the soundscape where you live?





Not all of the soldiers under Colonel Chivington’s command took part in the massacre. Captain Silas Soule and Lieutenant Joseph Cramer refused to fire and convinced their **companies**, the soldiers under their command, to also stand down.

When the two officers returned to their post at Fort Lyon, they wrote letters describing what they had witnessed on November 29th at Sand Creek. The letters they wrote helped to start three federal investigations into the attack at Sand Creek. These investigations would all conclude that the event was a massacre.

To whom did Captain Soule and Lieutenant Cramer write their letters?





Just a little way down the path from the valley overlook is an open, grassy area and a single bench. This is the **repatriation** area. In the dictionary, repatriation means to return a person to their country of origin. For many Native tribes, the meaning is much deeper. After death, a person embarks on a spiritual journey. This journey is interrupted when their graves are disturbed. For the journey to continue, the person must be returned to the earth.

During the massacre some soldiers took human remains as trophies. In later years, more were collected and taken away for study or to museums. Since the establishment of Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, some of these have been returned to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. The repatriation site provides a place for proper burial, so the people killed here in 1864 can continue their spiritual journey.

Disturbance of Native graves is something that still happens today. What are some modern activities that could disturb graves in other places?

---

Laws like the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) help establish procedures to follow if Native graves are found by accident, and establish punishments if the proper procedures are not followed.

What are some ways disturbing graves could be avoided?



The Sand Creek Massacre can be a difficult event to talk about. The actions of groups and individuals leading up to the massacre demonstrate how strong emotions like fear, anger, and hate can have serious consequences.

Unfortunately, the Sand Creek Massacre is not the only event of its kind or even the most recent event of its kind. Both before and after the Sand Creek Massacre there have been other tragic events.

Can you think of other events that are similar to the Sand Creek Massacre story?

Why is it important to learn and talk about events like the Sand Creek Massacre?

---

### **CONSIDER THIS**

Fear, hate, and anger are not the only kind of strong emotions or qualities that can affect the course of events. Courage, grief and perseverance can also shape history. How can you contribute toward a positive world where courage and perseverance are stronger than hate and anger?

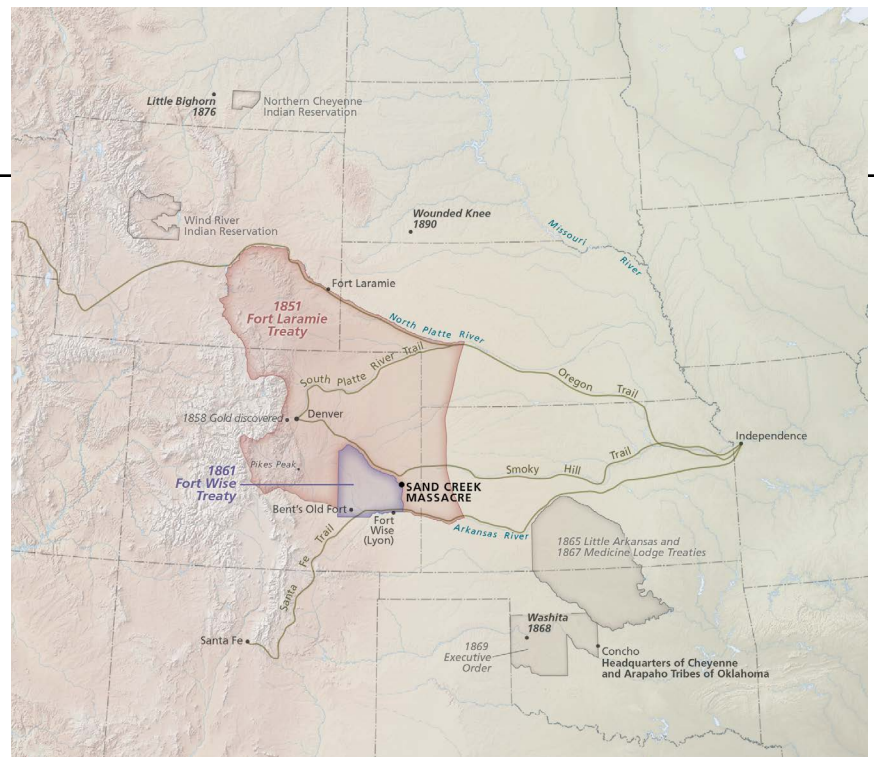


In the park brochure is a picture showing a map of Colorado and the surrounding states. On this map are two outlines: one in red, one in purple. These two areas show the boundaries of lands belonging to the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes in 1851 (red outline) and 1861 (purple outline). Read the part of the park brochure that talks about the treaties and answer the following questions.

What was the purpose of the 1851 treaty?

Why would many chiefs refuse to sign the new treaty in 1861?

What is one major difference between the boundaries of the two treaties?





There have been many written accounts of the Sand Creek Massacre. People described the same event from very different points of view. Read the passages below and answer the question.

*“This sand creek massacre was the worst blow ever struck at any tribe in the whole plains region, and this blow fell upon friendly Indians...From a third to a half of these friendly Indians were butchered in the attack, and of those who escaped very few were without wounds.”*

-George Bent, from letters he wrote to George Hyde between 1905 and 1918

*“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...”*

-Congressional Investigation, 1865

*“Among the brilliant feats of arms in Indian warfare, the recent campaign of our Colorado volunteers will stand in history with few rivals and none to exceed it in final results... All acquitted themselves well, and Colorado soldiers have again covered themselves with glory.”*

-Rocky Mountain News, December 17, 1864

Why do you think these points of view are so different?

**CONSIDER THIS**

Can you think of a time when you described an event differently than someone else? Why might their point of view be different from yours?





# Certificate of Completion

This certifies that

---

has completed the Junior Ranger Program at  
Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

---

Date

---

Ranger Signature



Junior Ranger Pledge:

I, (say your name), am proud to be a Junior Ranger at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

I pledge to learn about history both good and bad,

to continue to learn about the history, nature, and culture of important places,

and to share what I learn with my friends and family.

Return completed books to:  
Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site  
PO Box 249  
Eads CO 81036

Find us online!  
<http://www.nps.gov/sand>  
Facebook:  
@SandCreekMassacreNHS