The Cultural Specificity of Memory and Commemoration:

The Bear River Massacre (1863)

and

The Sand Creek Massacre (1864)

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Introduction

This work is a study of the collective remembrance of two Native American massacre sites, Bear River (1863) and Sand Creek (1864). I have chosen to consider these two particular massacres because they both occurred during the American Civil War and took place in America's western territories. Both massacres have been the subject of very interesting, yet substantially different, memorialization projects and their representations contrast greatly, particularly within Euro-American public and scholarly memory. The Sand Creek Massacre has a wide, varied historiography and is remembered within American history as one of the most brutal and violent massacres of indigenous peoples in the American West. By contrast, despite the number of Natives slaughtered at Bear River exceeding numbers at Sand Creek, the Bear River Massacre has a very limited historiography and to date has received little attention in American public memory.

This thesis explores the problems inherent in attempting to apply the concept of collective memory to the Euro-American and Native American remembrance of Bear River and Sand Creek from the time of the massacres until the present day. I reveal memory and commemoration at the two massacre sites to be culturally specific and demonstrate that different Euro-American and Native cultural memories are not easily transportable across disparate ethnic boundaries, a fact existing collective memory literature often fails to acknowledge. This has made the process of creating a collective memory that crosses Native and Euro-American cultures very difficult. Currently, at both Bear River and Sand Creek, different tribal and Euro-American memories of the massacres remain polarized and culturally specific, yet they co-exist at a shared site of atrocity. However, and somewhat paradoxically, I also argue that the contested process

of attempting to collectively remember across disparate groups has aided in a process of healing, reconciliation and historical understanding.

In order to demonstrate the cultural specificity of memory at Bear River and Sand Creek, I critically explore the notion's roots before examining in depth an anomaly in Western American history: how one of the biggest massacres in this history, the death of approximately 250 Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River in Southeastern Idaho, has been consistently under-emphasized by popular and academic historians, as well as in American public memory. I contend, therefore, that Bear River cannot be entirely categorized with instances of violence against Indian peoples in the formation of the 1800s American West. I argue that this lacuna is a result of limited cross-cultural historical representation from the Mormon Church, the Northwestern Shoshoni, Union-affiliated soldiers and Euro-American settlers. Each of these histories tends to remain separated in American scholarly and public memory. As I shall demonstrate, this has resulted in the relative obscurity of Bear River. I analyze key reasons for this under-emphasis, focusing primarily on the history of Mormon settlers in the region and the relative public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni regarding tribal history of the massacre.

The second part of this thesis centers on the better-known history of how 165-200 Cheyenne and Arapaho were massacred at Sand Creek in 1864. I pay close attention to the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in Southeastern Colorado, considering the problematic impact different Native and non-Native notions of place have had on constructing the collective and public remembrance of the massacre. I argue that a site of such resounding loss is subject to too many contested interpretations to serve as a viable means of expressing a form of collective memory. However, I also argue that the

desire to articulate loss and voice reconciliation at Sand Creek has nonetheless led to a positive interaction across Native and non-Native boundaries that has aided in a process of healing and cultural understanding.

A Note on Terminology: Definitions

History, memory, collective memory and public history are all fields that are fundamental this study of Bear River and Sand Creek. These terms are all distinctive and separate, yet they also overlap and inform one another in this study of Bear River and Sand Creek.

This is foremost a thesis about how massacres have been remembered and is largely concerned with the collective group memory and the public memory of Bear River and Sand Creek within Euro-American and Native communities. Thus I posit a continuous connection between past experience and current knowledge of the massacres, including attempts that have been made to remember as well as quash some elements of the massacres in memorialization efforts and public commemorative acts. However, how Bear River and Sand Creek have been written about in historiographical accounts or neglected have been integral to their public representation and collective memories specifically in Euro-American communities.

The term collective memory is extremely broad and can be used to refer to political, ideological, societal and small group memory as well as often merging with perceptions of historical research. Collective memory as a term has been the subject of much scholarly criticism, the principle reproach being that the term is too universal and

therefore contextualizing collective memory into any meaningful debate is problematic.

Andreas Lass has expressed concern that term memory is weakened by the habit of

using is at "catch all term for a wide variety of phenomenon."[1] A variety of phrases fit

within its remit including cultural memory, national memory, public memory and

political memory; all of which are different and require different modes of investigation.

Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam have implied that the term collective memory is dangerous

because it has displaced useful concepts such as myth and tradition which they argued

was evidence of "conceptual degradation, and not …. sophistication." [2]

The universality of the term collective memory has led to others suggesting it has

simply replaced the term ideology. According to Susan Sontag, collective memory is

not remembering but a stipulating: groups define themselves by agreeing upon what

they hold to be important, to which story they accord eminence, which anxieties and

values they share."[3] Similarly Aleida Assmann argued that as the term ideology lost

favor, the term collective memory took its place.[4] Therefore collective memory and its

meaning are constantly in flux and therefore I want to be clear how I contextualize

collective memory in this study.

Throughout this thesis, I use the term "cultural memory" or the phrase "cross-cultural

memory" as an extension of the term collective memory. I have applied Jan Assmann's

definition of "cultural memory" as it is relevant to the formation of collective memory

at Bear River and Sand Creek: "Cultural memory is particularly characterized by its

distance from the everyday," or its transcendence from the ordinary. Cultural memory

possesses its "fixed point." These fixed points, argued Assmann, are "fateful events of

the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formations," such as

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[1] A. Lass, 'From memory to history: the events of November 17 dis/membered', in R. Watson (ed.), *Memory, History and Opposition Under State Socialism* (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 1994), 102.
[2] N. Gedi and Y. Elam, 'Collective Memory: What Is It?' *History and Memory,* 8,1 (1996) 30-50: 40.
[3] S. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 85-86.
[4] A. Assmann, 'Transformations Between History and Memory', *Social Research*, 75, 1 (2008) 49-72: 53.

scholarship, monuments and rites."[5]. Wulf Kansteiner stressed the relevance of Assmann's approach to collective memory because cultural memory comprises a body of reusable texts, images and rituals that are specific to each group or society, whose "cultivation" serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image … designed to recall fateful events in the history of the collective." [6] I use the term cultural memory to refer to collective memories formed by Native and non-Native groups who did not directly experience Bear River or Sand Creek. Assmann's cultural method exposes both the manner in which Euro-American and Native communities externally objectify their memories and how these memories differ from, and come into conflict with, one another when attempts are made to create a cross-cultural memory.

Memory and History

Methodological approaches to both memory and history are applied in this thesis, yet memory and history are not the same thing and require different methods and approaches. Geoffrey Cubitt defined memory as "the study of means by which a conscious sense of the past, as something meaningfully connected to the present, is sustained and developed within human individuals and human cultures."[7] The clear connection to the present is essential to the definition of memory. It is very much a construct of the present and is subjective.

By comparison history is far more critical in its approach and traditionally implied a separation of past and present that is, as Cubitt argued, "overcome through a particular critical encounter." [8]

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[5] J. Assmann, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity'. Translated from German by John Czaplickia, *New German Critique*, 65, (1995), 125-133: 129.
[6] W. Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', *History and Theory*, 41, 2 (2002) 179-197:182.
[7] G. Cubbit, *History and Memory*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 9.
[8] Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 28.

History, then, critically bridges the gap between the past and the present. Allan Megill stated that a "critical historiography has to stand at a distance from memory in all its senses, and by the same token it must be both connected and estranged from it." History is far more objective than memory, however, and takes an analytical, methodological approach in the present to construct the past. The methodology applied by historians should be critical and primarily concerned with using historical evidence to get at the 'truth' of an event. This includes source-based evidence and what Megill terms 'traces'; a piece of evidence from the past that was not designed to reveal the past to use but was the subject of real life.[9]

As of recent years, in particular with a new wave in scholarship that equated history of the Holocaust with collective memories, there has been an effort, amongst historians and memory theorists alike, to distinguish between history and memory: how memory relates to the historical process, how one influences the other and the scholarly value of one over the other. Some scholars have argued for the incorporation of memory into the historical discourse whilst others are very clear that the two concepts are entirely different.[10] Aleida Assmann stated: "The past appears to be no longer written in granite but rather in water; new constructions of it are periodically arising and changing the course of politics and history … This paradigmatic shift alerts us to the entangled relationships between history and memory."[11]

To be clear, memory and history are two different concepts, requiring different methodology. However, used in conjunction with one another, they provide important

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[9] A. Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 40, 25.

[10] J. Lukacs, for example, argued that history was simply the 'remembered past'. J. Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness and the Remembered Past* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1968), 96. David Lownthal, by comparison, argued that history differed from memory in how knowledge of the past is acquired and also how it is transmitted and altered. D. Lowenthal, *The Past Is A Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 212.

[11] A. Assmann, 'Transformations Between History and Memory', 54.

explanations about the past and the relationship between past and present. As Megill asserted, memory and history are not the same thing and to suggest that they are leads to historiographical error: "historians who confuse history with memory, tradition, or nostalgia are destined to fall into error." However neither history nor memory can be justifiably rejected, argued Megill, especially because identity is closely ties up with both memory and history.[12] What emerges is a complex debate where memory and history inhabit what Sam Wineburg referred to as "colliding worlds."[13]

<u>History and collective memory</u>

There is a much closer link between collective memory and history than between history and memory. Collective memory is a representation of how a society organizes and analyzes its past through which a group or society is able to form its memories. In form and methodology, it therefore bears more resemblance to historiography in its more critical approach to the past. Cubitt argued that for many, "the implication has been that history is vital to the maintenance of collective identity."[14] History provides connections across groups and cultures in a similar manner to collective memory and provides insight into how history is interpreted by cultures. Alon Confino stressed this as one of the most useful areas of collective memory in demonstrating how people construct the past through "open-endedness, because it is applicable to historical situations and human condition in diverse societies and periods." By studying societies' collective responses to historical events we are provided with a comprehensive view of

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[12] Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error*, x, xi.
[13] S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 5. Kerwin Lee Klein asserted that "the emergence of memory promises to rework *history's* boundaries." See K. Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 69 (2000), 127-150.
[14] Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 42.

culture and society which, argued Confino, is "often missing in the history of memory, whose fragmentary tendency is to focus on distinct memories." [15]

Collective memory and public history

Collective memory can be the memory that is inherent to a group, culture or community which does not have to be shared in a public sphere. By contrast, public history is what is seen in an external space and is usually reflective of local and national ideologies. I have used David Glassberg's account of public memory because it fits with the notions of public memory representation explored in this thesis. He argued that public historians occupy a space between competing political forces and that they bring the local story into a larger context. Importantly for this study Glassberg implied that the public historian is often tasked with converging discrete and conflicting memories into a common space. The task of public history should therefore be to create a space for dialogue between conflict as opposed to presenting "finished interpretation of events."[16]

Collective Memory and Traumatic Memory

One reason for the difficulty in establishing cross-cultural memories, especially across minority and dominant groups that share a history of violence, relates to traumatic memory, particularly of tribal members. Traumatic memory stands as an anomaly from other forms of memory because it is dislocated from a historical event and, unlike other forms of memory, remains static and according to psychoanalysis is not influenced by events of the present. This thesis is not intended to be a study of trauma but I will

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[15] A. Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *The American Historical Review*, 102, 5 (1997) 1386-1403: 1387, 1390.
[16] D. Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory", *The Public Historian,* 18, 2 (Spring, 1996) 7-23: 13, 14, 13.

reference it briefly, particularly as it relates to history and silence, as these are two areas that are significant to this study.

The connection between history and traumatic memory is often deemed precarious because of the methodology applied to recovering traumatic memory which is often psychoanalytic and individualistic in approach. However, Susannah Radstone and Katherine Hodgkin argued that the development of history's association with trauma was influenced by Holocaust scholarship which equated the two intellectual subjects to enhance our understanding of the event. Although they are critical of this because the Holocaust has generated a representation of traumatic memory that is distinct from other studies of historical trauma, requiring its own language and critical approach, Radstone and Hodgkin argue that this new approach has provided an "explanatory apparatus" within which we can situate collective trauma.[17]

Dominck LaCapra stated that history and traumatic memory are in fact compatible because they allow us to weave a dialogue between different approaches to the past to form a hybrid form that gets at the truth of the past especially when considering what are termed historical limit events such as the Holocaust. Thus he proposed a sort of middle voice between history and trauma, stressing that approaches to the past rely too much upon the distinction between different modes of study, locking us into a pattern of identification.[18]

Therefore, using traumatic memory in historical approaches is not necessarily about historical accuracy but about exploring how societal memory functions and the identity

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[17] S. Radstone & K. Hodgkin (eds.), *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 6-7. See also D. LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).
[18] D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), xvi-xix.

of groups. LaCapra's middle voice is transferable onto cultures like the Shoshoni, Cheyenne and Arapaho, allowing us to study how their trauma relates to established history and how tribal traumatic memory can counter dominant narrative constructs.

Tension Between Memory and History

There is a tension between memory and history that exists throughout this thesis. I want to address why this happens and why the tension is in fact necessary for understanding cross-cultural memories at Bear River and Sand Creek. Whilst each of these subjects is distinctive and has its own definition, they often overlap and influence one another. This is especially apparent when studying the history and memories of two distinct yet inter-linked cultures like the Euro and Native Americans.

Using both memory and historiographical approaches is significant because Euro-American public memory of the massacres, in particular, has been influenced by the historical scholarship of Bear River and Sand Creek. Megill is critical of this mixed approach, referring to it as "affirmative history," because its primary aim is to praise the tradition of a group whose history it is recounting." Megill argued that memory-orientated historiography is problematic because it lacks the critical stance on the memories it collects and the traditions it supports and subsequently becomes more concerned with ancestral conflicts.[19]

However, memory can serve as a useful counterbalance to history, especially in overlapping yet distinct Native and non-Native cultures. Historiographic studies have a tendency to favor conventional national history narratives. By conventional I mean the dominant way of writing and constructing history of that time period. This is in itself fluid and changes with societal needs. Cubitt believed that history represented a

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[19] Megill, *History and Memory,* 21-23.

"putatively authoritative view of the past which serves the interests of the elite" by emphasizing certain memory narratives over others.[20] Within the massacres' written historiography, tribal perspectives are represented in a limited manner or remain decidedly absent from Euro-American scholarship. In part this is because Native American communities do not historically conform to Western scholarly methods, favoring oral histories.

Native memory is therefore a useful counterpoint to national histories, providing insight into how minority cultures master narratives, are constructed and reproduce dominant historical narratives in the public realm. The contrast between Euro-American scholarship and Native public memories of Bear River and Sand Creek allow for an exploration of Native and non-Native approaches to the collective memory of Bear River and Sand Creek.

Simply using the term "memory" in isolation is problematic. As Megill stated, "Memory cannot be its own critical test"[21] because it does not inform us about cultural impacts and their relation and influence within broader society. Confino stated that "only when memory is linked to historical questions and problems, via methods and theories can it be illuminating."[22] Therefore this thesis has used historical methods and historiography to support the claims of collective memory made at Bear River and Sand Creek, specifically in terms of evidence and source material.

When possible this thesis has used tribally specific names to refer to indigenous societies. I have used the words Native American, American Indian and indigenous

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[20] Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 36
[21] Megill, *Historical Knowledge*, 28.
[22] A. Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *The American Historical Review*, 102, 5 (1997) 1386-1403: 1386.

peoples interchangeably when referring to broader North American indigenous peoples.

I have used the term Euro-American much more broadly as covering non-indigenous

groups involved in both Bear River and Sand Creek historically, currently and in

scholarship. Whilst I recognize that each Euro-American group is diverse in itself, I

have used this phrase to represent the local Euro-American group conflated with the

general Euro-American ideology. This will become clear within particular sections. A

Euro-American group I have distinguished is the Mormon Church. Throughout this

thesis I use the broad terms Mormon and Mormon Church not as globalized terms but to

refer specifically and historically to the Mormons who settled in Utah and Southeastern

Idaho during the 1840s until the 1870s. I also use the term Mormon in a contemporary

context, referring to the Mormon Church that currently operates in Utah and

Southeastern Idaho. This thesis only acknowledges the beliefs, politics and actions of

the Church in this particular region and is not intended to be representative of the

Mormons in the broader United States. When using the term Mormon historiography, I

refer to Mormon histories that refer specifically to the Mormon experience in America.

These histories tend to be written by historians who are themselves members of the

Mormon Church. I have also used the abbreviation NPS when referring to the National

Park Service.

<u>Contribution to Scholarship</u>

Being inter-disciplinary in approach this thesis challenges and contributes to a multitude

of existing schools of thought, including Native American history, memory studies and

American Western history. This thesis uses newly unearthed data, which I accessed at

the Stephen H. Hart Research Center in Denver, Colorado, in order to provide a better

understanding, of Colorado's 1864 Sand Creek Massacre. I have made extensive use of

the yet unpublished *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book* of Colorado's Governor, John

Evans.[23] The collection was compiled in 1951 by Colorado state archivist, Dolores

Renze, and contains transcripts of Evans' correspondence with the War Department in

Washington regarding Colorado's Indian affairs during the period 1863-1864. These

transcripts have never before been used as a complete source in scholarship, yet they

provide a compelling insight into Evans' self-serving and manipulative political

character, as well as his attempts to rid Colorado Territory of its Indian population. The

study of these letters, which detailed the hostile developments of Evans' Indian policies

and his increasing personal animosity towards the tribes of the Plains, led me to

conclude that Evans has to be held accountable for actions at Sand Creek to the same

extent as Colonel John M. Chivington, the man who actually carried out the massacre.

This adds a new dimension to the existing literature of Sand Creek as it implies that

Evans and Chivington are equally responsible, whereas it has previously been assumed

that Chivington was primarily to blame for the slaughter of the Cheyenne and Arapaho

camped at Sand Creek.

In order to further explore Evans' role in the massacre, as well as assessing the extent of

Colonel Chivington's actions at Sand Creek, I have synthesized a collection of sources

also accessed at the Stephen H. Hart Research Center. These include the congressional,

military and judicial hearings conducted in the aftermath of the massacre, condemning

the attack at Sand Creek, as well as a report on Evans' life carried out by Northwestern

University in 2014.[24]

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[23] J. Evans, *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864,* (John Evans Manuscripts MSS#226), transcribed and compiled by Dolores Renze (1951). Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO.
[24] 38th Congress of the United States, second session, January 10th, 1865, *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, (Folio Box 29), call no: RB 970.9 Sa56u 1865. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO. J. Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans of the territory of Colorado to that part referring to Him of the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War Headed 'Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,'* 8th of June,1865, (John Evans Manuscripts MSS#226, FF# 66), call no: RB 970.9 C714ter. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO. Northwestern University, *Report of the John Evans Study Committee*, (May 2014). Available online: http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/committees/equity-and-inclusion/study-committee-report.pdf [Accessed 24/01/17]. University of Denver, *Report of the John Evans Study Committee,* (November 2014). Available online: https://portfolio.du.edu/evcomm [Accessed 24/01/17].

I have also made extensive use of the Sand Creek Massacre Oral History Project, which I accessed at the Stephen H. Hart Research Center. The project was made in conjunction with the NPS and Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes and was used during the 21st century memorialization efforts, specifically in attempts to locate the boundaries of the massacre site.[25] The Oral History Project has never been used as a complete source in scholarship before and this is the first study to provide a detailed and innovative assessment of the project. This is important as it gives a new and accessible insight into Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants and their memories of Sand Creek. It also challenges existing collective memory scholarship by highlighting the deeply contrasting Native and non-Native memories of Sand Creek, thereby problematizing the notion of collective memory and serving as a reminder of the cultural specificity of memory. I have both synthesized and juxtaposed the primary sources listed above with key secondary literature to provide a new historical understanding, particularly of events that led to Sand Creek, but also to highlight the current problematic and contested nature of collective memory at the Bear River and Sand Creek Massacre sites. The primary sources used in this thesis have evidenced both a historical and contemporary difficulty in creating cross-cultural memory narratives that transcend cultural difference.

Bear River Contribution

The historiography of the Bear River Massacre is very limited, especially in comparison to that of Sand Creek. The key texts dedicated primarily to Bear River are Brigham D. Madsen's, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* (1985), Kass Fleischer's, *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History* (2004), and Rod Miller's, *Massacre at Bear River: First, Worst, Forgotten* (2008). These histories

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[25]National Park Service, Denver, Intermountain Support Office, *Sand Creek Massacre Project*, *Volume One: Site Location Study,* 2000, call no. q970.09 S56pr. Stephen H. Hart Research Center, Denver, CO. The Sand Creek Massacre Project was compiled as a result of *The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site Study Act,* Public Law 105-243.

largely provide chronological accounts of what happened preceding, during and in the aftermath of the massacre. Their primary concern is that Bear River is afforded its proper place as one of the most brutal Indian massacres in American history. This thesis situates Bear River into broader debates about violence against indigenous peoples in the West and argues that Bear River was an anomaly compared to massacres such as Sand Creek because it occurred in a unique political and cultural environment that ultimately led to its under-emphasis. I shall alter our understanding of events at Bear River by assessing two key reasons why the massacre remains so obscure: the role of the Mormon Church and the public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni. These two areas have not been considered in detail in previous studies of the massacre. The role of the Mormon Church in Bear River's scholarly obscurity has been very briefly considered by some scholars, such as Madsen and Miller. However, I produce a detailed study of the Latter Day Saints' part in in both the occurrence and under-emphasis of the massacre.

By situating the massacre within the broader context of Mormon politics in Utah and Southeastern Idaho from the 1840s until the 1870s, this thesis brings a new dimension to the study of the massacre by analyzing it from the standpoint of the Mormon Church and the result of Mormon mass settlement in Utah and Southeastern Idaho, beginning in 1840. I critically assess the leadership style and political character of Utah's governor and Mormon leader, Brigham Young, arguing that he was in part responsible for both Bear River's occurrence and its relative obscurity, past and present. By implicating the Mormon Church in the massacre, new sources, particularly from Mormon scholarship, are brought to the study of Bear River. These include, Leonard J. Arrington's, *The Mormon Experience,* (1979), Arrington's biography of Young, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (1985), and Lawrence G. Coates' "Brigham Young and Mormon

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Indian Policies: The Formative Period, 1836-1851" (1978). Situating these Mormon sources within the context of the Bear River Massacre has not been done in previous scholarship. The silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice in Bear River's under-emphasis has not been considered at all before now. This study will critically assess how the private history of the tribe has influenced the relative obscurity of Bear River.

In comparison to previous studies such as Madsen's, Miller's and Fleischer's, I highlight the essential need to analyze events at Bear River through the lens of interlinked cultural narratives. These include the Mormon Church, the Northwestern Shoshoni and local Euro-American communities. Previous studies of the massacre have failed to emphasize the importance of overlapping historical and cultural stances, which must be addressed if we are to understand the historical and contemporary significance of Bear River.

Finally, I consider events at Bear River within the broader context of forgetting within collective memory, assessing the implications forgetting may have had on the representation of Bear River. In particular, I provide an assessment of the multiple and contradictory Euro-American and Northwestern Shoshoni memorials that stand at the massacre site as representative case studies of Bear River's public under-emphasis.

Sand Creek Contribution

I have already outlined the new archival evidence this thesis brings to the scholarship of Sand Creek. This study also foregrounds new ideas about Sand Creek's collective remembrance. As I shall detail in the section, "How Sand Creek has been written and thought about to date," Sand Creek's historiography is far larger than that of Bear River. Key texts on Sand Creek include Stan Hoig's, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (1961),

George E. Hyde's, *Life of George Bent, Written from his Letters* (1968), Jerome A. Greene and Douglas D. Scott's, *Finding Sand Creek: History and Archeology and the Sand Creek Massacre Project* (2005), and Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre, Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (2013). I contribute to Sand Creek's scholarship in the following ways. Firstly, I innovatively situate Sand Creek and its problematic remembrance within culturally conflicting Native and non-Native notions of place. Although authors such as Kelman and Scott and Greene have considered the search for the massacre site and the ensuing conflicts over Sand Creek's remembrance, to date no authors have critically considered the crucial importance of place in constructing Cheyenne and Arapaho and Euro-American memories of the massacre. Unlike previous studies, I highlight what differing notions of place contribute to collectively remembering a shared atrocity.

Contribution To Collective Memory Theory

By considering collective memory through the problematic lens of inter-cultural memory at Bear River and Sand Creek, I add an important and previously un-assessed dimension to the field of collective memory by arguing that memory is culturally specific. I demonstrate that collective memory scholarship to date does not acknowledge the inter-connectedness and overlapping of culturally specific memories that work together to form collective memories. To address this problem my research on Bear River and Sand Creek has highlighted that, when groups, cultures or nations attempt to collectively remember, less attention should be given to creating a united image of the past. Instead, the formation of collective memory should reflect the reality of opposing, competing, complex and culturally specific memories that interlink but retain their specificity. If we consider collective memory in this manner we are better equipped to understand the competing historical narratives that were involved in events

such as Bear River and Sand Creek and further understand the contemporary

relationships between disparate cultural groups. Importantly, this also goes some way to

preventing one version of memory receiving dominance over another smaller or

minority memory.

The Development of Collective Memory Theory

In order to contextualize the Bear River and Sand Creek Massacres within the

framework of collective memory, I shall begin by outlining key collective memory

ideas and theorists and assessing the development and limitations of the theory

In its broadest sense, collective memory theory posits that memory is not an individual

construct but, rather, personal memories are formed as a result of an individual's

external interaction with larger groups, societies or nations. The emergence of the

theory is attributed to the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs who coined the phrase

"collective memory" in his seminal work, *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925),

later translated into English as *On Collective Memory* (1992). In response to individual

notions of memory that had previously governed the field, Halbwachs believed that

memory was not a given but a socially constructed notion where the individual's

memory was developed in relation to societal experience. Halbwachs argued that the

individual was located within a certain group that "holds particular traditions and beliefs

on which the individual relies for remembrance."[26] According to the theory, it is

individuals as group members who remember, be they part of a church, a school or a

national group. The 1980s translation of Halbwachs' work, *The Collective Memory*,

originally published posthumously in 1950, saw a rapid increase in collective memory

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[26] M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory.* Translated from French by L. A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

studies with theorists from around the globe applying and adapting Halbwachs' theory to their own memory studies.[27]

Taking this basis of collective memory theory and applying it in the American context is interesting because America is made up of many different groups and cultures who have so often overlapped and conflicted with one another. In his seminal work, *Memory and American History* (1989), David Thelen, a supporter of Halbwachs, argued that in America, families, large groups and social institutions interpret their memories based upon changing external factors. Thelen stated: "The historical study of memory would be the study of how families, larger gatherings of people, and formal organizations selected and interpreted identifying memories to serve their changing needs." Thelen considered the arrival of European immigrants into America, for example, arguing that these people reconstructed or even abandoned elements of their past in order to participate in a larger national American memory. Whilst some American immigrant groups abandoned memories, argued Thelen, others simultaneously used their unique group identity to protect themselves against changes in their surrounding society.[28] Although both Halbwachs' and Thelen's arguments are not new, they still hold significant weight in the field of collective memory and provide a contextual framework for collective memory theory and collective memory in the American context.

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[27] M. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. Translated from French by Francis J. Ditter and V. Y. Ditter (New York: Harper and Row, 1980). Following this translation the following fields of collective memory gained prominence: Jewish and Holocaust Studies. See Y. H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1982). See also J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and* Meanings (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,1993). There was also a newfound emphasis on the role place and memorials played, particularly in the formation of national collective memory. See J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Winter produced a comparative study of the memory of the First World War in France, Germany and Britain, in which traditional symbols and ideologies were evoked by nations to enable countries to mourn at external sites of memory. See also, P. Nora *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Volume One: Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1996). Nora re-evaluated collective memory theory by considering the role of external sites in the formation of French national memory.

[28] D. Thelen (ed.), *Memory and American History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), Xiii.

Halbwachs' work, and by extension Thelen's, have not escaped negative appraisal. To date the most penetrating criticism of Halbwachs is that he displaced the role of the individual in the formation of memory. Paul Ricoeur argued that, by making the leap from individual to collective memory, Halbwachs "crosses an invisible line." This line, argued Ricoeur, separated the notion that "no one ever remembers alone" from the theory that "we are not an authentic subject of the attribution of memories." The idea that individual memory and recollection is a radical illusion, argued Ricoeur, cannot "simply be denounced as a radical illusion."[29]

Collective Memory and Asymmetries of Power

A further problem with collective memory that my research has highlighted is the imbalance of power that exists in the formation of collective memory. Both Halbwachs and Thelen claimed that memories are based upon conforming to the conventions of the society to which we belong. Conventions, however, tend to reflect the concerns of leading groups and national ideology, thereby denying the cultural specificity of minority memory, in this case Native American memory. In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning, The Great War in European Cultural History* (1995), Jay Winter pointed particularly to the exclusive nature of public memory. He argued: "To remember was to affirm to community, to assert its moral character and to exclude from it those values, groups, or individuals who placed it under threat."[30] Similarly, in *Remaking America, Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (1992), John Bodnar, made a connection between public memory and power in the American context, arguing that: "Public Memory speaks primarily about the structure of power in

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[29] P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting.* Translated from French by K. Blamey and D. Pallauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 122, 123.
[30] J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)*,* 80.

society … because cultural understanding is always grounded in the material structure of society itself."[31]

A key way dominant groups, societies and nations use collective memory to control public remembrance is through memorialization. Writing specifically about how memorials and monuments of World War One were used to construct German, French and British collective memory of the First World War, Winter argued that traditional ideological motifs were reflected within national monuments, providing a framework within which individuals could remember the Great War.[32] Similarly, Pierre Nora in "Between Memory and History" (1989) argued that, when nations or groups memorialize an event, the responsibility of remembering is shifted onto a site of memory.[33] Memory can be revised and re-structured to reflect different portrayals of the past. At a national and public level, memorials usually reflect the dominant group's ideology at the time the memorial is constructed. A memorial, then, becomes a way to control what is remembered and simultaneously what is forgotten.

There is a distinct link between collective memory and forgetting, especially when it comes to historical narrative, which often draws attention to what is repressed and forgotten as much as what is remembered particularly in public representations of historical events. Cubitt argued: "'Forgetting' can be seen as a deficiency of public recognition - a failure to accord these events and those who were their victims their due place in the stories of the past that politicians refer to in their speeches … that public monuments evoke, that historians compose." [34] Events that are not incorporated into both the historical consensus and the public consciousness are not explicitly forgotten

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[31] J. Bodnar, *Remaking America, Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15.
[32] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 4.
[33] P. Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Memoire', *Representations*, 26 (1989) 7-24: 10.
[34] Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 54.

but the people or events that are not mentioned by historical texts or in the public sphere expose the manner in which collective memory can be used to manipulate the past.

Milan Kundera applied the notion of forgetting to the example of nations using collective memory to control what their people remember, arguing that it is our duty to attempt to remember, particularly when our memories come under threat from power. In *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979), Kundera tells one story about Czechoslovakian attempts to preserve their culture against a Soviet attack: "The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long … the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world around it will forget even faster.… The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."[35] The theories briefly noted above show the exclusivity of collective memory and particularly how it is used as a tool of power to control remembrance. According to the theory, groups frame their remembrance within the context of the dominant thought of their group or, at a national level, within the central ideology of their nation.

This thesis both highlights and challenges the notion that collective memory tends to reflect the ideas of dominant social groups. Remembrance at Bear River and Sand Creek demonstrated that what was remembered and what was forgotten was often selected, usually by local Euro-American communities or organizations such as the NPS, who then framed their perceptions of the massacres according to their own ideals and values, often at the cost of Native memory. Attempts by Euro-American

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[35] M. Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. Translated from Czech by M.H. Heim (London: Penguin, 1983) 3. See also M. Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Translated from Czech by M.H. Heim (London: Faber and Faber, 1984) 4-5. Kundera argued that it is our duty to remember because it is memory that connects us to our present reality.

communities to control how these massacres were remembered highlighted the often

exclusive nature of collective memory. However, this study also challenges the notion

of collective memory as Euro-American-centric in its approach. I argue that

collaborative Native and non-Native memory attempts, particularly at Sand Creek,

demonstrate how the Cheyenne and Arapaho have endeavoured to remember across

Native and non-Native cultures to re-structure and re-create Euro-American dominant

memory narratives that had previously governed the memory of Sand Creek. In this

way, the authority and authenticity of Euro-American memory was challenged. In

contrast, the limited scholarly memory of Bear River, that often excludes the

Northwestern Shoshoni voice, emphasizes that Bear River's narrative remains

dominated by Euro-American perceptions at the cost of Northwestern Shoshoni

representation, particularly in scholarship. This thesis highlights the exclusive nature of

collective memory, particularly within the sphere of public and

scholarly memory. However, it simultaneously challenges the Euro-American-centric

notion of collective memory by outlining and addressing Native opposition to dominant

perceptions of the massacres.

Collective memory and the Problem of Cross-Cultural Memories

Research carried out for this thesis has enabled me to recognize a significant problem

with collective memory theory: the idea that collective memory does not allow for, or

recognize, cross-cultural memory. Instead, collective memory theory as it currently

stands argues that we are reliant upon the specific groups to which we belong in order to

remember. However, what happens if we become detached from such a group,

voluntarily or involuntarily? According to collective memory theory, if we are removed

from our traditional cultures or groups, our memories are either worked into a new

group or we create new memories. There is no recognition of the overlap between

disparate cultural groups. To exemplify this problem in collective memory, I have outlined key theorists and their approaches to this issue, before assessing how the remembrance of Bear River and Sand Creek has challenged them.

Collective memory theorists have acknowledged that we do not belong to consistent groups for the duration of our lifetimes. Halbwachs argued that throughout our lives we enter into a multitude of different social groups. In *Memory* (2009), Anne Whitehead produced a clear explanation of what Halbwachs believed happened when an individual became detached from a group: "As individual members of a group, especially older ones, become isolated or die, their memories are gradually eroded. Alternatively, the interest of one or several members, or external circumstances can impinge upon a group, causing it to give rise to another group, with its own particular memory." Halbwachs further attempted to defend the stability of group memory in the face of individual or societal transformation. The collective memory, according to Halbwachs, represents the group's most stable and permanent element, in that it is impersonal enough to sustain itself when individuals leave the group or are replaced by others. Although Halbwachs recognized the fluid nature of individuals within the group, at the heart of Halbwachs' notion of a group is a set of core ideas and beliefs that are inflexible and not open to change. Whitehead noted: "The group memory itself comprises a body of these shared concerns and ideas."[36] This is problematic because it suggests that memories are polarized by group ideologies and ideals. The collective memory theory that Halbwachs proposed did not take into account what happened when different, yet inter-linking, group memories overlap in the formation of collective memory.

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[36] A. Whitehead, *Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 128-129.

Like Halbwachs, Thelen's collective memory argument implied that there was a core set of values that govern group memory and these remain static and unchanging and without connection to outside conflicting cultural ideologies. Thelen stated: "Perhaps the most familiar theme of social history is that people have resisted rapid, alien and imposed change by creating memories of a past that was unchanging, incorruptible and harmonious."[37]. The un-malleable nature of group memory proposed by Thelen implied that there is no inter-linking of different cultural memories in the formation of a broader collective memory.

I compare the work of Halbwachs and Thelen to the research of psychologist, Frederic C. Bartlett, who has received comparatively little attention in the field of collective memory studies. However, Bartlett's work, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology,* originally published in 1932, provided an important though isolated explanation of what happened when the memory of one culture adopted the distinctive and disparate patterns of another culture. This process Bartlett termed 'conventionalism'. He argued that, if a culture adopts traditions and customs from another group, they re-work them into a distinctive cultural pattern that is rationalized within their own culture.[38] Bartlett acknowledged that disparate cultural groups will come into contact with one another but he argued that, when tradition and custom arrives at a new culture, they will suffer modification until they reach a stable form in the current social setting.

As there is for Halbwachs and Thelen, there is still a core stable group for Bartlett that forms the group memory. Once different cultural values are absorbed, the specificity of the original group idea is lost and becomes dominated by the central values of the group attempting to rationalize it according to their own belief systems. However, in his

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[37] Thelen, *Memory and American History*, xv.
[38] F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 268-280.

experiments, Bartlett only evidenced what happened when dominant groups rationalized the memory of smaller, or minority, groups. As a result, conventionalism does not allow for the overlapping of different memories in the formation of the collective memory of a shared event across disparate cultures. Instead, the dominant group takes the memory, forming and shaping it according to its own core values and beliefs.

By using attempts to remember cross-culturally across Native and non-Native memory at Bear River and Sand Creek, this thesis will problematize and challenge the cultural exclusivity of collective memory by arguing that, whilst memory at the Bear River and Sand Creek Massacre sites is culturally specific, culturally disparate memories are inextricably tied to one another in the formation of history and public and scholarly memory. Unlike in the work of Halbwachs, Thelen and Bartlett, cross-cultural memory attempts at Bear River and Sand Creek demonstrated that collective memory cannot be reliant on one group's core values and ideas but is formed by competing, yet indivisibly bound, group patterns. For example, for Euro-Americans, frameworks of remembering massacre are tied up with legacies of conquest. Native Americans, on the other hand, are survivors of that conquest, meaning their memories are different and often a hybrid of Euro-American and tribal memory, which are in themselves diverse and mutable. Native American remembrance of massacre represents a complex interplay of both Euro-American and tribal identity.

If we are to understand the historical and contemporary significance of events such as Bear River and Sand Creek, we have to accept that group or cultural memory is malleable. As I shall demonstrate, whilst there have been many difficulties in trying to create a cross-cultural memory of the massacres, such attempts have produced a greater understanding of the significance of the massacre across Euro-American and Cheyenne and Arapaho communities. I want to make clear, however, that making the claim for

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cross-cultural remembrance does not deny the cultural specificity of memory: the memories of each Native and non-Native group remain culturally specific even when they intersect in the formation of new memory. Specific Native and non-Native memories exist at both Sand Creek and Bear River but they are inextricably linked to one another.

Collected not Collective Memories

The idea of collected (as opposed to collective) memories, has received relatively little attention within the field of collective memory and is an idea this thesis expands upon and develops. Holocaust historian James E. Young, in his study *The Texture of Memory, Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (1993), considered how, after the horrific experiences of the concentration camps in World War Two, national memory became much more abstract. In this work Young referred briefly to what I believe to be a very significant point when applied to the memory process at Bear River and Sand Creek. He argued that memories at sites of memorial were "collected," not collective. By this he meant that individuals, groups and cultures did not share the same memories but that a site or shared place, such as a historical landmark, was a location where the individual could frame a personal memory within a broader group context. Young stated: "It is the individual in whose power memory ultimately lies, that frame their memories in the collective guidelines." Young's argument is interesting because it afforded less power to external national forces in constructing collective memory and gave more control to the personal memories an individual brought to a shared site of remembrance, such as a Holocaust memorial. Young wrote: "The relationship between a state and its memorials is not one-sided.… On the one hand, official agencies are in a position to shape memory as they explicitly see fit, memory that best serves that national interest. On the other

hand, memorials take on lives of their own, often stubbornly resistant to the state's intentions."[39] [40]

Young's theory is particularly relevant to my topographical examination of conflicting Native and non-Native notions of place at Sand Creek. The way the Cheyenne and Arapaho remembered Sand Creek using the specific site of the massacre was deeply different from the way local Euro-American communities and the NPS used the location to remember. However, all groups situated their different memories at the same, shared site of atrocity. When Sand Creek was opened as a National Historic Site in 2007, different Native and Euro-American memorials of the same event were constructed to co-exist at the same site. To this extent, memories of Sand Creek were 'collected' not collective. The notion of 'collected' memories is also applicable to the Bear River Massacre, especially in terms of the memorials gathered at the site today. As I shall detail further in the section on Bear River, different interpretations of this massacre, coming from the Northwestern Shoshoni and local Euro-American communities, exist side by side, overlooking the massacre site. The memorials at Bear River are extraordinary because monuments and plaques from the 1930s remain next to the modern memorials constructed in the 2000s. Thus, memories spanning cultures and time at Bear River are, like the memories of Sand Creek, 'collected', not collective. As I shall detail throughout this thesis, however, these memories remain culturally polarized. Collected memories do not solve the issue of creating culturally specific, yet overlapping memories.

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[39] J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and* Meanings (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,1993), 132, xi, 132.
[40] Young's work has been criticized for not adequately explaining his use of the term 'collective memory'. Kerwin Lee Klein said Young explained his reluctance to 'apply individual psychoneurotic jargon to the memory of national groups' by pointing out that individuals cannot share in another's memory. However, most historical studies of memory highlight the social or cultural aspects of memory or memorial practice to the point of "projecting psychoneurotic jargon." Therefore, despite Young's claim, it is very difficult to avoid this psychoanalytic approach because it forms the basis of our understanding of human memory. Klein, 'On the emergence of Memory', 138-139.

To conclude my contribution to collective memory scholarship: by presenting a study of the Native and non-Native memory processes at Sand Creek and Bear River, I shall provide a new dimension to the field of collective memory studies, challenging commonly held perceptions and ideas. The memory process at both massacre sites evidences that, in essence, collective memory reflects the principles, ideologies and historical representations of leading groups. In the case of Bear River and Sand Creek, Euro-American memory often dominated attempts to collectively remember from the time of the massacre until the present day. However, this thesis contributes to the field by highlighting the importance of recognizing inter-cultural narratives in the construction of collective memory at Bear River and Sand Creek. Combined Native and non-Native collective memory endeavor, at both massacre sites, to demonstrate not only the contested nature of collective memory, but also the importance of attempts to remember across cultures in order to aid in healing and reconciliation and produce understanding between disparate cultural groups.

Contextualizing Massacres in the American West: New Western History and Ned Blackhawk and *Violence Over the Land* (2006)

This thesis is primarily a study of events at Bear River and Sand Creek. However, it is important that these two massacres are not regarded as isolated acts of atrocity but are contextualized within the history of militaristic violence against indigenous peoples in the American West. From the mid- to late-1800s, as Euro-American communities pushed westward in great numbers, seeking land, resources, and dominance over the territories west of the Mississippi, Euro-American emigrants massacred American Indians in significant numbers as they became casualties of American conquest.

I therefore situate events at Bear River and Sand Creek within the established field of New Western History which maintains that violence against Indian people was central to the process of forming the American West. New Western History persists today as the generally accepted historical version of the West.[41] Clyde A. Milner, in his work *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West* (1996) outlined the purpose of New Western historians: "We re-evaluate violence, we rethink crime … innumerable atrocities committed against the weak, the unprotected and those simply overwhelmed-culturally, numerically, by the proportions of Anglo-Americans penetrations, settlement, and expansion."[42] The central themes at the heart of New Western History are regionalism, cultural diversity, collaboration, violence and imperialism but for the purpose of this study I focus on violence and imperialism.

In *Under Western Skies; Nature and History in the American West* (1992), David Worster argued that with the emergence of New Western History came a new consideration of the violent imperialistic process by which the West was taken from its original inhabitants and the violence by which it had been secured against minority groups and nature.[43] Imperialism and economic gain was central to the Euro-American settlement of the West, underneath which lay the unavoidable consequence of violence

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[41] New Western History began in the 1970s but was firmly established with the publication of Patricia Nelson Limericks, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1985). The New Western history served to debunk the myths posed by Frederick Jackson Turner in his *Frontier Thesis* (1893), which struck New Western Historians as sexist, racist and imperialistic. The goal of these historians was to establish a more honest view of the West, based on collaboration and cultural diversity but also on violence and imperialism. The purpose was to create a "more thoughtful and diverse community" that accepted its flaws. See D. Worster, *Under Western Skies; Nature and History in the American West* (Oxford and new York: Oxford University Press 1992), 11. Scholars argued for a transition from the frontier version of the past to a regional based history. For another example see, Richard White, *It's your Misfortune and None of my Own: A New History of the American West,* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). These perceptions persist as historians like Limerick and White are sill publishing today. See, R. White, 'From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes: The Cultural Turn in Environmental History', *The Historian,* 66, 3 (2004), 557-564 and P.N. Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).
[42] C.A. Milner (ed.), *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 38.
[43] D. Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 11.

against Native peoples. Richard White argued that, in the early days of Spanish settlement, "lurking beneath" all collaborative and trade deals with indigenous peoples lay the threat of violence. [44] As I demonstrate in this thesis, violence was often a result of the political institutions and the de-centralized federal power in the American West. State-sanctioned violence, combined with individual acts of frontier brutality, saw Indians become a casualty of nation-building which, argued William Cronon writing in the 1990s, we have only just begun to understand.[45] George Miles, again writing in the 1990s, argued that the latest scholarship on Indians has had very little impact on mainstream or Western history.

However Ned Blackhawk draw Indians into the fold of Western history with his influential work, *Violence Over the Land, Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2006). Blackhawk situated indigenous peoples at the center of his history of the much-neglected Great Basin region, arguing that violence shaped indigenous/settler relations from the mid 1700s until the mid-1900s. Violence between Euro-Americans and Native Americans coincided with American expansionism and subsequently informed ideas of American nationhood. Central to this violence, and particularly prevalent in the 1800s, was the destruction and acquisition of Native American homelands. Blackhawk stated: "American political formation in the Great Basin occurred through violence in the homelands of Native peoples."[46] I argue that Bear River and Sand Creek must be situated within the broader context of Native tribes attempting to survive against an overwhelming tide of violence and atrocity.

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[44] R. White, *It's your misfortune and None of my Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 28.
[45] W. Cronon, G. Miles & J. Gitlin, *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992), 16.
[46] N. Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*: *Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 9.

To date, argued Blackhawk, the Indians of the intermountain West have been defined by ahistoricism and essentialism. Any changes or adaptation that these tribes have made are used as evidence of their demise. Missing from America's historical narrative is "clear and informed analysis of America's indigenous peoples" that should be "interwoven" into the history of America. Blackhawk concluded: "Though often presented without any mention of Native people, American history emerged from within, and not outside of, such encounters."[47] Indians have been key players in the formation of the American nation, rather than existing on the peripheries of American history. As one reviewer noted: "Native American peoples are not sideshows on the edges of American history, but historical actors with diplomatic agendas equal to that of their colonial counterparts."[48] Considering the essential role tribes of the Great Basin played in the colonial formation of the intermountain West, Blackhawk importantly stated that, rather than incorporating Indians into already established Euro-American historical narratives, the traumatic experience of the Great Basin tribes should force a "reconsideration of large portions of North American history."[49] At the center of this re-evaluation lies a painful and traumatic past that presents a bleak and aggressive view of American history that in reality defined much of the intermountain region.

This thesis develops Blackhawk's ideas and attempts to provide a re-evaluation of the histories of these two massacres. To do this, I demonstrate that we cannot polarize Native and non-Native narratives, but that they must be regarded as overlapping and inter-connected violent histories that have shaped the American experience in the West. No group should be afforded greater historical significance than another. I argue that it is not only Native groups who have been marginalized, but also other sectors of

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[47] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 1, 4, 3, 265.
[48] W. P. Reeve, 'Review of Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land', The American Historical Review*, 113, 1 (2008), 190-191: 191.
[49] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 5.

