



Winds of Change

A flowing river and the sound of wind blowing through the prairie grasses are present reminders of the time when an expanding United States drove tensions to rise and cultures to clash along the banks of the Washita River in present day Oklahoma.

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site tells the story of this significant period in history which resulted in the re-birth of one man's career and the death of others. This tragic culmination of events ultimately led to the end of a way of life forever for many on the Southern Plains and was the prelude to the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876.

On the morning of November 27, 1868, Lt. Col. George A. Custer and the 7th U.S. Cavalry attacked the sleeping village of Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle, camped along the river. Black Kettle, his wife, and other men, women and children were killed by soldiers, as well as over 800 horses. Major Joel Elliot and 17 of his men with the 7th Cavalry were also killed. The results from the attack at Washita created lasting impacts for the Cheyenne and other Southern Plains Tribes, as they were eventually forced onto reservations. Their struggles to preserve a way of life and traditional homelands were permanently suppressed.



A winter morning along the Washita River.



The major features of the 315-acre site include the Washita River, the area where Black Kettle's encampment was located and attacked, and the Pony Kill site. Visitors can begin their experience at the park's Visitor Center. The story is told through the orientation film *Destiny at Dawn*, permanent and temporary exhibits, and ranger-led talks and tours. A bookstore is also located in the building's gallery.

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site is located near the town of Cheyenne, OK. It is situated in western Oklahoma halfway between Amarillo, TX and Oklahoma City, OK. Cheyenne is approximately 30 miles north of Interstate 40.

From Interstate 40 take exit 20 (Sayre, OK) and travel north on U.S. Highway 283 into Cheyenne and turn west on U.S. Highway 47. Take U.S. Highway 47 1/2 mile out of Cheyenne and turn north on U.S. Highway 47A. The visitor center is located on the right, and the historic site, featuring the park overlook and interpretive trail, is located approximately one mile further on U.S. Highway 47A.

Hours of Operation:

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site is open daily from 8am-5pm except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

For More Information:

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site
 18555 Highway 47A STE. A
 Cheyenne, OK 73628
 (580) 497-2742
www.nps.gov/waba