America, such as the Mormon Church, the Union-affiliated Volunteers, and even territorial governors have also received relatively little attention within American Western historiography. Following on from Blackhawk's argument, I believe this is because Mormon, as well as old and contemporary Euro-American historiography, is unwilling to highlight the inter-connected aggression that was fundamental to the formation of the American West. These inter-cultural narratives need to be re-evaluated and afforded equal attention if we are to understand the historical significance of these events in shaping the western section of the nation and, importantly, the role they still play in forming relations in the contemporary American West.

Blackhawk argued that histories of violence "have contemporary legacies that continue to influence these communities and their descendants."[50] I develop this by arguing that Euro-American and Native American relationships, particularly at Bear River and Sand Creek, are still largely defined by the historical violence against indigenous peoples. Using the problematic framework of cross-cultural memory attempts at the massacre sites, I assess how these polarized histories still characterize present Native and Euro-American relations. The application of memory is useful here because memory is malleable and changes over time, adapting as cultures change. Tribal and Euro-American memory have both developed since the events at Bear River and Sand Creek, yet the cultural memory of Native and Euro-American communities remains distinct and disparate. This demonstrates that the shared Euro-American and tribal legacy of violence that shaped the West is still misunderstood and unfortunately this misunderstanding still characterizes much of the relationship between Native Americans and Euro-Americans at Bear River and Sand Creek in the 21st century.

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[50] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 5.

Contribution to American Civil War History

One final field to which this thesis will contribute is the scholarship of the American Civil War. This thesis offers a counter-narrative to traditional Civil War historiography that has presented the Civil War as a war of liberation.[51] I contribute to a growing field of Civil War history that situates the Civil War in the context of the West. Pekka Hämäläinen stated that the history of the West is in "the midst of a western turn." Hämäläinen observed that, if we situate the Civil War in the context of the West, it becomes less a war of liberation and more a war of empire, "a massive sustained explosion of federal power that demolished the slave south and dismantled the indigenous west."[52] Similarly, Ned Blackhawk argued that notions of empire became more pronounced during the Civil War and violence against indigenous peoples increased, noting that the majority of the volunteer troops became engaged in Indian conflict, contending that the "western theatre of the Civil War centered upon Indian subjugation."[53] I propose that events at Bear River and Sand Creek demonstrate that the Union effort in the West was about extending Union power through the acquisition of Western territories, which was done at the cost of indigenous lives. Within this framework were the attempts to attain Civil War glory by Colonel Connor at Bear River and Colonel Chivington at Sand Creek. Both men were avid supporters of the Union, and were desperate to achieve recognition.[54] Killing Indians, who were treated with

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[51] American Civil War history is a huge field with many different narratives. I refer to traditional histories as those that consider the Civil War as Union victory and the impact of the war on slavery and the economics of the East Coast. These books tend to consider the Civil War as an event that played out in the eastern section of the nation between Union and Confederate forces. See J. McPherson, *Battle Cry Of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) and E.Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). I have also listed a biography of Lincoln as interestingly biographies of the President often exclude mention of Lincoln's dealings with indigenous peoples in the western section of the nation, including the Bear River and Sand Creek Massacre's which both occurred during Lincoln's presidency. See W. E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[52] P. Hämäläinen, 'Reconstructing the Great Plains: The Long Struggle for Sovereignty and Dominance at the Heart of the Continent', *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, 16, 4, (2016), 481-509: 481.

[53] N. Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 245.

[54] For examples of Colonel Connor seeking Civil War glory see, B.D. Madsen, *Glory Hunter: A Biography of Colonel Patrick Edward Connor* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 47-65.

mistrust and suspicion in the West, was a means to achieve glory, whilst simultaneously clearing land for the extension of the Union. Connor's and Chivington's actions demonstrated that the Civil War in the West was certainly not a war of liberation but, as Blackhawk suggested, a war of empire that relied on the death and subordination of Native groups.

To date, within Civil War scholarship, general histories of the American West and texts dedicated to Bear River and Sand Creek, neither massacre is readily associated with the Civil War. Texts such as Alvin M. Josephy's, *The Civil War in The American West* (1991), and Thom Hatch's more recent, *The Blue, The Gray and the Red, Indian Campaigns of the Civil War* (2003), both assessed how western sections of the nation were affected during the Civil War. Josephy stated: "Even well-known episodes of Indian-white conflict that occurred in the West during the war years, like the Sand Creek Massacre … have often been treated as if they had nothing to do with the Civil War, but lay outside its time period and sphere of interest."[55] More recently Hämäläinen argued that historians have successfully begun to understand that the divide between the South and West in Civil War historiography is "artificial".[56] It is essential that Western Civil War narratives are seen within the context of the Civil War if we are to understand the significance of violence, specifically here in the cases of Bear River and Sand Creek, in shaping the Civil War not just in the West but nationwide.

Considering the new "western turn" in Civil War history in the following ways, I shall redress the problem of the polarization of Civil War narratives by looking at Bear River and Sand Creek through the lens of cross-cultural memory. My research has raised the problem that Civil War events such as Bear River and Sand Creek have been isolated

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[55] A. M. Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), XII.
[56] Hämäläinen, 'Reconstructing the Great Plains', 481.

from broader Civil War studies. For example, Mormon history, Native American history and Union and Confederate efforts in the West are often isolated from events on the East Coast. These histories are often also separated from one another, existing as offshoots of Civil War history. This has resulted in the relative obscurity of Bear River in Civil War studies. The Sand Creek Massacre, although commemorated as a Civil War battle was subsumed by events on the East Coast and also under-emphasized as Eastern events took priority. This thesis aims to synthesize these often isolated sub-topics of American history into the broader Civil War historical narrative. This is important because it allows an understanding of the role marginalized groups, such as Native American tribes and the Mormon Church, played in the Civil War.

Importantly, I argue that Bear River and Sand Creek need to be publically contextualized within Civil War history through the process of memorialization. Both massacres were originally commemorated as Civil War battles between 1930 and 1950. Plaques identifying them in this way were removed at both massacre sites when it was no longer deemed acceptable to commemorate the indiscriminate slaughter of Native Americans as a battle. However, problematically, instead of associating these massacres with the Civil War, they are now portrayed as isolated events of violence against indigenous tribes. I argue that it is essential that we commemorate Bear River and Sand Creek as Civil War massacres if we are to understand better how the Civil War played out in the American West and how Union efforts in the West often revolved around the loss of indigenous lives to secure Western territories.

Hämäläinen stated that we must not see Native tribes simply as passive victims of Civil War violence. Rather, he argued that, within frameworks of Euro-American empire building, what emerged was not just a picture of indigenous decline but also of

"indigenous resilience in the midst of an expanding American state."[57] I shall expand upon Hämäläinen's idea by demonstrating how the Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River and the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek have used the attempts to memorialize the massacre as a means of publically asserting tribal sovereignty.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into two sections, each section containing four chapters, and a conclusion. Section A covers the Bear River Massacre (1863). Under "Historical Under-emphasis and Memory", I analyze why the massacre has received so little attention, particularly in Euro-American public and scholarly memory. Chapter one details what happened at Bear River, considering the inter-linked historical narratives of the California Volunteers stationed in Utah during the Civil War, the Mormon Church, Euro-American settlers and the Northwestern Shoshoni. Bringing these narratives together, I tell a more complete story of what led to the massacre and its aftermath. Chapter two then details the state of Bear River's scholarship to date and argues that certain aspects, such as the role of the Mormon Church in the massacre itself and its subsequent under-emphasis, have not been afforded enough attention. I therefore assess Mormon historiography in this section and what it conveys about Bear River's under-emphasis.

Having outlined Bear River's relative public and scholarly obscurity, my third chapter considers theoretical concepts of forgetting and what they reveal about Bear River's under-emphasis, whilst simultaneously considering what Bear River's obscurity can tell us about collective memory and its ties to forgetting. Once the relationship between collective memory and forgetting has been established, chapter four will then consider

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[57] Hämäläinen, 'Reconstructing the Great Plains', 482.

the specifics of why Bear River remains so obscure, focusing particularly on the historical role of Utah's Mormon population in this. Beginning with their initial settlement in Utah in the 1840s and considering the specific policies and leadership style of the Church, I argue that the Church was far more complicit in the massacre than has previously been estimated. Following this, I consider another reason why Bear River remains under-emphasized: the public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice. I consider why the tribe has maintained its histories privately. I also address what the conversion to Mormonism of some members of the Northwestern Shoshoni has contributed to Bear River's obscurity. Although the tribe's reasons for remaining quiet about Bear River are different from those of the Mormon Church, I argue that both groups have been complicit in the massacre's under-emphasis. Having considered the specifics, I conclude this section by considering what Bear River's under-emphasis reveals about wider debates and problems with collective memory.

Section B covers the Sand Creek Massacre (1864). In "The Topographies of Memory", I begin by detailing what happened at Sand Creek, using new archival material. I consider the role of Governor Evans in the massacre and the impact of the arrival of the Colorado Volunteers. I assess the massacre's aftermath in detail, considering the military, judicial and congressional hearings that followed the massacre. Chapter two then analyzes Sand Creek scholarship to date, arguing that the reason its historiography is considerably larger than Bear River's is because of the condemnation Sand Creek received in its immediate aftermath. Chapter three analyzes the significance of place in collective memory, considering different and juxtaposed Native and non-Native attitudes toward the meaning of place. Having established these contrasts, chapter four considers the specifics of place and memory at Sand Creek and the difficulties that ensued between Native and Euro-American groups as they attempted to memorialize the

site. Firstly, I address the search for the site by local Euro-American communities, which I then contrast with Cheyenne and Arapaho perceptions of place and memory, making particular use of transcribed Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories. To conclude this section, I analyze what culturally disparate Native and non-Native attitudes towards place reveal about the difficulties of remembering across cultures.

By evaluating these central themes of place, memory and forgetting, I demonstrate that Native and non-Native attempts to collaboratively remember, particularly within scholarship at Bear River and through the use of place at Sand Creek, highlight the problematic nature of collective memory. In the case of both massacres it has been impossible to create a cross-cultural collective memory and Native and non-Native memories remain polarized and culturally specific at shared sites of atrocity. This reminds us that it is difficult for collective memory to transcend cultural and ethnic boundaries. However, if we are to understand the historical and contemporary significance of both Bear River and Sand Creek, efforts must be made to produce a collective memory that crosses cultures and is a composite of competing and often conflicting memories. Attempts have been made at both Bear River and Sand Creek to remember across cultures and, whilst not entirely successful, significantly these attempts have enabled the Northwestern Shoshoni and the Cheyenne and Arapaho to challenge dominant historical representations of the massacre and publically reconfigure representations of the massacres according to their own histories.

Section A: The Bear River Massacre (1863)

Historical Under-emphasis and Memory

Introduction to Section A

On the morning of the 29th of January, 1863, Colonel Patrick Edward Connor and around 200 California Volunteers massacred approximately 250 Northwestern Shoshoni who were camped at Bear River Creek in what is present day Southeastern Idaho.[1] Despite the number of dead exceeding those killed in the Civil War conflict at Sand Creek, the Bear River Massacre remains relatively obscure in scholarly and public memory.

Section A will address the scholarly and historical public under-emphasis of Bear River within conventional debates about massacres in the American West. Bear River's scholarship to date has asserted that Bear River was one of the worst massacres of Indian people and should therefore be contextualized within current narratives that situate violence against American Indians as fundamental to the formation of the American West. However, this section argues that to some extent, Bear River is an anomaly compared to other massacres of the American West like Sand Creek because of the unique political and cultural environment in which it occurred. To asses Bear River's uniqueness and its subsequent under-emphasis, I assess the role of the Mormon Church and the relative public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice, two factors that are currently not analyzed in much detail in historiography. In addition it is important to note that both the Mormon Church and the Northwestern Shoshoni were, and remain, historically marginalized in American historical narratives. This section will also address what the limited discussion of Bear River tells us about forgetting and its links to collective memory in the American context. I have used the term Mormon Church to refer only to the beliefs politics and actions of the Church in Utah and Southeastern Idaho. Similarly the term Mormon historiography in this section is

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[1] Both Shoshone and Shoshoni are acceptable spellings for the name of the tribe. I have chosen to use Shoshoni following the example of the now deceased Northwestern Shoshoni tribal historian, Brigham D. Madsen.

representative of Mormon history, largely produced by historians who are members of the Mormon faith.

This section will make an important contribution to scholarship because it uses a wide variety of Mormon historiography, which has not been analyzed in any detail in previous studies of Bear River. By contextualizing these Mormon sources within Bear River's scholarship I shall produce the first detailed account of the Mormon role in Bear River. This will be shown to implicate the Mormon Church, and in particular their leaders, in the Bear River Massacre, thereby altering our understanding of the massacre. These sources include newspaper accounts from local Mormon papers, published in the aftermath of the massacre and accessed at the Latter Day Saints digital archives and the University of Utah. I also use key secondary texts by Mormon historians, such as Leonard J. Arrington and Lawrence Coates, as well as a range of articles that demonstrate the limited representation of the massacre within Mormon historiography. I detail Mormon policy and leadership in Utah and Southeastern Idaho in the lead-up to and aftermath of the massacre. I use these sources to address the multiple historical and contemporary narratives surrounding Bear River in order to analyze the reasons behind the lack of discussion of one of America's most brutal massacres of indigenous peoples.

For the study of remembrance at Bear River I contribute to scholarship by considering the massacre within the context of collective memory and forgetting. This includes an analysis of the Euro-American and Northwestern Shoshoni memorials that stand at the massacre site today. The representation of Bear River in public history contexts conveys what is remembered of the massacre publically and what is omitted or forgotten. The Northwestern Shoshoni memorials demonstrate the different way they regard the massacre from their Euro-American counterparts and importantly their

commemorations challenge and re-interpret Bear River's history. Using key theoretical texts on forgetting, including selected works by Milan Kundera and Paul Ricoeur, this section demonstrates the contested process of cross-cultural memory attempts at Bear River.

Historians have so far failed to analyze in depth the underlying reasons for the limited scholarly representation of Bear River. This I refer to as the compliance of Utah and Southeastern Idaho's Mormon population with Connor's slaughter at Bear River. In the case of Mormon compliance, the Church was relatively quiet. However, using the legal maxim of St. Thomas Moore, *qui tacet consentire videtur* (silence gives consent),[2] I argue that the Church's relative public silence in the immediate aftermath of the massacre was evidence of their compliance.[3] Mormon acquiescence in the attack is surprising considering the fraught relationship the Mormons had with the California Volunteers and the Church's relationship with Native Americans according to scripture. The Book of Mormon states that Native Americans are the Mormons "lesser blessed brethren" who are to be treated kindly and peaceably, a dogma that Utah's Mormon leader, Brigham Young, followed in his political dealings with the Native Americans. Mormon support of an attack against a peaceful encampment of Shoshoni clearly contradicted this theology. However, as evidence from the immediate aftermath of the massacre supports, I argue that the Mormon Church complied with the massacre because it offered the promise of protection against increasing Native depredations and paved the way for future Mormon settlements in Utah and Southeastern Idaho. The

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[2] More used this defence on 1st July 1535 when tried under the Treasons Act 1534.

[3] Whilst the maxim 'silence gives consent' is not without its difficulties, especially in legal terms where in general American courts have found it problematic to prove guilt by silence, admission by silence has been used in courts of law. See
A.L.C, 'Silence Gives Consent', *The Yale Law Journal of Law*, 4 (1920), 441-444. See also H. Zinn, *Disobedience and Democracy: Nine Fallacies on Law and Order* (New York*:* Random House, 1968), 119-122. Zinn argued that by being silent, American citizens were expressing their obedience. He stated that: "Obedience to bad laws" as a way of "inculcating some abstract subservience to 'the rule of law' can only encourage the already strong tendencies of citizens to bow to the power of authority" (Zinn, 119).

political and ideological conflicts the Mormons confronted over their support of the massacre meant they were not keen to emphasize their approval of Connor's actions, particularly outside Utah and Idaho, as the Church faced hostility from wider America. This is why I refer to the Mormon reaction to the attack using the maxim of 'silence gives consent'. This response from the Mormon community has greatly influenced the limited representation of Bear River in historical and contemporary scholarship. The failure of the Mormon Church, the dominant authority in Utah and Southeastern Idaho at the time of the massacre, to publically acknowledge and represent the massacre in public and scholarly memory, has severely impacted Bear River's current under-emphasis in American history and memory.

Another reason I propose for the scholarly under-emphasis of Bear River, specifically in Euro-American scholarship and public memory, concerns the relative public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice. The tribe maintains a private, tribally specific history of the massacre, often retold through generational oral histories history of Bear River being distorted by the dominant Euro-American perceptions of history. Furthermore, Northwestern Shoshoni histories of the massacre are complicated by the fact that some of the tribe converted to Mormonism in the aftermath of Bear River and remain members of the Church today. This has resulted in a complex inter-cultural relationship in the history of the massacre. Therefore, it remains a challenge, specifically within the Euro-American historiography, to analyze the impact Bear River had on the Northwestern Shoshoni community. Tribal representation often remains absent within Euro-American scholarship of the massacre. I want to make clear that, whilst the massacre has received limited attention in Euro-American public and scholarly memory, the memory of the massacre has been kept alive within Northwestern Shoshoni communities in their oral histories and their often private tribal commemoration efforts.

Shoshoni tribal historian, Brigham D. Madsen, as well as historians Kass Fleischer and Rod Miller, have all considered some reasons as to why the massacre has been under-emphasized, specifically that it has probably not received due attention because it occurred during the Civil War when the nation was preoccupied with events on the East Coast. This, however, is not an adequate explanation. By comparison, the Sand Creek Massacre, involving the slaughter of approximately 140 Cheyenne and Arapaho, also occurred during the Civil War, yet it is remembered as one of the most brutal and bloody events in Western American history. The primary concern of scholarship to date on the Bear River Massacre is not assessing reasons why the massacre has been forgotten but rather with making sure the massacre retains its proper place in American history as one of the most significant Indian massacres of the West. Bear River's under-emphasis cannot be attributed simply to the Mormon Church or the public silence of the Shoshoni. There are, of course, several complex and intertwined reasons that I shall address in the section on the state of scholarship surrounding the massacre. These include the Civil War, the limited press coverage after the massacre, the geographical location of the massacre and the lack of written evidence, including military and congressional hearings, in the aftermath of the massacre. All these factors have influenced the contemporary memorialization projects at Bear River and explain why the massacre still remains relatively absent from public Euro-American memory, especially at a national level.

Recent shifts in commemoration and memory have meant that Bear River has of late received more attention, both in scholarship and memorialization projects.[4] The growth

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[4] Current archaeological projects being carried out at the Bear River Massacre Site include investigations by the Idaho Site Historical Society under the direction of Dr. Kenneth C. Reid and University of Utah archaeological excavations. See K. C. Reid, *Research Design for Archeological Investigations at the Bear River Massacre National Historic Landmark, Idaho.* [Research Design Proposal]. Personal Communication, 19th January 2014. See also, Cannon, K. P., *Preliminary Results of Archaeological Investigations at the Bear River Massacre Site, Franklin County, Idaho.* October 2014. [Available online]: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271217229 [Accessed 24/01/17].

in interest surrounding the massacre is reflective of larger concerns about forgetting and collective memory in the American context. I shall also explore the relationship between historical under-emphasis and the impact this has had, particularly on Euro-American collective memory. To contextualize the specifics of Bear River's historical and contemporary under-emphasis, I shall situate events at Bear River within the realm of forgetting and collective memory. I argue that the massacre's obscurity evidences both the Euro-centric nature of collective memory as well as attempts by minority groups, such as the Northwestern Shoshoni, to control which aspects of their past are publically remembered. The very different, culturally specific memories of Euro-American groups and the Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River have contributed to Bear River's obscurity because of the failure to commemorate the massacre across disparate yet interlinked cultural boundaries. This has highlighted the failure of collective memory to acknowledge the cultural overlap of disparate group memories in the formation of the collective memory of a shared atrocity such as the Bear River Massacre.

I shall begin by explaining the events that led to the massacre, and what happened at Bear River and in its immediate aftermath. I shall then provide an outline of the scholarship to date, primarily assessing the key reasons leading scholars have provided for its under-emphasis. I shall then provide a theoretical section on what the massacre communicates about forgetting within the realm of American collective memory, considering in detail the Northwestern Shoshoni memorials and Euro-American memorials that currently stand at the massacre site. I shall assess how these public examples of historical understatement have influenced the public representation of Bear River, particularly in memorial form. I shall then consider how the practicalities of Mormon settlement conflicted with the Church's relationship regarding how Native Americans should be treated according to scripture. This led to what I refer to as the

Mormons' silent compliance with the massacre. I shall then address the relative public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice, specifically within contemporary debates about how the massacre should be commemorated and memorialized and in relation to the conversion to Mormonism of some of the tribal members. These arguments demonstrate why the Bear River Massacre of 1863 has been significantly underemphasized in popular and academic scholarship and in American public memory.

Chapter One: What Happened at Bear River

Mass Migration into Shoshoni Territory

The Bear River Massacre took place between 6am and 10am on January the 29th 1863

in present-day Franklin County, Idaho. The reports of the Northwestern Shoshoni killed

in the massacre made little distinction between men, women and children and the

accounts placed the number of Native dead anywhere between 200 and 300. The most

reliable reckoning of those killed was from the meticulous Shoshoni tribal historian,

Brigham D. Madsen, who suggested between 250 and 280 Northwestern Shoshoni were

massacred by a force of approximately 200 Union-affiliated California Volunteers

under the command of Colonel Patrick E. Connor, making Bear River one of the largest

Western Indian massacres.[1] The Bear River Massacre was the result of a series of

complex and intertwining factors that included increasing tension between the Mormon

settlers in Utah and Southeastern Idaho and federal authority, specifically Connor and

the Volunteers; a difficult and declining relationship between the Mormon Church and

the Northwestern Shoshoni; the increasing pressure emigrant settlements placed on

Shoshoni land; and the advance of the Civil War and the arrival of Connor and his

Volunteers into Utah in 1861. To tell the story of what happened at Bear River I have

primarily made use of key secondary texts on the massacre including Brigham Madsen,

The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre (1985) and Rod Miller, *Massacre*

at Bear River, First, Worst, Forgotten (2008). I believe these to be the best

chronological accounts of events leading to the slaughter of the Northwestern Shoshoni.

However, to supplement these secondary texts I have used quite extensively a recently-

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[1] B.D. Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 191-192. The California Volunteers were a unit of Union-affiliated soldiers based in Utah from 1861 at the request of Abraham Lincoln. Their objective was to protect the Overland Mail Route from Confederate interceptions and Indian raids during Civil War conflict.

resurfaced account of a soldier under the command of Connor who witnessed the massacre.

The Northwestern Shoshoni are part of the Shoshoni Nation, which in the mid-1800s consisted of approximately 17,000 people.[2] At that time, they were a nomadic tribe who spent their winter months in the Cache Valley region of Southeastern Idaho and Northern Utah. Because of its rich land and plentiful game, Cache Valley was used especially by Euro-American fur trappers from the early 1800s. By the mid 1800s, Euro-American footfall onto Shoshoni land had increased significantly. The California Gold Rush in the 1850s meant new trails were established throughout Shoshoni territory, which placed increasing pressure on tribal resources.[3] The Gold Rush introduced a difficult era in the relationship between the Indians, Mormons and Gold Rush miners. Madsen wrote: "The advent of the forty-niners [gold miners] introduced a complex new dimension to Indian relations in the Great Basin."[4] This was because the large numbers of gold miners were merely passing through Shoshoni territory and had little regard for the land on which they grazed stock and put down temporary encampments, often leaving the land of both the nomadic Shoshoni and the permanent Mormon settlements in dire condition. The biggest invasion onto Northwestern Shoshoni land, however, was the arrival of Mormon settlers. They quickly established themselves in Salt Lake Valley, Utah, in 1847 under the leadership of Brigham Young who was governor of Utah Territory from 1851-1857. Escaping religious intolerance and the failure of the previous colony, Nauvoo, in Illinois, Young wanted to establish a new Mormon Zion beyond the control of the US government. In her study of the Bear

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[2] R. Miller, *Massacre at Bear River, First, Worst, Forgotten* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 2008), 12.
[3] Emigration of people travelling on the California trail is estimated at 165,000 people and 1 million animals by 1857. Travel to Oregon between 1842 and 1852 is estimated at 18,287 people and 50,000 animals. See, K. Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 15.
[4] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 39.

River Massacre, Kass Fleischer stated: "The Mormon incursion into Utah had the profoundest impact on the Northwestern Shoshoni, who lived closest to Salt Lake City and whose lands straddled the forty-second parallel."[5] Similarly, Madsen described Mormon settlement on Shoshoni territory as "a major intrusion into Indian lands…."[6] Mormon settler communities had a complex relationship with the Shoshoni. According to prophecy they believed the Native people they encountered were their dark sinful brothers who were to be saved and restored to goodness by their white brethren.[7] The religious responsibility Young felt towards the Native Americans meant that, in the early days of settlement, he believed it to be Mormon duty to follow a policy of "feed not fight" in relation to the Native Americans they encountered. I shall consider this theologically inspired policy in more detail later in the section. Problematically, Young's ideology of "feed not fight" failed to translate into a working policy as Mormon settlement continued to encroach on Shoshoni land. Tension concerning Shoshoni resources mounted when Utah became an incorporated territory of the United States on September the 9th, 1850, and Young was made governor of the territory a year later. Young began sending Mormons east and west of Salt Lake City in an attempt to create a Mormon majority in an area that was now under federal control. By this point the primary concern of the Mormon settlers was ensuring their dominance over the land, rather than maintaining peaceful relationships with the Shoshoni.

The Utah War began in March 1857. Mormon isolationism from the rest of America, particularly regarding their cultural, political and religious tendencies, was mistrusted by the government and the Mormons patriotic loyalty to the United States was often

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[5] Fleisher, *The Bear River Massacre*, 25.
[6] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 28.
[7] *The Book of Mormon: Fourth European Edition.* (Liverpool: S.W. Richards, 1854), Alma 3:8-9. The Book of Mormon portrays the Lamanites as the usually dark-skinned, wicked rivals to the lighter-skinned, righteous Nephites, both of whom are portrayed as descendants of Israelites who traveled to the New World by boat circa 600 BC. To the Mormons, redemption of the Native Americans (the Lamanites) was a prophecy to be fulfilled and a scripture to be vindicated.

questioned. President Buchanan wanted to solve what he regarded as the "Mormon problem" at a time when paranoia over secession was heightened within the federal government, which was already facing the insubordination of Kansas and the southern states. Buchanan received word that several federal appointees in Utah Territory had been mistreated by the Mormons. Young, however, believed the Mormons had been victimized by the federal government who, he thought, had arrogantly told the Church how to live and behave culturally and religiously. Young's position was perhaps understandable considering that the Mormons had already experienced defiance and persecution from the federal government in Nauvoo. The federal appointees began to leave Utah, claiming mistreatment. This worried Buchanan because it meant he was losing his political grip on Utah. To deal with his concern, Buchanan sent 2,500 troops into the territory without informing Governor Young of his decision. The approach of Buchanan's army in what became known as the "Utah Expedition" was met with fear by the Mormons and on August the 1st 1857 they mustered their territorial militia, the Nauvoo Legion, and sought to arm them with guns and ammunition. Both the federal troops and the Mormons were given orders not to shoot. From the Mormon perspective, avoiding gunshot was essential if they wanted to prevent the loss of further support from the American public. However, later violent actions carried out by the Mormons would belie their peaceful intent. In 1858, Utah's newly appointed territorial governor, Alfred Cumming, accepted an invitation to address the mounting tension between the Mormons and the federal troops in Utah. In the spring of 1858, Buchanan's "peace commission" arrived in Utah, bearing a pardon for the Mormon people. On June 12, 1858, Young accepted the pardon and life for the Mormons in the territory returned more or less to what it had been preceding the war. US troops were able to enter Utah in relative peace and establish Camp Floyd forty miles south of Salt Lake City. Although the Utah War has been referred to as "Buchanan's blunder", the bloodless campaign

signified the tense and suspicious relationship between the federal government and the Mormon Church.

Coinciding with the Utah War was the infamous Mountain Meadows Massacre which occurred at the height of federal and Mormon tensions on September 11th 1857. The Fancher emigrant party was making a journey from Missouri to Los Angeles when, in Southeastern Idaho, 140 members were killed by Utah Territorial Militia and a band of Shoshoni Indians. The Fancher party was attacked by Mormons because of their refusal to stop their cattle grazing on Mormon land and because of what Madsen described as their "flagrant anti-Mormon outbursts." Madsen provided a good summary of the massacre: "A band of Indians, encouraged by the local Mormons, had already launched an attack on the Fanchers while they were camped at Mountain Meadows. When this assault was not successful, the Indians turned to their Mormon friends, who, afraid that news would reach California that the Saints were helping the Indians attack emigrant trains, joined in a well-planned massacre of the party." Only 17 children of the original 140 members survived the massacre.[8]

Importantly and problematically for the Mormons, events at Mountain Meadows convinced citizens on the East Coast that the Mormons were uniting with the Indian "savages" against harmless emigrants, especially when, as Madsen reported, the Mormon people adopted a "cloak of silence" regarding the carnage. Madsen wrote: "The Mountain Meadows Massacre convinced many Americans of the fanaticism of the Utah Saints and of their propensity to turn savage Indians against helpless emigrants."[9] The combination of both the Utah War and the Mountain Meadows Massacre provided the proof American citizens needed that the Mormons were disloyal, often violent, traitors. The Mormons, however, saw things differently. In a letter to the Shoshoni chief

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[8] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 81, 82.
[9] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 82.

Washakie, dated November 2nd, 1857, Young explained his intentions to the Indians in his role as Superintendent of Indian Affairs:

> Some of the whites in the United States are very angry at the Mormons because we wish to worship the Great Spirit in the way which we believe he wants us to and have more than one wife, and they have sent some soldiers to this country to try and make us get drunk, to abuse women, and to swear and dispute and quarrel, as many of them do.
>
> Now we don't want to fight them, if they will only go away and not try and abuse and kill us when we are trying to do right. But if they try to kill us we shall defend ourselves but we do not want you [Indians] to fight on the side of those wicked men….
>
> I do not want you to fight the Americans not fight us for them, for we can take care of ourselves. I am your Brother. B.Y.[10]

This letter demonstrated that the Mormons believed the poor treatment they received from the federal government was unjust and unfounded. Importantly, although acting in his role of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, this letter also demonstrated Young's peaceable attitude towards the Shoshoni. Instead of acting violently in retaliation for actions carried out by the Shoshoni at Mountain Meadows, Young behaved diplomatically.

However, Young's peaceful diplomacy in relation to the Indians by no means reflected the overwhelming opinion amongst the Mormon community towards their "lesser

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[10] Young quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 83.

blessed brethren" in the late 1850s and into the 1860s. The Shoshoni had begun raiding

and vandalizing Mormon farms with growing intensity because greater emigration and

settlement on their land had destroyed much of their game and natural resources,

leaving them in an increasingly impoverished position and with growing resentment

towards Mormon communities.[11] Shoshoni raids on Mormon settlements multiplied

with the development of the Overland Mail Route in 1858. This saw heavier traffic

through Shoshoni territory and, by 1860, as Fleischer stated, Cache Valley had become:

"a major center for red-white conflict in the West."[12] The region's increasing violence

exacerbated the already complicated relationships between the Mormon settlers, the

Northwestern Shoshoni and the federal government. These relationships became even

more strained with the onslaught of the Civil War in 1861, highlighting the pattern of

suspicion and mistrust between the different groups in the region.

The Civil War, the Volunteers and Violence in the West

The Civil War ushered a wave of militarism into the western section of the nation.

President Abraham Lincoln was concerned about the potentially wealthy state of

California seceding from the Union, especially since gold had been discovered there in

1849. For their part, the Mormons played an extremely limited military role in the Civil

War. Young did not want to lose manpower or money to a government that he believed

had greatly mistreated him and his followers. Instead, Young chose to remain equivocal

in his loyalty to the Union. In an article for the *New York Times* regarding the

Mormons' engagement in the Civil War, John G. Turner wrote: "Young was careful to

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[11] An example of the desperation of the Shoshoni can be found in the account of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, James D. Doty's, report when he visited the Shoshoni in Cache Valley in July 1862: "To say they are 'destitute' but feeble describes their situation … repeatedly I saw their children, lying on their bellies on the margins of the streams, cropping the young grass. I hope I shall receive the goods from the Dept. in time to clothe their nakedness before the snow falls and winter commences." (T. Hatch, *The Blue, the Grey, and The Red: Indian Campaigns of the Civil War* (Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2003), 32).
[12] Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre,* 40.

tread the line between dissent and treason; in October he declared that Utah was 'firm

for the Constitution'".[13]

After the Civil War began, federal troops that had been in Utah since the end of the

Utah War in 1858 left to fight on the East Coast. In his chapter on the Bear River

Massacre in *The Blue, the Grey and the Red: Indian Campaigns of the Civil War*

(2003), Thom Hatch pointed out that, when the regular army was stationed in the East,

Utah and the surrounding regions were left virtually unprotected. This, wrote Hatch, did

"not go unnoticed by the Indians."[14] Indian attacks on settler communities and the

Overland Mail Route increased during this period, heightening tension between settlers

and Indians. The Union Army therefore wanted help protecting the mail and telegraph

routes that crossed Utah. Union forces had little choice but to ask Mormon troops for

assistance. Turner wrote: "Young was all too happy to oblige, relishing the fact that the

Army needed his assistance."[15] On May 1st, 1862, Capt. Lot Smith led a cavalry

company of just over 100 volunteers from Salt Lake City east into the mountains.

However, it soon became clear to Young that Mormon engagement in the Civil War

would not offer any form of reconciliation between the Mormons and the federal

government. In August 1862, when the Army asked for a re-enlistment of Smith's

company, Young refused, after receiving continual rejection of Utah statehood from the

federal government. The Mormons' limited engagement in the Civil War left serious

doubts among the American people regarding Mormon loyalty to their country.

Abraham Lincoln, still requiring Union protection in the area, requested that California

supply one regiment of infantrymen and five companies of cavalry to guard the

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[13] J.G. Turner, 'The Mormons Sit Out the Civil War,' *The New York Times*. 1 May 2012 [Online].
Available at https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/01/the-mormons-sit-out-the-civil-war/?_r=0
[Accessed 24/01/17].
[14] Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey and the Red*, 28.
[15] Turner, 'The Mormons Sit Out the Civil War'.

Overland Mail Route in 1861 and keep a watchful eye on the Mormons. Lincoln sent

the California Volunteers and the man in charge was Colonel Connor, whose name in

time would become synonymous with the massacre at Bear River. Connor was born in

Ireland in 1820 and came to New York as a young boy. He joined the army in 1839 and

served on the Western frontier before settling in Stockton, California. In *Soldiers of the

Overland,* Fred B. Rogers described Connor as someone who "courted rather than

avoided danger."[16] Whilst Rogers' biography of Connor presented the man in a

moderately favorable light, considering the terrible deeds he carried out, Brigham D.

Madsen described Connor as a much more aggressive, authoritarian figure in his

biography, *Glory Hunter: A Biography of Patrick Edward Connor* (1990). For Madsen,

Connor was a shrewd but ruthless frontiersman, obsessed with his own glory and

power. In the opening of his biography, Madsen introduced Connor: "He was … a

businessman … a staunch anti-Mormon, and the military leader of one of the largest

Indian massacres on record."[17] Connor despised the Mormon community, describing

them in a letter to his superior as a "community of traitors, murderers and whores…."[18]

In Utah, the Volunteers were regarded as rowdy, heavy-drinking frontiersmen. As

Madsen put it in an interview with Kass Fleischer: "These were not disciplined

soldiers.… Connor and his men did their best to discipline them, but they were gold

miners."[19] These men resented being in the West, protecting mail routes, when the

majority of the Civil War action was occurring on the East Coast. Connor and his men

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[16] F. B. Rogers, *Soldiers of the Overland: Being an Account of the Services of General Patrick Edward Connor and his Volunteers in the Old West* (San Francisco: The Grabhorn Press, 1938), 18. An assessment of the general military behavior of the volunteers is provided in a written complaint from Camp Douglas about Connor's second in command, Major Edward McGarry, described him: "Colonel McGarry was 'drunk' most of the time. They accused him of such nonsense as ordering Company K to dismount on the desert, lie down in the road and go to sleep, saying he was leaving them to go out and fight Indians", quoted in Madsen, *Shoshoni Frontier,* 166.
[17] Madsen, Glory Hunter, 1
[18] This is a commonly used quotation to describe Connor's attitude towards Mormons. See, Madsen, *Shoshoni Frontier,* 169, Miller, *Massacre at Bear River* 132, Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre,* 52.
[19] Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre,* 151.

were so displeased with their assignment that they went as far as to pledge $30,000 of their pay to cover the cost of transporting them to Virginia and Connor contacted the head of the Union's armies, General Henry Helleck, offering to send his infantry troops East at their own expense. The request was denied. The frustration of the Volunteers made them hungry for some means of demonstrating their capacity to fight and the hostility felt towards the Shoshoni offered them the opportunity to prove their worth.

The contributing factors behind Connor's and the Volunteer's heated violence against the Indians in Utah Territory were, I believe, threefold. Firstly, the Volunteers sought Civil War glory in this isolated section of the nation and killing Indians, who were regarded with increasing disdain by settler communities, was a likely way to achieve this. Secondly, Connor's staunch anti-Mormon stance meant the Colonel was determined to demonstrate his dominance through violence and aggression as opposed to diplomacy. Lastly, Connor believed in the Union. In *Glory Hunter,* Madsen wrote: "From his [Connor's] point of view and in the fight to save the Union, however, he was also determined to follow his orders as a competent military commander and keep the mail lines and western trails open. To accomplish that task he chose to strike terror into the hearts of the Shoshoni from his very first expeditions against them, convinced that this strategy would discourage at once any notion of a prolonged conflict and would ultimately save the lives of both his soldiers and the Indians. Any charge that his tactics were harsh would have brought only disdain from him and most westerners who vociferously supported him as a great Indian fighter."[20] By protecting the Overland Mail Route from hostile Indian raids, Connor and his men no doubt believed they were doing their duty to the Union in the West and, as Madsen suggested, they believed they were preventing long-term violence in the region.

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[20] Madsen, *Glory Hunter,* 63.

The arrival of the Volunteers increased violence within an environment that was already extremely volatile. The Shoshoni, often provoked by Connor and in a desperate position, retaliated with violence against the Volunteers who had indiscriminately attacked their people. Connor gave orders to his second-in-command, Major Edward McGarry, with respect to any hostile Indians captured: "If they resist you will destroy them. In no instance will you molest women and children…. If other hostiles are delivered to the troops by friendly Indians, you will (being satisfied of their guilt) immediately hang them, and leave their bodies thus exposed as an example of what evildoers may expect while I command in this district. You will also destroy every male Indian whom you may encounter in the vicinity of the late massacres. This course may seem harsh and severe but I desire that the order may be rigidly enforced, as I am satisfied that in the end it will prove the most merciful."[21] Connor's statement to McGarry made little distinction between hostile and other Indians. He appeared to be carefully suggesting that all male Indians should be killed, whether guilty or not.

A ruthless fighter, McGarry took Connor's orders literally and was praised by the Colonel for his Indian killing. In November 1862, reports reached Connor that an emigrant boy, Ruben Van Orman, had been captured by Indians in 1860 with his sisters, who had since died of starvation. Connor assigned to his second-in-command, McGarry, the duty of returning the boy to the Volunteers' encampment at Fort Douglas. McGarry arrived in Cache Valley on the 22nd November and was confronted by Chief Bear Hunter. McGarry ordered his men to "kill every Indian they could see."[22] The Volunteers killed three Shoshoni in a short battle with Bear Hunter's band, after which Bear Hunter told McGarry that the boy would not be returning to camp for four days.

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[21] Madsen, *Glory Hunter,* 62.
[22] Quoted in Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey and the Red,* 37.

This outraged McGarry who took Bear Hunter and four others hostage until the boy was returned. The next day Van Orman was given to McGarry who took him back to Connor's camp at Fort Douglas. Violence came to a head between the Shoshoni and the Volunteers a little over a week after Ruben Van Orman had been returned by McGarry. On December 4th McGarry executed four Shoshoni at Bear River Ferry after it was reported they had stolen emigrant cattle. He sighted the Shoshoni's encampment lying across the Malad Valley in Southeastern Idaho and, capturing four Indians, he sent word to the camp, following Connor's orders, that he would shoot the prisoners if the stolen stock was not returned to him by noon the next day. The stock was not returned and the Indian encampment packed up and left. McGarry, "true to his word" killed the hostages.[23]

This indiscriminate violence was shocking, but vicious events in the West were monitored less closely by the federal government than events in other areas of the nation, partly because of the geographical and political distance from Washington at which these events took place. These confrontations also occurred during the Civil War when the government, media and general American population were far more concerned with events on the East Coast. Furthermore, Euro-American ethnocentric attitudes meant that attacks against Indians were not deemed as significant as, say, an attack against a Euro-American community such as the Fancher party at Mountain Meadows. Fleischer proposed that the attacks carried out by Connor and his men were "silently consented" to by Lincoln whose primary concern was protecting the mail routes and keeping California in the Union rather than disciplining the Union volunteers.[24]

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[23] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West,* 256.
[24] Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre,* 52.

Massacre at Bear River

As revenge for the executions at Bear River Ferry, ten emigrants were killed by Shoshoni raiders in January 1863. Connor used this attack as a final justification for the massacre of the Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River. Having determined the location of the tribal encampment, Connor was convinced that the Shoshoni would hear about an impending attack and scatter throughout the countryside. Two Shoshoni leaders who made a lucky escape from the massacre at Bear River were Chiefs Pocatello and Sagwitch. Pocatello, hearing of a possible attack, moved his band out of harm's way.[25] To address this challenge, Connor sent out a detachment of 72 men on the 22nd of January 1863. Two days later Connor moved out with 220 men.[26] The plan was to march through the night so as to go undetected and then rest during the day. It was a slow march, carried out in sub-zero temperatures, with the soldiers being led by notorious Mormon guide, Orrin Porter Rockwell.[27] On the morning of the 29th January, McGarry and the first cavalry units stood on the bluffs overlooking the Shoshoni encampment and, according to reports, engaged in attack prematurely after being taunted by the Shoshoni. In his official report of the massacre Connor noted: "On my arrival on the field I found that Major McGarry had dismounted the cavalry and was engaged with the Indians who had sallied out of their hiding places … and with fiendish

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[25] Pocatello had received an advance notice of the US army troops stationed at Fort Douglas under Connor and pre-supposing violence from the volunteers he moved his band out of harms way. Chief Sagwitch survived the Bear River Massacre and went on to lead his Shoshoni followers to convert to Mormonism. He was instrumental in founding the Washakie colony; a Mormon influenced Shoshoni colony in Northern Utah. For a biography on Sagwitch's life see, S. Christensen, *Chief Sagwitch: Shoshone Chief and Mormon Elder* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1999).

[26] Connor's force included approximately 300 soldiers, two thirds of whom participated in the battle and subsequent massacre. The total force included 220 men from Companies A, H, K, and M of the 2nd Cavalry, California Volunteers, with ten officers and accompanying staff, Isaac L. Gibbs, a civilian marshal with arrest warrants for three Shoshone chiefs, and Porter Rockwell, a Mormon guide. A second unit under Captain Hoyt included 40 men of Company K, 3rd Infantry, California Volunteers, two mountain howitzers commanded by a lieutenant, a mounted escort of 12 men detailed from the 2nd Cavalry, and 15 wagons carrying 20 days' rations for the men and horses. Reid, '*Research Design for Archeological Investigations.*'

[27] Orrin Porter Rockwell was regarded as being among one of the most famous and violent frontiersmen of his day. As a guide to Connor and his men, Rockwell was instrumental in helping locate the Shoshoni encampment before the massacre. For a biography of Rockwell, see H. Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God/Son of Thunder* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993).

malignity waved the scalps of white women and challenged the troops to battle, at the same time attacking them."[28] Not expecting the attack, the Shoshoni had considerably fewer arms and less ammunition than the Volunteers. Madsen wrote that the Shoshoni suffered close conflict with Connor and his men, who took advantage of their hand-held revolvers and a "generous supply of ammunition." The Shoshoni fought back with what they had, which was very little. According to Rod Miller they possessed insignificant weaponry, using bows and arrows, tomahawks and knives against the guns of the Volunteers.[29] The Shoshoni were driven down into the ravine by the soldiers and those that tried to escape by jumping into the river were quickly shot down. The *San Francisco Bulletin* described the horror at the scene of the massacre: "The carnage presented in the ravine was horrible. Warrior piled on warrior, horses mangled and wounded in every conceivable form, with here and there a squaw and a papoose who had been accidentally killed."[30] This was probably the most accurate account of the massacre as this paper was the only one to have a reporter at the scene. In his notes to *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre,* Madsen wrote that the other accounts of the massacre that exist are mostly "copycat reproductions of the *San Francisco Bulletin* and Connor's official report".[31]

Many family groups of Shoshoni died in the massacre. However, the numbers of Northwestern Shoshoni killed vary in different accounts. Connor's report did not distinguish between men, women and children. He stated: "We found 224 bodies on the field, among which were those of the chiefs Bear Hunter and Sagwich (*sic*), and Leight. How many more were killed than stated I am unable to say, as the condition of the

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[28] For Colonel P.E. Connor's full and official report of the massacre see, N. Hart, *Bear River Massacre* (Logan UT: Cache Valley Publishing Company, 1982) 81-84.
[29] For limited details on Shoshoni weaponry, see Madsen, *Shoshoni Frontier,* 188 and Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 104.
[30] Quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 189.
[31] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 256.

wounded rendered their immediate removal a necessity. I was unable to examine the field."[32] Madsen originally estimated the number of Northwestern Shoshoni dead at 250, this number being drawn from three sources he regarded as reliable. Firstly, after the massacre, Indian Agent James Doty spoke to the Shoshoni who reported their dead at 255. Secondly, Peter Maughan, a leader of the Mormon Church, to whom Madsen referred as "careful and accurate", reported that there were about 120 men killed and 90 women and children, bringing Maughan's total to 210. Lastly, Madsen refers to the writing of the clerk of Brigham Young. The clerk reported that Colonel Connor and his men had killed 250 men, women and children. These reports meant Madsen estimated the number of Northwestern Shoshoni dead at 250.[33] He later suggested he had been too conservative in his estimates and claimed up to 280 Northwestern Shoshoni had been massacred.[34] After the massacre, members of surrounding Mormon encampments helped the soldiers wounded in the attack. Whilst some Mormon settlers were horrified by the brutality of the massacre, the majority believed the Volunteers had protected them from dangerous Shoshoni raiders. Even though Shoshoni raids intensified for a period, the Bear River Massacre had the intended effect: Shoshoni raids eventually decreased because the tribe's cultural and political strength was substantially weakened.

In 1997, new primary historical evidence regarding what happened at Bear River resurfaced and in 1999 American Western historian, Harold Schindler, produced an article entitled, "The Bear River Massacre: New Historical Evidence," which was first published in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. The publication contained an eyewitness account of the massacre in the form of a manuscript and a map produced by Sergeant William L. Beach of Company K, the California Volunteers, 16 days after the massacre at Bear River. Beach's report primarily focused on what happened during the actual

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[32] Hart, *Bear River Massacre,* 81-84.
[33] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 192.
[34] Fleischer, The *Bear River Massacre,* 157.

engagement at Bear River and he provided no account of the lead-up to the massacre. If Beach had written an account of the lead-up, it would have been valuable in determining if the Volunteers entering the battlefield were fully aware that they would be carrying out a massacre as opposed to engaging in a battle. However, Beach's report has remained one of the very few sources of primary evidence. Schindler described Beach's report as fundamental to our understanding of what happened that day, claiming: "Bear River began as a battle but it certainly descended into a massacre." Beach's report came to light in February 1997 after Jack Irvine of Eureka, California, read an article in the San Francisco Chronicle where he learnt of Brigham Madsen's text, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre.* Irvine informed Madsen that he had Beach's map and brought it to the attention of Utah historian, Schindler. [35] Beach's account and map provided new and crucial evidence regarding the violent and unprovoked nature of the Volunteers' attack, pointing to the conclusion that it was a massacre not a battle. Beach gave evidence of the movement and formation of the Volunteers on the massacre site as well as estimates of numbers of Shoshoni and Volunteer soldiers killed at Bear River. The language used by Beach to describe the engagement at Bear River leaves little doubt that he regarded the attack as a massacre. Beach described how the volunteers broke through Shoshoni defences: "Capt. George F.

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[35] H. Schindler, 'The Bear River Massacre: New Historical Evidence', in K. L. Alford (ed.), *Civil War Saints*, (Salt Lake City: Desert Books, 2012), 227-235. The date is unknown but Ephraim D. Dickson III, produced an addendum to Schindler's article. Dickson stated that since the publication of Schindler's article much has been discovered about the life of Sergeant Beach. Relating to the Bear River Massacre: In 1862, Beach enlisted in Company K, second California Volunteer Cavalry. In July 1862, the second California Cavalry joined Connor's men as they marched over the Sierra Nevada Mountains, bound for Utah Territory. Sergeant Beach's company was assigned to Major McGarry as they travelled north to punish the Shoshoni who had attacked an emigrant train near Gravely Ford. Beach's company participated in several later campaigns, including the attack at Bear River. Dickson wrote; "Sergeant Beach rarely spoke about his army experience, saying only that he remained haunted by what he had witnessed during his Indian fighting service in Utah Territory. That he had been a participant at Bear River and had drawn a map of the battlefield was a surprise to his descendants", Schindler 234. Jack Irvine obtained the four pages from the estate of Richard Harville, a prominent Californian and a descendant of Joseph Russ, an early 1850s overland pioneer to Humboldt County", Schindler 230. According to Schindler's report Harville had researched the massacre and although he determined that Joseph Russ had been alive when the regiment was organized, Harville could not find any connection between the Russ and Beach to indicate how the manuscript ended up in Russ's possession, Schindler 231, 324.

J. Price then gave the command forward to their respective companies after which no officer was heeded or needed. The boys were fighting Indians and intended to whip them. It was a free fight and every man on his own hook." Beach continued: "with a deafening yell the infuriated volunteers with one impulse made a rush down the steep banks into the very midst when the work of death commenced in earnest." Beach's report provided a sense of the utter chaos and disorder amongst the Volunteers: "No distinction was made between officers and privates, each fought where he thought he was most needed."[36]

It is likely that Beach's numbers of Volunteers and Northwestern Shoshoni killed are more reliable than those provided by Connor in his report of the massacre, as Connor may well have exaggerated numbers to emphasize his victory. Schindler wrote that Beach: "confirmed the magnitude of the massacre when he cites the enemy loss at 'two hundred and eighty killed.'" This estimate coincides exactly with Madsen's reconsidered number of 280 Shoshoni dead. However, as Schindler pointed out, these numbers would not have included those Shoshoni who were shot in an attempt to escape across the river and the bodies that were swept away and could not be counted. Beach puts the number of California Volunteers dead at fourteen, with 42 injured. [37] Nonetheless, Beach's figures of those killed, as with the approximations of other scholars, can only be regarded as estimates. We do not know enough about his character or motives to know if Beach presented a realistic figure or if exaggerated numbers.

However, the value of Beach's report as geographic evidence cannot be over-emphasized. Both report and map carefully record the position of each Volunteer unit as well as locating the Indian camp and the position of the Shoshoni at the massacre site.

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[36] Schindler, 'The Bear River Massacre', 231, 232. Other examples of the uncoordinated chaotic nature of the fight from Beach's report: "When across [the river] they took a double quick until they arrived at the place they occupy on the drawing they pitched in California style every man for himself and the Devil for the Indians", Schindler 231.
[37] Schindler, 'The Bear River Massacre', 231, 232.

Beach also recorded the course of the river at the time of the massacre and pinpointed the soldiers' journey across it on his map. As an eyewitness account, Beach's report has much value in determining the location and layout of the site and evidence of what happened that day. Surprisingly, however, it has received limited scholarly attention since its 1999 publication. Idaho State Archaeologist Ken Reid, in his archaeological design framework for an excavation of the massacre site, does not make use of Beach's report, despite its value as a primary source. The validity of the Beach report as primary evidence that could help determine the exact location of the massacre site has, I believe, been under-emphasized. It was only in 2014 that the map was used in preliminary archaeological investigations at Bear River by the Idaho Historical Society.[38] However, the map formed only a small part of their investigations, since they chose instead to rely upon a 1926 map that was drafted for the Mormon women's organization, Daughters of the Pioneers, because of its relevance in providing a number of landscape features that are identifiable today.[39]

This is especially interesting when compared with the amount of attention a similar map of the Sand Creek Massacre, created by Cheyenne Warrior George Bent, received in determining the location and the subsequent NPS memorialization of Sand Creek. It is intriguing to compare Beach's documents with those of George Bent. Bent's map was influential in determining the location of the Sand Creek Massacre Site for both the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Sand Creek Massacre descendants. I argue that Bent's map received far more attention than Beach's because it formed an integral part of tribal and NPS inter-disciplinary methods in the search for the Sand Creek Massacre Site. Since Bent's map was regarded as valuable evidence in determining the location of

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[38] In 2014 the Idaho Historical Society in conjunction with Utah State University Archeological services, the Spatial Data Collection Analysis Visualization lab and the geology department of Utah State University began to identify physical remains of the Bear River Massacre. The aim of this excavation will be a more conclusive interpretation of the events of 29, January, 1863.
[39] Cannon, *Preliminary Results of Archaeological Investigations at the Bear River Massacre Site.*

the massacre for both the Cheyenne and Arapaho, the NPS was essentially forced to consider its value as reliable geographical evidence. I therefore argue that the scholarly impact of Beach's documents has been significantly limited because it has not received the same amount of attention as Bent's map.

Madsen's 1985 work, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*, predated the discovery of Beach's map and document. However, Madsen told Schindler that he believed Beach's report could help solve some of the mysteries surrounding the Bear River Massacre, such as the exact location of the site, and the movement of troops. Importantly, Madsen stated that Beach's report could "emphasize and strengthen efforts of the NPS to bring recognition, at last, to the site of this tragic event, which was the bloodiest killing of a group of Native Americans in the history of the American far west."[40] Madsen's assertion of the validity and value of Beach's report as a source that would bring local and national attention to the Bear River Massacre was reiterated by Rod Miller in his 2008 text, *Massacre at Bear River: First, Worst, Forgotten.* Miller briefly referenced Schindler's report: "Bear River began as a battle, but it certainly disintegrated into a massacre." Miller wrote that, combined with the efforts of Shoshoni massacre descendants, Schindler's report helped establish the dedication of "Bear River Massacre Site" in 2002.[41]

The Bear River Massacre ended at around 10am, after which some accounts tell of the rape of Northwestern Shoshoni women by the Volunteers. Rape of Shoshoni women is not an aspect of aggression that I have chosen to analyze in depth in this chapter for the following reasons.[42] Firstly, there are limited reports addressing rape after the massacre

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[40] Schindler, 'The Bear River Massacre, 231.
[41] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 153.
[42] For detailed and concise study of rape and warfare, particularly amongst Euro-American cultures see, S. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1975). Brownmiller argued that rape is not a crime of lust but a crime of violence that is inextricably linked to conquest, power and domination. Her analysis focused primarily on European cultures where sexual

and these are hard to cross-reference and verify. This is in keeping with how the history of rape in war and conflict has been marginalized. For example, in her seminal study on rape and warfare, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975), Susan Brownmiller asserted: "An aggressor nation rarely admits to rape."[43] Secondly, one author on the Bear River Massacre, Kass Fleischer, has already attempted to address the issue of rape in her study, *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History.* Her success in dealing with this issue has been debated by critics of her work.[44] Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, is the fact that Shoshoni massacre descendants have been very quiet about the issue of rape concerning their relatives. Since there is a possibility that current Shoshoni could be descended from rape, their silence is understandable. In his research design for the planned excavation of the Bear River Massacre Site in 2014, Kenneth C. Reid considers massacre descendant May Timbimboo Parry's denial of rape at the massacre when she was interviewed by Fleischer. Reid stated: "Perhaps a more ethnographically attuned interviewer would have sensed why a massacre descendent might not want to claim descent from a California rapist."[45] I believe that the issue of rape at Bear River deserves a full-length analysis, either written by Shoshoni massacre descendants or at least involving their detailed input. I shall, however, provide a brief account, based on work done by other scholars on the Bear River Massacre.

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violence is committed on the bodies of the defeated nation's women with the intention of producing intimidation and demoralization in those that had been conquered. Brownmiller stated: "As a man conquers the world, so too he conquers the female." Brownmiller, *Against Our Will,* 37-8, 289.

[43] Brownmiller, *Against Our Will,* 145.

[44] Fleischer never managed to prove that rape happened after Bear River and relied primarily on accounts from Mormon diaries that Madsen used in his work, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre.* In his review on Fleischer's work John Barnes wrote: "The brutality at Bear River cannot be overstated-men, women and children died there, and eyewitness testimony is replete with horrific details. But Fleischer ignores evidence that no rape took place that morning; she insists that rape did happen yet offers no direct evidence to support her claim. That is not to say that soldiers did or did not rape Shoshoni women at Bear River, only that Fleischer seems more concerned with shoehorning available information into her own agenda than she does with drawing conclusions from that information." J. B. Barnes, 'Review of *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History* by K. Fleischer', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 36, 3 (2005), 389-390: 389.

[45] Reid, '*Research Design for Archeological Investigations*', 7.

The limited reports of rape relating to the Bear River Massacre all come from Euro-American sources. It is Madsen's work, both in the *Bear River Massacre and the Shoshoni Frontier* and *Glory Hunter*, that most clearly evidenced reports of rape. Madsen wrote: "After the slaughter ceased, Colonel Connor appeared to show a callous disregard for what happened to the innocent women and children left at the Shoshoni camp. Although he was understandably concerned about his soldiers, he allowed a breakdown of discipline when his men brutally raped Indian women during the process of burning the tipis."[46] Madsen referenced the accounts of Mormon men who bore witness to the aftermath of the massacre. Peter Maughan, a leader of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Cache Valley, reported to Young after the massacre: "Bro. Israel J. Clark has just returned from visiting the Battlefield and gave the most sickening accounts of inhuman acts of the Soldiers, as related to him by the squaws that still remain on the ground.… They killed the wounded by knocking them in the head with an axe and then commenced to ravish the Squaws which was done to the very height of brutality … they affirm that some were used in the act of dying from their wounds."[47] Madsen suggested a possible motivation for the Mormon reports of rape after Bear River stems from hostility that existed between the Mormons and the soldiers, particularly regarding sexual behavior. Connor and the soldiers had publically voiced their contempt for polygamy and, after the massacre, the Mormons had a chance to be equally public and morally superior in their accounts. I do not intend to imply that these reports were invented for the purpose of Mormon vengeance, but rather that Mormon witnesses chose to evidence the rape of Northwestern Shoshoni women, as opposed to ignoring it, because of the hostility that existed between them and the Volunteers. However, it is impossible to verify the scope of the rape that did or did not take place

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[46] Madsen, *Glory Hunter*, 85.
[47] Madsen, *Shoshoni Frontier,* 193.

because there are no accounts from the Shoshoni or from the Volunteers. The rape of Native women is especially hard to verify because of a lack of first-hand accounts.

Of all the studies of Bear River, Fleischer's text is the one which most fully considered the question of rape. Fleischer relied on Madsen's accounts to justify her claim and this is the only evidence she provided to suggest rape occurred after the massacre. She did, however, place the rape of Native women in a broader cultural context, by referring to how rape was and is used in warfare by invaders as an effective military tool that is "only beginning to come into our cultural focus." She wrote: "Indeed the rape that followed the massacre was a necessary guarantor that this most valuable Cache Valley real estate had been thoroughly cleared of those who disputed European American claim to the property." However, Fleischer had great difficulty consolidating evidence or even defining attitudes to rape after Bear River, an issue that became increasingly problematic when a descendant of Chief Sagwitch, who escaped the massacre and was later instrumental in some of the Northwestern Shoshonis' conversion to Mormonism, denied that rape occurred. Mae Timbimboo Parry told Fleischer: "I was surprised when I read Madsen's account of that, saying that the women were raped by the soldiers, because that was not mentioned by the Indians. And I don't think it's true."[48] The problems inherent in documenting sexual violence demonstrate how complex rape is as a historical phenomenon, given its negative and shameful connotations. This is especially true within Native cultures where families must confront the possibility of being descended from rape. The lack of evidence from possible victims makes accounts exceptionally hard to verify.

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[48] Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre,* 247, 206.

The Aftermath of Bear River

Even if rape did not occur in the aftermath of Bear River, the massacre had a highly destructive impact on disbanding the Northwestern Shoshoni geographically and culturally. By the summer of 1863 the Northwestern Shoshoni were in such a dire state of poverty that their living standards forced them into negotiations with local Euro-Americans. Madsen wrote: "There is no doubt that Connor's 'victory' at Bear River … helped convince the tribes that treaties were the best course and the Indians were pleased to finally get some assurance of protection and annuities from the government."[49] On the 22nd of June 1863 nine bands of the Northwestern Shoshoni tribe signed the Box Elder Treaty which was instrumental in securing peace for the Euro-Americans in the region. The treaty was signed under the guidance of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Governor James Duane Doty, who was governor of Utah Territory from the 22nd June, 1863, until January 9, 1869. To conclude the treaty, Doty met with nine bands of the chiefs of the Northwestern Shoshoni at Brigham City on July 30th, 1863. Chief Sagwitch was unable to attend the meeting because he had been made prisoner by a detachment of California volunteers. Madsen stated: "Doty sent a messenger to the troop commander asking that no violence be committed against him [Sagwitch] and that he be released to attend the treaty negotiations." Despite the plea Sagwitch was unable to attend the meetings and was later shot in the chest by the Volunteers, an incident which he survived. [50]

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[49] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 223.

[50] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 212. The Treaty of Box Elder contained five articles. Article one established friendly relations between the Shoshoni and the United States. Article two introduced provisions promised by the Treaty of Fort Bridger. Article three provided annuity of $5,000 and £2,000 in presents at the time of the signing of the agreements. Article four defined the boundaries of the country "claimed by Pocatello for himself and his people." This was to be the country between the Portneuf Mountains on the east and the Raft River Mountains on the west. Article five stated that the Shoshoni could claim no more land than that which they had occupied under Mexican law. Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 212.

Only five groups of a band of Northwestern Shoshoni from the Goose Creek Mountains refused to sign the document. The Deseret News on August 5th, 1863, hoped that the peace terms would prevent any **"recurrence of the robberies, plundering and tragic scenes that had taken place in the northern Utah settlements over the past decade."**[51] After the signing of the Box Elder Treaty and for the next few years the Northwestern bands gathered every autumn to receive their annuity presents of blankets, clothing and food and to talk to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah to try and resolve any problems they may have encountered. Many times the relief promised by the Box Elder Treaty failed to arrive and the Shoshoni bands were left in an appallingly impoverished position.

In 1869 the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Southeastern Idaho was established and, by late 1875, Madsen reported that nearly all the Northwestern bands were living there as they were encouraged to do by the federal government.[52] By1875 about 200 Northwestern Shoshoni had joined the Mormon Church and this group established Mormon-led farms at the Washakie colony in Malad Valley. An important figure in the Shoshoni conversion to Mormonism was Chief Sagwitch, who survived the Bear River Massacre. Sagwitch became the first Native American to be sealed to his wife in the Mormon Church, to use a Mormon term for marriage. In his biography of Sagwitch, Scott Christensen wrote: "As a result of some striking spiritual experiences, Sagwitch and his band were baptized Mormons."[53] Sagwitch's authority as a leader and his enduring connection to the Mormon Church was instrumental in the formation of Washakie, the Mormon colony in northern Utah. Madsen wrote: "It is ironic that the almost 2,000 Northwestern Indians who once roamed the Cache and Weber valleys and along the northern shores of Great Salt Lake have been lost to Utah history and now

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[51] Quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 213.
[52] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 213.
[53] Christensen, *Chief Sagwitch,* xi.

reside in Idaho."[54] This is a point I will address the next chapter on Bear River's state of scholarship to date, as I believe the territory of the massacre and the subsequent geographical relocation of the Northwestern Shoshoni has had an impact on the massacre's under-emphasis.

The agreements signed under the Box Elder Treaty in 1863 meant there was relative peace in the region for the Euro-American emigrants and settlers. Connor remained in Utah after the Bear River Massacre until his death in Salt Lake City in 1891. He was briefly regarded as a hero by some military officials such as Commander of the Pacific and General-in-Chief Henry W. Helleck who on March 29, 1863, awarded Connor the position of Brigadier-General.[55] However, Connor's glory was brief and he faded into relative obscurity, especially by comparison with other notorious Euro-American colonels such as Sand Creek's infamous Chivington. It is worth remembering, however, that, unlike Chivington, Connor was buried with full military honours. Even if Connor's glory was short-lived, he achieved his goal of bringing down the Shoshoni. Madsen writes that by the 1870s: "The Shoshoni frontier was receding before the advance of civilization and the armed power of the government."[56]

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[54] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 213.
[55] Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey and The Red,* 45.
[56] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 213.

Chapter Two: How Bear River has been Written and Thought About to Date

Introduction to Bear River's Scholarship

The Bear River Massacre remains relatively obscure in both regional and national studies of the American West, American Civil War texts and general American histories. Where Bear River does appear, it is often given only a couple of lines in general histories of the American West or, at best, there is a chapter dedicated to the massacre. Throughout this section I shall reference popular and academic texts that both mention and omit the Bear River Massacre, despite their focus on topics such as the Indian Wars of the West and violence against indigenous peoples in the conquest of the American West. Scholarly lack of attention to Bear River raises the question of whether the lack of focus on Bear River is indicative of American history overlooking violence against Indians in the West, especially during the Civil War period or whether Bear River is isolated in this respect.

Through exploration of texts that both contemplate as well as omit the massacre this chapter will argue that Bear River is indeed unique, and has therefore been under-emphasized in scholarship. The primary reason I propose for the anomalous nature of Bear River is because the massacre occurred in a distinct political and cultural environment that resulted from a series of complex and interlinked factors. This thesis primarily explores the distinctive cultural patterns that the Mormon Church brought to the region, including their scriptural relationship with indigenous peoples that often conflicted with the practical demands of Mormon settlement, their fraught relationship with the federal government and the political and literal isolation of Utah territory. Bear River does not fit as neatly within discussions about violence against Indians and federal western state expansion as, for example, Sand Creek, a factor that has ultimately led to its scholarly under-emphasis.

The fraught and political situation in the territory and the complex alliances between the Church, the federal government and the Shoshoni meant that Bear River was not discussed in its immediate aftermath. The lack of attention paid to Bear River at this time has influenced the current scholarly obscurity of the massacre: there is a limited amount of documented historiography available to analyze.

Unlike the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, which has a large historiography, Bear River was not the subject of congressional and military hearings immediately following the event. As a result of this, only a small number of governmental documents relating to events at Bear River remain. Furthermore, newspaper coverage of Bear River was restricted: the majority of media attention the massacre received came from California, the birthplace of the California Volunteers, whilst newspapers on the East Coast paid little attention to it. Secondly, both the Mormon Church and the Shoshoni are renowned for keeping their histories private as both groups suffered persecution from the government and wider American society. Miller referenced the privacy of the Latter Day Saints: "Given the tumultuous relationships between the Mormon Church and mainstream America ... it is perhaps understandable that the Saints would be protective of their role in history."[1]

Similarly the Shoshoni have not been anxious to publically acknowledge the massacre for a number of reasons, including their historical and current link to the Mormon Church, the trauma they suffered following the massacre and the fear of their history becoming distorted if depicted by Euro-Americans. There are therefore limited Northwestern Shoshoni sources available to the public regarding the massacre and it is difficult to examine how the massacre is fully understood by the Shoshoni without ethnographic research. However, this chapter does make use of the detailed memorials that stand at the massacre site today. Although this study of public history contrasts

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[1] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 147.

with the scholarly study that forms the basis of this chapter, the Shoshoni memorials are highly relevant to our understanding of both the historical and current representation of the massacre for the tribe. Furthermore, cultural practices of the tribe should influence written historiography by providing unique insight.

Scholars of western history such as Ned Blackhawk, as well as historians of Bear River like Brigham Madsen, have asserted that the occurrence of Bear River was not in itself a unique event because the massacre of indigenous peoples was relatively common-place during the increased violence of the Civil War period in the West. Blackhawk stated: "Occurring within a larger context of violent social relations, the Bear River Massacre was not an aberration but the culmination of decades, indeed generations, of Indian destitution."[2] This chapter does not aim to disregard this generally held assumption about Bear River. Rather, it argues that more attention needs to be paid to the unique environment in which the massacre occurred if we are to understand the subsequent obscurity of events at Bear River.

Historians, such as Madsen, who have dedicated entire studies to the massacre, argue that it received little attention in its immediate aftermath because it occurred during the Civil War when the American public mind was not focused on Indians in far of western sections of the nation but on the East Coast. The Civil War was not centrally about western expansion and native peoples. Madsen argued that the "importance of Bear River has been lost to American history" because an "obscure engagement with Indians in far off Utah" was a minor incident compared to events of the Civil War."[3] Blackhawk argued that the Civil War in Utah Territory was not distinct from the instability and violence as it played out in other western sections of the nation.[4] Thus Bear River's occurrence during the Civil War is used by scholars to contextualize the massacre

[2] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 265.
[3] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 24.
[4] Blackhawk, *Violence Against the Land,* 246.

within now established narratives of the Civil War in the West that focus on violence against Indians.[5]

Understanding Bear River within Civil War debates and broader Western history debates is important to increase understanding of the massacre itself and the evolution of federal, state and indigenous relationships of the period. However the massacre's occurrence during the Civil War, does not fully explain why Bear River has been excluded from scholarship when massacres such as Sand Creek, that also occurred during the Civil War, are the subject of rich scholarly analysis. I believe the distinct environment in which the massacre occurred is worthy of a more detailed analysis in order to explore the uniqueness of Bear River within the broader context of violence against Indians in the formation of the American West.

This chapter will primarily focus on the scholarship of Bear River as opposed to its portrayal in public memory. However, the public perception of Bear River has been deeply influenced by the limited scholarly portrayal of the massacre. Cubitt argued that, within current debates about memory and history, we have come to focus on the power of historical research to reconstruct history's modes of expression, rather than modes of critical analysis.[6] An example of this would be current obsessions with memorialization that are reliant on historical evidence. This was especially prevalent at Sand Creek during the memorialization project when, according to Euro-American communities, the massacre could not be memorialized until the historical evidence had been gathered. Bear River, however, has not been subject to the same level of historical scrutiny. Aleida Assmann argued that an important new configuration of memory and history has

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[5] Josephy's *The Civil War in the American West* (1991) analyzes the Civil War in the West, partly through the lens of violence committed against Native Americans.
[6] Geoffrey Cubit, *History and Memory*, Manchester University Press; Manchester and New York. 2007, 51.

been developed into a new branch of historiography called 'mnemohistory'.[7] Since the

1980s, historians have become more and more interested in modes of remembering as a

form of social and cultural practice. This is evident in Bear River's most recent

historiography that traces the cultural links between history and memory. These

histories consider how Bear River's public memory has been both constructed and

distorted, and include Fleischer's, *Bear River and the Making of History* (2004) and

John Barnes, *The Struggle to Control the Past: Commemoration, Memory and the Bear

River Massacre* (2008). Whilst the absence of Bear River from scholarship does not

equate to public forgetting, its limited scholarly portrayal has certainly influenced the

massacre's limited public representation in Euro-American national and local public

memory.[8]

By analyzing the essential scholarship that both ignores and considers Bear River, the

central aim of this assessment of Bear River's historiography is to reveal the

exceptionality of the massacre, as well as demonstrating the lack of historical emphasis

attaching to an atrocity of considerable scale and importance. I thus aim to redress its

absence from scholarship.

To address this argument, I will begin by contextualizing texts devoted to Bear River

considering how they situate the massacre within wider instances of violence against

Indian peoples as characteristic of the Euro-American western experience. The authors

considered put forward limited reasons for Bear River's current scholarly and public

obscurity. I shall outline these in some detail. However, these texts have not explored

in depth the unique environment that has resulted in Bear River's obscurity: the role of

the Mormon Church and the silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice. I believe

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[7] Aleida Assman, Transformations between History and Memory", *Social Research,* vol. 75, No.1, (Spring 2008), 49-72: 62.
[8] See Miller, *Massacre at Bear* River, 139-140 and Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 20-23.

these two distinct historical reasons contribute significantly to Bear River's current under-emphasis. They also distinguish the massacre from other instances of violence against Indians in this period.

Contextualizing Bear River's Scholarship

The growing number of texts dedicated to Bear River certainly confirms American western history's concern with highlighting and analyzing the violence that occurred against indigenous people as Euro-Americans pushed westward. To the extent that these Bear River texts are becoming more commonplace, we are now able to situate the massacre within established western narratives such as Alvin M. Josephy's, *The Civil War in the American West* (1991) and Thom Hatch's, *The Blue, The Grey, and the Red: Indian Campaigns of the Civil War* (2008) and Blackhawk's, *Violence Against the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2006).

New Western History is now the generally accepted historiography of the American West. Beginning from the with the seminal publication of Patricia Nelson Limerick's, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987), these texts regarded violence against indigenous peoples as a fundamental factor in Euro-American conquest of the West. Indian peoples are portrayed as both independent agents who were severely impacted by, but also took advantage of Euro-American settlement in terms of trade and economics. However Bear River is rarely mentioned in these texts or if it, it is in passing. If violence and conquest is not the historical process which is now generally agreed as taking place in the West, it is interesting that Bear River is rarely mentioned despite its size and the impact it had on paving the way for future Indian massacres like Sand Creek, in the quest for Euro-American expansion.

For example Richard White argued that empire building existed at the heart of the American western narrative, arguing that the American West was a product of conquest

and the merging of diverse groups of people: "Expanding, empires created Native

enemies who preyed on them, and they came into competition with rival imperial

powers." Violence against Native peoples was essential to expansionist efforts as the

displacement and murder of the Natives was a necessary precursor to conquest.

Therefore we would expect to see Bear River, as one of the largest and most

consequential massacres in the West in White's text. However it does not appear. White

does, however, refer to the Sand Creek Massacre because of it is attributed to starting

the Plains War of 1864 where he assessed the instrumental impact the federal ambitions

of both Evans and Chivington for starting the Plains War. [9] The neglect of Bear River in

White's work might be a result of the massacre's absence from discussion in its

immediate aftermath, which certainly resulted in a lack of primary documentation to

analyze.[10] However, I believe western history's limited attention is a result of

inadequate importance placed on minority narratives like those of the Mormon Church

and smaller indigenous tribes like the Northwestern Shoshoni. George Miles pointed out

in 1993 that the latest scholarship on Indians has had little impact on either

'mainstream' or western history.[11] Bear River did not impact mainstream history until

the 1985 publication of Madsen's, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre.*

The Great Basin region has been particularly neglected in western history and this

limited focus goes some way to explaining Bear River's marked absence from a field

that stresses the importance of violence against Indians in the shaping of the West.

However, more recent Western histories have argued that Bear River must be situated

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[9] R. White, *It's your misfortune and None of my Own: A New History of the American West,* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, 4, 27, 95-96.

[10] Another reason for the omission of Bear River from western histories could be a result of New Western History's focus on the persistence of Indian tribes despite continued repression from Euro-American settlers. See, Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, 179-222 and David Rich Lewis, 'Still Native: The Significance of Native Americans in the History of the Twentieth Century American West' in ed. C. Milner, *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996: 213-140.

[11] G. Miles et al, *Under Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992, 15. (bibliography: list all authors).

within the established New Western History debates about violence against Native Americans. Ned Blackhawk's seminal text, *Violence Against the Land* incorporates Indians of the Great Basin region into the history of the West. For Blackhawk, Bear River is not an anomaly but part of his central argument that the Indian tribes of the Great Basin region and violence committed against them have been typically overlooked in an era characterized by US expansionist, even imperialistic policies.

Blackhawk situates Bear River within other debates about massacres in the American West but, unlike some of his New Western predecessors, he is one of the few historians to discuss the massacre in significant detail. Blackhawk argued that Bear River occurred because of a combination of militarized Indian policy, the result of more federal influence in the region, during and after the Civil War, and aggressive Volunteer forces. Blackhawk asserted that a violent environment had already been established as a precursor to Bear River as a result of over a decade of a combination of a militarized Indian policy combined with the behaviour of the aggressive volunteers forces. Out of this combination, argued Blackhawk, arose the diminished stock of Shoshoni and other Great Basin tribes which promoted violence from the Shoshoni: violence that was met with retribution from federal forces.[12] Bear River therefore occurred within a setting that was not that different from other areas of the West of the period where Indians faced massacre in the quest for Euro-American expansion. For Blackhawk Bear River, along with other cases of Indian slaughter in the Great Basin region, should be historically acknowledged with other incidents of violence against Indians.

Blackhawk does not regard Bear River as a historical anomaly but he does assert one key reason for its neglect from American history texts. Primarily, as with historians to follow him, he asserted that the Civil War is the essential reasons for the massacres relative obscurity, arguing that it paled in comparison to the loss of life in other Civil

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[12] Blackhawk, *Violence Against the Land*, 263, 231.

War theatres. This assessment is often reinforced by American history's "prevailing silence" surrounding the massacre where, Bear River is often an "episodic aberration in the larger American narrative." [13]Bear River's neglect from Euro-American histories coupled with the massacres importance for contemporary tribal members, Blackhawk argued, above all else, is illustrative of the disconnect between Indians today and Euro-American communities. Blackhawk's work, however, is crucial in situating Bear River within enhancing our understanding of this much neglected region in formulating the American West.

However Blackhawk does acknowledge the increased tension brought to the Great Basin regions' Indians by the arrival of the Mormons. Blackhawk is clear in his assessment that the Mormons cannot be held accountable for events at Bear River but he does provide evidence of a distinct cultural framework set up by the Church in which the massacre could take place. Because of the lack of federal control in Utah Territory and the mistrust the existed between the Church and the authorities, Blackhawk described Utah as a "semiautonomous" region following the Mormon War, leaving the Shoshoni and other Great Basin tribes at the mercy of the Mormon Church for annuities, civil and political support. "The challenge of incorporating the interior West's Indians into the nation rested, then, on precarious as well as precariously few shoulders."[14] The Mormon Church had different initiatives with Indian policy which often conflicted with the federal government's role in Utah Territory.

Blackhawk argued that the Mormon Church, in particular its leaders, ushered in an increasingly volatile environment, enhancing the instability of the region. The groups that occupied the Great Basin region, the Mormons, the tribes and the presence of federal authorities, including the Volunteers, were often at odds with one another over

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[13] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, 264, 245.
[14] Blackhawk, *Violence Against the Land*, 264, 245.

matters of policy, a factor that was only increased by Mormon political secrecy. This, argued Blackhawk, created a tense environment in which "any semblance of a national Indian policy" was challenging. Often, then, Mormon policy makers took matters of Indian affairs into their own hands and Blackhawk argued that Mormon policy against indigenous peoples was characterized by aggressive paternalistic policies.[15] Caught between political infighting between the Church and the federal authorities, the Shoshoni became a casualty of a unique Western political environment that centered on Mormon expansionist efforts and federal distance from this politically isolated region. The Mormon Church and its influence in the region were essential in creating a space where Bear River could happen.

I agree with Blackhawk that Bear River was not an aberration in the history of the American West, in that volatile political circumstances that resulted in the massacre of Indian tribes were not a unique occurrence. Furthermore, Bear River's relevance in heightening the continuing violence in the West cannot be under-estimated. However, Blackhawk's work can be used to decipher the distinct political environment that led to the massacre, namely Mormon settlement and their Indian policy. Along with Indian histories of the Great Basin, Mormon narratives also remain relatively neglected in mainstream history. Blackhawk's work has highlighted the importance of affording equal significance to the interconnected Mormon narratives, the Volunteer histories and the Northwestern Shoshoni narratives of Bear River, all of which have been isolated from mainstream American history. This is essential if we are to understand why Bear River exists as an anomaly in comparison to other Indian massacres of its period and how this has led to its subsequent obscurity.

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[15] Blackhawk, *Violence Against the Land,* 226-266: 247, 245.

Texts dedicated to Bear River (1980s until present)

Over time texts have emerged that are devoted to Bear River and, following Madsen's 1985 publication of *The Shoshoni Frontier,* there have been a number of texts dedicated to the massacre, including Kass Fleischer's *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History* (2004), Rod Miller's *Massacre at Bear River: First, Worst, Forgotten* (2008) and John Barnes' "The Struggle to Control the Past: Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre of 1863" (2008).

The first text devoted to Bear River, however, appeared in 1982 when Newell Hart published *The Bear River Massacre.* Hart's work considered, for the first time, the Northwestern Shoshoni perspective of the massacre and included a story of the event by Shoshoni massacre descendant Mae Timbimboo Parry, originally published in a 1976 edition of the western magazine, *The Trail Blazer.*[16] Hart also considered the complex relationship between the Mormon Church and the California Volunteers. The distribution of Hart's work was very limited and it has not reached a wide audience.

Madsen, Miller and Fleischer's works are important as they contextualize a little-known, but brutal event within our understanding of the American West. Their histories develop an established narrative that violence against Indians was an essential part of the Euro-American formation of American West and that this violence increased during the Civil War. The authors' primary aim is to make sure that Bear River is afforded its rightful place in Western history as one of the most significant Indian disasters of the American West and thus situate this 'forgotten' massacre within a context of violence already founded by New Western Historians and later developed by authors like Blackhawk.

However, what stands out about these works is their assertion that Bear River has been

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[16] Hart, *The Bear River Massacre*, 143.

forgotten. In order to situate a "forgotten" massacre into this narrative, Madsen, Miller and Fleischer highlight the rarity of Bear River within broader instances of violence against indigenous peoples by outlining possible reasons for the restricted discussion surrounding the slaughter in its aftermath and its resulting under-emphasis in scholarship. Thus they provide a framework for future analysis into Bear River's under-emphasis which I hope to go someway to redressing in chapter four. Questions raised that point to the anomalous nature of Bear River by key authors are: why was Bear River forgotten because it occurred in the Civil War if Sand Creek was remembered? Why wasn't the massacre the subject of discussion in its aftermath? Why did the Mormon Church not want to highlight either their support or condemnation of the massacre after its occurrence? The authors do provide some brief answers to these questions but the questions raised imply that something occurred to make Bear River anomalous among other Indian massacres of the period.

In a study that paved the way for future historiography of Bear River, *The Shoshoni Frontier and The Bear River Massacre* (1985), Madsen argued for the importance of contextualizing Bear River within other incidents of violence that were characteristic of this western period as one of the most significant Indian massacres in the American West. In terms of its destructive scale, culmination and the impact it had on increasing violence against Indians in the West and political relationships between Euro-Americans and Indians, Bear River was hugely significant. Madsen described the massacre as the "culmination of almost two decades of Indian/white friction in the Great Basin and along the Snake River."[17] It was also crucial in shaping Indian-Euro-American relations on the frontier and setting a precedent for other Western Native American massacres, what Madsen termed a "preview" to the future Plains Wars from 1865-1885. By situating the massacre within established debates about violence in the

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[17] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 4.

west, Madsen adds to understanding of violence, and even massacre, in the west as a process inherent in Euro-American expansion, policy, frontier spirit and Indian/white relations.

Similarly, in his 2008 study in which he credits Madsen as his influence, Miller is primarily concerned that Bear River is no longer the subject of neglect: "Despite its short shrift by historians, it was the Shoshoni who opened the book of Indian massacres in the West that closed some three decades later at Wounded Knee." Miller stressed that Bear River should be situated among other incidents of violence against indigenous peoples in the formation of the American West, especially because it was a precursor to later massacres in the region: "[I]t is long past time for the Bear River Massacre to get its due." In order to contextualize the massacre as an indiscriminate slaughter of great scale, Miller attested to the complex relationship between the federal government, the Mormon Church and the Northwestern Shoshoni, arguing that the volatility of the region laid a precedent for future massacres in the West.[18]

Miller, along with other recent works on Bear River, including Fleischer's *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of* History (2004) and John Barnes' "The Struggle to Control the Past: Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre of 1863" (2008) have focused more on Bear River's under-emphasis through the lens of commemoration, raising questions about why Bear River has received such little attention from public memorialization efforts, in what Fleischer termed the "cultural erasure of one of the West's most brutal Indian disasters." Again, the aim of these works is to make sure Bear River receives its place in Western history along with other Civil War massacres and that they should be incorporated within our perception of the American West. The 2004 publication of Fleischer's monograph was representative of the rise in interest surrounding Bear River after the site's re-dedication as a massacre

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[18] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, xii, xiii, xiv.

site in 1990 and the subsequent memorialization efforts of local Euro-American and Northwestern Shoshoni citizens. Fleischer posited that the reasons for Bear River's scholarly under-emphasis was not to do with the specificities of the massacre but was the result of how Western histories are written. Thus, her primary aim was to situate Bear River within theoretical debates about how history is written. Who is writing it? Whom are they writing it for? Why has no one evaluated issues of rape after the massacre? Within this framework, Fleischer still discussed violence, specifically that committed against Native women during acts of indiscriminate brutality which, as Fleischer rightly asserted, are poorly documented. Her work critiqued the dominance of white men writing history about minority cultures and she asserted that, to date, this had resulted in histories of the massacre disguising the actual events of Bear River. They have failed to acknowledge the interplay of patriarchy and rape that was instrumental in the occurrence of the massacre and its under-emphasis.[19] Therefore, for Fleischer, the fact that Bear River was overlooked related more to a broader issue of the way Western history was and is constructed as opposed to the acceptance that Indian massacres have to fit in with how we perceive the West during the Civil War period.

As with Bear River scholarship, considering the massacre's representation at a national level, Fleischer's work demonstrated that there have been few commemorative attempts outside of regional communities. Similarly Barnes' article, a case study of the complex and contradictory memorials at the massacre site from the 1930s and the early 2000s, considered how little attention Bear River has received in public history, particularly at a national level. By assessing the commemoration of the massacre, Barnes, unlike other authors, implied that that Bear River was an anomaly because of how it was commemorated in its aftermath and in its current public representation. Like Fleischer, his concern is with how history is constructed and created according to certain cultural

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[19] Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre*, xi, 249, 243-262.

perceptions. He wrote: "At the site of the massacre … a handful of monuments stand commemorating the same event yet telling the story in different - almost contradictory - ways. These monuments are anomalous in America's commemorative history, and reveal shifts in popular and scholarly memory over the last 140 years: a visible struggle to control the past." [20]Barnes agreed that Bear River needed to be nationally commemorated as a Civil War massacre, like Sand Creek, if we are to understand that violence against Indian peoples was a part of the Civil War experience in the West. Historically then, for Barnes, Bear River was not unique but its distinct commemorations provide a compelling insight into the ways cultures remember and what they choose to forget.

Texts devoted to Bear River unanimously argue that the massacre has to be listed with other massacres of the period because it enhances our understanding not only of Bear River but also of the wholesale carnage of Indian peoples that existed in the West during this period. Madsen stated: "The killing of 250 Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River was a national catastrophe. It deserves to be listed with other massacres in American history." As Madsen rightly stated, the Bear River massacre has "few parallels in American history for rapine and human atrocity." [21] Similarly, Miller concluded his study of Bear River stating: "One thing is certain: unless the historians who help us remember our past begin to remember the Bear River Massacre, it will remain forgotten."[22] Bear River's scholarship agrees that the massacre was the beginning of a series of large-scale massacres against indigenous peoples in the West. Furthermore, Bear River provides evidence to the causality and impact of other Western massacres. When Bear River is contextualized as one of the most influential atrocities in terms of the influx of Western violence, we must wonder why it has been "lost to

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[20] Barnes, 'Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre', 81.
[21] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 27, 222.
[22] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 149.

history."

The primary reason for Bear River's neglect, proposed by scholars of texts dealing with the massacre and writers of general American histories, is the atrocity's occurrence during the Civil War. At the time of the Civil War, it is argued, attention was focused on the important battles of the East and, to the American mind, the Civil War was not about American expansion and the slaughter of Indian peoples that came with it. Historians such as Josephy and Blackhawk argue that the Indian bloodshed of the Civil War period exists outside of general Civil War scholarship because the Civil War was not about the murder of Indian tribes but was about slavery and Union fragmentation.[23] Blackhawk believed that Bear River was part of the progression of increased violence against indigenous peoples during the Civil War period, which brought "an unprecedented measure of military involvement in western Indian affairs."[24]

Recent scholarship is centralizing Indian violence within our understanding of the war in the American West. Similarly, Madsen situates Bear River within Civil War debates and its impact on western tribes, arguing that the pre-occupation with the Civil War was the primary reason for Bear River's historical neglect. He stated: "In 1863 the American people were caught up in a bloody war with daily casualty figures that promoted a calloused view toward death. The destruction of un-known Indians in the Rocky Mountains did not raise many eyebrows at the time." According to Madsen, then, there was little newspaper coverage, partly a result of there being only one reporter who accompanied Connor to the engagement. The historical significance afforded to an event is often subject to the primary sources that are available in its aftermath and the perception provided by these sources. Even though the massacre received some press coverage in Utah and California, the home state of the Volunteers, it attracted little

[23] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West*, xi.
[24] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, 261.

press coverage in eastern papers such as *The Herald, The Tribune* and *The New York Times*. They devoted only short paragraphs to the massacre because, Madsen argued, they were far more concerned with the Emancipation Proclamation recently issued by Lincoln.[25]

The Civil War is not an altogether adequate reason for Bear River's neglect because a series of other massacres occurred at this time and have been the subject of a rich scholarship. It is interesting that, whilst citing the Civil War as the key reason for Bear River's under-emphasis, no authors, aside from Miller, draw a comparison between Bear River and Sand Creek, one of the most thoroughly investigated Civil War massacres of the period. Why is Sand Creek remembered and Bear River not? One of the reasons has to be the comparable lack of attention Bear River received in its aftermath. If Connor's actions had been investigated to the same extent as Chivington's, it is likely that Bear River would be the subject of more historical assessment. This is not addressed in detail by historians of the massacre, so before the Civil War is defined as the primary reason for the massacre's neglect we need to establish why Bear River was forgotten when other Civil War massacres were remembered.

Miller in fact criticized Madsen for blaming Bear River's obscurity on its occurrence during the Civil War, claiming that was "inadequate as a full explanation." Unlike Madsen, Miller noted that there were no major contemporary Civil War incidents that might have overwhelmed news of the massacre. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January the 1st, 1863, nearly a full month before Connor's attack. Miller queried: "Just why Connor's expedition did not arouse the same ire, despite its equal savagery and higher body count, can only be guessed at." He concluded: "Had there been more outrage and less accolades perhaps Bear River would be as famous today as

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[25] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 23.

Sand Creek."[26]

At stake in Bear River's neglect are a series of more complex issues than just the Civil War. Although I agree with scholars that Bear River needs to be situated with other massacres into our current understanding of the American West, the very fact that Bear River remains so under-emphasized, an area that all scholars of the massacre acknowledge, provides clues to its obscurity. Recent scholarship raises important questions which lay the groundwork for my exploration below of the distinct historical environment that resulted in Bear River. In addition, there are areas that have not been considered in detail, such as the role of the Mormon Church, which I would argue is the most under-analyzed cause of Bear River's neglect.

In addition to citing the Civil War, Madsen briefly outlined other reasons which point to historical uniqueness in the lead up to the massacre. An important explanation was the location of the massacre site which occurred in present day Idaho, just a few miles north of the Utah state line. However, the boundary survey was not completed until 1872, impacting which state the massacre was historically and is currently associated with. Madsen said: "Perhaps the fact that the Battle of Bear River took place in Idaho, just a few miles north of the Utah line, has also led historians to ignore the event and any description of one of Utah's most powerful Indian tribes."[27] Miller, on the other hand, emphasized the location of the massacre as the primary reason for Bear River's scholarly and public under-emphasis, detailing the complex territorial boundaries and associations that existed in the Western territories in 1863. The arbitrary creation of political boundaries in the West may have prevented Bear River from gaining sufficient historical traction. When the massacre occurred, the Shoshoni were actually encamped in Washington territory (today this is Southeastern Idaho). However, the Shoshoni were

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[26] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 145, 141, 142.
[27] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 8.

geographically isolated from any government authority in this region. Miller stated: "So while the blood-drenched soil was now called Idaho, that place did not even exist during the fight. And again [as in Washington territory], political responsibility was far away-physically, culturally and historically."[28]

The ambiguous territorial boundaries led to a lack of federal responsibility for Indian affairs in the region. The Shoshoni were politically deprived of annuities and some bands were forced to seek relief as far away as the Pacific Coast, whilst others received aid in Salt Lake City. Indian agents were slow to identify the different bands, let alone assist the Shoshoni, so the tribe was essentially off the federal radar. Both Madsen and Miller address this problem. Miller wrote that, despite being recognized by the Box Elder Treaty of 1863, the Northwestern band were often put in the same category as the Eastern Shoshoni at the Wind River reservation in western Wyoming and the Shoshoni Bannock at the Fort Hall reservation in Southeastern Idaho. The Box Elder treaty limited the Northwestern band's land claims and, in 1939, was recognized as no more than a "treaty of friendship."[29] Madsen emphasized the inefficiency of the federal government, whose agents were stationed hundreds of miles from the Shoshoni, and the ambiguous role of Brigham Young, who, in balancing his commitment to the conversion of the Indians to Mormonism against his desire to settle his own people on Indian lands, often decided upon the latter.[30]

The distance of the Shoshoni from political authority and the chaotic state of federal Indian affairs in the West meant the Shoshoni often looked to Young and the Church for economic, political, military and Civil support. Madsen argued that Bear River had always been politically and culturally associated with Utah, largely because the Shoshoni were provided annuities in Utah and had a strong link to the Mormon Church

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[28] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 138-139, 145.
[29] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 145.
[30] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 25-41.

there.[31] Miller theorized that the Northwestern Shoshoni became increasingly associated with Mormonism and Utah Territory because "long established migratory paths and settlement patterns dictated that the Northwestern Shoshoni … would naturally look southward [to Salt Lake City] for assistance."[32] The unique paternalistic attitude of the Church toward the Shoshoni, their scriptural requirement to convert their "lesser blessed brethren", coupled with their desire to expand their settlement, meant that the Church was much conflicted over the occurrence of the massacre. This remains a significant reason for the lack of discussion surrounding the event in its immediate aftermath.

In the massacre's aftermath Mormon papers such as the *Deseret News* reported the massacre as an "intervention from the Almighty". Madsen referred to this Mormon attitude as a "sharp break" from Young's long-standing policy of peace with the tribes of the Great Plains. Madsen also pointed out that Bear River occurred a little over six years after the notorious Mountain Meadows Massacre so the "less said about Mormon exultance over another wholesale killing of innocents, the better."[33]

The Mormon need to distance itself from the massacre persists today. Madsen stated: "The very fact that Utah historians … have continued to call this encounter a battle rather than a massacre may have some significance in this respect."[34] Currently, Mormon histories have not been overanxious to highlight their approval of the murder of the Northwestern Shoshoni. Similarly, Miller provided a brief account of the difficult relationship between the Mormon Church and mainstream America in the lead up to the massacre, a situation that Miller suggested lasted for at least another decade. It is, therefore, perhaps understandable, wrote Miller, that the "Saints would be protective of

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[31] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 222.
[32] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 144.
[33] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 22.
[34] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 22.

their role in history."[35] As a result, Mormon histories either include a very brief mention, or no mention at all, of the massacre, often presenting themselves as victims of Shoshoni violence but subsequently protective of the tribe after the massacre.

The complex relationship between the Mormons and the Shoshoni and its influence in Bear River's current scholarly obscurity has been signaled by scholars of the massacre to date. However, this relationship is deserving of further analysis because it evidences both an important reason why the massacre remains under-emphasized and the anomalous political and cultural relationship that was a precursor to Bear River. This is apparent when Bear River is contextualized within broader instances of violence in the West. When placed in this framework, questions that to date are unanswered are raised about its historical neglect.

All key historians of Bear River quite rightly force us to situate the massacre within broader debates about violence in the West, which enhances our understanding of federal Indian relations, the Plains Wars and the Civil War in the West. Such authors, whilst signaling the tense political setting that was a precursor to the massacre, do not analyze the unique political and cultural environment that resulted in the massacre but they do raise future questions worthy of further analysis. In his review of Fleischer's work, for example, John Barnes stated that Fleischer "accomplishes much by asking the questions that historians ought to be asking." However, he later criticized her for not addressing the questions she raised. [36] Questions about Bear River's under-emphasis need further development if we are to properly understand why it remains so under-emphasized.

It becomes apparent that the massacre was unique when searching for non-Civil War

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[35] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 170.
[36] J.P. Barnes, 'Review of *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History* by K. Fleischer', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 36, 3(2005) 389-390.

reasons. A complex web of circumstances that led to the massacre's under-emphasis then emerge. However, recent authors pay limited attention to the unique environment that resulted in Bear River. I shall explore below how it was this environment led to Bear River's obscurity.

General Histories of the American West (1800s until present)

General histories of the American West have evolved to include massacres of Indian people in the West as the currently accepted process of the development of the region. This change coincided with the development of New Western history in the 1990s. More recent general Civil War histories centralize violence against tribes as the natural consequence of war in a region untamed by federal control. Whilst some of these texts, like Josephy's *The Civil War in the American West,* include Bear River, others like Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* omit any mention of the massacre despite focusing on the brutality of the West.

The notion that violence against indigenous peoples coincided with Euro-American expansionist efforts is, however, not new. From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, a small number of national histories focused on the poor treatment of Native American tribes by the US government, but they ignored the Bear River Massacre. Examples of two such work are J. P. Dunn Jr.'s *Massacres of the Mountains: A History of the Indian Wars in the Far West* (1886) and Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with Some Indian Tribes* (1913). Despite the focus of these texts on Western history and the often appalling treatment of Native Americans by authorities, both authors neglect to mention the Bear River Massacre. This could be for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Blackhawk suggested, the Shoshoni were a relatively unknown tribe. Secondly, these authors were writing soon after the massacre so the lack of primary documentation pertaining to opinions of the

event would be minimal, especially in comparison to Sand Creek, the extensive

coverage of which would have likely sparked interest in historians like Jackson.[37]

Regional histories of Idaho and Utah, written in a similar period to Dunn's and

Jackson's works, have paid more attention to the massacre, but have represented it in a

positive light in relation to the Euro-American settlers because it was seen as ending

Shoshoni violence in the region. Thus violence is regarded as a necessary part of

settlement. In his history of Idaho published in 1926, C.J. Brosnan referred to the

Shoshoni as "savages" and wrote of Bear River: "The battle put an end to Indian

depredations in that region."[38] Similarly in *Indian Wars of Idaho* (1932), R. Ross

Arnold stated that the "slaughter of the Shoshoni" was the fault of the tribe because of

their "thieving depredations."[39] Local history of this period focused on the success of

Connor and the Volunteers in protecting Euro-American settlements in the push for

Westward expansion. In his study of the commemoration efforts at the Bear River

Massacre Site from the 1930s until the present day, John Barnes suggested that local

history from the 1940s until the 1960s considered Bear River in "terms of how it ended

Shoshone resistance to settlement."[40] In this period, the massacre received no attention

in national histories and was presented in local histories as essential for the

advancement of Euro-American settlement. Therefore violence against Indians was

overlooked in early regional histories because Bear River was regarded as a necessary

engagement in the conquest of the West. The lack of focus on Bear River as atrocity

was probably also a result of the massacre not being subjected to outrage in its

aftermath, either by local communities, in national newspaper coverage, or military

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[37] For an example of the limited text space dedicated to Bear River by comparison to Sand Creek, see R. Wooster, *The American Military Frontiers: The United States Army in the West, 1783-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009). Wooster dedicated one page to Bear Rive by comparison to his five pages on Sand Creek.

[38] C. J. Brosnan, *History of the State of Idaho* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 131-132.

[39] R. R. Arnold, *Indian Wars of Idaho* (Caldwell ID, Caxton Printers, 1932), 89.

[40] J. P. Barnes, 'The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History: Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre of 1863,' *Western Historical Quarterly*, 36, 3 (2005), 81-104: 94.

investigation.

By the 1970s and into the 1980s, regional texts began to shift focus. Bear River was no longer a glorious event in the colonization of the American West. Richard W. Etulain and Bert W. Marley in their edited collection of essays on Idaho's history, *The Idaho Heritage: A Collection of Historical Essays* (1974), presented Bear River as a brutal and indiscriminate attack committed by Connor and the Volunteers. However, this text still referred to events at Bear River as a battle, the slaughter not gaining recognition as a massacre until the 1980s.[41] It is interesting that there were only limited histories written by Utah historians on the Bear River Massacre in this early period. Utah and Mormon history did not address the Bear River Massacre in full-length studies or journal articles until a much later date.

Up until the 1970s, Bear River had been regarded as an event intended to civilize and conquer the American West. In the 1970s, however, coinciding with the Civil Rights era and more sympathetic portrayals of minority history, as well as the advance of New Western History, Native American massacres of the West were more often regarded as violent and unprovoked attacks on a people who were trying to survive in an era of conquest. Despite this shift in opinion, the Bear River Massacre remained relatively obscure in general scholarship of the American West, with authors omitting it when they made reference to other instances of violence in the American West. For example Dee Brown's, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970), omitted Bear River. Brown referred to the period of 1860-1890 as an extremely violent era for the tribes of the American West, drawing attention to the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres. However, despite Bear River being larger in scale than both these massacres, Brown failed to mention it. Similarly, Arrell Morgan Gibson's well-known study, *The*

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[41] R.W. Etulain & B.W. Marley (eds.), *The Idaho Heritage: A Collection of Historical Essays* (Pocatello, ID: Idaho State University Press, 1974), 47.

American Indian: Prehistory to the Present (1979), does not include the Bear River

Massacre. It was not until Brigham Madsen produced his full-length academic study,

The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre, in 1985, that the Bear River

Massacre started appearing in more Western Civil War texts. Western Civil War

histories tended to regard Western military campaigns as ruthless and unprovoked,

largely because Civil War forces in the West were made up of volunteer soldiers who

were beyond the authoritative reach of Washington DC.

In 1991 Alvin M. Josephy published, *The Civil War in the American West*, pointing out

that a huge amount of Civil War literature had until now "simply ignored the events of

the conflict in the western section of the nation." Josephy therefore argued that, whilst

Indian violence was initially overlooked in the formation of the American West, it had

to be incorporated into current historical understandings of the Civil War in the

American West. Josephy asserted that violence against western tribes increased during

the Civil War. As a result of the federal government doing little to control Volunteer

violence, "more Indian tribes were destroyed by whites and more land was seized from

them than in almost any comparable time in American history."[42]

Within this characteristic Civil War violence, Josephy dedicated several pages to the

Bear River Massacre. Considering the lack of emphasis previous scholarship had paid to

the Mormons' role in the Bear River Massacre, it is interesting that Josephy carefully

considered the relationship between the Mormons, the California Volunteers and the

federal government. He began by describing the skeptical reaction of the Mormons

when the Volunteers first arrived in the territory, having been told by their leader,

Young, to treat the Indians peaceably, rather than resorting to violence.[43] However,

Josephy suggested attitudes amongst the general Mormon population changed as

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[42] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West*, xi.
[43] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West*, 258, 251-233.

Shoshoni raids intensified. The Mormons began to regard the Volunteers as a source of protection from Shoshoni depredations and were therefore not entirely unhappy when the massacre occurred. The links Josephy made between the Mormon Church and the massacre are of interest because Josephy's is the first general work on the American West that analysed in some detail the violence brought into the region by the Mormon Church. Josephy's text remains important in bringing the Bear River Massacre to the attention of a wider audience of Civil War historians as well as general historians of the American West.

Scholarship that aims to redress the lack of attention to the Indian campaigns of the Civil War in the American West has continued into the 21st century. In 2003, Thom Hatch's, *The Blue, the Grey and the Red: Indian Campaigns of the Civil War*, included a chapter on Sand Creek. This was not unusual, but what was, and remains, rare is that Hatch dedicated an entire chapter to Bear River, in which he presented a balanced view of the massacre. I want to stress that, like Josephy, Hatch considered the increasing violence Mormon settlers bought into Shoshoni territory before the massacre, stating that the Mormons had by far the greatest impact, in terms of destruction of Shoshoni resources and land. Hatch regarded Mormon settlement as destructive to Shoshoni survival and yet noted that Young was highly idealistic in his Indian policies, which led him to misunderstand the problems his Mormon followers experienced in the face of increased Shoshoni raids. Although Young might have taken issue with the arrival of Connor and the Volunteers in Utah Territory, wrote Hatch, the Volunteers were a mixed blessing to the Mormon settlers. Young's orders to treat the Indians peaceably could now be followed by the Mormon settlers because the arrival of the Volunteers guaranteed them protection: "Now, with soldiers ready and willing to fight, the settlers could obey Young and remain detached but look forward to perhaps the prospect of an

end to thievery."[44]Although Hatch only dedicated one sentence to Mormon detachment from the massacre, I believe it is a crucial point that I will develop later, because Mormon detachment led to what I call their 'compliance' in Connor's attack.

Hatch did not underplay violence committed by the starving Shoshoni on emigrants and Mormon settlements. The Shoshoni were not presented as victims of ruthless Euro-American violence. Rather, Hatch portrayed them as equally violent as their Euro-American counter-parts. Hatch does, however, carefully analyze the reasons for the increased violence of the Shoshoni, emphasizing their lack of resources, by using first-hand accounts of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, James D. Doty. In March 1832 Doty visited Cache Valley and found the Shoshoni in a "starving and destitute condition." Doty noted: "No provision having been made for them, either as to clothing or provisions, by my predecessors ... they were enduring great suffering."[45]

The success of Hatch's work lay not only in bringing the history of Bear River to a wider audience but in his analysis of the reasons that led to the massacre. Hatch's work also evidenced the shift in Euro-American Western scholarship that began in the 1970s as he gave equal attention to every group: the emigrants, the Mormons, the Volunteers and the Shoshoni. All faced hardship and violence in the West. No longer was violence committed against Indians seen as justified in the name of Westward expansion. Like Josephy, Hatch implied that the Mormons were not innocent bystanders in events that led to the Bear River Massacre. However, I want to develop his ideas by arguing that the Mormons were involved in the occurrence of the massacre and to some extent accountable for its subsequent under-emphasis. Both Josephy and Hatch contextualized the Bear River Massacre into broader events of the violence characteristic of the Civil War in the American West.

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[44] Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey, and The Red*, 25-46, 36.
[45] Doty quoted in Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey, and The Red*, 30, 31.

Mormon Scholarship

I am keen that this study brings scholarly attention to sources written by Mormon historians that relate to the Bear River Massacre. I refer here to historians, usually Mormon themselves, who wrote about Mormon history as opposed to situating Mormon culture within the broader American historical narrative. It is difficult to categorize Mormon scholarship with historiography like Blackhawk's that regards the Bear River Massacre as symptomatic of instances of violence against indigenous peoples characteristic of the period. For reasons I shall outline in the following chapter, the Mormon relationship with the Native American tribes was complex and unique. The Church's history tends to focus on the goodwill of the Latter Day Saints towards the tribes they encountered during settlement. Therefore the Bear River Massacre is often omitted from Mormon historiography.

The history of the Mormon Church is insulated from mainstream American history because the church has had a notoriously difficult relationship with the rest of America as a result of political, religious and cultural differences. Fleischer pointed out that there were: "broad segments of American history involving the Latter Day Saints that remain wholly isolated from our nation's consciousness."[46] Histories that address Mormon settlement in Utah and Idaho have been written largely by Mormon historians, with little input from outside scholarship. In his synthesis of Mormon history in the West during the 1800s, Mormon historian Ronald Walker has noted: "We [Mormons] have been more prone to introspection than to challenge and protest. This inward tendency in turn has limited our attention to cultures different from our own."[47] Insularity has led to a polarization of Mormon, Indian and mainstream American sources.

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[46] Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre*, 103.
[47] R. Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction of Mormon and Indian Relations, 1847-1877', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 29, 4 (1989), 23-42: 24.

America has also been unwilling to include the Mormon experience in its own national history, associating the Church with polygamy and questionable belief systems. The unwillingness to combine Mormon and Euro-American historical narratives has meant the Bear River Massacre has been omitted from many Mormon sources. Walker referred to the nature of studies of Native Americans in the Brigham Young era as "incomplete and tentative."[48] If incidents such as the Bear River Massacre and the environment that led to such violence and involve an interplay of histories are to receive properly scholarly attention, then Native American history and Mormon history need to be seen within the context of American Western historiography, so the Mormon Church can also be held accountable for violence against indigenous peoples.

Another cause of the omission of the Bear River Massacre from Mormon sources is the fact that Mormons often saw their relations to Indians in terms of good intentions. According to scripture they were the saviors of the Shoshoni, their "lesser blessed brethren." The violent events at Bear River countered Mormon religious ideology and so the Mormons chose to distance themselves from the massacre. Furthermore, the slaughter was committed by federal forces and therefore not definitively linked to the Mormons who, on the one hand, separated themselves from the violence but also 'silently complied.' These historical factors have influenced the limited contemporary representation of Bear River. This argument is evident in the work of two traditionalist Western Mormon scholars, neither of whom addressed the Bear River Massacre. Firstly, Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton's, *The Mormon Experience* (1979), did not mention the Bear River Massacre, despite having a chapter dedicated to the relationship between the Mormons and the Indians. Interestingly, in this chapter Arrington and

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[48] Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction,' 23.

Bitton omitted the period around 1863, skipping from the late 1850s to 1865.[49]

Similarly, in his biography of Brigham Young, *Brigham Young: American Moses*,

which has been widely regarded amongst Mormon historians to be the best biography of

the Mormon leader, Arrington omitted mention of the Bear River Massacre in his

chapter, "Indians: Friendship and Caution", and only dedicated one sentence in passing

to the Bear River Massacre later on in his work, when referring to the poor relationship

between Young and the California Volunteers.[50] Secondly, another prominent Mormon

historian, Lawrence G. Coates failed to address the Bear River Massacre and instead

focused on the goodwill of Brigham Young towards the Indians. In his 1994 paper,

"The Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho, 1845-1900", Coates dedicated less

than a paragraph to the Bear River Massacre, placing it within the context of the

disputes between Brigham Young and Connor and the Volunteers.[51]

Both Arrington and Coates emphasized the conciliatory nature of Brigham Young in his

dealings with Indians. In comparison, revisionist Mormon historians have tended to

emphasize a more fraught and difficult relationship between the Mormons and the

Indians. Howard A. Christy argued that "hostility and bloodshed, as much as

benevolence and conciliation, characterized Mormon-Indian relations in Utah before

1852."[52] Walker argued that Eugene Campbell's, *Establishing Zion* (1988), provided

the most detailed account of the revisionist school of thought. Walker stated:

"Emphasizing tension, conflict, and the similarity of Mormon ways to the broader

American experience, Campbell held that Mormon colonization was disastrous for the

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[49] L. J. Arrington & D. Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter Day Saints* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 150-156.

[50] L. J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses*, Kindle version (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), loc 7585. [Downloaded 08/09/15].

[51] L. G. Coates, 'The Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho, 1845-1900', *Journal of Mormon History*, 20, 2 (1994), 45-62: 50.

[52] H. A. Christy, 'Open Hand and Mailed Fist: Mormon-Indian Relations in Utah, 1847-1852', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 46, 3 (1978), n.l.: 217.

Native American."[53] However, despite emphasizing a more brutal and violent way of life on the Mormon-Indian frontier, Campbell failed to mention the Bear River Massacre. Instead, his chapter on the Civil War years in Utah focused on the fraught relationship between the Mormons and the California Volunteers. Walker argued that the separation of traditional and revisionist histories needed re-evaluating if we were properly to understand the Mormon experience because clearly the Mormon-Indian relationship had elements of both conciliation and cooperation.[54]

Despite the difference of opinion between Mormon traditionalist and revisionist historians, the Bear River Massacre has not been highlighted in either school of thought. I believe it is crucial to point out that, despite arguing for a better synthesis between Mormon, Native and Euro-American history and revisionist and traditionalist historians, Walker did not mention the Bear River Massacre in his article, despite covering the period from 1847 to 1877. I argue the massacre has been left out of Mormon scholarship because, as I shall later detail, the Mormons have had a particularly difficult relationship with the event. Overall, because of the insular nature of Mormon history and the polarized tensions that exist between Mormon, Native and federal history, combined with the fact that Mormon history has tended to emphasize the conciliatory and non-violent nature of Brigham Young's Mormon policies, it is no wonder that the Bear River Massacre has received so little attention in Mormon historiography. The massacre was the result of interplay between different cultural histories - Native, Euro-American settler and Mormon - which unfortunately often remained isolated from one another. This has contributed to the lack of attention to Bear River.

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[53] Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 27. See also, E. Campbell, *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847-69* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).
[54] Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 27.

<u>Shoshoni sources</u>

I am well aware of the limited Native voices informing my work. This is largely due to the fact that significant archival material is only available in the US My much appreciated travel award from the British Association of American Studies limited my research work in the US to a few days only. However, in the following chapter on forgetting, I have included a study of the Northwestern Shoshoni memorials that currently stand at the massacre site. In his 2013 report for planned excavation of the Bear River Massacre site, Kenneth Reid referred to the lack of Shoshoni sources as an "imbalance" in the testimony of Bear River. The reasons for the limited representation of the Northwestern Shoshoni in scholarship are as follows. Firstly, the Northwestern Shoshoni have been, like the Mormons, very private with their histories because of the mistrust between the Shoshoni and the federal government. The Northwestern Shoshoni have kept their histories within their own communities, with an emphasis on the importance of passing on tribal histories to younger generations, to prevent information becoming distorted by Euro-Americans, as has historically been the case. The nature of oral histories as a form of story-telling, as opposed to historical fact, has meant that Shoshoni oral histories have often been neglected as evidence of what happened at Bear River. Reid wrote of the lack of first-hand Shoshoni testimony regarding the massacre, stating that only: "fragments of testimony, often second- or third-hand, from thoroughly traumatized Shoshone survivors," remained. "These fragments," wrote Reid, had been "woven over time into an oral tradition that is emotionally faithful to the tragedy at Bear River without necessarily being factually accurate."[55]

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[55] Reid, '*Research Design for Archeological Investigations',* 5, 17.

Secondly, as now deceased Northwestern Shoshoni massacre descendent Mae Timbimboo Parry explained, the majority of the Shoshoni histories have remained exclusively in oral form. No attempts were made to record eye-witness accounts of the Shoshoni after the massacre. Similarly, relatively few interviews have been carried out with current members of the tribe regarding their histories of Bear River. This has meant the Northwestern Shoshoni voice remains under-represented, particularly in Euro-American histories.

It is notable that, in relation to the Sand Creek Massacre, the NPS carried out an extensive Oral History Project in conjunction with the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants to record their perspectives. This resulted in a great deal more information that details the Native voices from Sand Creek becoming available. Furthermore, the Oral History Project was produced between 1998 and 2000 by the NPS, meaning it gained widespread political and public attention which resulted in a rise in scholarship on Sand Creek that had not yet been seen for Bear River. I shall provide greater detail of this comparison in my section on the silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice.

One of the most vocal Northwestern Shoshoni tribal members regarding Bear River was the late Mae Timbimboo Parry. She told Newell Hart that she was concerned the history of the massacre would be lost to future generations of Northwestern Shoshoni unless she published her account. Parry's version, *Massacre at Boa Ogoi*, is included in Newell Hart's text, *The Bear River Massacre*.[56] She provided a detailed account of Northwestern Shoshoni life at the camp before presenting gruesome details of the attack. Parry's account is interesting as the only available written Shoshoni perspective of the massacre, but it is not widely available, published only within Hart's book.

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[56] Hart, *The Bear River Massacre*, 85, 86-95.

However, largely due to Parry's efforts in recounting the Northwestern Shoshoni view of the massacre, with a stress on its importance within the Utah education system, the Shoshoni have recently become more publically forthcoming with their histories of the massacre. Parry's granddaughter, Pattie Timbimboo Madsen, has provided interviews for Utah public television, in which she speaks of the importance of remembering Bear River for the sake of younger generations of Northwestern Shoshoni. The public revival in Northwestern Shoshoni history corresponds with the seven markers the massacre descendants have erected at the site. However, their voices remain woefully under-represented, particularly within Euro-American scholarship.

Conclusion

To conclude, the majority of scholarship discussed has outlined that Bear River should indeed be situated with other instances of violence in the American West because its violence reflects the now generally accepted process of Euro-American formation of the West. Studies have argued that Bear River was initially overlooked but that know it should be listed with massacres like Sand Creek as one of the most brutal American Indian disasters. I agree that Bear River needs to be afforded its rightful place in western history. However Bear River's scholarship and the questions it raises as to the massacres under-emphasis, has highlighted that it was a unique event in terms of the political and cultural environment in which it occurred. The authors discussed above, especially Madsen, Miller and Fleischer, have all provided important and valid reasons why Bear River has been under-emphasized and it is not my aim to devalue their explanations. However, I do believe the Mormon role in the massacre has been significantly downplayed in scholarship and I want to explore this in depth. I also believe that the public silence of the Shoshoni regarding their own history of the massacre is another compelling reason for Bear River's neglect. This is an area that has

been neglected by scholars. In recent years, however, there has been a renewed interest in Bear River, perhaps as a result of the works of Madsen and others. Current archaeological research and preliminary reports on recent findings at the site began in 2014. I have no doubt that recent local and national archaeological interest, from the Idaho State Historical Society and the NPS, will lead to further publications and scholarly attention to Bear River. A revival in scholarship of the Sand Creek Massacre, including Kelman's award-winning, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (2013), occurred when the NPS became involved in excavating the site. I am optimistic that the current interest in the Bear River Massacre site will result in more publications on Bear River in coming years.

Chapter Three: The Bear River Massacre: Forgetting and Collective Memory

Introduction

Before considering the specifics of Bear River's scholarly and public obscurity, I shall analyze what the under-emphasis of events at Bear River tells us about the concept of collective memory and its relationship to forgetting. Simultaneously, I shall apply broader theories about forgetting, particularly as it is applied to group and public memory, to Bear River in an attempt to re-evaluate events at this massacre. I have been reluctant to apply the word 'forgetting' to events at Bear River in other sections of this thesis because the massacre has not been forgotten so much as misrepresented and chronically under-emphasized, particularly in Euro-American public memory. However, in relation to collective memory theory, the term forgetting is often applied by theorists, especially in the realm of public memory, to memorials, commemorations and even written historiography.

Through the lens of the Euro-American and Native memorials that currently stand side by side at the massacre site, I shall consider contradictory and culturally specific Euro-American and Native public memory, arguing that these memorials demonstrate how the dominant society constructs and maintains visions of the past within the public sphere that are not necessarily true representations of the past but are concerned with upholding local and national American ideals. Simultaneously, I argue that the Northwestern Shoshoni have used the public space at the Bear River Massacre site to reclaim and restructure their vision of the past. Forgetting can be used as both a means to control what is remembered and subsequently forgotten, but also to reclaim culturally specific visions of the past. Public memory provides both the opportunity to repress and forget but also to challenge and re-work forgotten memories. David Glassberg argued:

"Public history simultaneously reproduces the unequal political relationships of a society, through the relative power of groups in society to have their version of history accepted as the public history, and serves as an instrument through which these relationships are transformed."[57] Public history and memorialization projects are therefore an excellent way to engage debates about forgetting because they are clear markers of societal and ideological misrepresentations of the past and allow us to assess which groups have forgotten and why. However, they also open up connected dialogues about exactly what has been omitted from the past and whose version of memory is being presented. Even though dialogues between the Northwestern Shoshoni and Euro-American communities have emerged at Bear River in the formation of public memory, Native and Euro-American memory remains culturally distinct at the massacre site and their narratives do not interlink or overlap in the creation of public memory.

Using theorists such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Milan Kundera and Paul Ricoeur, I shall demonstrate that the failure to remember Bear River evidences the Euro-American-centric nature of public collective memory as it relates to memorials, commemorations and even written history. Dominant groups and cultures tend to control what is remembered and subsequently what is forgotten, particularly concerning significant historical events within the public sphere. Leading societal groups often present their own culturally specific version of memory, sometimes at the cost of minority memory. Minority memories are then often distorted to fit the central ideological narrative, or lost entirely. Such memories - in this case those of the Northwestern Shoshoni - can be actively involved in the process of public forgetting, thus protecting their own group memories to prevent them becoming misrepresented within dominant historical narratives. Minority groups may thus construct their own culturally specific versions of

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[57] D. Glassberg, 'Public History and the Study of Memory', *The Public Historian*, 18, 2 (1996) 7-23: 11.

memory. The attempts by dominant groups to control what is remembered, combined

with the desire of minority groups to protect their own group memories, remind us that

memory is culturally specific. Culturally specific notions of forgetting at Bear River

have made the establishment of cross-cultural narratives of the massacre very difficult.

Challenges, in particular to Euro-American public representations of memory, go

someway to a cross-cultural understanding of Bear River.

Tribe members have recently foregrounded their narratives, particularly through

memorials that re-tell and re-structure previously held Euro-American representations

of Bear River. This section situates Shoshoni attempts to reclaim the public memory of

the massacre within the realm of other theories surrounding minority groups and the

reclamation and re-structuring of their histories.

Passive and Active Forgetting

To provide theoretical context for Bear River's public forgetting, I will outline two

dominant forms of forgetting: passive and active. Forgetting is a quandary for human

nature. We naturally forget with old age, time, illness, or as a result of external factors

in our lives. The concept of passive, or natural, forgetting is one of the oldest Western

memory theories, formed in part by Plato's analogy of human memory being

comparable to a wax tablet. In Plato's dialogue, *The Theaetetus*, (circa 396 BC), he

highlighted the malleable nature of human memory where some people's brains are soft

and not capable of retaining information, meaning impressions can become easily

blurred or lost.[58] By using the wax tablet metaphor, Plato highlighted the unreliability of

memory. Plato's ideas on memory have reverberated throughout scholarship and,

although writing much later, John Locke reaffirmed Plato's concept of a wax tablet in

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1689). Locke emphasized the tendency

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[58] Plato, *Theaetetus*. Translated from Greek by R. A. H. Waterfield (London: Penguin, 1987).

of impressions on the brain to fade, resulting in forgetfulness. He stated: "There seems to be a constant decay of all of our ideas, even of those that are struck deepest, and in our minds the most retentive."[59] Both Plato and Locke emphasized that, over time, individual memories eventually fade, a fact that is unanimously agreed upon by contemporary theorists. In *Memory and American History* (1989), David Thelen argued that that we naturally expect accuracy if a memory has been formed by the memory holder's literal proximity in time and space to the event being remembered. The further the individual moves from the event, the more he forgets.[60]

Passive forgetting is far more of an individual process as it is concerns our own brains and individual memory decline. However, it can be applied at a collective level. For example, Northwestern Shoshoni oral histories of Bear River informed the tribe of their own specific versions of the massacre. Over time, these communal memories are likely to have faded due to the natural process of forgetting. Then, through an unintentional passive process, the Northwestern Shoshoni may have transformed their communal oral histories as the surrounding environment developed and mutated and their memories came to reflect changing societal and tribal trends. The oral histories would have been restructured accordingly for their use in current tribal life. Combined, these factors mean that the contemporary generation of Northwestern Shoshoni do not remember events at Bear River with the same detail as their ancestors who witnessed the massacre. The forgetting here is not intentional but is the result of natural factors that passively shape collective memories of events.

Unlike natural passive forgetting, which cannot be avoided, active forgetting is much more of a considered and organized process. It is usually associated with the way

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[59] R. Woolhouse, (ed.), *John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (London and New York: Penguin, 1997), 149.
[60] Thelen, *Memory and American History,* ix.

nations or groups formulate memories as opposed to being an individual process. David Lowenthal distinguished between active and passive forgetting in relation to individual and collective memory. He argued that individual, passive forgetting is largely involuntary. By comparison "collective oblivion" is mainly "deliberate, purposeful and regulated."[61] Marita Struken whose work, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and The Politics of Remembering* (1997), considered that American cultural memory and its relationship to national identity provided a useful distinction between passive and active forgetting, arguing that memory was a natural process that worked in tandem with forgetting. Struken argued that the construction of national memory is far more strategic and organized than individual memory.[62] National memory that affects groups in the public sphere involves a systematized active process and therefore has particularly strong ties to public collective memory that is formed in an external environment.

Theorists have argued that active forgetting can be crucial if the individual or a community is to survive a traumatic event and not be simply overwhelmed by memory. In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," the second work of his *Untimely Meditations* (1874), Nietzsche offered a defense of active forgetting, arguing that willed forgetting was essential to the wellbeing of the individual. People, argued Nietzsche, should envy the herding cattle and their ability to forget, living outside historical time. "Man, on the other hand, braces himself against the great and ever greater pressure of what is past." For Nietzche, the past is a burden that is to be: "forgotten if it is not to become the gravedigger of the present."[63] For Nietzsche,

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[61] D. Lowenthal, Preface, in A. Forty & S. Kuchler (eds.), *The Art of Forgetting,* Oxford: Berg, 1999), vii- xiv: xi.
[62] M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories, The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997), 7.
[63] F. W. Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', in *Untimely Meditations.* Translated from German by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61, 63.

individuals and cultures must make active attempts to forget if they are to survive and achieve happiness.[64] Modern theorists such as Milan Kundera and Marc Augé have also agreed that much of the past is a burden that should be forgotten if we are to survive in the present.[65] In *Oblivion*, Marc Augé argued that: "we must forget in order to remain present, forget in order not to die, forget in order to remain faithful."[66] Willed forgetting, for Augé, serves mankind in the present: it is forgetting, or oblivion, that brings us back to the present. To stress the importance of forgetting, Augé used the example of those who have been subject to horror or trauma and, like Freud, argued that forgetting was necessary for self-preservation.

Paul Ricoeur argued that active and passive forgetting were not easily distinguishable. In *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2000), Ricoeur wrote that people *escape* memories by forgetting them. Escapism is ambivalent, both passive and active, in that there are certain events that we do not want to know so we naturally wish to forget them. There is, however, a degree of activity involved in this process. Ricoeur's escapist forgetting is particularly applicable to Bear River's memory. He argued: "It is a matter here of *escapist forgetting* - and of bad faith, a strategy of avoidance - that for the most part is guided by an obscure desire not to know about, and not to inquire into atrocities committed in one's own neck of the woods."[67] Escapism here is passive because it goes "unacknowledged." However, Ricoeur argues that this strategy of avoidance of enquiry into past events is as much an ambivalent active process as it is a passive one. Ricoeur's theory can be applied to events at Bear River where there is arguably an active effort by

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[64] Signund Freud also argued that forgetting was a willed or active process conducted by individuals who had experienced a traumatic event. Freud believed humans actively repressed traumatic memories to protect themselves. See, S. Freud, 'Screen Memories', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. 3. Translated from German by J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1962), 301-322.
[65] Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting,* 6.
[66] M. Augé, *Oblivion.* Translated from French by M. de Jager (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 89.
[67] P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated from French by K. Blamey and D. Pallauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 120

local Euro-American communities not to recognize the impact the massacre had on the Shoshoni or to publically acknowledge tribal histories of the massacre as interlinked with their own representations. Instead, the Shoshoni voice is excluded from local Euro-American memorials and much Euro-American scholarship on the massacre. This is certainly an active strategy by which the realities of history are avoided. Ricoeur argued that, in such cases, passive forgetting becomes blurred with active forgetting, especially when it becomes: "the history of the greatness of peoples … in short the history of conquerors ... this forgetting boils down to a forgetting of the victims. It then becomes the task of memory to correct this systematic forgetting and to encourage the writing of the history of victims."[68] This is evident at Bear River where the Northwestern Shoshoni are, at the time of writing, involved in constructing their own culturally specific histories of the massacre which exist in a separate sphere from the that of the victors', or dominant, history.

The concept of active forgetting can be applied to both the Northwestern Shoshoni and local and national Euro-American communities at Bear River. The event was certainly traumatic and the Northwestern Shoshoni who experienced it were likely to have suppressed memories, which in turn would have impacted on how much information they provided to their relatives. Their traumatic legacies have, therefore, had a lasting impact on which information regarding the massacre they are willing to share with the broader Euro-American community. Simultaneously, local Euro-American communities have actively forgotten elements of the massacre because such memories would have hindered their current relationships with the Northwestern Shoshoni. Retaining these memories would also have cemented their connection to their own violent histories that

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[68] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 122, 123.

included the slaughter of Native Americans. Such atrocities would make for uncomfortable recollection.

The Memorials at Bear River: Power and Forgetting

The Bear River Massacre site offers a unique case study in public remembrance and the application of public forgetting. One of the essential ways that dominant societies assert their power and are capable of inducing a culture of forgetting is through the predominantly Western preoccupation with public memorialization. Forgetting is often performed in a public space and public constructs of memory and simultaneous forgetting can infiltrate and shape private memories. Michal de Carteau described memorials as the "enemy" of memory, because, when built, they tie down a version of history which remains static. However, Carteau argued that a principle feature of memory was that you could not fix it in this way.[69] Attempts to do so result in memorials promoting forgetting. Problematically, we are often passive consumers of public memory and fail to question whose version of history is being represented in memorial form. This means visitors to memorial sites often fail to understand whose voices might be excluded from public remembrance.

There are multiple and contradictory Euro-American and Northwestern Shoshoni memorials, dating from 1932 to 2003. These stand collectively at the site, allowing visitors to actively engage in the process of memory. Since no memorial at the site has been destroyed, the implication is that no memory of the massacre has been subject to the process of active forgetting. Paradoxically, however, the multiple memorials demonstrate that what is remembered is inherently involved in a process of forgetting. Kirk Savage, in *The Politics of Memory,* argued that, whilst people may build monuments to commemorate specific battles, the monuments themselves often signify

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[69] M. Carteau, 'The Place of Memory', in A. Forty & S. Kuchler (eds.), *The Art of Forgetting,* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 7.

the battle between dueling memories and interpretations.[70] The shifting tone of Bear

River's Euro-American memorials reveals much about collective memory and its

relationship to public forgetting, instead of reflecting an accurate account of events.

Barnes stated: "They combine to tell a story in which the massacre's abrasive brutality

is mitigated and polished, filtered through the perspectives and understandings of those

who built the monuments. There, the massacre itself is clouded in the effusive praise of

the community and its values."[71] At Bear River the active and structured process of

memorialization has encouraged memories that do not so much represent the reality of

events but are controlled according to culturally specific, temporal ideologies and

values.

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[70] K. Savage, 'The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument', in J. R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 143.
[71] Barnes, 'Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre', 98.

Figure 1: Bear River Monument: This memorial stands about 100 yards away from the massacre site. Built in 1932, it contains three plaques dedicated to the Bear River Massacre, placed here in 1932, 1952 and 1990. These plaques present different portrayals of the massacre that reflect the time in which they were erected. Image: Author's own.

The majority of memory theorists regard the relationship between power and forgetting as a negative or even dangerous tool of ideological control over a nation or society's memory. Often dominant memories will downplay or omit negative elements of their past, such as violence against minority groups, that were essential to the formation of their societies. In *Banal Nationalism* (1995), Michael Billing argued that every nation needed its national history, its collective memory, that was: "simultaneously a collective forgetting." Billing claimed that nations were prone to forget the violence that brought them into being, arguing that national unity was always: "effected by means of brutality."[72] This is evident with the first Euro-American memorial erected at the massacre site in 1932, which reads "The Battle of Bear River was fought in this vicinity January 29, 1863. Col P.E. Connor, leading 300 California Volunteers from Camp Douglas, Utah, against Bannock and Shoshoni Indians guilty of hostile attacks on emigrants and settlers, engaged about 500 Indians of whom 250 to 300 were killed and

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[72] M. Billing, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 37, 38.

incapacitated, including about 90 combatant women and children. 14 soldiers were killed, 4 officers and 49 men wounded, of whom 1 officer and 7 men died later. 79 were severely frozen. Chiefs Bear Hunter, Sagwitch, and Lehi were reported killed. 175 horses and much stolen property were recovered. 70 lodges were burned."

This memorial paints a fairly accurate historical representation of the massacre, including the number of Indians and soldiers killed. Details from the massacre are not missing, but what the memorial does do by a process of omission, and a distortion of the truth, is paint a picture of the massacre that is not concerned with the violence and brutality committed against unsuspecting Indians. The Indians, even the women and children, are described as "combatant." Whilst they may have been combatant when the attack began, they certainly were not to begin with. The memorial therefore implied that the massacre was necessary because the Indians were "guilty of hostile attacks." This image, although not forgetting in a broad sense of the term, is about upholding a national image of a glorified Western past, representative of the 1930s America where Bear River was still regarded as "easing the burdens of the Citizens of Cache Valley" who were always worried about Indian attacks.[73] (Barnes, 87). This monument, then, does not forget but it does alter the past to provide a specific understanding of the event that is reflective of national ideas about Indians and the West.

Similarly the next marker, erected in 1952, focuses on a different aspect of the massacre, again referring to something that happened but omitting other details to favor this representation of the past. The "Pioneer Women" memorial was erected in July 1952 and read: "Attacks by the Indians on the peaceful Inhabitants in this vicinity led to the final battle here January 29, 1863. The conflict occurred in deep snow and bitter

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[73] Barnes, 'Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre', 87.

cold, scores of wounded and frozen soldiers were taken from the battlefield to the Latter Day Saint Community of Franklin. Here Pioneer women trained through trials and tribulation of frontier living accepted the responsibility of caring for the wounded until they could be removed to Camp Douglas Utah. Two Indian women and three children found alive after the encounter were given homes in Franklin."

Like the 1932 memorial, this one preserves a version of the frontier narrative that is reflective of the brave inhabitants who not only survived, but were dutiful and caring citizens in the face of violence. Certain elements of the past are downplayed in favor of a glorified, unspecific vision of frontier living: the Shoshoni women and children are only mentioned in terms of the good that was done to them by local religious women. Reference to the ordeal the Shoshoni women and children had suffered prior to being "given homes" was neglected in this memorial. Shoshoni narratives are omitted entirely, of course, because during this period, the murder of Indians was a requirement of extended settlement and expansion.

The purpose of this memorial is, however, to uphold local community ideals about pious Mormon frontier women of the 1800s and to express gratitude toward them. The political nature of this memorial meant that it was not necessarily about the Shoshoni but was about the women who served the soldiers in the aftermath, giving a different interpretation of the massacre.

Memorials of the 1990s

Attempts to rectify what was regarded by the Shoshoni tribe as the misrepresentation, or forgetting, of Bear River's true brutality were established at the massacre site in 1990. However, rather than being representative of a desire for historical accuracy, this new initiative reflected shifts in Euro-American ideology at a national and local level. A

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specific example of this applies to the original public commemoration by local Euro-American communities of both Bear River and Sand Creek as Civil War battles. Ken Reid pointed out: "[C]hanges in the country's racial and cultural tone have made it expedient to no longer refer to what happened at Bear River as simply a battle."[74] By the 1970s, Bear River and Sand Creek were re-established as massacres in Euro-American public memory. This was reflected in the 1990 national memorial at Bear River which read: "Bear River Massacre Site has been designated a national historic landmark.… This site possesses national significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America." A couple of months after this, the Idaho State Transportation Department put up a sign at the same place which read: "Bear River Massacre: Very few Northwestern Shoshoni survived a battle here that turned into a massacre by P.E. Connor's California Volunteers: In 1863, Connor and his force set out from Salt Lake City on a cold January campaign in response to friction between Indian and white travellers. They found more than 400 Shoshoni settled in a winter camp on Battle Creek. When Connor struck at daybreak on January 29, the Shoshoni suffered a massacre unrivaled in Western history."

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[74] Reid, 'Research Design for Archeological Investigations', 6.

Figure 2: Bear River Massacre Memorial: This depicts the memorial erected by the Idaho State Transportation in 1990. It stands adjacent to the 1932 monument, yet tells a different story of the day. Image: Author's own.

Although the violence against the Shoshoni is acknowledged in these two memorials, these markers do not situate the massacre within Civil War public history and so omit Bear River from the Civil War narrative. In fact, in comparison with Sand Creek, once it was confirmed that atrocities carried out by Connor and Chivington were massacres, plaques commemorating the events as 'battles' were removed from public memorials of the Civil War. Subsequently, in public memory, the massacres became isolated acts of unjustifiable violence against indigenous tribes that had no connection to the Civil War. By neglecting to situate the massacres within Civil War history, it was forgotten that massacres of Native tribes played a part in Union victory of the Civil War. Bear River and Sand Creek's isolation from Civil War history demonstrates that the construction of American public memory is actively involved in the process of forgetting to reinforce the dominant historical and ideological narratives of the Civil War as a war of liberation.

Significantly, all the Euro-American memorials omit, or forget, the Northwestern Shoshoni voice. Shoshoni histories are not represented on any of the memorials, and so cannot challenge dominant Euro-American perceptions of the past. It was not until 2003 that the tribe was deeded 22 acres at the massacre site. In 2007, the tribe erected seven markers representing their culturally specific histories of Bear River. Importantly, these memorials demonstrated the Shoshoni reclamation and tribal reconstruction of history according to their own interpretations. This went some way to redressing the forgetting put in motion by Euro-American culture, and showed some semblance of reconciliation between competing Euro-American and Native memories. However, at the Bear River Massacre Site, memories of the Euro-American and Native American memories still remain culturally and physically polarized. For example, the Northwestern Shoshoni memorials stand at some distance from the Euro-American markers: their versions of history are physically isolated. Furthermore, and most importantly, no memorial at the massacre site portrays a cross-cultural Native and non-Native representation of the past, despite the memorial process being carried out by and affecting both cultures. Instead, the memorials present are multiple and often provide contradictory representations of memories that remain culturally specific. This problem of remembering collectively across cultures at Bear River has hindered our historical understanding of the intertwined role both groups played in the massacre, as well as limiting understanding of the place the massacre still has in influencing contemporary Native and Euro-American relationships.

The Northwestern Shoshoni Memorials: Challenging Notions of Forgetting

So far, this section has argued that forgetting is used as a powerful tool in attempts to control what societies and cultures remember, often at the cost of minority memory. However, minority groups themselves can be equally involved in the process of

forgetting, often as a consequence of dominant group attempts to control collective memory. For example, the Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River, have had a history of protecting their memories to prevent them becoming distorted and misrepresented by Euro-American portrayals of Bear River's history. However, within the public sphere, the Shoshoni have attempted to alter the public representation of the massacre. Shoshoni attempts to publically re-structure memory of Bear River can be situated within changes in the Euro-American national character regarding their attitude towards Native Americans. Shifts in how America's western past should be remembered, even within the sphere of memorialization, meant that violence against indigenous peoples was broadly understood to be characteristic of the historical environment in which the massacre occurred. Local and national communities became concerned that the Shoshoni portray their representation, perhaps as a Euro-American form of atonement for past atrocity or an enactment of social justice. Whatever the reason, it was deemed necessary that the Shoshoni have their say about a violent act that shaped, and continues to shape their past. There will, of course, be memories of Bear River that the massacre descendants have kept within their tribe. However, unlike Sand Creek, the memorials were not created in conjunction with the Park Service but were constructed by members of the tribe.

Shoshoni re-evaluation of the massacre did not over-ride Euro-American public memory of Bear River and Shoshoni memorials did not replace those already present from 1932. However, in 2003 the Northwestern Shoshoni were deeded 22 acres of the massacre site and in 2007 they erected seven markers that represented their own tribally specific versions of Bear River. These memorials stand in a semi-circle overlooking the massacre site. Michael Rowlandson argued that the need to build memorials outside

Western and European communities could be seen as contributing to finding out what really happened as well as expressing the need to come to terms with events.[75]

The first two Shoshoni markers focus on the history of the tribe in the region and how its people had relied on the land and its resources for centuries. These memorials contextualize Shoshoni life preceding settler contact before we are introduced to "Marker Three: Change and Conflict: A Clash of Cultures", which marks the end of the Shoshoni way of life. "The delicate balance in which the Shoshone managed food resources for thousands of years was drastically altered by colonization." The marker then states: "The Shoshone welcomed the settlers and tried to be hospitable, but didn't realize what they had in mind. They retaliated when injustices were done to them, when their very survival was threatened, when their traditional way of life was made impossible." The new narrative these markers present provide an image of the Shoshoni not as hostile combatants with no history, but as a people trying to survive and co-operate in times of violence.

"Marker 4: California Volunteers March to the Bear River", sets the scene for the massacre to follow: "The tensions between the Shoshone and the settlers eventually led to a call from Utah territorial leaders for help from the Army…. After reports of horses stolen by the Shoshone and skirmishes between Indians and miners in early 1863, Col. Connor saw his chance for a reprisal."

"Marker 5: Attack at Bia Ogoi" details the horrors of the massacre and, unlike the Euro-American memorials, highlights that the Indians were not "combatant" but were indeed unsuspecting. It states how the Shoshoni leaders met to "parley" with the soldiers,

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[75] M. Rowlandson, in A. Forty and S. Kuchler, (eds.), *The Art of Forgetting,*129.

seeing them coming over the bluff, but that they were immediately met with fire. The marker provides a graphic description of the aftermath of the event, stating: "The soldiers, better equipped with guns and ammunition, slaughtered the Indians in hand-to-hand combat. According to the Shoshone, Col. Connor never had any intention of negotiating with their people and arrived with the specific intention of attacking the Indians, leaving them no alternative but death and annihilation."

In these two markers the Shsohoni re-write early Euro-American public memories of Bear River and the aggressors are switched, from being the "hostile" Indians of the early Euro-American markers, to the Volunteers, with their untamed violence. Like the Euro-American memorial, this shifts our understanding of Bear River and offers an alternative version of the massacre to the Euro-American memorial that asserted the Indians were combatant. While not passive victims of the Volunteers, tribe members were unjustly met with violence according to the Shoshoni narratives.

"Marker 6: A Battle Becomes A Massacre" provides a unique understanding of the massacre by continuing its public representation beyond the event itself. Visitors learn of the devastation inflicted on the Shoshoni encampment and future generations of Shoshoni following the massacre: "When the killing ceased, the massacre field was strewn with blood and bodies which were left unburied and at the mercy of scavenging animals and people." Regarding the generational reach of the massacre, the marker states: "Stories told by survivors of the massacre have been handed down through the years and still have the power to chill with their vivid description of the horrors of that day." For the Shoshoni, Bear River cannot be forgotten because it forms part of their current identity and has had a lasting impact on tribal generations. By contrast, the Euro-American memorials allow the observer to forget the devastation the massacre

would have caused to the Shoshoni community and remembrance is limited to a static vision of the past that ends with the massacre itself.
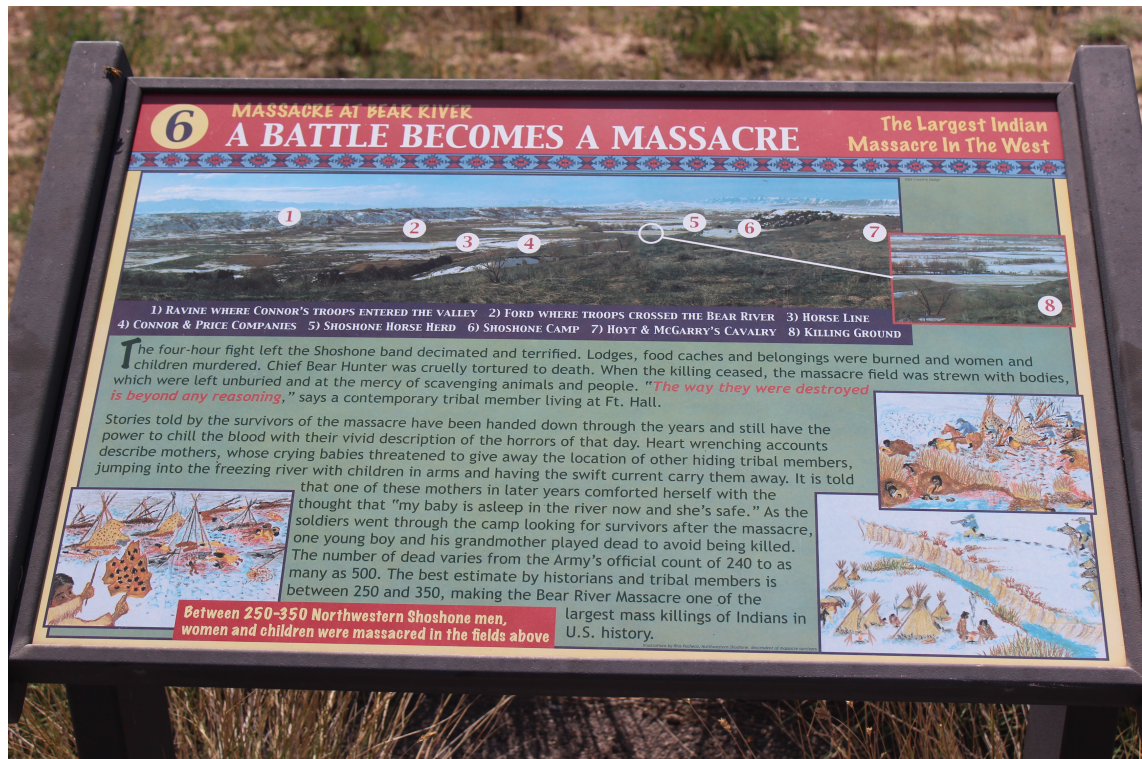
Figure 3: A Battle Becomes a Massacre: This is one of seven Shoshoni markers overlooking the massacre site, depicting the Shoshoni version of events.

"Marker 7: The Earth Will Remember", states: "We cry for the loss and sacrifice of those who did not survive and we honor the strength of those who lived."

The marker tells the observer of the impact the massacre still has on current tribal life, whilst honoring tribal strength. "Most Shoshone people today do not want to dwell on the tragedy or inflame old animosities. They seek understanding and peace among all people. Nevertheless, they also feel an obligation to tell the story of their ancestors, to learn from the mistakes of the past, and to honor the dead." The continuous connection to the past is prevalent in the Shoshoni markers, meaning the massacre cannot be forgotten or lost to history in tribal lives but remains part of the everyday in their community and in their relationships with the broader Euro-American communities.

The Shoshoni and Euro-American markers are symptomatic of their time. The shifting histories they portray demonstrate the culturally specific, public, collective memories that were themselves the result of ideological shifts in society. Therefore, what we remember in the public sphere, and subsequently what we forget, is impacted by time and reflects the culture to which we belong. It is difficult to ascertain the result of Shoshoni attempts at producing a new understanding of Bear River. However, when visitors enter the site now, they can engage with Shoshoni narratives to inform their understanding of Bear River. Furthermore, because of increased interaction with the tribe as a result of the memorials, local groups are currently working with the tribal members to construct a new vision of Bear River which hopes to have a national impact, as did the conjunctive memorialization projects at Sand Creek.

It is questionable how effective publically remembering a traumatic event is for victims of that trauma. Susannah Radstone and Katherine Hogkinson question whether recalling suffering can actually be therapeutic. In terms of the political, they question whether traumatic events actually need to be memorialized. Does this promote healing and understanding?[76] Similarly Paul Antze and Michael Lambeck asked if remembering trauma was central to identity formation, concluding that there is nothing "liberating about narrative per se."[77]

When I visited the massacre site in 2014, there were several members of the tribe conducting a quiet ceremony overlooking the massacre's location where, they told me, they came simply to remember. They were not overly concerned about the memorials when it came to their own personal and collective tribal memories. The Shoshoni have clearly maintained their own private versions of Bear River, not represented on the

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[76] Radstone & Hodgkin, *Memory, History, Nation*, 98.
[77] P. Antze & M. Lambeck, *Tense Pasts*, 9.

memorials but, from the very brief conversation I had, apparently linked to notions of place. This personalized version of memory allowed massacre descendants to remember place and its meaning as opposed to telling the history of the massacre in specific historical detail. American anthropologist, Richard Archibald, offered a pertinent personal discussion of place and memory. Archibald stated that: "[p]lace is the crucible of memory" noting also that "[m]emory and story are characteristics of our brains, not attributes of the universe that enfolds us". Moreover, he stated, memory is not fixed, for "my story also changes daily" What Archibald called "subjective" memory is "stimulated by emotion and not evidence" and so cannot be incorporated in traditional history or memorialization projects. In this way, Archibald noted how his grandmother used the cemetery as a "mnemonic device, "that could produce a "torrent of reminiscences".

In Native terms, Archibald referred to a Comanche friend whose recall of history noted the sequence of events as "not of particular import". Indeed, "there is no evidence for sequential time, time is, time as we understand and use the concept" Memory, according to Archibald, acts as a "means of confirming my own identity" but must be based on "the assumption of authenticity". However, he implied such "authenticity" may be handed down through stories, personal experience not being necessary. This has interesting application to notions of place and memory, for and understanding of the past can be "subjective, personal, emotional, intimately linked to [your] people". This has repercussions, for "The past is knowable but not through words on printed pages so much as through emotional resonance, stimulated by places and objects of memory and the stories our whole community tells".[78] Archibald's view of memory thus placed considerable weight on the oral passing on of stories to the next generation. If applied to

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[78] R. Archibald, 'A Personal History of Memory', in J.C. Cattell (ed.), *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*. (Oxford: Altamira, 2002), 64-80: 66, 68, 71, 67, 66, 75, 80.

the Northwestern Shoshoni, re-remembering does not have do be done in the public sphere as it is not wholly about every visitor to the site being aware of the past. What is important is that the memory stays alive within individuals and the tribe which can be achieved by visiting the site and passing down stories.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Situating Bear River's relative obscurity, or forgetting, within broader debates about collective memory and its relationship to forgetting has not been done in previous scholarship. However, the process reveals both new ideas about collective memory and our understanding of Bear River, namely that collective memory, particularly within the public sphere, reflects dominant group concerns and ideologies but is also representative of challenges to memory. At Bear River dominant local and national groups have controlled how the massacre has been remembered according to their own specific versions of the past and these have often excluded or overlooked the Northwestern Shoshoni voice. This has resulted in the forgetting and commemoration of a significant historical event such as Bear River being disproportionately controlled by local Euro-American and Mormon communities. This has resulted in the Northwestern Shoshoni being radically under-represented in Bear River's Euro-American memory and in turn formulating their own culturally specific public versions of the massacre as is demonstrated by the disparate Shoshoni and Euro-American memorials that currently reside together at the site. That the Shoshoni have formed their own representations of the massacre, often in response to the forgetting or misrepresentation encouraged by the dominant culture, re-enforces a central idea of this thesis: that disparate cultural narratives rarely overlap in the formation of memory. This study of Bear River's forgetting emphasizes the importance of remembering the massacre through the lens of inter-linked minority and dominant memories if we are to prevent elements of Connor's

slaughter being forgotten. Observers at the site can choose which memorial version to believe. As David Blight framed it: "Collective historical memory … can overwhelm and control us.… But historical memory is also a matter of choice, a question of will. As a culture, we choose which footprints from the past will best help us walk in the present."[79] However, as this has been largely a study of public remembering and forgetting at Sand Creek, it is important to remember that the Northwestern Shoshoni have their own private versions of memory that exist outside of this sphere which will never form part of our cultural understanding of Bear River.

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[79] D. W. Blight, 'For Something beyond the Battlefield: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for Memory of the Civil War', in D. Thelen (ed.), *Memory and American History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 27-50: 29, 32, 35, 39-40.

Chapter Four: Bear River's Historical and Contemporary Under-Emphasis: The Compliance of the Mormon Church and the Silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni Voice

The Mormon Church and Compliance at Bear River

I have chosen to consider the role of the Latter Day Saints (LDS) within the absence of scholarly discussion surrounding the Bear River Massacre because it has not been significantly analyzed in either Mormon or non-Mormon historiography, yet it forms an essential reason behind Bear River's limited scholarship and the massacre's inadequate portrayal, particularly within Euro-American public memory. I argue that members of the Mormon Church who settled in Utah and Southeastern Idaho in the years preceding the Bear River Massacre fostered an environment where the massacre was possible and eventually complied with Connor's slaughter of the Northwestern Shoshoni. Although some scholars have briefly considered the role of the Mormon Church in the Bear River Massacre (Madsen referred very briefly to the Mormon response to the massacre as "approval."[1]) their conduct has not been analyzed to any significant extent. This section on the Mormon Church argues that the Mormons complied with Connor's actions at Bear River by way of their relative public silence.

In the immediate aftermath of the massacre, the Church was not - and neither is it currently - keen to emphasize its historical support of Bear River. The primary reason for this was that the practicalities of a rapidly expanding Mormon population in Utah and Southeastern Idaho throughout the 1850s demanded more land: land that the Shoshoni occupied. When Connor slaughtered an encampment of Indians at Bear River he both decreased the likelihood of future Shoshoni attacks on established Mormon

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[1] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 22.

colonies and cleared the path for future Mormon settlement in a sought-after, resource-rich region. Although the massacre aided the Church's plans for permanent settlement, unprovoked violence against Indians did not fit in with LDS theology regarding the treatment of Native Americans. According to The Book of Mormon, the Native Americans were the Saints' "lesser blessed brethren" who were to be treated peaceably and kindly. Open and widespread support of Connor's actions, particularly outside Utah and Idaho where the Mormons were treated with mistrust and suspicion by both the federal government and the general Euro-American population, presented a conflict between the requirements of increasing settlement and theological doctrine.

Added to this complexity was the fraught relationship the Mormons had with Connor and the California Volunteers. Having escaped the grasps of federal control after fleeing their previous colony in Nauvoo, many Mormons resented the presence of government-sponsored troops in their new homeland. When Connor and the Volunteers committed the massacre at Bear River, the Church was wary of publically supporting a group about whom they had previously been vocal in their disdain. Combined, then, these complex and often contradictory factors meant that many in the Mormon Church approved of the massacre, but they were careful not to openly highlight their support of actions at Bear River.

There was, and is, a curious silence within Mormon historiography regarding the Saints' reaction to Bear River, especially from those Mormons who were in the region in the immediate aftermath of the massacre. To historically contextualize: where we would expect to find primary sources and documentation there is relatively little available, making it difficult for historians to evaluate the Mormon reaction to Bear River. Importantly, there are few Mormon sources condemning the massacre. Considering the

volatile relationship many in the Church had with the Volunteers, this is surprising. Indiscriminate slaughter at Bear River provided the Church with the perfect opportunity to condemn the Volunteers, yet the majority of Mormon sources available praise Connor and his troops. Considering the theological relationship the Church had with the Native Americans, it is surprising that at least some Mormons did not rebuke the perpetrators for the brutal murder of the Shoshoni. Reflecting on this historical background, the lack of Mormon historical condemnation of the massacre leads to the possible conclusion that the Saints complied with the slaughter at Bear River for reasons of self-interest: the preservation and securement of future colonies.

The Mormon Church's compliance with the massacre has no doubt influenced the scholarly under-emphasis of Bear River. It has had the greatest impact on Mormon historiography where often only a few sentences are dedicated to Bear River or the massacre is omitted entirely. The limited representation of Bear River relating to Mormon acquiescence to the massacre occurred for the following reasons. Firstly, the lack of primary documentation pertaining to the Mormon reaction of the slaughter, specifically the lack of sources condemning the massacre, means Bear River has not been widely evaluated within Mormon and non-Mormon histories. Secondly, Mormon history is still unwilling to highlight its association with one of the most brutal Western Native American massacres. Bear River, when considered at all in Mormon historiography, is often detached from the Mormon experience, and analyzed as a federal engagement. This leads to my third point: as discussed in my state of scholarship section, Mormon historiography is still relatively isolated from mainstream American and Native American history. There is a sense that Mormon history remains the domain of those who are members of the Church. The lack of historical synthesis means that the interlinked roles that these groups played in the massacre have not been

adequately analyzed, resulting in poor historical representation of Bear River in scholarship. Lastly, we know that at the time of the massacre the Church was regarded with mistrust and suspicion by mainstream America and often the Saints kept their opinions to themselves to avoid being persecuted. This sense of separation has reverberated throughout modern Mormon histories of the massacre. These reasons have combined to create a minimal scholarly representation of Bear River, particularly in Mormon historiography.

It is important to state that the Mormon Church clearly cannot be held solely responsible for the slaughter at Bear River and from the outset I want to make clear that I am in no way placing blame for the massacre solely on the Church. The Bear River Massacre occurred for a number of complex and interlinked factors, as discussed in my "What Happened at Bear River?" chapter, and the role of the Mormon Church cannot be separated from the complex interplay of federal, Native and Volunteer historical narratives. I am, however, choosing to address the Mormon role in the lead-up to, and the Church's reaction to, the outcome of the Bear River Massacre because it needs further consideration if we are to understand properly why the massacre has been so under-emphasized in both Mormon and non-Mormon historiography.

To address the Mormon Church's compliance and the impact this has had on the under-emphasis of the massacre, I will analyze over a decade of Mormon-Indian relations from when the Mormon settlers first arrived in Utah in 1849 until the occurrence of the Bear River Massacre in 1863. It is important to consider this time period, prior to events at Bear River, because it demonstrates the development and subsequent deterioration of Mormon-Indian relations as a result of increased Mormon settlement in the Cache Valley region. By providing this background information, I shall show how many in the

Mormon Church fostered an environment where the massacre was possible and eventually came to be complicit in events at Bear River. I shall begin by outlining the Mormons' relationship to the Shoshoni according to Latter Day Saints' scripture. I shall then address why the Mormons came to Utah initially, and the impact increasing settlement had on the relationship between the Shoshoni and the Mormons. Thirdly I shall analyze Brigham Young's policy of "feed not fight," assessing the contradictions this policy posed when combined with the practical demands of Mormon settlement. I shall look at specific Mormon-Indian polices to provide examples of this conflict. Finally, I shall consider the Mormon reaction to Bear River in the massacre's immediate aftermath.

The Lamanites and the Mormon Migration

According to the Book of Mormon, American Indians are the descendants of Israelites who came to America about 600 BCE. These Israelites were descendants of Laman, the rebellious son of Lehi, a prominent prophet in the Book of Mormon. Soon after the Israelites arrived in America, they divided into two great civilizations, one that followed the Mormon gospel, and the other which followed darkness and apostasy. American Indians were perceived as those that followed sin and were named the Lamanites. The light-skinned and righteous men who followed the Mormon gospel were named the Nephites. To the Mormons (the light-skinned Nephites) redemption of the Native Americans, the Lamanites, was a prophecy to be fulfilled according to their scripture.[2]

Encountering Native Americans in great numbers when they travelled west, the Mormons took this scriptural reference literally and were concerned with treating the Indians kindly if the latter were to be redeemed. Although their scripture implied

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[2] *The Book of Mormon: Fourth European Edition,* Alma 3:8-9.

superior ethnocentric attitudes over the Native Americans, the Church's theological guidelines meant they were concerned with being thoughtful and diplomatic in their relationships with Indians, particularly in the early days of settlement. This contrasted with the brutal violence carried out against tribes on the Western frontier by other Euro-American settlers. Treating the Indians peaceably was an initial primary concern for the Church's leader in Utah Territory, Brigham Young. Young was fiercely devoted to Mormonism and interpreted the Book of Mormon literally. Upon arrival in Utah in 1849, Young was noted as stating: "Were you to ask me how it was that I embraced Mormonism, I should answer, for the simple reason that it embraces all truth in heaven and earth.... There is no truth outside of it; there is nothing holy and honorable outside of it; for, wherever these principles are found among all the creations of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and his order and Priesthood, embrace them."[3] Young's dedication to the Book of Mormon was the explanation for what some, particularly traditionalist Mormon historians, have regarded as his often conciliatory and diplomatic attitude towards Native Americans that he advocated throughout his life.

Mass Mormon emigration into Utah Territory resulted in early conflicts for the Mormons between redeeming the Indians and protecting their own settlements. When Brigham Young first came West in 1849, he guided his followers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Utah Territory in what is today Southeastern Idaho. At the time of his arrival these areas were geographically and politically isolated from federal control and national hostility and therefore perfect for the establishment of a Mormon colony. Travel to the inhospitable, largely unmapped West was dangerous and yet the Mormons decided on this section of the nation because it was isolated yet had plentiful resources. In his study of the Mormon settlement of Southeastern Idaho, Mormon historian, Lawrence G.

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[3] Young quoted in Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses,* loc 858.

Coates, wrote that the "idea of Idaho" first entered Mormon history on the 31st March, 1844, when the Mormons were given the report of Western explorer John C. Fremont's expeditions West to this area. According to Fremont, the Bear River Valley was resource-rich, having extensive water supplies and timber and good soil for vegetation. Fremont stated: "A military post and a civilized society would be of great value here." Coates wrote that: "Fremont's maps were a major influence on the Mormon choice of a settlement at the site."[4] By the mid 1840s Young had decided upon the location of future Mormon settlement.

By August 1846 Brigham Young told his followers in Missouri that they were going to Great Salt Lake and the Bear River Valley. Originally migration was on a relatively small scale, amounting to few followers from the disbanded Nauvoo colony. In their study, *The Mormon Experience* (1979), Arrington and Bitton stated: "The exodus to the Far West, stretching as it did over several years, and thousands of miles is not easy to portray." Arrington and Bitton pointed out that in the 1840s migration did not occur *en masse*, but was originally made up of small pioneering groups who were travelling to poorly defined areas of the West.[5] However, once the initial settlements were established in the Bear River and Great Salt Lake regions of Utah and what is present day Idaho, Mormon colonies grew rapidly. In the 1850s, during the first mass emigration, the Mormons settled up to 100 towns in a vast area. By the end of the 1850s Utah's population had increased by more than 250 per cent.[6] Young wanted to extend Mormon borders as far as possible to spread, secure and protect Mormon settlements. In her article on resource conflict between the Mormons and the Indians, Beverly Smaby pointed out that one of the reasons for the rapid expansion of Mormon colonies was to accommodate the vast numbers of Mormon converts coming West from both eastern

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[4] Coates, 'The Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho', 45, 48.
[5] Arrington & Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*. 96.
[6] Coates, 'The Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho', 49.

America and Europe.[7] As the rate of Mormon conversion increased, so too did settlement to the now established Mormon colonies of the West.

These rapidly growing Mormon settlements had a profound impact on the Shoshoni and surrounding Plains' tribes. Blackhawk stated that the relationship was immediately volatile: "The Mormon arrival quickly brought displacement, additional violence, disease, and misery...."[8] As a nomadic tribe, the Shoshoni depended on the different resources offered in Utah and Idaho. Permanent Mormon settlements meant the Shoshoni often arrived at their traditional winter or summer encampments and found resources either destroyed or farmed by the Mormons. Added to this was the fact that the Mormons refused to compensate the Shoshoni for their land. Firstly, the Mormons believed that the land belonged to God and was not for humans to buy or sell. Secondly, the Mormons did not want to pay the Shoshoni for their land because they feared it would mean more tribes would demand money in compensation for the Mormons' ever-growing settlements. Brigham Young's second-in-command, Herbert C. Kimball, rejected the very "idea of paying Indians for their lands, for if the Shoshones should be considered, the Utes and other tribes would claim pay also."[9] Madsen remarked: "a major source of Indian anger was white refusal to acknowledge aboriginal ownership of the land, and the Shoshoni anger increased when Salt Lake and other nearby valley's were settled by the aggressive Mormons in 1847 and after."[10] Despite Mormon-Indian conflicts over resources and land, Young remained confident that he could carry out peaceable and diplomatic relations with the Indian tribes of Utah and Southeastern Idaho.

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[7] B. P. Smaby, 'The Mormons and the Indians: Conflicting Ecological Systems in the Great Basin', *American Studies,* 16,1, (1975) 35-48: 39.
[8] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the* Land, 260.
[9] Kimbell quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 28,
[10] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 38.

"Feed Not Fight:" The Contradiction of Mormon Diplomacy and Settlement

Brigham Young introduced his policy of "feed not fight" when he became Governor of Utah and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the territory in 1852, and followed this mantra for the rest of his life. The approach of "feed not fight" was simple: Young decided that it was vastly more economical to feed and clothe the Indians than to fight them. His policy was in part guided by his religious principles that the Indians he encountered were the descendants of the Lamanites and should be treated kindly if they were to be converted to the good ways of Mormonism. In his biography of Young, John G. Turner pointed out that the maxim of "feed not fight" was not unique to Young but had been employed previously by a group of Indian Commissioners in 1851 when negotiating a series of treaties with California tribes. However, the maxim is primarily associated with Young who declared this ideology throughout his political career as an example of his humanitarian philosophy. Turner stated: "Probably no one else employed the maxim as frequently as Young did. For the next thirty years, he consistently reminded Utah settlers calling for military reprisals against Indians that it was "cheaper to feed them.'"[11] Even after the Bear River Massacre, in 1865 Brigham Young announced:

> Our past experience with the Indian tribes with which we have come into contact has led us to adopt a maxim that it is cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them. The correctness of this maxim is especially forced upon us when we consider the great risk the brethren run of endeavoring to whip or kill the marauders.… The plan we propose to adopt is to stop the fighting altogether,

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[11] J. G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Harvard MA: Belknap Press, 2012), 217.

and as soon as possible establish communication with the disaffected Indians and endeavor to make peace with them by means of presents.[12]

"Feed not fight" was not simply based upon Mormon good intentions. The policy also served the economic interests of the Mormon Church. Feeding the Indians was much cheaper than providing the arms, ammunition and manpower that would be required to ward off Indian hostility and it was hoped that, by not being overtly aggressive towards Natives, they would be placated, thus decreasing the possibility of Indian attacks on Mormon settlements. Furthermore, the policy served the cultural goals of the Church. If the Indians became dependent on the Mormons to feed them, they would be in a weakened position, making their conversion to Mormonism much more likely. In the late 1840s Young told his followers: "If we can secure the good will of the Indians by conferring favors upon them, we not only secure peace for the time being, but gradually bring them to depend upon us until they eventually will not be able to perceive how they can get along without us."[13]

It was Young's hope that eventually the tribes of Utah and Idaho would become dependent on the Church and would follow both the Latter Day Saints' religion and agricultural lifestyles, thus fulfilling Mormon prophecy of converting their "lesser blessed brethren" to Mormonism. Young remarked: "It has ever been my aim, in all my intercourse with the Natives, to teach them by example as well as precept, and to endeavor to exercise a good wholesome and salutary influence over them, in order if possible to bring them to appreciate the benefits arising from a civilized existence when contrasted with their own."[14] The aims of "feed not fight" were therefore twofold. On

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[12] Young to Orson Hyde, 1st October 1865 quoted in Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 34.
[13] L. G. Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies: The Formative Period, 1836-1851', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 18, 3, (1778), 428-452: 429.
[14] Young quoted in Arrington, *Brigham* Young, loc 5666.

the one hand, they demonstrated a treatment of Indians that was much more sympathetic than the harsh treatment tribes had received from other Euro-American settlers. On the other hand, the policy also served the Mormon Church's own economic and cultural self-interest.

The policy of "feed not fight" evidenced the complex and often paradoxical politics of the Mormon leader, Brigham Young. Traditionalist Mormon historians such as Arrington and Coates argued that Young's "feed not fight" policy could be used as evidence of his kindly treatment of Native Americans. Arrington wrote that, whilst Young could not be portrayed as "enlightened" in a way that would "satisfy the militant Native Americans of today," taken in the context of the 19th century, when frontier violence against Indians was commonplace, "Brigham displayed moderation and a willingness to share."[15] Similarly Coates argued: "The relations of Brigham Young with the Indians were a blend of his socio-religious-humanitarian philosophy and practical measures that he thought necessary for establishing the Mormon Kingdom of God here on earth."[16] Traditionalist Mormon historians tended to emphasize the more diplomatic and peaceful side of Young's Indian policy and it is difficult to find evidence within Mormon sources that "feed not fight" was anything but conciliatory towards the Indians.[17] Some Mormon historians have, however, recognized a conflict of interest in Young's Indian policy. Arrington, for example, referred to Young as a "supreme American paradox"[18] and there is evidence to suggest that Young's policy was not always conciliatory.

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[15] Arrington quoted in Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 33. In his synthesis of historiography on Mormon and Indian relations, Walker described Young's reaction to Indian skirmishes as almost "pacifistic", Walker, 34.
[16] Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies', 428.
[17] Coates, Arrington and Walker all describe Young's Indian policy in mild tones using words such as "pacifistic", "moderate" and "gentle".
[18] Arrington, *Brigham* Young, loc 145.

A study that contradicted the traditionalist Mormon view is Blackhawk's *Violence Over the Land*. Blackhawk argued that violence increased in the region as a result of Mormon settlement and that the Mormons were responsible for what Blackhawk referred to as "violent paternalism." The Utah Mormons, argued Blackhawk, had a history of aggressive paternalistic policies towards Great Basin Indians such as the Paiute and Utes: members of both tribes were either enslaved or adopted into Mormon communities.[19] These policies began almost immediately upon the arrival of the Latter Day Saints in the region. It is therefore essential that later events at Bear River are contextualized within the history of Mormon aggression towards indigenous peoples.

Although he advocated peaceful and what Blackhawk would term paternal treatment towards the Indians, Young was not wholly averse to using force against them when he saw it as being the only effective option to quell Indian violence: "Like other American leaders, Young wielded blunter instruments of control when charity and civilizing efforts failed to pacify Utah's native peoples."[20] Young was not foolish. He expected violence to occur when he settled on Indian land and, in the early days of settlement, he instructed his followers to build forts for protection against hostile Indian raids. He also established Utah's own Mormon militia, the Nauvoo Legion, who were instructed to use force against Indians if it was deemed necessary for protection. Coates wrote: "When the forts proved inadequate during periods of intense violence, he [Young] ordered the Nauvoo legion to fight the 'hostile' natives."[21]

An example of Young inadvertently advocating violent policies towards the Indians was his effort to shift the responsibility for the Natives away from the Church. Blackhawk stated: "As was the case throughout much of western history, Utah's new leaders

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[19] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 245, 240.
[20] Turner *Brigham Young*, 217.
[21] Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies', 429.

deferred to settlers, and particularly the military in matters of Indian affairs."[22] There is evidence of this attitude throughout Young's career: facing the continuous threat of Indian violence and depredations, Young believed a possible solution was to remove the Indians from land the Mormons had settled. Coates argued that in this respect Young was not dissimilar to other frontiersmen for whom Indian removal was clearly advantageous to Euro-American settlement. Coates stated: "For the good of the Indians, for the prosperity of the civilization, and for the safety of the mail routes, he [Young] argued that Congress should remove the Indians from the interior of the Great Basin to a region near the Wind River Mountains."[23] Despite his mistrust of federal authority, Young relied on the government to enforce treaties aimed at removing Indians from Utah to Northern territories such as Wyoming. In 1853 Young formally requested that the government remove the Indians from Mormon occupied areas and drafted a treaty, *An Act to Extinguish the Indian Title to Lands in the Territory of Utah for Agriculture and Mineral Purpose.* Although this treaty was never ratified by the government, it demonstrated that the Mormons wanted the Indians off the lands the Church had come to occupy. Furthermore, Young requested that, if Congress removed the Indians, they should send them teachers, farmers and missionaries and teach them to cultivate the land.[24] By shifting responsibility for Indian removal onto the federal government, Young hoped that the Indians would be removed from the lands the Mormons had settled, clearing further land for Mormon occupation. Relying on the federal government is evidence that Young's Indian policies were not always conciliatory but rather that he took a more calculating attitude when it came to clearing the territory for Mormon settlement. Throughout his political career in Utah, Young continued to request the federal government to extinguish Indian rights to land and remove them to a distant territory, thus attempting to personally remove himself from acts of violence and

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[22] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, 255.
[23] Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian policies', 450.
[24] Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian policies', 451.

hostility against indigenous peoples. As Blackhawk stated, Young had a history of shifting responsibility and I believe this must be considered when analyzing the Mormon role at Bear River.[25]

Another example of Young's antagonistic policies towards the Indians is what Coates coined as his "private Indian diplomacy."[26] This referred to the diplomatic relations and meetings Young conducted with the Indians without the knowledge of the government or federal appointees in Utah Territory. The reasons for Young's covert relations with the Indians were as follows. Firstly, he mistrusted federal intervention into Mormon affairs and he saw the Indians in Utah Territory as his responsibility, especially in his role as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, despite this being a federal appointment. Secondly, Young wanted to keep Utah Territory as Mormon-occupied land and he feared that, if the federal government started discussions and treaties with Utah's Indian population, then the land had more chance of being opened up to non-Mormon emigration and settlement.

Young's diplomatic policy has been cited by traditionalist Mormon historians as evidence of his peaceable manner towards the tribes. "The first real test of Brigham Young's ability to gain and maintain peaceful and friendly relations with the Indians came during the exodus from Nauvoo, when he first began his 'private Indian diplomacy'."[27] Whilst Young preferred discussion to military action, I do not agree that Young's diplomacy was evidence of his friendly intentions towards the Indians. Rather, I regard his Indian diplomacy as a manipulative political effort for the acquisition of more land for Mormon settlement. If Young conducted his Indian affairs privately, without informing the government of his intentions, the threat of federal intervention

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[25] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, 254-255.
[26] Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies', 429.
[27] Coates, "Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies," 429.

into Mormon affairs, particularly regarding gaining Mormon territory for non-Mormon settlement, decreased and the dominance of the Latter Day Saints in the region was assured.

By the early 1860s the Saints turned their attention to the settlement of the Bear River Valley. In August of 1863 Young told a gathering of tribal Chiefs from Utah: "We have it in our minds to settle the Bear River Valley…. Now if you will keep this matter to yourselves, nobody will know anything about it, but otherwise it will be telegraphed to old Abe Lincoln by some of these army officers, and then it will be made a reservation … to prevent us from getting it."[28] In this statement Young essentially tells the Indians that if they mention the planned Mormon settlement of the Bear River Valley then they will be forced onto a reservation by the federal government. This was manipulative diplomacy as the tribes were forced into silence, the federal government was unaware of Young's actions, and Young gained land for settlement. By conducting Indian Affairs outside of federal control, Young aroused the suspicion of an already mistrustful government. Walker wrote that Forty-Niners (Gold Rush miners), non-Mormon settlers and territorial officials each charged the Mormons with controlling the Indians for their own purposes, "independent of national policy".[29] This certainly had some truth to it. Ultimately, I do not think Young's "private Indian diplomacy" can be cited, as it is by traditionalist Mormon historians, as an example of his conciliatory treatment of Indians. Rather, I believe it is evidence of a far more aggressive and manipulative Mormon Indian policy. The Indians were essentially used as scapegoats in political battles between the United States and Utah Territory.

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[28] Young quoted in Arrington, *Brigham Young*, loc 50.
[29] Walker, 'Towards a Reconstruction of Mormon Indian Relations', 36.

It is important to note that that many Mormons in Utah thought that Young was far too kindly and generous to the Indians. Some members of the Mormon community advocated violence against Utah's Indian tribes because there were complaints of Natives raiding settlements, destroying crops and stealing stock. When their homes and farms were attacked by Indian raiders, the policy of "feed not fight" became increasingly undesirable to Mormons settlers, who were already facing harsh living conditions. One of Young's followers remarked: "Should hostilities ensue, whilst we wish our leaders to be prudent, wise men, we would rather choose those who have learned other military tactics than the extreme of officers to the rear in the time of danger and well away to the front on retreat."[30]

Certainly Young's Indian policy, especially "feed not fight", was far more peaceable than the Indian policies of his Euro-American counterparts on the Western frontier. Walker, for example, wrote: "While the question is yet to be fully treated, we may tentatively posit that the scope and duration of the Mormons' conciliatory policy may have been unusual, perhaps exceptional."[31] After the Utah War ended in 1858, Young said: "We should now use the Indians kindly, and deal with them so gently that we will win their hearts and affections to us more strongly than before; and the much good that has been done them, and the many kindnesses that have been shown them, will come up before them, and they will see that we are their friends."[32] If we compare Young's Indian policies to the often harsh rhetoric of Colorado's governor, John Evans, who was governor for a similar period to Young, (1862-1865), we can see that Young was comparatively peaceful, especially in terms of military action. Walker wrote that

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[30] Quoted in Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 34.
[31] Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 38.
[32] *Our Indian Relations-How to Deal With Them: Remarks by President Brigham Young in Springville, Sunday, July 28, 1866, Reported by G. D. Watt.* Available online: *http://scriptures.byu.edu/jod/jodhtml.php?vol=11&disc=40* [Accessed 25/01/17].

Young's Indian policy had meant the "wholesale carnage" of Indian communities had been avoided.[33]

To conclude, Young's Indian polices, especially "feed not fight", was arguably peaceful in that he did not openly advocate the murder of Indians. However, Young was not averse to the use of violence or manipulative diplomacy against the Indians. Furthermore, he was largely motivated by economic needs and the practical requirements of expanding Mormon settlements and was not simply concerned with kindness towards the Indians. By considering the conciliatory nature of Young's Native American policies, particularly his maxim of "feed not fight" and how this conflicted with the practical demands of Mormon settlement, I have aimed to provide background evidence, through the lens of the Mormon Church, that explains how an environment was created in which a massacre would not be regarded with outrage by members of the Mormon Church.

Mormon - Indian Conflict

I shall now provide specific examples of Mormon-Indian conflicts to illustrate that ideological conflict arose almost immediately after 1847 Mormon settlement in Utah and Southeastern Idaho and continued throughout their occupation of the region. In her article on the conflicting ecological systems of the Mormons and the Natives, Smaby wrote: "Their [the Mormons] role as peacemakers between the two groups [Natives and Mormons] required empathy for Indians, but policy-making Mormons had responsibilities that required quite the opposite." Analysis of these specific conflicts is important because they provide detailed examples of just how idealistic and unworkable Mormon goals for the Indians were. Smaby wrote that, on the one hand, the Mormon Church recognized how important it was for the Indians to regain their independence

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[33] Walker, 'Toward a Reconstruction', 38.

and "in spirit they [the Mormons] urged them to settle down and build houses … and cultivate the land as the white men did." On the other hand, the Mormons gave the schemes that they offered the Indians little "tangible support," providing them with finished products such as food and clothes, "a policy that only served to increase the Indians dependence on the white settlers."[34] By not having steadfast and concise Indian policies that translated into realistic workable outcomes, the Mormons found themselves facing increasing problems when it came to constructing diplomatic and workable relationships with the Indians. Ultimately this meant that, by the time the Bear River Massacre occurred, the Latter Day Saints friendly disposition towards the Native Americans had deteriorated rapidly.

During what Coates referred to as the "formative period," in Mormon-Indian policy, from 1831-1851, Young: "preached sermons to the Indians … gave them tobacco, food, and clothing to alleviate their suffering; and established colonies to aid them in making a transformation of their hunting, fishing and food-gathering habits to a more reliable agricultural economy patterned after the Mormon lifestyle." However, Coates went on to state that, even though he attempted to follow this peaceable policy, Young also found it necessary to "engage in open conflict with those Indians in the Basin when it seemed that peaceful means had failed to settle Mormon differences with them." For example, when the Mormons first began their mass exodus from Nauvoo, across the plains and into Utah Territory, Young re-organized the Mormon military unit, the Nauvoo Legion, calling "every able-bodied man between the ages of fourteen and seventy-five into service", arming them with a variety of weapons and urging them to be vigilant against Indian attacks. However, Coates stated that if the Indians "eventually proved to be friendly, the Saints were counseled to teach them to raise grain."[35] Military

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[34] Smaby, 'Conflicting Ecological Systems in the Great Basin', 45, 43.
[35] Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies', 451, 438, 435, 438.

defense in these unknown lands was necessary and the nature of colonization meant it was virtually impossible to avoid conflict with the Indians who were unlikely to be friendly towards intruders onto their land. Indeed, relationships between the Indians and the Mormons began to deteriorate quickly within Young's formative period and by the late 1850s Mormon-Indian violence had increased. The Indians began raiding Mormon settlements with greater intensity as the Mormon population rapidly grew throughout Utah and Southeastern Idaho.

My first example of the Mormon settlers' conflict over their theological beliefs concerning Native Americans and the practicalities of settling a vast population, relates to when the Mormons began looking to extend their settlements northwards during the mid to late 1850s. An example of this was the Mormon establishment of Fort Lemhi in 1855 in Southern Idaho. The fort was occupied by Mormon missionaries under the command of Thomas S. Smith who served as Young's leader at Lemhi.[36] Fort Lemhi was of great strategic importance to the Mormons because it offered the possibility of extending settlement north and securing northern Mormon borders, especially during the Utah War when the Mormons wanted to defend land against the federal government. Furthermore, the purpose of the mission was to convert the Shoshoni who occupied the region to Mormonism. The missionaries and subsequent Mormon settlers did not anticipate the anger they would encounter from hostile Shoshoni who saw the mission as an intrusion into their territory. The situation came to a head when, in February 1858, approximately 250 Bannocks and some Sheepeater Shoshoni entered the Mormon mission at Fort Lemhi, to the alarm of the surprised missionaries. They killed two

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[36] Fort Lemhi, formerly occupied by Mormon missionaries from 1855 until 1858, was named after King Lemhi in the Book of Mormon. It lay near the present town of Tendoy, Southern Idaho. On May the 18th, 1855, Brigham Young sent twenty-seven men under the leadership of Thomas S. Smith to establish a permanent Mormon mission north of Salt Lake City. The settlers were instructed to convert the Shoshoni who lived in the region to Mormonism and this was done with the aid of Shoshoni interpreter George Washington Hill. By 1858 the community had grown to over 200 people, some of whom were Shoshoni converts to Mormonism. The fort was abandoned in 1858 as an outcome of the Utah war.

missionaries, wounded five, seized around thirty horses and most of the colony's nearly 300 cattle. In his article on the Shoshoni Bannock raid at Fort Lemhi, David Bigler wrote: "The attack reached well beyond the colonists' immediate wellbeing. At a stroke it also eliminated the possibility of moving Mormon settlement North from the Salt Lake Valley in the event the Great Basin theocracy failed to win the Utah War." Thus the Shoshoni attack, which was a direct result of Mormon settlement on their land, also impacted the Mormons failure to win the Utah War and the fort was soon after abandoned in the summer of 1858. What happened at Fort Lemhi provides a specific example of the idealistic Mormon belief that the Indians would prove easy converts to Mormonism. Settlement of Fort Lemhi began with the Mormon missionaries believing they could peacefully convert the Shoshoni, whilst simultaneously invading Indian land to ensure Mormon dominance in the region. This was a contradiction in terms and the mission served the self-interest of the Mormon Church, a fact that was not lost on the Indians who later invaded the fort. The Shoshoni raid at Fort Lemhi was evidence that the Mormons put the concerns of their increasing population above caring for the Natives. Bigler wrote that the "ostentatious display of interest in the upper Salmon River served mainly to alienate the [Shoshoni] Bannocks."[37]

The second and key example of conflict over the practicalities of settlements and the religious and agricultural goals for the Indians were over resources, including wood, grain, water and livestock. Conflict existed both in competition for resources and over how each distinct culture regarded and used natural resources. Smaby has produced an excellent study on the conflicting ecological systems of the Mormons and the Indians of the Great Basin, "The Mormons and the Indians: Conflicting Ecological Systems in the Great Basin." I have made use of Smaby's argument to demonstrate the conflict over

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[37] D. Bigler, 'Mormon Missionaries, the Utah War, and the 1858 Bannock Raid on Fort Lemhi', *The Magazine of Western History*, 5, 3 (2003) 30-43: 30, 35.

resources between the Church and the Indians. Smaby defined conflicting ecological systems thus: "Two ecological cultures are in conflict, whenever they define mutually exclusive relationships to the same resource, that is, when the implementation of one group's plan for using a resource prevents the other group's plan from functioning."[38]

Competition for resources occurred almost immediately after the mass movement of Mormon settlers into the Salt Lake and Cache Valley regions. Their arrival meant land that the Shoshoni were dependent on was cultivated and often destroyed rapidly by the settlers. Furthermore, much of Utah was by no means fertile, subject as it was to desert drought, with poor soil for crops to flourish in and limited water supplies. Areas such as the more productive Cache and Bear River Valleys were therefore highly sought after by both the Shoshoni and the Mormon settlers. Firstly, this meant resources were destroyed with greater intensity because of the limited amounts available. This led to the suffering, impoverishment and starvation of the Shoshoni people as they battled against the permanent settlements and advanced agricultural methods of the Mormons. Secondly, competition for resources led to an obvious breakdown in relationships between the Shoshoni and the Mormons. Smaby wrote: "Limited resources were another reason for the Mormons' inability to help the Indians. By 1870 the Mormons were finding it difficult to provide enough land for Mormon immigrants, let alone for any Indians who might be willing to practice agriculture."[39] It became more difficult for the Church to follow such policies as "feed not fight", and the likelihood of converting the Indians to agricultural lifestyles became less likely when the Mormons were equipped with only minimal resources to feed their own people. From the perspective of the Shoshoni tribe, the Mormons permanent agricultural settlements had destroyed the

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[38] Smaby, 'Conflicting Ecological Systems', 41.
[39] Smaby, 'Conflicting Ecological Systems', 45.

resources and restricted the freedom of movement that their nomadic lifestyle relied upon, resulting in a destruction of traditional methods of survival.

 Added to this was the fact that both the Mormons and the Indians had very different cultural and religious views about natural resources and their relationship to the landscape. Smaby wrote: "Mormons made explicit the self-image which governed their use of natural resources. According to their beliefs, the world of humanity is separate from the world of nature; nature, moreover exists primarily to serve the needs of human beings."[40] This is very different from the way the Shoshoni and other Native tribes regarded the land. For the Shoshoni, the landscape and the resources it provided were inextricably linked to humanity.[41] Smaby continued to say that the Mormons' use of natural resources and the construction of their agricultural lifestyles was influenced by their religious mandate to "gather the believing multitudes into the sparsely endowed Great Basin." Smaby further stated: "The Mormons implemented their belief in human dominance over nature by a system of intensive agriculture. They replaced wild plants with animals and domesticated ones and in this way they substantially increased the output per acres over those provided by nature."[42]

Mormon pressure on the Shoshoni landscape caused a rapid reduction in Indian resources as well as weakening the relationship between the two cultures. Federal agents and Mormon missionaries produced reports describing the poverty, starvation

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[40] Smaby, 'Conflicting Ecological Systems', 38.
[41] Although relationship to land is always tribally specific, the eminent Sioux scholar, Vine Deloria, Jr., pointed to the inter-connectedness many tribes felt between nature and their identity. He said that, for Indians, nature is not an abstraction but instead: "you can find an extremely intimate connection between the lifestyle, the religious, and sometimes the political organizations of Indian tribes and the land in which they live." However, Deloria makes clear that each tribe manifests its relationship to the land in different ways. See V. Deloria, Jr., *Spirit and Reason* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1999), 223-224.
[42] Smaby, 'Conflicting Ecological Systems', 38.

and decreased populations of Indian tribes.[43] By 1860, wrote Smaby, it was obvious to

the Euro-American men writing the reports that the "Indians had lost the contest."

Smaby attributed the destruction of Indian ways of life and the survival of Mormon

ways of to the: "interaction between two competing ecological systems."[44] Mormon

dominance over the resources and subsequent destruction of the Shoshoni landscape

were examples of the Mormons' excess of idealism in their Indian policy-making

decisions. The Church, especially Young, believed it could convert the Indians to

agriculture-based, Mormon-designed economies but the realities of competing for

scarce resources meant this was near impossible. Furthermore, the Mormons failed to

understand the patterns that had previously governed the Shoshoni's nomadic lifestyle.

This led the Church to destroy the Native landscape in their quest for agricultural

dominance, which produced a rapid deterioration in Mormon-Shoshoni relationships.

These examples of Indian-Mormon conflicts have demonstrated that, almost

immediately after the Mormons had settled in Utah, the concerns of the Church, and of

Young specifically, shifted from attempting to work diplomatically with the Indians to

the ultimate Mormon goal, which was the protection of their own settlements. Mormon-

Indian policies were often too idealistic and did not translate into realistic working

goals, especially considering the demands of frontier living. Smaby noted that the

Mormons were far too "optimistic about the amount of cultural change which a

community can absorb."[45] Arrington claimed that after a few years of settlement in the

western section of the nation, Young eventually decided that the Indians could not be

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[43] For accounts of the impact poverty and resource destruction had on the Indians, see D. W. Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians: A True yet Thrilling Account of the Author's Experiences Among the Natives* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1890) and P. Gottfredson, *Indian Depredations in Utah* (Salt Lake City: Press of Skelton Publishing Co., 1919).
[44] Smaby, 'Conflicting Ecological Systems', 42, 45-46.
[45] Smaby, 'Conflicting ecological systems', 44.

civilized.[46] In part the struggles the Mormons faced with the Indians arose because the Mormons did not understand the culture they were trying to convert and their ethnocentric attitudes prevailed. Referring to his plans for agricultural conversion, Young said: "We would have taught them to plow and sow, and reap and thresh, but they prefer idleness and theft."[47] Madsen stated: "It was clear that Young entertained the ethnocentric views of the time that native Americans were not equal of whites and should be treated as inferior people."[48] Young often fell back upon his belief that the white man was superior and the Indian lazy, especially when the Indians of Utah and Southeastern Idaho failed to behave as the Mormons wanted. Ethnocentric attitudes that governed Mormon settlement meant the Church underestimated the difficulty of Indian conversion to both the Mormon religion and their agricultural lifestyle. Ultimately Mormon-Indian policies were overly idealistic and conflict and struggle defined the Mormon-Indian experience throughout the Saints' settlement in Utah from the 1840s until the late 1870s.

The conflicts that arose between the Mormon Church and the Indians in Utah demonstrate that by the time the Bear River Massacre occurred in 1863 the Mormon Church had become increasingly frustrated with the Indians who were becoming a hindrance to their settlements and further colony growth. Because there is limited primary evidence or historical analysis regarding the Mormon response to the Bear River Massacre, my aim has been to make clear why many in the Mormon Church did not openly condemn the actions of Connor and the Volunteers. To this end, I have provided a backdrop to Mormon policy and their deteriorating relations with the Native American tribes of the Great Basin prior to the massacre. In fact the massacre benefited Mormon communities in two ways. Firstly, it removed the responsibility of the "Indian

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[46] Arrington, *Brigham Young,* loc 5696.
[47] Young quoted in Coates, 'Brigham Young and Mormon Indian policies', 450.
[48] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 39.

problem" from the frustrated Mormon settlers and placed it in the hands of federal control. I previously demonstrated Young's willingness for the federal government to create treaties that would remove Indians from Mormon land. Secondly, the slaughter by Connor at Bear River cleared the resource-rich land of Bear River Valley for further Mormon settlement and the decreased number of Northwestern Shoshoni limited the likelihood of further attacks on previously established Mormon settlements. The massacre was therefore a successful outcome for many Mormons. However, the Church's mistrust of federal authority and Mormon disdain for Connor and the Volunteers, combined with the fact that the massacre of a peaceful encampment of Shoshoni was counter to the way Mormons believed the Native Americans should be treated according to scripture, meant the Mormons did not widely express support for the massacre, especially outside of Utah. However, neither did they condemn the actions of Connor and the Volunteers which, considering the fraught relationship between the two groups, may be considered heinous. Instead, the Mormons chose to comply with the massacre.

The Mormons and the Bear River Massacre

I shall now assess the Mormon reaction to the Bear River Massacre, based upon the limited sources available. I have made use of key secondary Mormon historiography in conjunction with newspaper accounts preceding and in the immediate aftermath of the massacre from the Utah based paper, *Deseret News.* These articles were accessed from the digital archives at the University of Utah. The Church's relatively quiet response to the massacre, as well as the subsequent downplaying of the slaughter in old and recent Mormon historiography, is evidence of the Church's attitude of compliance with Connor's actions at Bear River.

In the months preceding the massacre, the Mormon Church and the Union-affiliated California Volunteers stationed in Utah territory created a previously unseen tension. I demonstrated in the chapter "What Happened at Bear River" that the Mormon Church and the Union-affiliated California Volunteers had an extremely fraught relationship, a point that is agreed by all historians of the massacre, including Mormon scholars.[49] Upon arrival in Salt Lake City in May 1862, Connor stated of his position: "The federal officers are entirely powerless, and talk in whispers for fear of being overheard by Brigham's spies." Similarly when hearing that the Volunteers were stationed above Salt Lake City at Camp Douglas, Young remarked: " In regard to their location I wish to say, that after all the insult that has been offered, they are in the best place they can be for doing the least injury."[50] The volatility of this relationship was certainly influenced by the mistrust of the Mormon Church felt by the federal government which sought to establish a strong military presence in the region, especially during the Civil War. The aggressive presence of the Volunteers and their fragile relationship with the Church, I believe, created an environment in which the Bear River Massacre was able to occur, with the Shoshoni being casualties of a weakening and hostile political environment in Utah Territory.

However, and somewhat paradoxically, considering the abrasive statements of Young and Connor, when Abraham Lincoln sent the California Volunteers to guard the Overland Mail Route in 1862, some members of the Latter Day Saints welcomed the soldiers into Utah, despite their mistrust of federal powers. In his study on the California Volunteers in Utah during the Civil War, Tom Generous argued that the

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[49] Madsen, Fleischer and Miller all dedicate passages to the weak relationship between the two groups. See Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 156-176; Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre*, 49-58; and Miller, *Massacre at Bear River,* 1-37. Arrington refers to the relationship between the Mormons and the Volunteers as the "Brigham Young-Patrick Connor confrontation." Arrington, *Brigham Young,* loc 7587.
[50] Connor and Young quoted in Arrington, *Brigham Young*, loc 7532, loc 7547.

general consensus among the Mormons was that the Volunteers were welcomed.[51] The reasons were as follows. By the early 1860s, a decade after the Mormons first arrived in Utah, tension over land claims between the Mormons and the Indians was increasing. In his study, *The Civil War in the American West,* Alvin M. Josephy stated that: "there was constant friction between the whites and parties of 'thieving Indians' whom the Mormon families were dispossessing." Secondly, many Mormon settlers had become dissatisfied with the diplomatic and kindly treatment of Indians by their leader, Young. Even by the 1860s, when Indian depredations against Mormon colonies were at an all-time high, Young continued to advocate his policy of "feed not fight." This angered many of his followers who, according to Josephy, pleaded for "punitive military action from Salt Lake," to ward off Indian raids on Mormon farms.[52] Those settlers who had become disillusioned with Young's policy and discontented with the Indian raids on their communities welcomed the strong military protection of the Volunteers against Indian depredations. To many settlers the Volunteers represented the hope of much-needed security in the region.

Newspaper reports prior to the massacre supported the view that the settlers welcomed the arrival of Connor and his men. In his chapter on the Bear River Massacre, Hatch suggested there was exaggerated rhetoric surrounding the Indian threat in regional newspapers.[53] Referring to Major McGarry's execution of four Shoshoni at Bear River Ferry, the *Deseret News* reported that following the murder it was the "intention" of the band of Shoshoni "to kill every white man they should meet on the north side of Bear River." Writing of the murder of two emigrant men, the article continued: "there is no doubt but that the men were murdered by bloodthirsty savages, and it is further believed

[51] T. Generous, 'Over the River Jordan: California Volunteers in Utah During the Civil War', *California History*, 63, 3 (1984), 203.
[52] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West*, 255.
[53] Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey, and The Red,* 33.

that they will continue their murderous operations wherever the opportunity may present, till some measures be taken to dispose them to peace."[54] Nearly every newspaper article, wrote Hatch, ended with a "demand for the protection of the settlers."[55]

Contemporary regional newspaper articles further supported the implication that the settlers were discontented with the level of authoritative leadership in the territory. On 21st of January, 1863, in an article entitled "More Indian Outrages," the *Deseret News* somewhat sarcastically reported: "We would ask, if within the memory of any of the citizens of Utah, an effort has been made by that class of federal representatives [Indian agents and Superintendents] … to dispose of the hostile bands of the Shoshones and the Bannocks occupying the region of the country between the northern settlement in this Territory and the northern gold fields, to peace."[56] The citizens were demanding stronger military protection against Indian depredations, which is why Hatch writes: "The prayers and pleas of Utah residents were about to be answered," in the form of Connor and the California Volunteers.[57]

The relationship between the Volunteers and the Mormons was complex. Whilst they welcomed the protection of the Union soldiers against Indian depredations, the Church also mistrusted Connor's men. Furthermore, Connor was not a supporter of the Mormons. In fact he avidly mistrusted them, regarding them as disloyal traitors to the

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[54] *Deseret News*, 'More Indian Murders', 14 January 1863 [Online]. Available at: https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=2593418&q=title_t%3A%22More+Indian+murders%22&page=1&rows=50&fd=title_t%2Cpaper_t%2Cdate_tdt%2Ctype_t&sort=date_tdt+asc&gallery=0&facet_paper=%22Deseret+News%22#t_2593418 All *Deseret News* articles digitized by the University of Utah.) [Accessed 26/1/2017].
[55] Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey and The Red,* 33.
[56] *Deseret News,* 'More Indian Outrages', 21 January 1863 [Online]. Available at: https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=2593457&q=more+indian+outrages&page=1&rows=50&fd=title_t%2Cpaper_t%2Cdate_tdt%2Ctype_t&sort=date_tdt+asc&gallery=0&facet_paper=%22Deseret+News%22#t_2593457 [Accessed 26/1/17].
[57] Hatch, *The Blue, The Grey, and The Red,* 33.

federal government. In his article that addressed the role of the California Volunteers in Utah during the Civil War, Generous wrote that, after the initial arrival of Connor and his men in Utah, there was heightening conflict between the Volunteers and the Mormons. As the months passed "the two groups never mixed well because Connor repeatedly sought confrontations."[58] The tension between the two groups was particularly obvious in Young's mistrust of the Volunteers. For Young, the Volunteers represented federal political invasion into the isolated territory the Mormons had built to distance themselves from governmental authority. In his analysis of the Bear River Massacre, Josephy wrote: "Brigham Young was of the opinion that the federal government had sent in the volunteers to intimidate him, especially when Connor established his camp at Fort Douglas overlooking Salt Lake City."[59] Young resented, and even feared, the presence of Connor and his men in his territory: three weeks before the massacre, the Mormon leader was so convinced that he was going to be attacked by Connor and his men that he had armed guards and soldiers surround his mansion in Salt Lake Valley.[60] Despite some of his followers welcoming the Volunteers, Young forbade his men to have any contact with them, aside from a committee set up by Young to conduct trade with the soldiers.[61] Unfortunately, Young's hostile attitude caused fractures within Mormon communities between those that supported the Volunteers and those that regarded the soldiers' arrival as a hindrance to the Mormons' established freedom.

Perhaps the largest contributing factor to the breakdown in relationships between the Church and the Volunteers was that Connor never had any intention of establishing a working relationship with the Mormons. Connor was vocal in his dislike of the Mormon

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[58] Generous, 'Over the River Jordan', 203.
[59] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West,* 225.
[60] Arrington, *Brigham Young,* loc 7585.
[61] Josephy, *The Civil War in the American West,* 225.

population. The explanation most commonly used by historians to describe Connor's attitude to the Mormon Church is a statement in which he refers to them as a "community of murderers, traitors, and 'whores'."[62] The majority of men under his command shared Connor's attitude. Volunteer soldier James H. Carleton noted on July 1st, 1861, that the Saints were an "ignorant grade of people … [and were] low, unprincipled Americans.… Their government is solely a hierarchy … [and] they scorn and deride and set at defiance all the laws that interfere with their safety or interest, save those promulgated by the great council of the Church." Madsen stated that Connor and the Volunteers had a "predisposed attitude" towards the Mormons. They certainly questioned and criticized the Church's loyalty and patriotism towards America, based on accusations and hearsay that the Mormons were working in alliance with the Indians in an attempt to bring down the federal government. Events such as the Mountain Meadows Massacre, where the Mormons had been accused of working with the Indians, had heightened these suspicions. Considering his adamant dislike of the Mormon population, it is no surprise that Connor's concern was never the protection of Mormon settlements from Indian raids. Connor's primary aim was to achieve Civil War glory. As discussed in the section entitled "What Happened at Bear River," Connor and the Volunteers resented being in the West for the Civil War, when the majority of military action was played out on the East Coast. Connor wanted Civil War glory in this isolated section of the nation and a means to achieve this was killing Indians. Madsen wrote that most Westerners "vociferously supported him as a great 'Indian fighter.'"[63] A man concerned with his reputation, Connor would do little to sabotage his reputation as a fearsome Indian fighter.

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[62] Madsen, Miller, Fleischer and Generous all use this phrase to describe Connor's reaction to Mormonism.
[63] Madsen, *Glory Hunter*, 66, 63.

Within the Church's relationship with the Volunteers, mutual mistrust and increasing Volunteer and Indian violence contributed to an extremely hostile political environment in Utah during the Civil War. Whilst there was an aura of suspicion between the two groups, and neither supported the other personally or politically, when it came to violence against the Indians, they had some shared ground: violence benefited both the Mormons and the Volunteers, albeit for different reasons. Connor's attack at Bear River cannot be justified as an attempt to protect the Mormon population from Indian ravages. Rather, we have to regard his actions within the context of Civil War glory-seeking efforts. However, many in the Mormon population welcomed Connor into their territory to protect their communities against increasing Indian depredations which is why, when the Bear River Massacre occurred, the majority of those in the Church complied with Connor's actions.

Sources regarding the Mormon reaction to the Bear River Massacre are relatively limited and the Church was not vocal in support of Connor and the Volunteers, particularly outside of their territory. It is possible that some in the Church were aware that Connor was planning to attack the Shoshoni encamped at Bear River because the Volunteers were led to the Indians by a Mormon guide, Orrin Porter Rockwell. Other than this, there is little to suggest the Mormons knew of Connor's intentions. However in Bear River's aftermath the majority of the Mormon community reacted positively, a fact that is generally agreed upon by scholars of Bear River. Madsen wrote: "The Mormon settlers of northern Utah certainly did not abhor the tactics of Colonel Connor.… In fact there was rejoicing throughout the land and thanksgiving in Mormon church services for the intrepid courage of the California Volunteers." Madsen concluded that the Mormons were "satisfied" with Connor's "aggressive tactics" because they believed it meant the Shoshoni would put an end to their depredations in

Cache Valley.[64] Similarly Miller wrote that the Mormon reaction while: "more tempered and less uniform [than the support towards Connor from Union generals in the West], also tended to praise the action of Connor's expedition." The massacre was seen as a cause for celebration.[65] In his study on the memorialization project at the Bear River Massacre site, John Barnes stated: "Soldiers hated in Salt Lake City and Cache Valley before Bear River were remembered with admiration and praise after the massacre."[66] Barnes' statement evidenced the volatile relationship between the Volunteers and the Mormons but also how the settlers came to appreciate Connor's efforts.

The consensus provided by historians of Bear River is, of course, supported by primary evidence from the Mormon community among whom some described the work of the Volunteers as an "intervention of the Almighty." A local woman in the nearby town of Wellsville referred to the massacre as "an interposition of providence," while a man from Logan believed that God had sent Connor to "punish them [the Indians] without us having to do it."[67] Regional newspaper articles tended to reflect the view of the citizens. Although not declaring the massacre as an act of providence, the rhetoric of the local Mormon paper, the *Deseret News*, supported the actions of Connor and his men despite not having a reporter at the scene of the massacre. The reports made by the *Deseret News*, in an article written on 4th of February, less than a week after the massacre, were compiled from testimony of the Volunteers. "From every statement that we have heard from those who were on the field, we conclude that the Volunteers must

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[64] Madsen, *The Shoshoni* Frontier, 17, 197.
[65] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 119.
[66] Barnes, 'Commemoration, Memory, and the Bear River Massacre', 89.
[67] Local residents quoted in Miller, *Massacre at Bear* River, 120.

have met the Indians with a bravery seldom equaled by regulars."[68] This article was

followed by one on 11th of February that concluded with praise for Connor: "We have

so far extended this article that we must now only add that while the commanding

officer compliments his officers and men for their bravery, they are as loud in their

praises of the colonel for his coolness and bravery in the field."[69]

Further evidence of Mormon support of Connor's actions is provided by the fact that

that the Mormons helped the wounded Volunteers after the attack. In *Glory Hunter,*

Madsen wrote that, on the night of January 29th, 18 sleds were brought across the snow

from the Mormons in Franklin, to transport the wounded and dead back into town

where they were to receive medical assistance from the Mormon women.[70] Mormon

Bishop Peter Maughan gathered teams of men to create a passageway through a snow

blockade between Wellsville and Brigham City, both in the northern Cache Valley

region of Utah, in order to help get the troops safely back into Salt Lake Valley.[71] The

Deseret News, reported: "We are glad to learn that the citizens of the settlements

through which the wounded returned contributed in every way they could to their

comfort."[72] It is interesting to note that Connor never publically acknowledged the

support the Volunteers received from the local community, stating after the massacre:

"No assistance was rendered by the Mormons, who seemed indisposed to divulge

information regarding the Indians.…"[73] Madsen wrote that Connor's anti-Mormonism

was so entrenched "that he did not recognize any Mormon help or did not want to

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[68] *Deseret News*, 'The Fight with the Indians', 4 February 1863 [Online]. Available at:
https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=2593543&q=the+fight+with+the+indians&page=3&rows=50&
fd=title_t%2Cpaper_t%2Cdate_tdt%2Ctype_t&sort=date_tdt+asc&gallery=0&facet_paper=%22Deseret+
News%22#t_2593543 [Accessed 26/01/2017].
[69] *Deseret News*, 'The Battle of Bear River', 11 February 1863 [Online]. Available at:
https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=2593583&q=battle+of+bear+river&page=2&rows=50&fd=titl
e_t%2Cpaper_t%2Cdate_tdt%2Ctype_t&sort=date_tdt+asc&gallery=0&facet_paper=%22Deseret+News
%22#t_2593583 [Accessed 26/01/2017].
[70] Madsen, *Glory Hunter*, 85.
[71] Madsen, *The Shoshoni* Frontier, 194-197.
[72] *Deseret News,* 'The Fight with the Indians'.
[73] Connor quoted in Madsen, *Glory Hunter,* 85.

acknowledge it."[74] Connor's refusal to acknowledge Mormon aid demonstrated why the Mormon Church did not widely vocalize their support of Connor and his men. Suspicion and mistrust, especially from Connor, prevented either group from recognizing their shared ambition to rid the land of Indians.

Despite the support of Connor's actions from many within the Mormon Church, some settlers recognized and recorded the bloodshed in the aftermath of the massacre. One possible reason behind Mormon opposition to the attack is that the massacre offered the Church an opportunity for revengeful condemnation of the Union soldiers, especially after Connor and been particularly vocal in his disdain of the Mormons. James Martineau, a Cache Valley resident, witnessed the attack and claimed that the Volunteers raped dying Shoshoni women after the killing. "Several squaws were killed because they would not submit quietly to being ravished, and other squaws were ravished in the agony of death."[75] Whilst Martineau described in graphic detail, the horror of the scene, another settler, Samuel Roskelly, considered the negative impact of the massacre on future Indian-Mormon relations. Roskelly reported that, following the massacre, the Indians were so angry with the soldiers that they now intended to steal all their horses and would "kill every white man they could find."[76] Here he hinted at the negative impact the massacre would have on Mormon settlement. We know that Shoshoni raids did actually intensify for a brief period after the massacre. However, although sources condemning the massacre exist, there are few that specifically condemn the actions of Connor and the Volunteers.

Official documents from the Latter Day Saints regarding the Church's reaction to the massacre are limited and some are skeptical in their opinion of Connor's actions. In the

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[74] Madsen, *Glory Hunter*, 85.
[75] Martineau quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 193.
[76] Roskelly quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier,* 197.

immediate aftermath of the massacre, Secretary Farrell of the Mormon Logan Ward (an LDS meeting point), noted the following in the minutes of the ward record book: "We the people of Cache Valley looked upon the movement of Colonel Connor as an intervention of the Almighty, as the Indians had been a source of great annoyance to us for a long time, causing us to stand guard over our stock and other property the most of the time since our first settlement."[77] By comparison, the Mormon Bishop Peter Maughan wrote the following report to Young after the massacre:

> I feel my skirts clear of all their blood. They rejected the ways of life and salvation which have been pointed out to them from time to time (especially for the last two years) and thus have perished relying on their own strength and wisdom. We have pretty good reason to believe that if they had gained victory over the soldiers their intention was to take our Herd and drive it right to the Salmon River Country for their own special benefit."[78]

Maughan's report expressed anger at the Indians for refusing to accept the goodwill of the Mormons which he claimed was the reason for the rapid decline of the Shoshoni. Stating that his "skirts [we]re clear of all their blood", the bishop asserted that the responsibility for the Indians' death had been removed from the Mormons. However, Maughan did overtly express support for the Volunteers, and there is a hint of uncertainty in his words when he wrote: "we have pretty good reason to believe" that had the Shoshoni not been massacred the Mormons would have faced further Indian depredations. Madsen wrote of Maughan's report: "There was a mixture of piety and pragmatism in his words."[79] Maughan's attitude is reinforced by the fact that Young remained remarkably silent following the massacre. In fact, beyond his account of

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[77] Farrell quoted in Madsen, *Glory Hunter,* 85.
[78] Maughan quoted in Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 194.
[79] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 194.

Maughan's report, I have found no evidence in primary or secondary sources of Young's reaction to the attack at Bear River. This is significant as Young had previously been vocal in his opinions of both the Volunteers and the Indians. However, by not being overtly aggressive in his Indian policy and by having the chance to shift responsibility for the massacre primarily onto the Volunteers, Young was in a position to deny either a positive or negative response to the slaughter of the Shoshoni at Bear River whilst gaining the hoped-for outcome of decreased Shoshoni attacks on Mormon settlements. I believe Young's silence following the massacre is evidence of compliance with Connor's actions but, considering the fraught relationship he had with the Volunteers and how the massacre conflicted with the peaceable and kindly treatment of Indians according to Mormon scripture, it was not a compliance that he was overanxious to express publically.

The limited number of Mormon documents available - letters to Young from senior members of the Church, local Mormon newspaper reports and accounts from Mormons who witnessed the massacre - suggest a primarily positive reaction from the Church. However, considering the deteriorating relationship between the Mormons and the California Volunteers, combined with the fact that the Shoshoni were the Mormons' "lesser blessed brethren", it is surprising that the Church did not widely condemn the actions of the Volunteers. Connor's indiscriminate slaughter of an encampment of innocent Shoshoni provided the Latter Day Saints with the opportunity to publically criticize the Union Volunteers, and possibly secure support from a mistrusting federal government. The Church could spin Connor's actions as unjustified and of no gain to the Union Civil War effort. Furthermore, instead of helping the wounded Volunteers after the massacre, the Mormons had the opportunity to follow their scripture and help the surviving wounded Shoshoni, their "lesser blessed brethren." I argue that the simple

reason the Church did not widely criticize the slaughter was because the massacre

protected Latter Day Saints communities from increasing Shoshoni raids and cleared the

path for future Mormon settlement in a much desired, resource-rich region of

Southeastern Idaho

It is of considerable interest that more attention is not paid, specifically by Mormon

historians, old and contemporary, to the benefits of the Bear River Massacre for

Mormon colonies in Utah and Southeastern Idaho. Traditionalist Mormon historian,

Lawrence Coates, does however dedicate a brief but significant statement on the Bear

River Massacre in his article, "The Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho, 1845-

1900":

> Indians living along the Bear River provided the most formidable obstacles to
>
> the expansion northward from Cache Valley. In January 1863, US Army Col.
>
> Patrick E. Connor - initially sent into the area to control the Mormons -
>
> ironically aided settlement by supervising the brutal massacre of a band of
>
> Shoshone-Bannock Indians in the Battle of Bear River.[80]

This is the only time in this work that Coates mentioned the massacre, despite making

this highly relevant observation.

Madsen's very brief account of the Mormon response to the massacre clearly suggests

the Saints' unwillingness to acknowledge their part in the carnage:

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[80] Coates, 'The Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho,' 50.

The dramatic bloodletting at Bear River has been lost to history perhaps, first of all, because the Mormon people have not been overanxious to highlight an approved slaughter of Indian men, women and children. The salvation of all native Americans is of concern to the Saints under the Book of Mormon declaration that American Indians are descended from Israel…. Also coming a little over six years after the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the less said about Mormon exultance over another wholesale killing of innocents the better….[81]

Like Coates, Madsen spent little time analyzing the Mormon response, despite making the significant accusations that the Church "approved" of Connor's actions and remained remarkably quiet regarding Mormon actions preceding the massacre. I believe that, by regarding the massacre as a federal engagement, the Mormons could, and still can, distance themselves from Connor's slaughter whilst still being seen to be treating the Native Americans correctly according to their scripture. As noted earlier, the Mormons had a history of referring responsibility for Indian affairs onto the federal government or the military. Blackhawk wrote of the Mormons: "They passed the challenge of incorporating Indians into the nation to others, and in the process of such incorporation, violence became a most expedient tool."[82] The Mormons were partly responsible for creating a violent environment where Bear River could occur. However, the Church could deny any association with the slaughter because Indian concerns were regarded by many in the Church as a federal concern.

To conclude this section on the role of the Mormons in the Bear River Massacre, I have chosen to address the Church's role in the lead-up to, and its reaction to the outcome of, the Bear River Massacre. I have done this because the Church's role has not been

[81] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 22.
[82] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the* Land, 259.

properly analyzed in either Mormon or non-Mormon historiography of Bear River. By providing the background of the declining Mormon-Indian relationship, particularly indicating that policies such as "feed not fight" were not conducive to increased Mormon settlement, as well as analyzing the primary evidence available, I have demonstrated how the Mormons came to comply at Bear River. The curious silence surrounding the massacre still remains a focal point of non-Mormon scholarship with historians such as Madsen, Miller and Fleischer, all of whom are acutely aware of the lack of attention the massacre has received. Mormon scholarship, on the other hand, tends to dismiss any mention of Bear River. If the massacre is considered at all, it tends to be separated from the Mormon experience and regarded purely as a federal engagement. Most importantly, the Mormon Church, still regarded with mistrust and suspicion, does not want to emphasize its support of a massacre of peaceful Shoshoni and the Church's history is still very much isolated from the national American experience, as is the Native American experience. Subsequently, historians have not fully engaged with the lack of historical discussion surrounding the slaughter of the Shoshoni and have largely overlooked the role some groups, particularly the Mormons, have played in the scholarly under-emphasis of the massacre. It has been my intention to go some way to redressing this by analyzing the Mormon impact on the lack of discussion surrounding Bear River in order to produce a better understanding of the role different cultural groups have played in the massacre.

The Silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni Voice

The historical and contemporary public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni has impacted Bear River's scholarly and public under-emphasis. Like the Mormons, the Northwestern Shoshoni perspective has been largely excluded from Euro-American historiography and tribal voices remain obscure in written histories of the massacre. The

public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni has influenced the limited historiography on Bear River because the Shoshoni have not been readily forthcoming with their views surrounding the impact of Connor's slaughter on their community. This has meant that Euro-American scholars have very few Shoshoni sources to analyze. This has therefore impacted cross-cultural memory of the massacre because historical connections have not been made in previous scholarship between the disparate cultural groups.

The reasons for the lack of available Northwestern Shoshoni sources are as follows. Firstly, the tribe has kept its history of the massacre within its communities, often passing stories to future generations through oral histories and private, localized commemoration efforts. The privacy of tribal memory is maintained to prevent their history being manipulated by dominant Euro-American narratives. Secondly, some Northwestern Shoshoni converted to Mormonism in the lead-up to and aftermath of the massacre, remaining members of the Church today. This has impacted the limited Shoshoni representation in scholarship because it has created a complex historical narrative between the Mormons who complied with Connor's attack, and those within the Northwestern Shoshoni community who are currently members of the Latter Day Saints.

I want to emphasize that, whilst the massacre has received limited scholarly and public attention, the memory of Connor's slaughter remains a focal point within private tribal history. Furthermore, there have been efforts by prominent Northwestern Shoshoni massacre descendants to promote Shoshoni perspectives of the massacre, particularly within the Utah education system and through public commemoration efforts. I do not want to promote the misunderstanding that the Shoshoni have chosen to forget the

massacre, but that tribal silence has impacted on the under-emphasis of Bear River in scholarship and public memory.

I should like to draw a brief comparison between the Bear River Massacre and the effort taken by the Cheyenne and Arapaho people to remember the slaughter of their people at Sand Creek by Colonel John Chivington and the Colorado Volunteers in 1864. The Cheyenne and Arapaho have been much more vocal regarding their histories of Chivington's attack than the Northwestern Shoshoni. The Sand Creek Massacre received more attention in its immediate aftermath than Bear River and was the subject of multiple judicial and Congressional hearings. This meant that the views of Cheyenne and Arapaho affected by the massacre were recorded in more detail than those of the surviving Northwestern Shoshoni after Bear River. It should, however, be recognized that tribal views were not given priority in the Sand Creek Massacre testimonies because Native American evidence was not deemed reliable according to the Euro-American ethno-centric attitudes of the time. However the legal proceedings carried out against Chivington and his troops certainly drew much more public attention towards the injustices carried out against the Cheyenne and Arapaho, attention that the Northwestern Shoshoni never received. Recent efforts have also been made by Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants and their histories of Sand Creek were recorded during a federally organized memorialization project between the NPS and Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal members. Oral histories were gathered as part of a lengthy study used to determine the location of the Sand Creek Massacre site. Cheyenne and Arapaho voices therefore gained much more traction in local and national media than the relatively little known voices of the Northwestern Shoshoni tribe regarding the Bear River massacre.

In this section I have made use of the following Northwestern Shoshoni resources, all of which have been taken from secondary sources. The most accurate representations of Shoshoni voices are in Newell Hart's 1989 book, *The Bear River Massacre*, which includes interviews with Shoshoni massacre descendants as well as the publication of Mae Timbimboo Parry's re-telling of the massacre, *Massacre at Boa Ogi*.[83] For more recent interviews with the tribe, Fleischer's study, *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History,* provides in-depth interviews with members of the Shoshoni tribe. I accessed two interviews with massacre descendant Pattie Timbimboo Madsen which were recorded and transcribed as part of the "We Shall Remain: America Through Native Eyes" established in 2009 in order to provide a native perspective on American history, particularly within the Utah school curriculum.[84]

There are a limited number of sources presented in this section and the majority come from secondary Euro-American histories rather than primary Northwestern Shoshoni sources and most of the voices are of prominent massacre descendants of the same family, the Timbimboos. The significance of only using one woman's testimony, that of Pattie Timbimboo Madsen, means it has been difficult to create an encompassing representation of the Shoshoni at Bear River. The Northwestern Shoshoni perspective is not varied and this section is not as rich in material as the previous section on the Mormons because of the limited evidence. However, it is important that the little-known voices of the Northwestern Shoshoni are considered if we are to understand why the Bear River Massacre remains obscure.

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[83] Hart, *The Bear River Massacre*, 86-95.
[84] N. Green, *We Shall Remain: Interview One with Pattie Timbimboo Madsen* (2009). Available online: http://www.kued.org/productionsweshallremain/pdfs/PATTYTIMBIMBOO1.pdf. [Accessed 21/04/16]. N.Green, *We Shall Remain: Interview Two with Pattie Timbimboo Madsen* (2009). Available online: http://www.kued.org/productionsweshallremain/pdfs/PATTYTIMBIMBOO2.pdf. [Accessed 21/04/16].

The Private History of the Northwestern Shoshoni Tribe

I shall begin by analyzing the often private oral histories of the Northwestern Shoshoni tribe and how these have influenced the limited scholarly representation of Bear River, specifically within Euro-American historiography. As mentioned earlier, there is a very limited response to the massacre from the Mormon Church in historiography but the response of the Northwestern Shoshoni is almost non-existent. However, more recent tribal interviews have begun to appear in Euro-American historiographies and there are contemporary efforts of Northwestern Shoshoni massacre descendants which publically acknowledge the Northwestern Shoshoni representation of the massacre.

The Northwestern Shoshoni history of the massacre has, by and large, remained within the confines of the tribe because, like the Mormons, whose history has remained similarly insular, the Shoshoni faced persecution for expressing their cultural beliefs. In an interview for Utah public television, Pattie Timbimboo Madsen remarked: "As I got older, I realized that my mother was spanked during her school years for speaking Shoshone. And in my mind I thought, maybe that's why we were never taught. Because she didn't want us to go through what she did."[85] Moroni Timbimboo, grandson of Chief Sagwitch, told Newell Hart in the mid 1980s that he no longer publically shared his history and maintained that he was "disillusioned" after giving his history to white people: "They only write it up wrong and make money from it; the Indian gets nothing and then has to read his lies."[86] Similarly, Brigham Madsen tells Fleischer of the resistance he encountered from the Northwestern Shoshoni after he was appointed as their tribal historian. Madsen was told: "We don't want you to write this book because you are a Mormon. You'll write a pro-Mormon history of our tribe…. Your first name

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[85] Green, *Interview Two.*
[86] Moroni Timbimboo quoted in Hart, *The Bear River* Massacre, 139.

is Brigham."[87] The cultural repression suffered by Native Americans meant that they kept their history private to prevent it from being subjected to Euro-American interpretations and distortions that have traditionally favored the dominant American narrative. Aaron Crawford reported in his Bear River thesis that differences arose between various Shoshone families about whose family owned certain anecdotes of the massacre. This more fluid notion of tribal memory clearly encounters difficulties when faced with establishing a story, such as that of the Timbimboo/Parry family, that is fixed by publication and challenged by other Shoshone. [88]

Tribal members have expressed the desire to keep the memory of the massacre within their own communities, handing stories down for future generations of Northwestern Shoshoni. Timbimboo Madsen stated that it was important to re-capture the tribes identity for younger Shoshoni generations: "And I think a lot of the stuff that we are doing to try and enrich our children's lives is what we need to do to make them whole too."[89] Timbimboo Madsen continued in a second interview: " … we came from a family that gathered these stories [of the Bear River Massacre] and my father's youngest sister Mae Parry documented a lot of that. And through her, that's where we got the stories."[90]

Lastly, it is important to note that the Northwestern Shoshoni remained quiet because memory, specifically public memory, of the massacre would be a very painful process for them. Massacre descendant, Mae Timbimboo Parry, spoke about her discomfort when writing her story of the massacre, *Massacre at Boa Ogi*, published in Hart's *The Bear River Massacre:* "There were times I had to put the papers away because I could

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[87] Madsen quoted in Fleischer, *The Bear River Massacre*, 151.
[88] A. Crawford, 'The People of Bear Hunter Speak: Oral Histories of the Cache Valley Shoshones Regarding the Bear River Massacre'. Thesis (Utah State University, 2007), 48-49.
[89] Green, *Interview One.*
[90] Green, *Interview Two.*

not see for the tears I could not stop from flowing."[91] It must be recognized that to remember such a horrific event in a community's history is a highly traumatic experience. Traumatic memory is therefore central to the silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice. Carol A. Kidron has argued that the projection of a traumatic event in everyday representations such as the painful writing experience expressed by Parry can come in the form of the transmission of traumatic silence onto everyday actions. Kidron argued that we have "little understanding of trauma survivor's and their descendants" because of their difficulties in signifying the "unspeakability" of traumatic pasts.[92]

The insular nature of Northwestern Shoshoni histories of Bear River has influenced the limited Euro-American scholarship of the massacre because historians have no recorded written evidence of the Shoshoni perception to analyze. Until quite recently, Northwestern Shoshoni histories have been, on the whole, oral and neither recorded nor written down. The lack of tribal sources has in part been influenced by Euro-American unwillingness to collect and analyze Shoshoni history. Firstly, Euro-American historians have not traditionally regarded Native American oral histories as a valid source of historical analysis. Therefore, Shoshoni accounts of the massacre have been under-valued in comparison with Euro-American historical material. Rod Miller wrote that in the massacre's aftermath no one recorded or wrote down the Shoshoni version of events.[93] Instead, in re-telling the story of the massacre, Euro-American historiography relies heavily on regional newspaper reports and accounts from the California Volunteers.

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[91] Parry quoted in Hart, *The Bear River Massacre*, 142.
[92] C.A. Kidron, 'Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel', *Current Anthropology*, 50, 1 (2009) 5-27: 5.
[93] Miller, *Massacre at Bear River*, 172.

However, there has been some limited initiative to include indigenous voices in remembering Bear River. In his Utah State University MA dissertation of 2007, folklorist Aaron L Crawford made the case for adding the multiple stories of Shoshone massacre survivors' descendants to the accounts of the Bear River Massacre. He noted how the Timbimboo family's version of events offers a respected, but almost isolated, published Native account of the day. While Crawford stresses the importance of adding Shoshone voices to white, Euro-American accounts of Bear River, he notes the Shoshone unwillingness to reveal their history to outsiders. Unfortunately, although adding three short transcriptions of speeches by Tom Pacheco, Elva Schramm and Susan Caldera in his appendices Crawford was only able to add quotations from "unrecorded interviews" and "back and forth email" exchanges with Pacheco and Schramm, along with several other unrecorded "conversations" with a number of additional Shoshone tribal members.[94] This highlights the difficulty of adding Native voices to accounts of massacre. Although Pacheco, Schramm and Caldera each talk of a forthcoming book which will include their input, so far only Crawford's account is available in print. Crawford's work emphasizes the complexity and fluidity of memory.

After an extended period of insular Northwestern Shoshoni history, Timbimboo Madsen suggests that neither Euro-Americans nor Native Americans are necessarily open to Shoshoni history. She stated: "And then I think it was what, a hundred and forty years later, and when my aunt Mae began to tell the story, it was almost like people didn't believe or didn't want to believe."[95] It is only very recently that Euro-American and Native authors have begun expressing Northwestern Shoshoni perceptions, particularly in published tribal interviews in the work of Fleischer. More explicit commemoration efforts by the tribe and local Euro-American communities have now also begun. In

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[94] A. Crawford, 'The People of Bear Hunter Speak: Oral Histories of the Cache Valley Shoshones Regarding the Bear River Massacre'. Thesis (Utah State University, 2007), 78-99.
[95] Green, *Interview Two.*

2014, for example, inter-disciplinary archaeological efforts were undertaken to excavate the massacre site. The aim of the project was to produce a more "conclusive interpretation of the events of 29 January, 1863."[96] The project has relied on the Northwestern Shoshoni community to help locate the site. Similarly, Idaho's state archaeologist, Kenneth, Reid, began a similar project to excavate the site in 2013. Although the project seems to have stalled, its research plan included the help of the Northwestern Shoshoni to establish the boundaries of the massacre site.[97] Despite recent attempts to at least include the Northwestern Shoshoni point of view, tribal representations of the massacre have been extremely limited. One final reason for this may be the size of the band. The Northwestern Shoshoni are a relatively small tribe so their influence has not been far-reaching in the same way as larger more influential tribes such as the Cheyenne. Furthermore, the Northwestern Shoshoni were geographically and culturally disbanded after the massacre, meaning they lost a united shared history. Interestingly, however, the Northwestern Shoshoni salvaged some sense of community after the massacre by converting to Mormonism and following Mormon means of subsistence. I shall now consider the impact the Shoshoni conversion to Mormonism has had on the silence of the Shoshoni voice and its effect on the scholarly and public under-emphasis of Bear River.

Northwestern Shoshoni Conversion to Mormonism

I have chosen to consider the conversion to Mormonism by some members of the Northwestern Shoshoni community in the lead-up to and aftermath of Bear River. It is an area that has remained unexplored by historians of Bear River, yet provides an explanation for the absence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice within Bear River scholarship. It is important to state that not all the Shoshoni converted to Mormonism.

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[96] Cannon, *Preliminary Results of Archaeological Investigations at the Bear River Massacre Site.*
[97] Reid, '*Research Design for Archeological Investigations'.*

In fact it was quite a small number who did. Unfortunately there are no official records in existence of the number of Northwestern Shoshoni who converted after the massacre. However, the conversion of some Northwestern Shoshoni to Mormonism has created an intricate interplay between Mormon and Shoshoni historical narratives that is complex and not an area either community is keen to highlight. Whilst the Mormons complied with the massacre, they had made efforts to convert the Shoshoni from the time of their arrival in the Great Basin region. Members of the Northwestern Shoshoni tribe remain current members of the Latter Day Saints, a group who historically condoned a brutal attack on their ancestors. This intertwined element of Shoshoni and Mormon memory has largely been ignored in Bear River scholarship because of its complexity. As mentioned above, the Mormon Church remains unwilling to admit their condoning of the slaughter of the Shoshoni. Similarly, contemporary Northwestern Shoshoni Mormons are not disposed to highlight their attachment to a Church that essentially overlooked a massacre of their people. The lack of will from either the Mormon or Shoshoni communities to acknowledge their difficult historical connection has influenced the limited scholarship and relative obscurity of Bear River since neither group has been forthcoming with evidence.

To analyze the impact the Shoshoni conversion to Mormonism has had on the public silence of the Shoshoni voice and its relationship to the limited scholarship on Bear River, I have primarily made use of interviews with the current Northwestern Shoshoni cultural resource director, Pattie Timbimboo Madsen, carried out for Utah public television. As a spokeswoman for the tribe, she provided a clear view of the Northwestern Shoshoni perspective of some members of the tribe's conversion to Mormonism. Furthermore, Timbimboo Madsen's opinion is highly relevant as that of a Northwestern Shoshoni massacre descendant and a member of the Mormon Church. I

will consider the historical and contemporary relationship the Northwestern Shoshoni had with the Church, including pre- and post-massacre conversion efforts of the Latter Day Saints, and the impact the Bear River Massacre had on the Northwestern Shoshoni relationship with Mormonism.

The Northwestern Shoshoni interconnection with Mormonism was and remains conflicted. In one respect Shoshoni conversion assisted in the maintenance of Shoshoni community, especially after the severe communal breakdown the tribe suffered after Bear River. The Mormon Church provided a relatively secure environment in which the tribe could subsist. However, somewhat paradoxically, the Mormons were also partially responsible for the breakdown of an already fragile Shoshoni culture after the massacre. The Church provided the Northwestern tribe little choice but to convert to Mormon religious and agricultural methods at the cost of traditional tribal life patterns. The Bear River Massacre introduced a period of sustained instability to the Northwestern Shoshoni and they were obliged to become members of the Church if they were to retain a semblance of tribal community.

The recent response and attitude of the Northwestern Shoshoni community is evidence of the conflict the tribe faced over the conversion of some of their members to Mormonism. Pattie Timbimboo Madsen's 2013 interviews evidence this conflict. In one respect, she was supportive of the Church, particularly after the massacre, for allowing her community a chance of survival on regulated agricultural settlements. However, she simultaneously questioned the motives of a Church who forced her relatives to destroy their own culture as the price of survival. Furthermore, as I shall detail in this section, the increasing numbers of Shoshoni converts to Mormonism coincided with the devastating effects of the Bear River Massacre on the already small Northwestern Shoshoni community. The greater conversion rates after the massacre imply that the

Northwestern Shoshoni did not convert to Mormonism out of choice, but for community survival.

When asked for her opinion on the Mormon Church, Timbimboo Madsen defended their mass exodus to Shoshoni territory: "Well I think that maybe the church people knew that this land did belong to someone before they came and I think the efforts to try to, instead of having them leave is to, work with them [the Shoshoni] and then try to, bring them into the fold, and to teach them to become farmers. And I think that was their main goal."[98] Arguably the Northwestern Shoshoni were more sympathetic to the Mormon settlers when they first entered Utah and Idaho territories in the 1840s because the Mormons then were more diplomatic and less militaristic in their dealings with indigenous communities than their fellow Euro-American settlers. In his article on Mormon missionaries at Fort Lemhi in the years preceding the Utah War, David Bigler wrote of the Mormon missionaries' efforts to extend the reach of their conversion efforts by establishing a mission in Southeastern Idaho. Bigler wrote that in 1858: "An even better measure of friendliness [when the Mormons arrived at Fort Lemhi] was the number of conversions. Mission records show the names of forty-eight men and thirteen women, Bannock and Sheepeater Shoshones, baptized that fall."[99] Although this evidence was taken from a Mormon source, it implied that the Northwestern Shoshoni were not overtly hostile to Mormon conversion when the Latter Day Saints began establishing their communities in the Great Basin region.

Timbimboo Madsen continued her defense of the Church by drawing parallels between the Shoshoni religion and Mormon religions: "One of our elders, Kenneth Neuman, said that it, the religion [Mormonism], was so much like our own religion. We believe in life

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[98] Green, *Interview Two*.
[99] Bigler, B, 'Mormon Missionaries', 34.

after death, we believe in one great being or spirit or god. Maybe the difference is how you pray to it, to them or to him, or whatever but it's the same. I think the idea of family also touched them, because you know, without that family structure for Native American people, you can't survive. You need all those helping hands."[100] Timbimboo Madsen's words implied an affinity with the Church that created unity and community between two disparate cultures. The tribal connection to the Mormon Church supported an increasingly fragile Northwestern Shoshoni community in the years of advanced Euro-American settlement. However, as Timbimboo Madsen stated, if the tribe was to survive they would have to convert and follow Mormon lifestyles, becoming settled agriculturalists at the cost of their own nomadic culture. This tension was heightened in the aftermath of the massacre when the Shoshoni suffered massive annihilation of their people and culture.

The tribal losses post-massacre meant that, if the Shoshoni were to survive and hold onto some semblance of community in a Mormon dominated region, conversion to the Church of Latter Day Saints was a relatively safe option, but not necessarily a decision of free choice. In fact, Timbimboo Madsen credited the Church with providing security for the Shoshoni in Bear River's aftermath: "… I look at 'em all [the Northwestern Shoshoni who survived the massacre] and it was the church that held them together … sometimes I feel if it wasn't for the church we would have scattered and I think the fact that we were tied to the land and didn't want to leave our homelands, that we got to stay." Nevertheless, she described the sacrifice her relatives had to make when they converted: "… we had to give up our culture. We weren't allowed to practice … some of the religious stuff. They certainly cut off the hunter gathering aspects of our life. They talked about that we were beggars - well, beggars are not born you know? They're

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[100] Green, *Interview Two*.

created." There was obviously conflict between Shoshoni support of the Church and the sabotage of Shoshoni culture at the cost of conversion. Timbimboo Madsen amplified this point when she was asked why she thought the Northwestern Shoshoni converted to Mormonism after the massacre: "I think what they experienced after the Bear River Massacre had a lot to do with really how their lives ended up. I think some of their options were either to go to a reservation or to stay here and become part of the community and that meant … living amongst and joining the church. So you know with those options, either that or possibly dying?"[101] While Timbimboo Madsen's words implied that tribal members had to convert to Mormonism if they were to survive, the general consensus within Mormon historiography is that Mormonism had a positive impact on the tribal communities of the far West. Although not referring directly to the Northwestern Shoshoni, Mormon historian Ronald Walker wrote that some Indians reported improved living conditions after Mormons settled on their lands: "As elsewhere in the nation, Utah's Indians perceived cultural and economic advantages to white settlement."[102] However, Walker failed to stress that conditions probably improved for the Indians only after settlement had destroyed their resources and made their cultural life harder to maintain.

After the massacre approximately 1,300 Northwestern Shoshoni remained alive. According to Madsen, the majority of these had settled at Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Southeastern Idaho. However, two small bands of Northwestern Shoshoni, under the leadership of Chiefs Sanpitch and Sagwitch, stayed in Northern Utah. After a few years of attempting to maintain their traditional cultural patterns, they converted to Mormonism and began to learn agricultural methods taught to them by Mormon farmers. Whilst the number of Northwestern Shoshoni converts remained quite small in

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[101] Green, *Interview Two*.
[102] Walker, *'Toward a Reconstruction'*, 30, 36.

comparison to those tribal members who moved to the reservation, the numbers joining the Church continued to rise in the decade after the massacre. By 1875 approximately 200 Northwestern Shoshoni had converted to Mormonism and accepted the help of Mormon landowners. The Northwestern Shoshoni established colonies at Washakie in the Malad Valley, in the far northern corner of Box Elder county in Utah. Madsen noted that the Washakie Indian farm remained home to the majority of Northwestern Shoshoni throughout the most of the 20th century, although the colony has now been abandoned following the mass industrialization of America's agriculture.[103] The number of Shoshoni converts to Mormonism in the aftermath of Bear River is a long-term effect of the destruction wreaked by Bear River.

To conclude, the public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice has contributed to the limited representation of the Bear River Massacre for the following reasons. The Northwestern Shoshoni chose to maintain private oral histories, preserving their history of the massacre for future generations of Shoshoni as opposed to going through the painful process of publically commemorating the slaughter of their ancestors. Shoshoni silence has meant that Euro-American historians of the massacre have had very few sources to analyze. This contrasts with the Sand Creek Massacre where Cheyenne and Arapaho sources are much more widely available, allowing historians to present a more a balanced view of Colonel Chivington's attack.

Secondly, the conversion to Mormonism by some members of the Northwestern Shoshoni tribe created an interlinked and often contradictory process of memory. This complexity increased in the aftermath of the Bear River Massacre. Although the Mormons condoned the massacre, tribal conversion rates increased in the years

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[103] Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier*, 213. The colony of Washakie was established by the Mormon Church in 1800 for the purpose of Northwestern Shoshoni settlement.

following it, because conversion offered the Shoshoni survival. Today some members of the Northwestern tribe remain committed members of the Mormon Church. The complex historical relationship between the Mormon Church and the Northwestern Shoshoni has influenced the public silence of the Shoshoni voice because neither the Mormons nor the Northwestern Shoshoni have chosen to highlight their complicated historical connection. This has further made public commemoration of Bear River very difficult. Cross-cultural remembering and memorializing which involves two largely inimical cultures is a complicated task. The Northwestern Shoshoni connection to the Mormon Church has limited the extent of Bear River scholarship. Both groups have chosen silence, providing little historical detail of events surrounding Bear River.

Despite addressing the public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni in this section, it is important to stress that the tribe has not forgotten the massacre. In fact the tribe have held yearly tribal commemorations at the massacre site. During a visit to the site in the Autumn of 2013, I saw tribal commemorative objects in the trees surrounding the site. Mae Timbimboo Parry began a drive to get the Northwestern Shoshoni perspective of the massacre heard, particularly in the Utah education system. However, tribal massacre histories have by and large remained with the tribe.

I acknowledge problems within this section, the lack of Northwestern Shoshoni sources being the key one. My reliance on the interviews with Pattie Timbimboo Madsen means limited representation of Northwestern Shoshoni opinion, particularly concerning tribal conversion to Mormonism. As a current member of the Mormon Church, it has to be recognized that Timbimboo Madsen portrayed a sympathetic view of the Latter Day Saints. She did not acknowledge the connection between the Church and Bear River, aside from the Mormons helping the surviving members of the tribal community in the

massacre's aftermath. Timbimboo's silence regarding this connection symbolizes the unwillingness for the Shoshoni to speak up about their negative relationship to the Church. However, I believe she tried as a Northwestern Shoshoni tribal representative, to provide a well-balanced view of tribal opinion.

Overall, as a result of the under-representation of the Shoshoni voice and limited number of Northwestern Shoshoni sources in Bear River's historiography, it has been difficult, particularly for Euro-American historians, to produce an accurate and full history of the massacre. The Shoshoni perspective has been undervalued and has received little attention in the scholarship of Bear River.

Bear River's Obscurity: The Shoshoni and Mormon Connection

I have chosen to consider the historical and contemporary role of both the Mormon Church and the Northwestern Shoshoni in the under-emphasis of the Bear River Massacre because both groups have received limited attention in the scholarship of the massacre, yet I believe they play a crucial role in Bear River's obscurity. Both groups, in different but in connected ways, have contributed to the scholarly and public obscurity of Bear River. Neither group has been keen to highlight its historical relationship to the massacre, the Shoshoni preferring to keep their histories within the tribe and the Mormons being unwilling to acknowledge their historical support of a massacre committed on people they professed to be treating kindly, according to scripture. The historical conflict of Mormons and Shoshone is hard to ignore, for the expanding Mormon settlements from the 1840s demanded that the Shoshoni land be cleared for future colonies. This had a devastating effect on the Northwestern tribe, who were often left starving. The Bear River Massacre devastated the Shoshoni community further and seemingly widened the gap between these disparate cultures. Ironically

however, the massacre was the source of a lasting connection between the Church and the tribe. Considering their combined difficult history, the continued connection between Mormons and Shoshoni is of interest when considering the under-emphasis of Bear River. Both Shoshoni and Mormon historiography are isolated sub-topics of American history. This has meant they have both been excluded from the dominant Euro-American narrative, often forming instead their own private histories. In turn this has impacted the cross-cultural historical representation and current remembrance of Bear River because there is limited overlap in the historiography of intertwined groups like the Shoshoni and the Mormons. By exploring the roles of both the Mormons and the Northwestern Shoshoni in Bear River's under-emphasis, I hope I have gone someway towards redressing the problem of the massacre's current obscurity. These two groups are not solely responsible for the under-representation of Bear River and there are other key areas that I have addressed in the state of scholarship section. However, considering the lack of Shoshoni and Mormon input, it is no wonder that Bear River remains obscure in Euro-American histories of the massacre.

Conclusion to Section A

Bear River: Historical and Contemporary Under-emphasis

Despite the number of those killed at Bear River being substantially higher than those

Cheyenne and Arapaho massacred at Sand Creek, as well as at other Western massacres

of indigenous peoples, Bear River has remained in relative obscurity in American

historical literature and public Euro-American memory. This section has attempted to

address several reasons why this has been the case, as well as situating events at Bear

River within broader notions about collective memory and forgetting. This study of

Bear River is historically significant to the massacre's historiography because it

considers in detail specific reasons why the massacre remains obscure. This has not

been addressed in previous scholarship. Although attention has been given to Bear

River's neglect within earlier studies, the massacre has often existed as a side-note.

Scholars, to date, have been more concerned with telling the chronological story of

historical events at Bear River. This is certainly important, as the massacre must claim

its rightful place as one of the most brutal massacres of indigenous peoples in the

American West. However, by analyzing reasons for the massacre's under-emphasis, I

have aimed to provide a better understanding of what happened at Bear River. I believe

the massacre will only be significantly remembered when we understand why it has

been under-emphasized.

I have analyzed above two previously unexplored areas of Bear River's history: the

underemphasized role of the Mormon Church in the massacre and the public silence of

the Northwestern Shoshoni. By contextualizing Bear River within the territorial politics

of early Mormon settlement in Southeastern Idaho and Utah, I have brought a series of

new sources to Bear River's historiography, these being, largely, primary and secondary

sources from Mormon scholarship. Tellingly, these sources have often omitted mention

of Connor's slaughter but have enabled me to produce a clear explanation of the political environment in Utah Territory that led to the massacre, as well as the reasons for the Mormon Church remaining relatively silent regarding Bear River in its aftermath. The Mormon Church and its relationship to forgetting events at Bear River have not previously been assessed in scholarship.

This is the first study of Bear River to produce a full-length analysis of the silence of the Shoshoni voice as a reason for the massacre's under-emphasis. The Northwestern Shoshoni have been largely ignored in Euro-American histories of the massacre. As demonstrated above, this has been because of a lack of Shoshoni sources detailing Shoshoni responses to the massacre, but also because the tribe have chosen to keep their history private to prevent it becoming distorted.

As well as exploring reasons for Bear River's under-emphasis, this study has contextualized Bear River within the realm of collective memory, using a theoretical framework. Beyond this thesis, the massacre has yet to be discussed within broader debates about collective memory and forgetting. Using well-known theorists, I have aimed to demonstrate that the collective memory of Bear River has been controlled by culturally dominant Euro-American representations of the past, at the cost of the minority memory of the Northwestern Shoshoni. In this respect, I argue that notions of forgetting, as they relate memory, cannot be separated from concepts of power and dominance. I have analyzed the polarized histories of the massacre that exist in scholarly and memorial form, including the isolated history of the Mormon Church and the private and tribally specific memories of the Northwestern Shoshoni. The multiple and contradictory memorials that stand at the Bear River Massacre Site today demonstrate the cultural specificity of memory as collected but disparate memories of

the same event stand at a shared site of atrocity. I have shown how, in both scholarly and public memory of Bear River, it has been impossible to create a united cross-cultural collective memory that transcends ethnic boundaries.

Existing collective memory literature has not recognized the difficulty of creating cross-cultural collective memories and is instead reliant on one group presenting core static values that are unmalleable. At Bear River, a cross-cultural memory has not been achieved because collective memory attempts have been dominated by culturally specific versions of memory, either from the Northwestern Shoshoni or local Euro-American communities. This study of Bear River both highlights that memory is culturally specific but also that, within collective memory theory and Bear River scholarship, more concern needs to be afforded to inter-connected, cross-cultural memories when collective memory is being formulated. Only then can we properly understand both the historical and contemporary impact of events such as Bear River lift this atrocity from public and scholarly obscurity. To conclude, if Bear River is to be remembered to the extent it deserves, we need to open up a cross-cultural dialogue that considers the interplay of Mormon, Northwestern Shoshoni, and Euro-American narratives in the occurrence of the massacre.

Section B

The Sand Creek Massacre (1864)

The Topographies of Memory

Introduction to Section B

On the morning of November 29th, 1864, Colonel John M. Chivington commanded 700 Colorado Volunteers to carry out a surprise attack against Cheyenne leader Chief Black Kettle's village at Sand Creek in Southeastern Colorado. What followed was a brutal and bloody massacre in which 165-200 Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women and children were indiscriminately murdered. The soldiers ceased their firing at 3pm but the next day some men returned to the village, looting and scalping their victims. They burnt Black Kettle's encampment to the ground. The Sand Creek Massacre, like Bear River (1863), occurred during the height of Civil War conflict. Although fewer Cheyenne and Arapaho were slaughtered than the approximate number of 280 Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River, Sand Creek has retained a dominant place in American Western historical narrative, standing among the most horrific events in that history, and one which is significantly represented in Native and non-Native scholarship and memory.

This chapter uses a series of materials that are new to scholarship, newly and fruitfully juxtaposed with other archival sources. These materials were gathered from the Stephen H. Hart Research Centre in Denver, Colorado. These sources include the first full-length analysis of *Governor John Evans' Indian Affairs Letterpress Book* (1863-1864). Taken as an entire source, this transcribed collection of Evans' correspondence with Washington's War Department in the years preceding and the immediate aftermath of the Sand Creek Massacre, provides valuable insight into Evans' increasing animosity to the Plains tribes. This coincided with his growing political ambition. After assessing the collated collection, I have concluded that Evans was far more culpable for events at Sand Creek than has been assumed in previous scholarship. To further implicate Evans in the massacre, I have compared Evans' letters with other sources accessed at the

Stephen H. Hart Research Centre. These include the congressional, military and judicial hearings, carried out after the massacre, that were collated into the collection, "Massacre of Cheyenne Indians." I have also used the "Reply of Governor John Evans," which he produced as a reaction to the hearings. From combining these sources with new archival material on Evans, I believe Evans must be held as accountable as Chivington for events at Sand Creek.

This chapter has also made use of the Sand Creek Massacre Oral History Project, accessed at the Stephen H. Hart Research Centre. As with Evans' *Letterpress Book*, this collection of Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories has never been analysed as a complete source in scholarship before. Conducted by NPS ethnographers and Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants between 1998 and 2000, the Project is particularly relevant to this study. It provides compelling insight into Cheyenne and Arapaho memories of Sand Creek, and how their cultural notions of place are crucial to their remembrance of the massacre. These notions are juxtaposed with Euro-American concepts of place. Importantly, this source, challenges existing collective memory scholarship by demonstrating how difficult it is to remember across ethnic boundaries, reminding us that memory is culturally specific.

By considering culturally conflicted Native and non-Native approaches to place within the construction of Sand Creek's collective remembrance, I argue that a site of such reverberating loss is too contested to serve as a viable expression of collective remembrance. However, cultural conflicts over the meaning and use of place at Sand Creek have also aided a process of healing and reconciliation amongst disparate Euro-American and Native cultures. I consider the relationship Native and non-Native communities have had with place and land from the occurrence of the massacre until the

designation of Sand Creek as a National Historic Site in 2007. Throughout this chapter, I conceptualize place as a specific landscape that has historical significance and is integral to the memory of an individual or group, and land as the wider environmental entity. Contrasts between Native and non-Native uses of place and land are symptomatic of wider problems surrounding the concept of collective memory at a site of atrocity.

Differing Native and non-Native approaches to land and place have had a problematic yet essential role in attempting to shape and construct the collective remembrance of the Sand Creek Massacre. The Cheyenne, Arapaho and Euro-American communities have all had different understandings, at both individual and communal levels, of the significance and meaning of place at Sand Creek, from the massacre's occurrence until the present day. These differences highlight contrasting memories and profound cultural differences. Social dissimilarities over concepts of place have emphasised the difficulties inherent in transporting memories across disparate cultural boundaries. Problems in collectively remembering Sand Creek have been influenced in great part by conflicting Euro-American and indigenous historical engagement with the landscape that has guided contemporary memorialization of the massacre.

However, paradoxically, Native and non-Native conflicts over place at Sand Creek demonstrate that a shared place of memory, however conflicted, can offer the possibility of peace and reconciliation amongst disparate cultures. The cultural struggle over the importance of this specific place led Native and Euro-American communities to collaborate and confront their roles in history, aiding the process of healing and cultural understanding for all groups involved. However, I want to make clear that cultural reconciliation did not translate into a united form of collective memory between the

Cheyenne, Arapaho and Euro-American communities. Instead, each group was given the opportunity to express its different historical versions of the massacre at the site.

I have chosen to consider Sand Creek for this topographical examination of collective memory because, unlike the Bear River Massacre Site, Sand Creek is now a National Historic Site, having gained this status on April 28th, 2007, after nearly fifteen years of effort. The landscape at the Sand Creek Massacre Site has therefore been subject to an intensive and inter-cultural memorialization project. The NPS, local Euro-American communities and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes were all involved in the challenging process of publically commemorating the massacre. With so many conflicting interpretations of Sand Creek focused on one place, concerns were raised, especially by the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, over whether it was even possible to collectively remember such a contested area of American history. There was concern that tribal interpretations of Sand Creek would not be respected. However, with both Euro-American and indigenous cultures working through their memories together, dominant Euro-American perceptions that had previously governed the collective memory of Sand Creek prior to the memorialization project were publically challenged by Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants. These Native American groups now reconstructed their own histories of Sand Creek through their engagement with the memorialization process at the massacre site. The collaborative process at Sand Creek allowed for a reshaping of the massacre's public remembrance, thus opening up cross-cultural communication between previously dissimilar Euro-American and Cheyenne and Arapaho representations of the massacre.

A key milestone in the process of turning Sand Creek into a National Historic Site was the Euro-American desire to geographically define the precise boundaries of the site, a

procedure that began in 1993 and which I shall detail in this section. The NPS used interdisciplinary research methods in an effort firstly to locate and then memorialize the site. These included the use of sources of those who were at the massacre, comprising congressional and military reports, archaeological surveys of the site and oral histories of Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants. Traditional tribal methods, including reference to spiritual leaders and tribal elders to help determine the location of the site, were also employed. The use of interdisciplinary research methods, in an effort to locate and memorialize Sand Creek, demonstrated the methodological conflicts between the tribal massacre descendants and the NPS representatives assigned to manage the project. However, interdisciplinary methodology also emphasized the importance of recognizing and combining different cultural methods in an attempt to construct collective memory.

To analyse the problematic impact contrasting Native and non-Native uses of land has had on the collective remembrance of the Sand Creek Massacre, I shall begin by detailing the chronological history of the atrocity, making considerable use of primary sources, including the congressional, military and judicial hearings and the letters of Governor John Evans. I shall then consider the state of scholarship on the Sand Creek Massacre in both Euro-American and Native historiography, detailing specific studies of the massacre and biographies of key figures, as well as the regular appearance of Sand Creek in general American Western histories. Next, I shall analyse the role of place in collective memory theory in both Native and non-Native communities, highlighting differences between the ways in which cultures perceive place. I shall then consider the historical engagement with the landscape by both Euro-American and indigenous cultures and problems that arose with Euro-American colonization of indigenous lands. Finally, I shall deliberate the impact conflicting cultural concepts of

place have had on constructing collective remembrance of the Sand Creek Massacre by considering the search for the extent and boundaries of the massacre site. Defining the location of Sand Creek was a pre-requisite of the NPS if Sand Creek was to be commemorated as a National Historic Site. I shall then specifically detail the role of Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories in the search for the site and how these spoken histories have provided a different view of the importance of place as integral to memory in Native culture. Finally, I shall consider the culturally specific Cheyenne, Arapaho and Euro-American memorials that currently stand at the massacre site.

Chapter One: What Happened at Sand Creek

The Treaty of Fort Wise and Colonel Chivington's Arrival in Colorado

In this section I shall tell the story of what happened at Sand Creek, using research material gathered from the Stephen H. Hart Research Centre in Denver, Colorado, in conjunction with key secondary sources. The Sand Creek Massacre occurred for several intertwined reasons that included an influx of settlers into Colorado territory in the late 1850s, the advance of the Civil War, the increased political ambitions of Governor John Evans and John M. Chivington, the violent and merciless attitude of Colorado's Volunteer soldiers and the fear of a pan-tribal uprising in Colorado. Lastly, aggressive and exaggerated rhetoric from Colorado's leading men played a key role in the massacre.

In the early 1850s the Great Plains were still largely occupied by powerful Native tribes, the Cheyenne and Arapaho amongst them. However, this era also saw the advance of rapid Euro-American settlement into western sections of the nation. On the 17th September, 1851, the Cheyenne and Arapaho signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie with the United States treaty commissioners along with other tribes of the Great Plains.[1] The treaty provided the Plains tribes with a relatively large and resource-rich area on which to hunt buffalo and live, from Powder River, Wyoming, in the North to Texas in the South. In return, the tribes guaranteed safe passage for those emigrants passing over their land. However, this established understanding was threatened when gold was discovered in Colorado in 1859 and over 100,000 settlers flooded into the region seeking employment and wealth. In a study detailing Native engagements in the Civil War, compiled by the NPS and Native American tribes across America, Gary L.

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[1] The Treaty of Fort Laramie was signed between US treaty commissioners and representatives of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, Mandan, Hidatsa and Aikara nations. The treaty allowed for the tribes to establish territories amongst themselves. The tribes agreed to allow safe passage for settlers on the Oregon trail in return for annuities of £50,000 a year.

Roberts states that government officials took advantage of increased settlement in Colorado to organize the territory officially and push for new treaties with the Cheyenne and Arapaho which would increase Euro-American governance and influence.[2] With a rapidly expanding Euro-American population, tribal dominance in the region was weakening.

Subsequently, on February 18, 1861, six chiefs of the Southern Cheyenne and four of the Arapaho signed the Treaty of Fort Wise with the United States at Bent's Old Fort, in Southeastern Colorado. The treaty allotted to the Cheyenne and Arapaho a small, arid reservation in Southeastern Colorado, reducing their land to a fraction of what it had been under the Fort Laramie Treaty. One settler remarked the new treaty would prevent the Indians from interfering with "our Manifest Destiny."[3] The Cheyenne warrior George Bent, whose father had established Bent's Fort, wrote that many Cheyenne refused to recognize the "worthless" treaty because it had been signed by only a few men without tribal consent.[4] Tribal refusal to acknowledge the treaty would lead to future conflicts in the Great Plains but the Euro-Americans now regarded the land as their property. Stan Hoig wrote: "The whites in Colorado now legally owned the land they had invaded, bought from them at a price they would never pay."[5] These reductions in tribal lands, along with continued incursions by settlers, laid the foundation for conflicts over land, property, and survival across the Great Plains.

Colorado's Governor John Evans (in office from 1862-1865) conceded that the Treaty of Fort Wise had effectively solved the "Indian question," yet Coloradans still feared a

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[2] R.K. Sutton & J.A. Latschar (eds.), *American Indians and the Civil War: Official National Park Service Handbook*, (Washington: The National Park Service, n.d.), 136.
[3] S. Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 12.
[4] G.E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent: Written from his Letters* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 118.
[5] Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 17.

general Native uprising in the region. Paranoia was heightened when the regular army, which had served a peacekeeping role in the territory, was sent East in 1861 to fight Confederates in the Civil War. It was now up to the Western territories to organize their own military protection and in Colorado this task fell on the First Colorado Cavalry of Union-affiliated Volunteers under the command of the former Methodist minister, Colonel John M. Chivington. Roberts stressed that this 1862 appointment was "fateful and fatal."[6] Chivington, later irrevocably linked with the Sand Creek Massacre, was an aggressive and imposing figure with an avid dislike for American Indians. Addressing his men prior to the massacre, he famously said: "Damn any man who sympathizes with Indians! … I have come to kill Indians, and believe me it is right and honourable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians.… Kill and scalp all, big and little; nits make lice."[7] In the biography of Chivington, *The Fighting Parson* (1959), his grandson, Reginald S. Craig, provides an unsurprisingly sympathetic view of Chivington, detailing his rise from imposing Western parson to "brave" Union soldier who helped "civilize" the West during the turbulent frontier years. I shall analyze Craig's work in more detail in the "state of scholarship" section. However, what can be established from both sympathetic and damning accounts of Chivington was that he was an imposing figure and, like Colonel Patrick Connor, was eager to seek Civil War glory, even if that took the form of mercilessly killing Indians.

When he was stationed in Colorado Territory in 1862, Chivington was under the direct command of Major Samuel R. Curtis, a general in the Union army during the Civil War.[8] Curtis shared Chivington's ruthless and aggressive attitude towards the Native Americans, yet was often preoccupied with fighting Confederates outside Colorado,

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[6] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil War*, 139.
[7] Chivington quoted in D. Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Vintage Publishing, 1970), 86-87.
[8] General Curtis was in command of the union army of the southwest. He pursued and defeated the larger confederate army of the west at the Battle of Pea Ridge in March, 1862.

leaving Chivington in charge of military affairs in Colorado Territory. Roberts argued

that this shift in military personnel, from trained to volunteer soldiers, was more than a

change in competency: it also meant the military shared the interests of the settlers.

Many Volunteers wanted tribal land and had little or no concern for the Native peoples.[9]

Bent wrote: "The Colorado troops included the roughest of these frontiersmen, and

from Chivington down the officers thought no more of shooting an Indian than of

killing a wolf."[10] The introduction of untrained Union-affiliated Volunteers had a grave

impact on the increase of violence against Native Americans in the region and in the

general ruthlessness of frontier towns. There was also a loss of military discipline.

Arguably, the Civil War made the western section of the nation far more violent than it

had been prior to the outbreak of war on the East Coast.

Governor John Evans: Indian Affairs Letterpress Book (1863-1864)

No study of the Sand Creek Massacre is complete without detailed assessment of the

complex and contested role Governor John Evans played in its occurrence. I argue that

Evans must be held as accountable for events at Sand Creek as the military man on the

ground, Chivington. An ambitious, intelligent and politically ruthless man, Evans

(governor, 1862-1865) shared Chivington's dehumanizing opinion of the Plains tribes.[11]

However, whilst Chivington was outwardly militarily aggressive, Evans was much

more tactful and calculated in his dealings with Colorado's indigenous population. This

was partly a result of the fact that he had the dual responsibility of serving as

Superintendent of Indian Affairs as well as being Colorado's governor. However, I

believe Evans often purposely left his attitude towards Native Americans ambiguous to

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[9] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil* War, 138.
[10] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 127.
[11] D. Svaldi, *Sand Creek and the Rhetoric of Extermination: A Case Study in Indian White Relations* (New York: University Press of America, 1989), 219-262. Svaldi produced a detailed assessment of Evans' political career.

serve his own political ambitions of gaining Colorado statehood by 1864, becoming governor of that state and developing a major emigrant route to the West Coast. To achieve his goals, Evans sought to impose interpretations on existing treaties and laws to serve his own interests whilst not being overtly aggressive, because this would prevent Washington from questioning his dealings with Indians. Roberts wrote that originally Evans "hoped he could accomplish this goal peacefully, but he cared little about native concerns and assumed that Indian tribes would yield to the 'higher interests of civilization.'"[12]

In the *Rhetoric of Extermination*, David Svaldi argued that Evans' oratory regarding Indian affairs in public letters and in letters to his command in the 1860s was politically self-serving. Svaldi documented changes in Evans' attitude towards the Plains tribes that parallel his political ambition and often exist in direct conflict with his role as Indian Superintendent. Evans' Superintendent's reports prior to 1864 suggest that the Plains tribes did not pose a drastic threat to Coloradans but could be "peaceably removed."[13] When this policy failed and the tribes refused to conform to "civilized" ways offered to them under the Treaty of Fort Wise, Evans' rhetoric changed course and centred on the Indians as an uncontrollable threat which could only be met with military force. Evans's himself, however, refused to be responsible for commanding military operations against the Plains' tribes and instead asked for permission from Washington for military re-enforcements, often exaggerating the threat posed by Indian tribes.

A detailed analysis of Evans' shifting and calculated attitude towards the Plains Indians is in *John Evans Indian Affairs Letterpress Book (1863-1864)*. I aim to alter existing thinking on Sand Creek because my analysis of this collection led me to believe that

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[12] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil* War, 140.
[13] Svaldi, *Sand Creek and the Rhetoric of Extermination*, 221.

Evans was in fact culpable for events and Sand Creek and should share responsibility with Chivington for the slaughter of the Cheyenne and Arapaho in 1863. This newly unearthed data contains transcripts of Evans' correspondence with Washington's War Department in the months preceding and in the immediate aftermath of the massacre. It provides illuminating chronological primary source material that represents Evans' increasingly hostile and militaristic attitude towards the Plains tribes in the months preceding the Sand Creek massacre. Assessed as a whole, these letters evidence what I believe is Evans' calculated political efforts to clear the Plains tribes from the territory in order to achieve Colorado statehood and secure his own political ambitions.

It is surprising the letters have received such minimal attention as their relevance in clarifying Evans' Indian policy and political character is unrivalled. Instead, scholars have used only individual examples of Evans' letters. In fact, one of the only authors to use examples of Evans' Indian affairs letters to implicate him in the Sand Creek Massacre is Margaret Coel in her study, *Chief Left Hand: Southern Arapaho* (1981), yet she did not evaluate the letters as a complete source. Similarly whilst Svaldi, analysed the aggressive rhetoric of Evans and the impact it had on the governor's Indian affairs, he does not isolate Evans as being responsible for Sand Creek. Instead Svaldi argued that the Euro-American citizens of Colorado came to accept the massacre because of aggressive rhetoric from local newspapers and Evans in the months before the massacre. Unlike these authors, I argue that Evans letters are evidence of his accountability for the massacre. In my assessment of Evans' correspondence, I shall consider what the increasingly exaggerated rhetoric communicates about the apparent Indian threat in Colorado and increased violence against the Plains tribes. The letters demonstrate Evans' heightened paranoid concern regarding what he believed was a Native American threat, and reveal his repeated, often obsessive, requests to Washington for military

protection against a supposed Plains Indian uprising. Although there are no letters in which Evans explicitly expressed his opinion on actions at Sand Creek, the progressively violent nature of his correspondence showed that he had created an environment where the massacre was possible and that he would not have been averse to Chivington's attack on the Cheyenne and Arapaho camp.

Before analysing specific examples of Evans letters, I shall add a brief note on the archivist, Dolores Renze's, opinion of the letters and Evans. Written in 1951, her introduction to the collection presents a sympathetic portrayal of Evans as a frustrated yet well-meaning figure who was not treated seriously by Washington in his demands for military protection. She stated: "The story as it unfolds in these letters is one of near frustration." Her primary concern is with the military issues Evans faced in Colorado, rather than in assessing his political motivations. Renze wrote: "Governor Evans tried to fill the near vacuum created by the lack of regular army units by raising militia. This book of letters is an invaluable source of material on the attempts to mobilize the 'home guard' during the Indian War." Renze regarded the Indians as a threat and referred to the Governor's Indian policy attempts as "positive", even though they were highly militaristic.[14] Renze attributed any failings in Evans' Indian policy to Washington ignoring the Governor's pleas for military protection.

As a Letterpress Book, this source is an edited and transcribed collection from what I assume are selected examples of Evans' letters. The introduction to the book stated: "The following pages represent a transcription of Governor John Evans' Letter Press Book for the period 1863-1864."[15] Other than this, the only information provided regarding the construction of the texts is that they were transcribed and typed by

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[14] D. Renze, 'Introduction', in Evans, J., *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864* (John Evans Manuscripts MSS#226), 3, 1.
[15] D. Renze, 'Introduction' in *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864*, 1-7.

graduate students from the University of Denver. Certainly some information might be missing from the original letters, not all letters may have been found, some may no longer exist and Renze does state where writing is ineligible throughout the transcribed copies. There is no evidence to suggest that all of Evans' letters in this period were not transcribed but, considering Renze's supportive statements of Evans' actions against the Indians, it is possible that some letters, perhaps ones that showed a more aggressive side to Evans' Indian policy, have been omitted. Because of the nature of letterpress books as transcribed documents from original sources, they cannot be considered as a full historical account. However, when considered in conjunction with other sources, this collection provides new insight into Evans' Indian policy.

Evans' increasingly aggressive letters were a result of advanced paranoia, linked primarily to his political ambition as opposed to actual Indian threat. However, early letters in the collection from the summer of 1863 suggest that Evans was willing to hold a diplomatic council with the Indians to negotiate peace. On August 24th Evans wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, claiming that requests for funds to hold a council with the Cheyenne and Arapaho had been denied: "I have the honor to ask instructions as to the payment of necessary expense of collecting and holding Council with the Arapaho and Cheyenne Indians … [a]s I have not yet received funds …."[16] Another letter addressed to Major Colley on August 25[th,] 1863, further suggested that Evans wanted to hold talks with the Indians: "Please have the northern or non-signing bands to the old treaty prepared to sign it by an increase in the pay given to them."[17] Early letters, therefore, suggest that Evans was initially willing to be diplomatic with the Plains Indians but that he could not do this without the support of Washington. Evans'

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[16] Evans, *Letter to Hon. William P. Dole, Com of Indian Affairs* (August 24, 1863) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864.*
[17] Evans, *Letter to Major S. G. Colley, US Indian Agent* (August 25, 1853) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864.*

willingness for diplomacy suggested that, at this point, he did not perceive the Indians as a threat to his political goals. However, Washington rejected his pleas for funds and immediately the Governor's stance on the Indian situation became more militaristic and he suggested the Indian threat was very real. This implied that Evans' claim that the Plains Indians were hostile was not based on actual events but rather that he was aggravated because he had been ignored by Washington, and this hindered his goals of clearing the territory for statehood and further Euro-American settlement.

Evans wrote a series of letters to Washington, beginning in mid 1863, from which it may be inferred that he was becoming increasingly paranoid about an Indian attack. A letter from late 1863 outlined Evans' proposed means of dealing with what he regarded as the Indian problem. Firstly, he asked that no further regular army troops be withdrawn from Colorado to join the Union army in the East. Secondly, he wanted the right to call out the militia to be given to the military commander of Colorado for the purpose of speed. Lastly, he wanted regular US army troops to be stationed along the Platte and Arkansas River routes to Colorado.[18] To back up his demands for military protection, Evans repeatedly stated the violent intentions of the Plains Indians, which had to be met with force. In her introduction to the collection, Renze wrote: "By the spring of 1864 the Governor's letters indicated he had given up hope of avoiding war with the Indians and had been concentrating his efforts on preparing for it and securing adoption of a military plan of offense to end the "rebellion" as quickly as possible."[19] It is interesting that Evans' pleas for military protection were largely ignored by Washington until later, as this suggested that, although preoccupied with the Civil War, Washington did not believe the Indian threat was as substantial as Evans had suggested.

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[18] Evans, *Letter to Capt. S.I. Ashcraft* (June 8, 1863) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864*.
[19] Renze, *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864,* 3.

Furthermore, Colorado was an important territory for the Union army to occupy if they were to secure victory.

Although Evans' letters explicitly state the Indians were a threat, it is difficult to ascertain whether Evans was actually as concerned as he expressed in his letters. I suggest, however, that his words were misleading and that Evans exaggerated the threat posed by the Indians in an attempt to procure military protection from Washington, so he could clear the territory for statehood. Evans' letters provided evidence of exaggerated rhetoric because his correspondence outlining the Indian problem and the need for military support often did not correlate with Indian actions. For example, on September 24th identical letters were sent from Chief Black Kettle and other leading members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho to Indian Agent, Major Samuel Colley, and Major Edward Wynkoop. The letters expressed the Cheyenne and Arapaho desire for peace: "We received a letter from Bent, wishing us to make peace. We held a council in regard to it. All came to the conclusion to make peace with you, providing you make peace with the Kiowas, Comanches, Arapahos, Apaches and Sioux."[20] Black Kettle went on to state that the Cheyenne would return prisoners they had captured if the settlers also gave up theirs.

Two months previously, however, on June 8th 1864, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Evans asserted that the Plains Indians were planning to carry out a combined attack and, although he does not specify which band, the Governor demanded that they be punished: "I am satisfied that a severe chastisement of these Indians is the only mode in which we can obtain peace and security from the murderous raids and

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[20] Black Kettle quoted in Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 90.

depredations on the settlements."[21] On exactly the same date that Chief Black Kettle issued the public statement for Cheyenne and Arapaho desire for peace (September 4th, 1864), Evans sent a letter to the secretary of War, E. N. Stanton that stated: "Pray give positive orders for our 2nd Colorado Cavalry to come out … Through spies we got knowledge of the plan of about thousand warriors in camp to strike our frontier settlements in small bands simultaneously in the night for the an extent of three hundred miles."[22] Of Evans' reports of Native threats in Colorado, Bent wrote: "These tales were simply inventions. The Indians were hunting and trading, living their usual lives, and none of the Plains tribes had any intention of attacking the whites."[23] I believe Evans exaggerated the Indian threat so military action could be carried out against the Plains tribes. His continual request for military backup to protect against tribes such as the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who he knew to have peaceful intentions, demonstrated that he was not averse to using violence against the Indians as a means to clear the territory.

In the months preceding the massacre, Evans became increasingly adamant that Colorado needed military protection against its Indian population. This was strengthened by the murder of the Hungate family by what is now assumed to be Arapaho Indians June 11[th,] 1864. I shall return to this event later. On the June 14th Evans implied that he was not opposed to killing the Indians. He wrote to the US Indian Agent, Lafayette Head: "I cannot too strongly impress upon you the immediate importance of calling in the disaffected and pacifying them."[24] Following this correspondence, on 15th June, Evans wrote a long letter to Washington in which he requested permission to raise a detachment of 100-day Volunteers. Chivington and his

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[21] Evans, *Letter to Hon. William P. Dole, Com. of Indian Affairs* (June 8, 1864) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864*.
[22] Evans, *Letter to Hon. E. N. Stanton, Secretary of War* (September 4, 1864) [Letter] *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864*.
[23] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 115.
[24] Evans, *Letter to Lafayette Head, US Indian Agent* (June 14, 1864) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864*.

men were thus recruited. This was one of Evans' most significant letters as Washington finally responded to his request for military protection. In this letter Evans used inflated rhetoric to maintain that the Plains Indians were united in an uprising and he provided a long list of exaggerated depredations, including a description of the Hungate murders, carried out by the Indians. However, Evans rarely noted which band or tribe had committed which depredation.

Evans' language in this letter implied that Colorado's forces were no match for the hostile Indians who numbered: "above four hundred strong against about one hundred troops with two mountain howitzers." Although Indian depredations along the Platte and Arkansas had increased following continued Euro-American settlement in the area, there is no evidence that suggests an uprising of 400 united Plains Indians took place. The depredations were often small-scale and carried out by minority bands. In this letter, Evans detailed the Hungate murders: "The scalped and horribly mangled bodies were brought into the city yesterday." It is notable that Evans now spoke of the Hungate murders to take advantage of a highly publicized attack on a settler family in order to emphasize the Indian threat. As I shall detail later in this chapter, the Hungate murders were manipulated by Colorado's leading men in an attempt to instill fear of Indian violence in the settler communities. Evans ends his letter by stating that he was preparing for war with the Plains Indians: "I have commenced the organization of the militia for home defense but they will be of little service as our settlements are too much scattered to be easily defended. I have applied to the War Department for authority to call them out for US Service as we are unprepared to equip and subsist them on Territorial account."[25] Following this letter, on 16th of June Evans wrote to the War Department in Denver, claiming Indian depredations were increasing: "Hostilities

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[25] Evans, *Letter to Hon. William P. Dole, Com. of Indian Affairs* (June 15, 1864) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864*.

by these Indians have commenced as set forth and attacks have been made on our troops and citizens at various points on the Platte and Arkansas … I wish to ask if a force cannot be sent from your Department … Please place all the troops you can spare in shape to cooperate."[26] Evans' letters after the Hungate murders demonstrated that any willingness to conduct diplomatic relations with the Indians had by this point vanished and for Evans the only way to face the perceived Indian threat was now through violence.

The approval Evans received from Washington to raise a 100-day Volunteer soldier unit, following his June 15th correspondence, meant that Evans was responsible for increased military presence in the region. It is clear from his rhetoric that the Governor favoured using military force against the Indians. This aggression only increased as the massacre approached. In fact, in one of the definitive letters that positions Evans at the heart of Sand Creek is correspondence with Colonel Patrick Connor, one month before the massacre on October 24[th,] 1864. At this point Connor and his men were scheduled to come to Colorado territory from Salt Lake City, on request from Evans, to help Chivington in his campaign against the Indians. Evans wrote to Connor: "I am glad you are coming. I have no doubt the Indians may be chastised during the winter, which they very much need. Bring all the forces you can; then pursue, kill and destroy them, until which we will have no permanent peace on the plains." [27] This is fascinating, considering the timing of the letter and to whom it is addressed. Firstly, this letter arrived only one month before the massacre, thereby facilitating the violence that was to occur and Evans preempted the massacre by suggesting a winter campaign as he knew this was when the Indians would be at their weakest. The language used in this letters

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[26] Evans, *Letter to Major Gen. Curtis* (June 16, 1864) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864.*

[27] Evans, *Letter to Brig. Gen. Connor*, (October 24, 1864) [Letter]. *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864.*

implies indiscriminate violence against undetermined tribes, whether peaceful or hostile. Secondly, the letter was written to Connor, whose name was already synonymous with the massacre at Bear River. Evans would have been aware of the ruthless massacre Connor had inflicted on the Shoshoni and, according to his letters, wanted the same for the Indians of Colorado. As I shall detail later in this chapter, Chivington responded jealously to the threat of Connor's arrival in Colorado and issued immediate marching orders to his men. Although Connor never actually came to Colorado, Evans' letter in effect tells Connor that massacring Indians would be an acceptable military endeavor.

Unfortunately there is break in Evans' correspondence in the days preceding the massacre and the day of the slaughter. Renze stated: "There is little in these letters on the Sand Creek affair, primarily we can assume, because Governor Evans was in Washington during the last months of 1864."[28] However I argue Evans' distance from Sand Creek at the time of the massacre could be taken as evidence of his political calculation because he wanted to create distance between himself and the massacre to protect his political reputation. Despite this lack of documentation, Evans certainly fostered an environment where the massacre was made possible and has to be held accountable, along with Chivington, for events at Sand Creek. By this point in the majority of scholarship, it is Chivington who is most obviously associated with Colorado's Indian affairs.[29]However from Evans' letters preceding his departure, we can deduce that he had knowingly set the stage for massacre and remained committed to ridding Colorado of its Indian population.

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[28] Renze, *Indian Affairs Letterpress Book 1863-1864,* 3.
[29] See, Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil War*, 149-150 and Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 134-137.

As a collection, these letters demonstrate that the Governor, who readily condoned violence against Indians, must be held accountable for events at Sand Creek. The *Letterpress Book* demonstrated that the causes of the Sand Creek Massacre began with the political ambitions of Governor John Evans: ruthless zeal and a desire for tribal land resulted in Evans fabricating stories about Native violence which often did not correlate with historical events. Whilst it is true that some tribes in the region were becoming increasingly violent, these were often isolated incidents. There was no evidence of a united Plains war, as Evans implied in his letters. Evans' exaggerations led to the arrival of the Volunteers in Colorado Territory because he wanted to clear land for Colorado statehood. I believe, as has not previously been proposed in scholarship, that Evans knowingly created a hostile political environment where the massacre of the Cheyenne and Arapaho was made possible. Although Evans did not explicitly order Chivington to attack and nowhere in his correspondence did Evans overtly condone the massacre, or indicate he knew exactly if and when it was going to happen, his letters, particularly the last one to Connor, imply that he was issuing the go-ahead for massacre.

The Hungate Murders: Origins and Aftermath

Increasing Evans' paranoia regarding an Indian attack, in the early spring of 1863, a series of depredations were committed by Utes, Sioux and the militant Cheyenne Dog Soldiers along the Arkansas in Southern Colorado. These men resented the peaceful and diplomatic stance of their chiefs such as Black Kettle and were fighting to retain their lands. Unfortunately, their skirmishes provided fuel for Evans' war against the Indians. Hoig argued that it was often difficult to ascribe blame for depredations to one particular tribe.[30] This made it easier for Evans and Chivington to justify violence against any tribe, whilst ignoring the fact that the majority of Native depredations were

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[30] Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 23.

cattle raids committed because of increasing Native poverty. Major Colley informed

Evans that there were no buffalo within 200 miles of the reservation allotted to the

Cheyenne and Arapaho under Fort Wise and wrote to the Governor of the Indians:

"They are poor and hungry."[31]By comparison, Major Scott Anthony, who was in

command at Fort Lyon in 1863, was far more concerned about government spending on

tribal welfare than the suffering of the tribes.[32] He wrote: "The Indians are all very

destitute this season, and the government will be compelled to subsist them to a great

extent, or allow them to starve to death, which would probably be much the easier way

of disposing of them."[33] By May of 1863, a settler and informant who lived amongst the

Cheyenne had told Evans that the Cheyenne and Arapaho were holding secret meetings

with the Sioux for the purpose of "uniting and driving the white man from the

country."[34] Evans viewed this as evidence of the growing violence of the Plains tribes

and, sending for the chiefs of an Arapaho village, he told them: "if they went to war

with the whites it would be a war of extermination for them."[35] The chiefs were warned

that any more depredations committed by any band would be seen as evidence of their

violent intentions against the Euro-American communities of Colorado.

By 1864 the Plains tribes and their movements were being closely watched by both

Evans and Chivington. Evans was determined to clear the land titles in order to achieve

his political objectives. Roberts wrote that this was a "deadly combination" as it

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[31] *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Colorado Superintendency, 1863* Digital Collections University of Wisconsin – Madison Libraries: (The History Collection), 121-151:130,131. Available online: http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/Historyidx?type=turn&entity=History.AnnRep63.p0122&id=History.AnnRep63&isize=M [Accessed 26/01/2017].

[32] Fort Lyon: Initially under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel F. Tappan, command was passed to Major Scott Anthony in 1863 who was ruthless in his attitude towards the Indians. Edward Wynkoop took command of the post on May 9, 1864, and Fort Lyon was later to become synonymous with the Sand Creek Massacre. Wynkoop led the Cheyenne and Arapaho to Fort Lyon, guaranteeing that they would be protected. Chivington, however, used the fort as his staging post for the massacre.

[33] Anthony quoted in Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 35.

[34] Quoted in Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 31.

[35] Evans quoted in Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 31,

"predisposed government authorities to look for the worst possible explanation of Indian movements."[36] Indeed, early in 1864, Chivington had detached his men to attack Natives along the river Platte in Eastern Colorado, telling them to "take no prisoners."[37] By the spring, Chivington and his men had carried out several deadly attacks against Cheyenne and Arapaho who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, arousing suspicion in the Volunteers. One of these deadly skirmishes involved the murder of Lean Bear, a peaceful Cheyenne chief who was gunned down in Ash Creek, Kansas, by a regiment of Colorado Volunteers under the command of Lieutenant George Eayre. Seeing the troops approaching, the encampment of Cheyenne sent out a small group to inform Eayre's men of their peaceful intentions. The troops, however, opened fire, killing Lean Bear who was famously wearing a peace medal he had received in Washington DC in 1862. Hoig wrote that between May and April of 1864, Chivington and his men had had three major fights with the Cheyenne, burned four of their villages and killed a number of their people, "including a head chief who had prided himself on his peaceful relationships with the whites." Colorado's Euro-American community supported Chivington and looked upon him as a protector of frontier living. He was affectionately referred to as "old Chivington,"[38] and many Euro-Americans believed Evans' notion that the tribes of the Plains were uniting with the intention of warring with the settlers. By attacking and killing Indians, Chivington was sure to gain public support for his larger political ambitions.

Hoig argued that 1864 was a politically significant year for the Territory and, "though it can never be accurately measured, the influence of this upon the Colorado leadership cannot be ignored."[39] Bent stated: "On the frontier this was the shortest road to the

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[36] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil* War, 142.
[37] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 127.
[38] Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 53.
[39] Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 56.

people's hearts: give the Indians a whipping and the voters would give you any office you asked of them."[40] Like Evans, Chivington wanted Colorado to achieve statehood and was running for congressman of the Union Administration Party, a party in which Evans was planning to serve as senator. Although very different in their approach to Indian affairs, there was a close alliance between Evans and Chivington, formed by their parallel political ambition to clear the Territory of Indians.

In the summer of 1864 something happened that would convince Coloradans that an Indian War was on the horizon. On June 11th, raiders who were later believed to be Northern Arapaho attacked a ranch south of Denver. They killed a rancher, Nathan Ward Hungate, his wife and their two infant children. The incident provoked public hysteria and Colonel Chivington declared martial law in Colorado. In many of the texts dedicated to Sand Creek, the Hungate murders were regarded as a key turning point in Euro-American violence and public support of military action against the Plains tribes. However, the actual threat posed by the Hungate murders was deeply exaggerated. Firstly, people were unaware at the time which band or tribe actually committed the attack, although it was later agreed that it had been a band of Northern Arapaho. This was, however, deemed irrelevant, a decision which allowed the blame to be placed on any tribe. Secondly, the murders received dramatic and exaggerated media attention. *The Commonwealth* reported on June 15th, 1864: "Those that perpetrate such unnatural, brutal butchery as this ought to be hunted to the farthest bounds of the these broad plains and burned at the stake alive."[41] Similarly Indian agent Colley remarked that peace with the Indians was now a lost cause: "I have done everything in my power to

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[40] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 127.
[41] S. C. Williams, *The Indian Wars of 1864 through the Sand Creek Massacre: A Collection of Articles from the Rocky Mountain News and the Commonwealth Published in Denver Colorado Territory, 1864.* Aurora, CO: Pick of Ware Publishing, 1997. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO, 44.

keep peace. I now think the best food for them is a little powder and lead." [42]Thirdly, the bodies of the deceased Hungates were brought to Denver to be paraded around the streets to induce terror in those that watched, fuelling public hysteria. Fourthly, George Bent's work does not reference the Hungate murders, which could provide evidence that the Cheyenne tribe were not linked to the Arapaho as part of a pan-tribal uprising. Furthermore, it was shortly after the Hungate murders that Chief Black Kettle, in conjunction with other Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders, wrote the September 4[th,] 1864, letters in which they expressed their desires to Colley and Wynkoop for a peace council to be held with the settlers, suggesting a pan-tribal uprising was very unlikely.

Cheyenne and Arapaho efforts for peace did not, however, deter Colorado's leading men from manipulating the Hungate murders into a carefully orchestrated set of events that were designed to instil fear of Indian violence into the Coloradan public. By creating media and public outrage about the deaths of an innocent white family committed by savages, any violent action condoned or carried out against the Plains tribes by Chivington or Evans could now be justified in the eyes of Coloradans. Military action against "aggressive" and "hostile" Natives would serve both Evans and Chivington's political ambitions by mustering support for their control over the region. Evans played on the fear of the settlers to convince Washington that the murders were proof of an all-out Indian war that placed Colorado in imminent danger. The ambiguity of Evans' rhetoric became increasingly apparent after the Hungate murders, as was demonstrated by the public declaration he issued to the Plains tribes on June 27th.

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[42] S. G. Colley, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Colorado Superintendency, 1864* Digital Collections. University of Wisconsin 216-258: 244. Available online: http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/History-idx?type=div&did=History.AnnRep64.i0012&isize=M [Accessed 26/01/2017].

Evans' proclamation addressed the "friendly Indians of the plains": "Agents, interpreters, and traders will inform … [them] that some members of their tribes have gone to war with the white people. They steal stock and run it off, hoping to escape detection and punishment. In some instances they have attacked and killed soldiers and murdered peaceable citizens. For this the Great Father is angry, and will certainly hunt them out and punish them, but he does not want to injure those who remain friendly to the whites. He desires to protect and take care of them. For this purpose I direct all friendly Indians of the plains to keep away from those who are at war and go to places of safety." Evans then lists where each tribe should report, before ending his proclamation: "The object of this is to prevent friendly Indians from being killed through mistake.… The war on hostile Indians will be continued until they are effectively subdued."[43]

Despite this proclamation to the "friendly" Indians, on August 10th Evans sent a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs suggesting Coloradans were in imminent danger of Indian attack: "I am now satisfied that the tribes of the plains are nearly all combined in this terrible war, as apprehended last winter. It will be the largest Indian war this country ever had, extending from Texas to the British lines, involving nearly all the wild tribes of the plains. Please bring all the force of your department to bear in favour of speedy re-enforcement of our troops, and get me authority to raise a regiment of 100-days mounted men. Our militia law is inoperative, and unless this authority is given we will be destroyed." [44] The differences between the proclamation to the "friendly" Indians and the letter to the Commissioner provide evidence of the Governor's duplicity in his dealings with Indian affairs. He offered friendship to the Indians who remained peaceful, implying some agreement could eventually be reached between the tribes and

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[43] Evans quoted in Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre,* 62-63.
[44] Evans quoted in Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 67-68.

the settlers but his letter to the Commissioner condoned violence against the tribes by exaggerating the Indian threat to Washington.

On August 11th Evans finally received authorization from Washington's War Department to organize a regiment with the specific aim of fighting Indians. Recruitment began immediately for the 3rd Colorado Cavalry. Command of the unit was given to Colonel George L. Shoup and was assigned to the District of Colorado, commanded by Chivington. Despite receiving military permission from Washington, on the same day Evans sent another proclamation to the citizens of Colorado, seemingly abandoning his earlier plea to the peaceful Indians of the plains. He told Coloradans: "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 said call to rendezvous at the points indicated." He ends his proclamation: "The conflict is upon us, and all good citizens are called upon to do their duty for the defence of their homes and families."[45] Problematically, Evans did not distinguish between hostile and peaceful Indians. How would the citizens identify these different groups? Evans' calculated words effectively provided the opportunity for violence against all Indians, whilst simultaneously distancing himself from any attacks that might occur. These three pieces of correspondence, sent in a small window of time, evidence the conflicting messages Evans sent the tribes, Washington and the citizens of Colorado. To the Indians, he suggested that peace was possible if they followed his orders. To the War Department and citizens, he suggested a huge uprising was on the horizon and he needed the support of both Washington and Coloradans to quell the threat.

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[45] 38th Congress of the United States, Second Session, January 10th, 1865, *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, (Folio Box 29) Call no: RB 970.9 Sa56u 1865. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO, 44.

Despite Evans' political calculation and Chivington's promise of military aggression against the Indians, by September 1864 both his and Chivington's political ambitions had been thwarted. Colorado statehood had been defeated on September13[th], 1864 and Chivington and the 3rd Colorado Cavalry had become increasingly agitated after being nicknamed the "bloodless third" by Coloradans who believed the regiment would reach the end of their enlistment without having engaged in battle. Both men were angry at the state of affairs in Colorado and this was reflected in their treatment of the Cheyenne and Arapaho at the peace meeting at Camp Weld on September 28th.

The Camp Weld Meeting

Having met with members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes who claimed peace at Fort Lyon, Major Edward Wynkoop, commanding officer at Fort Lyon in 1864, agreed to escort a party of Cheyenne and Arapaho to Camp Weld, just outside Denver, where they would meet with Evans in an attempt to negotiate peace. Evans, however, had already decided that the Indians were united in a hostile war. Both Evans and Chivington were present at the council, as well as Chief Black Kettle (Cheyenne), Chief White Antelope (Cheyenne), Bull Bear (Cheyenne Dog Soldier leader) and Heap of Buffalo (Arapaho).

Cheyenne chief, Black Kettle, opened the council: "All we ask is that we may have peace with the whites … We want to take good tidings to our people that they may sleep in peace. I want you to give all these chiefs of the soldiers here to understand that we are for peace … that we may not be mistaken for enemies … We must live near the buffalo or starve." Evans replied: "I am sorry you did not respond to my appeal [the proclamation to the friendly Indians] at once. You have gone into an alliance with the

Sioux … However much a few individuals have tried to keep the peace, as a nation you have gone to war." Despite Black Kettle's invoking of peace, Evans continued by telling the Chiefs that he could not sign a treaty with them as they were clearly on the war path, and that: "The Great Father in Washington has men enough to drive all the Indians off the plains, and the whip the rebels at the same time." After this threat, although still overtly refusing to sign a treaty, and in typical ambiguous style, Evans suggested there remained a possibility of peace: "My advice to you is to turn on the side of the government, and show by your acts that friendly disposition you profess to me." The chiefs assented to this, telling Evans: "We will return with Major Wynkoop to Fort Lyon … I cannot answer for all of them, but think there will be but little difficulty in getting them to assent to help the soldiers." Evans explained that, if the Indians failed to make an arrangement with the soldiers, they would be considered his enemies. He stated: "Again whatever peace they [Cheyenne and Arapaho] make, must be with the soldiers and not with me." He directed the peaceful chiefs back to Fort Lyon with Wynkoop.[46] Once again, after Camp Weld, Evans effectively distanced himself from any violence and made no solid promises to the tribes regarding their protection.

At the close of the Camp Weld meeting, Chivington made his only statement: "I am not a big war chief, but all the soldiers in this room are under my command. My rule of fighting white men or Indians is to fight them until they lay down their arms and submit to military authority. They are nearer Major Wynkoop than anyone else, and they can go to him when they are ready to do that."[47] Bent stated that: "The chiefs remained puzzled by what Chivington had said and could not make out clearly what his intentions were. The truth was that he had probably already laid his plans for his attack on our

[46] J. Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans of the territory of Colorado to that part referring to Him of the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War Headed 'Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,'* 8th of June,1865, (John Evans Manuscripts MSS#226, FF# 66) Call no: RB 970.9 C714ter. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO, 17, 18, 19.
[47] Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans*, 20.

camp."[48] Like Evans, Chivington used ambiguous rhetoric to obscure his real intentions. However, I believe this was intended to confuse the Indians and make it easier to carry out military action against them. Unlike Evans, Chivington was certainly not averse to personally being associated with violence and military strength. In fact he saw glory in it, especially after being mocked by Coloradans for failing to spill any Indian blood.

Both Chivington's and Evans' language at the meeting was vague and neither man denied the possibility that they would attack the Cheyenne and Arapaho. The chiefs, however, left the meeting with a sense that peace had been achieved. Major Wynkoop reassured the chiefs that, if they brought their bands to camp near Fort Lyon, they would be protected. The meeting at Camp Weld was therefore a crucial step on the road to the massacre. Although the chiefs left assured of peace, the outcome of the meeting led the Cheyenne and Arapaho to the exact spot where they would be massacred. After the September meeting at Camp Weld, Roberts wrote that Chivington became the "primary actor in Colorado Indian affairs." As well as Colorado losing the bid for statehood, Chivington's commission as an officer in the Union Army expired on September 23rd. Engagement with the Indians therefore offered Chivington an outlet for his ambition. Interestingly, in November, General Patrick Connor (of the Bear River Massacre) and Chivington clashed over Indian affairs. Connor had just won acclaim for his winter strike against the Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River and proposed a joint campaign with Chivington to defeat Indians and protect commerce along the Platte. Chivington rejected the offer. Roberts wrote that Chivington had absolutely no intention of a joint of campaign with Connor, fearing that any glory gained in strikes would belong to the

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[48] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 146.

hero of Bear River.[49] Hoig wrote that Chivington was "alarmed to the extreme" by Connor's proposal.[50]

Connor arrived in Denver on 14th November and, hearing of this, Chivington issued marching orders to his men, believing that Connor had been sent to Denver by the War Department to check on Chivington's ability to control Indian violence. Chivington regarded Connor's arrival as a major attack on his abilities. In a written account he implies that Connor was mocking him for his inability to catch any Indians, to which he replied that he would find the Indians, as he was one of only two men who knew their location.[51] This was a chilling prophecy as the Sand Creek Massacre was under a fortnight away. Two days after Connor's arrival in Denver, Evans left Colorado for Washington, and remained there until after the massacre, a fact he would later use to defend himself against his involvement in Sand Creek. By leaving the area, Evans was able to distance himself from Chivington's actions yet, considering his attitude towards the Indians, it seems unlikely that he would have condemned the massacre, as long as he was not directly involved. In fact, considering his skill at political calculation, Evans was perhaps aware that Chivington was going to carry out the massacre and purposefully chose to leave the territory at this date.

However, it is also possible that Chivington exercised his freedom with Evans away and was able to execute his plan for massacre with limited interference. It is difficult to ascertain how long Chivington had been planning the attack. Bent suggested that Chivington had been arranging the massacre for weeks as a ploy to gain the support of the settlers: "The colonel and most of his officers were in politics, and their idea seems

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[49] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil* War, 149, 150.
[50] Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 134.
[51] Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, 136.

to have been to win the hearts of the voters by striking one terrible blow against the 'red rebels' before they were mustered out of service."[52]

The Sand Creek Massacre

A few days before the massacre, Chivington prevented all travel down the Arkansas so news of his plan would not reach Fort Lyon before his arrival. On the morning of the 28th, Chivington and a column of troops, comprised of three battalions of the 3rd Colorado Cavalry and supported by a battalion of the 1st Colorado Cavalry, arrived at Fort Lyon, informing Major Anthony (who had recently replaced Wynkoop in command at Fort Lyon) that they planned to attack Black Kettle's village. Many of the troops were clearly shocked at Chivington's intentions, knowing the tribes were camped there under protection. Captain Silas Soule of the 1st Colorado Cavalry stated, in a letter discovered in 2000, that he was horrified by Chivington's orders and that, as soon as he knew of Chivington's intentions, he went to his men and told them: "any man who would take part in the murders, knowing the circumstances as we did, was a low and cowardly son of a bitch." Cramer, also with the 1st Colorado Cavalry, described Chivington's plan as deceptive, referring to him as a "thief in the dark".[53] I shall detail the impact of the Soule/Cramer letters as evidence of what actually happened at Sand Creek after discussing the massacre. Despite objections, the troops still rode out to the encampment because Chivington had threatened those that disobeyed his orders, famously declaring: "Damn any man that has sympathy with the Indians."[54]

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[52] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 148.
[53] National Park Service, *Conscience and Courage: Soule and Cramer Letters* (n.d.) Available online: https://www.nps.gov/sand/learn/historyculture/upload/Combined-Letters-with-Sign-2.pdf [Accessed 26/01/17].
[54] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil* War, 151.

On the mission to Black Kettle's village there were between 675-700 troops in total: 450 Colorado Third under Colonel Shoup, 100-125 Colorado First under Lt. Wilson and 125 Fort Lyon Colorado First under Major Anthony.[55] When the troops approached the encampment of approximately 700 Cheyenne and Arapaho, the Indians were just waking with the rising sun.[56] When the columns reached the bluffs overlooking Black Kettle's village, Cramer and Soule refused to command their companies to fire. Cramer wrote: "Well I got so mad I swore I would not burn powder, and I did not. Capt. Silas Soule the same. It is no use for me to try to tell you how the fight was managed, only that I think the Officer in Command should be hung, and I know when the truth is known it will cashier him."[57] It is difficult to ascertain how much the refusal of Soule and Cramer to fire on the encampment influenced the outcome of the massacre. The fact that some troops were refusing to follow orders may have led to a loss of control by Chivington, causing military disarray on the field. However, it also likely that many of the men were so enthused by Chivington as well as their hatred of Indians that military discipline was lost as a matter of course.

Aware of the men surrounding his encampment, Chief Black Kettle exited his tent carrying a white flag and a US flag to symbolize the peace of the village. Chivington ignored this and his men opened fire indiscriminately. The official leaflet of the massacre site states that, as the soldiers scattered over many square miles, "command

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[55] Hoig here provided the most detailed account of the regiments involved. Numbers of soldiers do, however, vary. See Hoig, *The Sand Creek* Massacre, 130. A memorial placed at the massacre site by the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants in conjunction with the NPS, places the number of troops at 700. However, the official NPS leaflet for the massacre site places the number of troops at 675. See The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, *Sand Creek Massacre*, [leaflet] (2015). Leaflet's present edited and condensed versions of events that are accessible to the public so are problematic in this respect as information could have been omitted. However the numbers used are likely to be accurate in this leaflet as they were agreed upon by Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants and the NPS.
[56] The number of 700 Cheyenne and Arapaho was the number decided in conjunction with the NPS and the Native massacre descendants during the memorialization project.
[57] The National Park Service, *Conscience and Courage*.

and control was soon lost."[58] The Cheyenne and Arapaho who escaped the firing from the howitzers of the Volunteers dug into the soft ground of the creek in an attempt to hide themselves, but their attempts proved no match for the rapid fire from the howitzers. That said, some (numbers unknown), managed to hide in freezing conditions until the soldiers finally ceased firing in the late afternoon. George Bent was one of the survivors. He wrote that he was struck in the hip with a bullet but luckily: "tumbled down into one of the holes and lay there among the warriors, women and children." The pits offered some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho the possibility of survival against the rapid fire of the volunteers' howitzers. However, because it was mid-winter, conditions were freezing, so they could not remain hidden for long. Bent said that they lay in the pits for a long time until it became too cold and they had to move, slowly making their way northeast to the Smoky Hill Cheyenne encampments: "I passed many women and children, dead and dying, lying in the creek bed. The soldiers had not scalped them yet, as they were busy chasing those that were still alive.[59]

Chief Black Kettle and his wife managed to escape the massacre but many were not so lucky, with the highest number of casualties among women and children. The numbers of Cheyenne and Arapaho killed vary in different accounts. I have used the NPS leaflet as the most accurate and up-to-date calculation of those killed because it was recently produced in conjunction with massacre descendants and Sand Creek Massacre historians during the Sand Creek Massacre memorialization project. This places the number between 165-200, two-thirds of them being women, children and elderly. Aside from those killed, the NPS leaflet states: "Another 200 were wounded or maimed."[60] These numbers contrast hugely with the numbers Chivington provided in a statement to General Curtis, which was then printed in the *Rocky Mountain News* on December 8,

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[58] The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, *Sand Creek Massacre*, [leaflet] (2015).
[59] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 153, 154.
[60] The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, *Sand Creek Massacre*.

1864 Chivington claimed: "I, at daylight this morning, attacked a Cheyenne village of one hundred and thirty lodges, from nine hundred to one thousand warriors strong. We killed Chiefs Black Kettle, White Antelope and Little Robe and between four and five hundred other Indians.… Our loss is nine killed and thirty wounded."[61] The NPS leaflet placed the number of Volunteers injured or killed at a higher number: "Of the army's 675 soldiers, about 16 were killed and 70 wounded."[62] It is likely that Chivington, as Connor did after the Bear River Massacre, exaggerated the number of Cheyenne and Arapaho he killed to claim glory for the massacre. In his letter condemning Chivington, Cramer stated: "Not over 250 Indians mostly women and children, and I think not over 200 were killed, and not over 75 bucks."[63] The Cheyenne and Arapaho place the number of their dead at 150-200. A massacre descendant memorial states that over 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho people were slaughtered. Bent does not provide specific numbers of those in his tribe who were killed but he did state that women and children were by far the worst affected.[64]

The Aftermath of Sand Creek: Outrage and Investigations

In the immediate aftermath the massacre was revered by Coloradans as a successful victory in the campaign against the Indians. On December 8th the *Rocky Mountain News* reported: "Great Battle with Indians! The Savages Dispersed! 500 INDIANS KILLED."[65] Chivington and the Volunteers arrived in Denver to a hero's welcome on 22nd December, shockingly performing re-enactments of the massacre for captivated audiences with the human body trophies they had obtained. However, the glory soon faded as reports arrived, from both volunteer soldiers and from those in high command, in Denver and Washington, condemning Chivington's actions at Sand Creek.

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[61] Williams, *The Indian Wars of 1864 through the Sand Creek Massacre*, 271-279.
[62] The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, *Sand Creek Massacre*
[63] The National Park Service, *Conscience and Courage*.
[64] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 159.
[65] Williams, *The Indian Wars of 1864 through the Sand Creek Massacre*, 271.

Although the Soule and Cramer letters only resurfaced in 2000, it is likely that they were instrumental in the widespread condemnation that Chivington's actions received, mainly because of their value as graphic eyewitness accounts from Chivington's own troops. These letters were written to Soule's and Cramer's former commander, Major Wynkoop, who later became instrumental in condemning Sand Creek, possibly influenced by the accounts of these two men. The letters of Captain Soule and Lieutenant Cramer of the 1st Volunteer Cavalry clearly stated that they refused to command their men to fire. This was a bold action that put their military careers and even their lives at risk. Soule reported that Major Anthony had eagerly joined in with Chivington and, when Soule refused to fire, "hundreds of women and children were coming towards us and getting on their knees for mercy. Anthony shouted, 'kill the sons of bitches." Soule then described the scene once the firing had ended: "They were all horribly mutilated. One women was cut open and a child taken from her, and scalped … Chivington has gone to Washington to be made general I suppose, and get authority to raise a nine months Reg't to hunt Indians. He said Downing will have me cashiered if possible … I think they will try the same for Cramer for he shot his mouth off a good deal, and he did not shoot his pistol off in the massacre." Similarly, Cramer denounced Chivington's actions when he described the horrific scene after the massacre: "Bucks, women and children were scalped, fingers cut off to get the rings on them … and a Lt. Col. Cut off Ears of all he came across … little children shot, while begging for their lives … Things that Indians would be ashamed to do."[66]

The impact of these letters in the relatively immediate condemnation of the Sand Creek Massacre cannot be underestimated. Firstly, it is impressive that Soule and Cramer

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[66] The National Park Service, *Conscience and Courage*.

were prepared to risk their careers and lives in public condemnation of Chivington's actions at the massacre. This is further emphasized by the fact that the men they were commanding did not shoot, showing that a substantial number of troops did not agree with Chivington's actions and were probably unprepared for the massacre they were going to be ordered to carry out. Secondly, these letters were instrumental in prompting the investigations carried out by two congressional committees and an army commission following the massacre which, as the NPS reported: "changed history's judgment of Sand Creek from a battle to a massacre of men, women, and children."[67] The 2000 resurfacing of the letters also provided crucial evidence on the site location study carried out by the NPS for both Euro-Americans and Native massacre descendants. Lead historian for the study, David Halaas, said the Soule/Cramer letters were extremely valuable because they "validated much of the testimony taken during the congressional and Army hearings" that condemned Sand Creek. The letters confirmed the brutality and mutilation that occurred during and after the massacre. Facts such as these would no doubt help in providing the massacre site National Park status. The Native massacre descendants also valued the Soule/Cramer letters as they endorsed parts of the Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories. Arapaho massacre descendant, Steve Brady, believed the letters to be critical because they originated with white soldiers rather than Native Americans. Kelman writes: "Silas Soule, especially impressed the descendants as one of the only few white martyrs of Sand Creek."[68]

Following damning reports from the scene of the massacre, as well as general public outcry regarding its brutality, Sand Creek became the subject of three investigations, two congressional and one military. To analyze the impact these reports had on the widespread condemnation of the massacre, I shall consider the investigations carried out

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[67] The National Park Service, *Conscience and Courage*.
[68] Halaas and Brady quoted in A. Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre, Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 174.

by the congressional hearings of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War. I shall

also consider the reply of Governor Evans to the report compiled by the Joint

Committee. Finally, I shall analyze the evidence collected by the Secretary of War in

the military hearing, particularly the testimony provided by Captain Silas Soule. I

accessed these primary resources at the Stephen H. Hart Research Centre in Denver,

Colorado in 2014.

Investigating Sand Creek

On January 10[th,] 1865, Sand Creek was referred to the Senate Affairs Committee and

the House of Representatives ordered an investigation by the Joint Committee on the

Conduct of War. From 13th-15th March, 1865, the committee, made up of members of

the United States Congress, heard testimony from those who had experienced the

massacre. The committee compiled their evidence, consisting of correspondence and

official reports and interviews, in a report entitled *Massacre of the Cheyenne Indians*.[69]

Volunteer soldiers who had taken part in the massacre, Chivington and other high-

ranking officials were questioned by the committee, as was Governor John Evans,

despite his absence when the massacre took place. After hearing several days of

evidence, the Committee concluded that the massacre had been an unjustified attack

against an encampment of peaceful Indians who posed limited or no threat to Coloradan

settlements.

One of the most scathing accounts the Committee heard came from Major Edward

Wynkoop. In November 1864, following the meeting at Camp Weld, Wynkoop had led

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[69] 38th Congress of the United States, Second Session, January 10th, 1865, *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, (Folio Box 29) Call no: RB 970.9 Sa56u 1865. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO. The report's aim was as follows: "That the committee on the conduct of the war be required to inquire into and report on all the facts connected with the late attack of the third Colorado cavalry under Colonel Chivington, on a village of the Cheyenne tribe of Indians, near Fort Lyon."

the peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho to Fort Lyon, where he assured them that they would be safe under his command. In the account he provided to the Committee, Wynkoop stressed the duty he felt towards the peaceful Indians when he had told them: "I would endeavor to procure for them the peace for which they so anxiously sued." Throughout his testimony, Wynkoop expressed several times how "anxious" the Cheyenne and Arapaho were to secure peace with the whites. Wynkoop provided the Committee with a graphic account of the massacre: "Everyone whom I have spoken to, either officer or soldier, agrees in the relation that the most fearful atrocities were committed that ever were heard of…. Women and children were killed and scalped. Children shot at their mothers breasts, and all the bodies mutilated in the most horrible manner" and "… [t]he dead bodies of females profaned in such a manner that the recital is sickening."[70] This graphic account, which was no doubt influenced by the letters of soldiers under Wynkoop's command, Soule and Cramer, swayed the Committee's decision that the military actions at Sand Creek could not be justified as a battle: they were evidence of massacre. According to Wynkoop's testimony, the soldiers did not follow codes of warfare but instead carried out gruesome acts once the killing was done.

Wynkoop laid the responsibility for the massacre entirely on Chivington. He suggested that there was no battle plan and the Colonel had kept his men in ignorance of the peaceful intentions of the Cheyenne and Arapaho who were, according to Wynkoop's knowledge, under federal protection and camped near Fort Lyon. Wynkoop told the Committee: "Knowing himself [Chivington] all the circumstances of these Indians resting on assurances of protection from the government, given to them by myself and Major Scott Anthony, he [Chivington] kept his command in entire ignorance of the same; and when it was supposed that such might not be the case he denied it, positively

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[70] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, 82, 83.

stating that they were still continuing their depredations and laid here threatening the Fort." Having been in attendance at the Camp Weld meeting, which Wynkoop had left assuring the Cheyenne and Arapaho of protection, it can be assumed that Chivington was aware that these Indians were not a threat. However, Wynkoop suggested that Chivington's cavalry were manipulated by him as he deceived his men into regarding the Cheyenne and Arapaho as a threat instead of being truthful about their peaceful intentions. Wynkoop testified that Chivington was "inciting" his troops to commit "diabolical outrages." Wynkoop's account of Chivington's behaviour confirms the actions of Soule and Cramer. It is unlikely that Soule or Cramer would have continued to the Cheyenne and Arapaho encampment had they known what Chivington was going to command the soldiers to carry out. Wynkoop's testimony was clearly influential in condemning Sand Creek as a massacre, rather than it being celebrated as a battle. Like Soule and Cramer, Wynkoop bravely put his military career on the line. Having greater military authority than Soule and Cramer, being a respected high-ranking military official who was in close contact and command over the Cheyenne and Arapaho camped near Fort Lyon, Wynkoop's testimony was regarded as reliable. The Major concluded his evidence in a desperate tone, stating: "All of this country is ruined. There can be no such thing as peace in the future but by the total annihilation of all the Indians of the plains."[71] Wynkoop saw the terrible impact of the massacre on Colorado.

Despite Wynkoop's damning testimony, Chivington defended his actions to the Joint Committee. Chivington answered questions at length, claiming he had received information from both Major Colley and Major Anthony that the Indians camped near Fort Lyon could possibly be hostile. Chivington told the Committee: "On my arrival at Fort Lyon, in all my conversations with Major Anthony, commanding the post, and

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[71] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,* 83.

Major Colley, Indian agent, I heard nothing of this recent statement that the Indians were under the protection of the government … but Major Anthony repeatedly stated that to me that he had at different times fired upon these Indians and that they were hostile." This statement from Chivington is certainly suspicious as he was present at the Camp Weld meeting when Major Wynkoop, who was also in attendance, left the meeting assuring the Indians he took to Fort Lyon that they would be protected. Chivington's testimony was discredited by the Joint Committee because his justification for an attack against Black Kettle's camp was ambiguous and vague. He made no definite response indicating that Black Kettle's camp was hostile. Chivington was asked by the Committee: "What reason had you for making the attack? What reasons, if any, had you to believe that Black Kettle or any other Indian or Indians were hostile?" Chivington replied: "My reason for making an 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."[72] Chivington's responses regarding the Cheyenne and Arapaho remained ambiguous throughout his testimony. That those present at Black Kettle's encampment were from the same tribe as those Chivington claimed committed depredations was not proof of hostility.

In fact throughout his testimony Chivington never explicitly stated that Black Kettle and his encampment were responsible for depredations committed against Euro-American settlements and, instead, chose to justify his actions with imprecise language. When asked by the Committee if he had any reason to believe specifically that Black Kettle was hostile at the time of the massacre, Chivington replied evasively: "I had no reason

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[72] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians* 101, 104.

to believe that Black Kettle and the Indians were in good faith at peace with the whites."

Furthermore, it was known that Black Kettle raised the white peace flag and the

American flag when he saw the Colorado Volunteers arriving, providing Chivington

with a clear symbol of his camp's peaceful intentions. The Committee clearly became

frustrated with Chivington's vague responses and asked him repeatedly why he believed

Black Kettle's camp to be hostile. Chivington attempted to justify his position when he

stated: "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 [involved in] the acts of hostility. The most that can be ascertained is

that Indians of the tribes have performed the acts." Chivington followed this statement

with: "I had every reason to believe that these Indians were either directly or indirectly

concerned in the outrages which had been committed on the whites."[73]

In a final attempt to justify his attack, Chivington concluded his testimony by re-

enforcing his belief in the hostility of the Plains tribes, offering statements, not

evidence, about the depredations they had committed: "Since August, 1863, I have been

in possession of the most conclusive evidence of the alliance, for the purposes of

hostility against the whites, of the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanche river, and

Apache Indians. Their plan was to interrupt or, if possible, entirely prevent all travel on

the routes along the Arkansas and Platte rivers from the States to the Rocky Mountains,

and thereby depopulate the country." This is a serious charge against the Plains tribes

and, considering previous evidence of small-scale depredations not committed by united

tribes and testimony from the Indians, it is highly unlikely that the Plains tribes were

uniting to "depopulate the country." Chivington failed to provide concrete evidence that

the indigenous populations of the plains were planning a pan-tribal uprising, but he used

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[73] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,* 104.

this defence to make a concluding statement, justifying his attack by claiming that the "probability of trouble," based upon the "latest intelligence", meant he committed the massacre to protect the settlers and create safety in Colorado Territory.[74]

After hearing at length from Chivington, the Joint Committee concluded that the Colonel's ambiguous testimony did not provide cause for an attack against a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho. The report produced by the Committee denounced Chivington's justifications: "It is difficult to believe that beings in the form of men, and disgracing the uniform of the United States soldiers and officers, could [engage in] … the commission of such acts of cruelty and barbarity as are detailed in the testimony."[75] Chivington's attack could not be justified. However, the Committee did not place the blame for the massacre entirely on Chivington. It was recognized that other officials, particularly Governor John Evans, had a role to play, albeit less directly, in the atrocity at Sand Creek.

Governor Evans gave evidence to the Joint Committee on March 15th, 1865, in Washington, on the last day of the congressional hearings. Throughout his testimony Evans remained steadfast that he was unaware of Chivington's intentions to attack the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek. Evans believed he was able to corroborate this assertion because he was not in Colorado Territory when the massacre occurred. Like Chivington, Evans emphasized the depredations committed by the Indians against Euro-American settlers and his belief that some members of the Plains tribes were not peaceful. However, Evans was evasive when questioned about the massacre: he neither supported the massacre nor claimed it was unjust. He distanced himself from Sand Creek by shifting responsibility for Indian Affairs onto Chivington and other military

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[74] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,* 106.
[75] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, iv.

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officials in the territory, such as Wynkoop. This attitude was consistent with Evans'

earlier vague rhetoric concerning Indian affairs.

The Committee began by questioning Evans about Camp Weld and his views on the

intentions of the Indians. The main information acquired from Evans' reaction to Camp

Weld is that he claimed no responsibility for what actions the Cheyenne and Arapaho

took after the meeting. He claimed ignorance and placed responsibility on the military.

Evans stated: "They [the Indians at Camp Weld] did not suggest about keeping peace;

they proposed to make peace. They acknowledged that they were at war and had been at

war during the spring." Evans appeared to contradict himself here: he claimed that the

Indians wanted peace but would make no effort to secure it. Following this statement,

Evans transferred responsibility for any peace-keeping efforts onto the military,

Chivington and the Volunteers. He stated: "I gave them to the military authorities; and

they went back as I understood with the expectation of making peace with the soldiers,

as they termed them - with the military authorities." When asked by the Committee if

he, Major Wynkoop or Colonel Chivington had provided the Indians with any order,

Evans replied: "I gave no orders because I had no authority to give any." Evans then

referred briefly to the strange remarks Chivington had made at the end of the Camp

Weld meeting but did not confirm that they were explicit military commands, instead

choosing to remain evasive. Evans implied that, once the Cheyenne and Arapaho Chiefs

left Camp Weld with Major Wynkoop, he had nothing more to do with them and could

not be held accountable for anything that happened afterwards. Evans did attempt to

justify his belief that the Cheyenne and Arapaho were not peaceful. Like Chivington, he

emphasized depredations committed by the Plains tribes against Euro-American settlers,

telling the Committee: "I was asked if I knew of any depredations committed by these

Indians, and I stated what was done in 1862 [Hungate murders]. Before going further, I

will say that Black Kettle told me in that council that he and White Antelope had been opposed to depredations all the time, but could not control their tribes."[76] Evans continued to provide a list of depredations supposedly carried out by the Plains tribes. The problem was that Evans made no distinction between peaceful and hostile Indians, and instead used previous violence committed by Indians to suggest that Black Kettle's tribe was hostile.

When Evans was questioned by the Committee about his awareness of the massacre, he claimed ignorance. He stated that he was unaware that Chivington had been planning the specific attack at Sand Creek, yet his language implied that he knew Chivington was going to advance on some Plains Indians at some point. The Committee asked Evans: "Do you know anything further than you have stated in connexion with this attack upon Black Kettle and his band on Sand Creek? Did you issue any orders or take part in any transaction having in view any such attack?" Evans replied: "I did not know anything about it. After I got here, I got a letter from the Secretary of the territory, saying it was rumored they [the Colorado Volunteers] were going there." Considering Evans' past behavior involving his tactical diplomatic relationship with the Indians, as well as his relatively close political ties to Chivington, it would not be far-fetched to imply that Evans was aware of the attack. At the very least, it seems likely he would have known some military action was being planned against the Plains tribes. In fact, in his following statement, Evans said that he heard a report that "surmised that they [the Volunteers] were going to Fort Lyon. It is proper for me to say that I understood that they were going to make an expedition against the Indians. But I had no knowledge of where they were going."[77] After first denying that he knew anything about the attack, Evans suggested that he was aware that Chivington was going to Fort Lyon with

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[76] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians* 37, 40, 41.
[77] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,* 40.

possible military plans involving the Indians but maintained his innocence by stating that he had no knowledge of where the troops were going once they left the fort.

The Committee became frustrated by Evans non-committal responses. Evans was asked: "With all the knowledge you have in relation to these attacks and depredations by the Indians, do you think they afford any justification for the attacks made by Colonel Chivington on these friendly Indians, under the circumstances under which it was made?" Evans replied: "As a matter of course, no one could justify an attack against the Indians while under the protection of the flag… I have heard - however, that is only a report - that there was a statement on the part of Colonel Chivington and his friends that these Indians had assumed a hostile attitude before he attacked them. I do not know whether that is so or not…." Evans' vague response implied in the same statement that the attack was both unjust because Black Kettle's camp was protected by the American flag but also that military action against the Indians at Sand Creek was justified because, as Evans understood it, they were hostile.

It is evident that the Committee did not believe that Evans was answering their questions fully and honestly. He was now asked: "But from all the circumstances which you know, all the facts in relation to that matter, do you deem that Colonel Chivington had any justification for the attack?" To this Evans replied: "I do not know of any circumstances connected with it subsequent to the time those Indians left me [at Camp Weld] and I started for another part of the country. It is proper for me to say, that these attacks during the summer, and up to the time I came away were all of very frequent occurrence."[78] Evans insisted that he did not know of any circumstances that could have

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[78] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, 42.

resulted in the attack but he also insisted that the Indians committed prior depredations, without specifying which band or tribe.

Evans' answers and defense that he was not aware of the massacre are so non-committal that it is impossible to establish whether or not he was aware of Chivington's actions. However, when we compare Evans' responses to the Committee with his earlier letters from the *Letterpress Book,* I argue that it is clear that Evans was aware that a massacre was going to occur. In comparison to the public statements he made to the Committee, the rhetoric of his letters suggested he condoned a massacre and actually wanted it to happen. I suggest that the ambiguous answers Evans provided were planned by the governor to enable him to distance himself from any violence committed against Black Kettle and his encampment and save his reputation. The Joint Committee heavily criticized Evans for what they regarded as his failure to prevent the massacre occurring. They suggested that, even though he was not in Colorado at the time, he knew the tribes camped at Sand Creek were peaceful. The report stated: "[Evans] was fully aware that the Indians massacred so brutally at Sand Creek were then, and had been, actuated by the most friendly feelings towards the whites, and had done all in their power to restrain the less friendly disposed."[79] This statement, combined with the fact that Evans had himself admitted that he knew Chivington was planning an "expedition against the Indians," meant the Committee condemned Evans for his compliance in the massacre.

Evans was outraged that he had been implicated in the massacre and believed the report presented him in an unjust light. On 6th August, 1865, after the Committee's report, *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, had been published, Evans issued a public response, defending himself against the Committee's damning account of him. This report was

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[79] *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians*, iv.

entitled, *Reply of Governor Evans, of the Territory of Colorado. To that Part Referring to Him, of the Report on the Conduct of War, Headed "Massacre of Cheyenne Indians".* It was primarily concerned with defending his political reputation to the citizens of Colorado Territory and to broader American society against the scathing account of the Committee. Evans' reply was public. He stated: "To the Public: I have just seen, for the first time, a copy of the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, headed, *Massacre of Cheyenne Indians."* Evans began by condemning the Committee's accusations against him and asked the citizens of Colorado Territory not to judge his character. He stated: "As it does me a great injustice, and by its partial, unfair and, erroneous statements, will mislead the public, I respectfully ask a suspension of opinion in my case until I shall have time to present the facts to said committee, or some equally high authority, and ask a correction." From his opening remarks, it is evident, that Evans' primary concern was with protecting his reputation to the public. He defends his reputation by stating that a man in his powerful position is bound to have enemies who would seek to slander him: "Those who read this will be curious for some explanation of this slanderous report. To me it is plain. I am Governor of Colorado, and as is usual with men in public positions, have enemies.…"[80]

While Evans used the explanation of having enemies to suggest that people conspired to connect his name to Sand Creek, "although they knew I was in no way connected to it" interestingly, he is not overly anxious to either justify or condemn Sand Creek, remaining committed to his claim that he was unaware of the massacre. Evans wrote that he did not want to talk about Sand Creek: "I do not propose to discuss the merits or demerits of the Sand Creek battle, but simply to meet the attempt, on the part of the Committee, to connect my name with it, and to throw discredit on my testimony."

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[80] Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans*, 1, 15.

Again, Evans distanced himself from the massacre in his reply and still claimed ignorance of the attack, maintaining that the Plains Indians had been committing depredations before the massacre. Evans evidenced the Camp Weld meeting to prove this: "The entire report of this council [Camp Weld] … shows that the Indians had been at war, and had been 'guilty of acts of hostility and depredations.'"[81] Once again, Evans failed to identify which bands and tribes had been carrying out attacks on Euro-American settlements and he remained non-committal and vague in his reaction to the massacre, still denying any connection on his part.

Evans referred to the Civil War in his reply. This is interesting because the Committee made little mention of the Civil War in their statement yet, in what could be read as an attempt to justify the massacre, Evans said that the members of Congress who made up the Committee were too distracted by events on the East Coast to be aware of the extent of Indian violence in Colorado Territory. Evans stated: "The [Civil] war opened early in the Spring of 1864. The people of the East, absorbed in the greater interest of the Rebellion, know little of its history. Stock was stolen, ranches destroyed … wives taken prisoners … every species of atrocity and barbarity which characterizes savage warfare was committed. This is … plain statement of fact."[82] In this account Evans was correct to the extent that much of the Western territory was ignored during the Civil War. With a lack of federal control in the form of trained militia in the region, the territory fell into disarray. It was likely that the Indians recognized the breakdown in territorial law enforcement and increased their depredations against Euro-American settlements and, similarly, that Chivington and his men took advantage of the lack of organized authority in the region when they committed the massacre. However, although Evans recognizes

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[81] Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans* 15, 2, 4.
[82] Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans,* 9.

the impact the war had on Colorado Territory, his use of it in what could be an attempt

to justify Sand Creek is not valid.

Rejecting the findings of the Committee, Evans concluded his *Reply*: "That the

Committee on the Conduct of the War should have published a report containing so

many errors is to be regretted." Here Evans replied solely to the Committee's reaction to

him, not to any conclusions they drew about the massacre. His last words were: "This

report, so full of mistakes, which ordinary investigations would have avoided, so full of

slander which ordinary care of the character of men would have prevented."[83]

Continuing to distance himself from the Colorado Volunteers, to insist on his belief that

the Cheyenne and Arapaho were hostile, to repeat his denial of any personal

involvement in the massacre, Evan's *Reply* offered no new evidence of his role in Sand

Creek beyond the initial testimony he provided to the Committee. His public *Reply* is

evidence that Evans' primary concern was his political reputation. He showed little

interest in the massacre of approximately 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho in his territory.

To re-iterate: if Evans' evasive and non-committal responses regarding Indian Affairs

are compared with the correspondence from the *Letterpress Book* where he advocates

an aggressive, even murderous Indian policy, Evans must be held accountable for

events at Sand Creek.

Coincidental to the investigation by the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War and the

publication of its report, another military report was produced under the direction of the

army. On February1st 1865, a military commission was ordered for the purpose of

investigating Chivington's conduct in the massacre. This was compiled into *The Report*

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[83] Evans, *Reply of Governor John Evans,* 16.

of The Secretary of War and published in February 1867.[84] The first witness called to the stand was Silas S. Soule. Soule's testimony was crucial as he had been in direct contact with both Chivington and his commanding officer, Major Anthony, prior to the massacre. Soule had been present at the massacre, so was able to provide accurate information to the military committee on the positioning and strategies of the Volunteers during their attack. Aside from providing military information, Soule detailed the brutalities that occurred in the massacre's aftermath. Soule's account was especially brave as it was given in the presence of Chivington and other troops who had defended their actions at Sand Creek. Soule's testimony was, however, supported by some of the men directly under his command.

Soule started by confirming the peaceful intentions of the Indians camped with Black Kettle. Referring to the now infamous Camp Weld meeting, Soule stated: "The Indians seemed very anxious to make peace. The governor told them he could not make peace with them." Soule not only criticized Chivington and Anthony, but was also critical of Evans for providing peaceful Indians with misleading information. Soule said that, when these Indians returned from Camp Weld to Fort Lyon: "Major Wynkoop told them to bring in the Indians of their tribe, who were anxious for peace, to Fort Lyon, and camp near the post.… The Indians came and complied with Wynkoop's orders, and camped near the post." Soule re-iterates that the Black Kettle and his band, as well as the Arapahos with them, were safe if they camped near Fort Lyon. This was information Wynkoop also confirmed. Soule was adamant that the majority of Cheyenne and Arapaho were desirous of peace prior to the massacre.

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[84] 39th Congress of the United States, Second Session, February 14th, 1867, *Report of the Secretary of War,* Call no: RB 978.09 Un3sc. Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, Denver, CO. The aims of the report were as follows: "In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of February 4, 1867, a copy of the evidence taken at Denver and Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory, by a military commission, ordered to investigate into the Sand Creek Massacre 1864."

Soule then provided a detailed account of events preceding the massacre and what both Chivington and Major Anthony had told him before the attack took place. Soule stated that Chivington had asked him directly if he thought the Indians camped at Fort Lyon were hostile. Soule had replied that they were not. Soule further claimed he had informed his commanding officer, Anthony, of the camp's peaceful intentions prior to the attack and that he had protested against any actions Chivington and Anthony planned to carry out on Black Kettle's village. Anthony had told Soule, "that he was all for killing all Indians, and that he was only acting or had been acting friendly with them until he could get a force large enough to go out and kill all of them."[85] This is a damning statement from Soule that implied that Anthony had been planning the attack on Black Kettle's village and the Colorado Volunteers were gathered only for the purpose of massacre.

From his evidence, it seems that Soule was aware that military actions were about to be taken against the Cheyenne and Arapaho camp. However, it is likely that he did not know the extent of the violence that Chivington had planned as he went to the encampment and, only after witnessing the disarray and horror that followed, did he choose not to fire. Soule informed the commission of what he and the soldiers did once the command of Colonel Chivington reached Fort Lyon: "Major Anthony ordered myself and my company to join the colonel's command … I joined Colonel Chivington's command that evening about 8 o'clock, in company with companies G and K, under Major Anthony." He continued: "I immediately marched about north, marched all night, arrived at the village of Cheyennes and Arapahoes just before sunrise … Major Anthony then moved our battalion to within about one hundred yards of the lodges, and ordered us to open fire." Soule recounted to the commission how any

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[85] *Report of the Secretary of War*, 9, 10, 13.

military command descended quickly into chaos: " … I could see no order to the battle. The command was scattered and every man firing his own hook on both sides of the creek." Soule then confirmed that he refused to order the troops under his command to fire on the encampment. He was asked: "Did your squadron become separated from Major Anthony's battalion during the fight?" To which Soule replied: "It did when he ordered me into the creek."[86] It seems that Soule and his men then stayed to witness to brutality that occurred in the massacre's aftermath.

Captain Silas Soule offered one of the bravest and most damning testimonies concerning Sand Creek and his evidence was instrumental in naming events there as massacre not a battle. Soule, who at the time of the commission's investigations was serving as provost marshal of Denver, compromised not only his military career and reputation but also his life by testifying in front of Chivington and others during the court proceedings. On 1st April, 1865, Soule was murdered. His killer was a man named Squires who had served in the Second Colorado Cavalry at Sand Creek. In a short article, outlining the life of Soule, Hoig compared Soule to Abraham Lincoln, noting his: "courage to defend unpopular causes and a humor of the spirit that has marked so many of America's best heroes."[87] This is a reputation that Soule still holds today. Amongst many Cheyenne and Arapahos he is regarded as a hero for his actions at Sand Creek. His damning account of the brutalities have certainly influenced both Native and non-Native memories of Sand Creek.

The three federal investigations into the engagement at Sand Creek - two congressional and one military - concluded that the attack by the Colorado Volunteers against a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho was unjustified and unlawful.

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[86] *Report of the Secretary of War*, 11, 13.
[87] S. Hoig, 'Silas. S. Soule: Partizan of the Frontier', *The Magazine of Western History*, 26, 1 (1976), 70-77: 77.

Following the condemnation of the massacre, Governor Evans was removed from office in 1865. Chivington was heavily criticized by the reports and his political career was left in ruins. Shockingly, however, the colonel was never punished for his role in Sand Creek as his military service had expired and he was therefore beyond the reach of the law.

To conclude, the impact of these reports was dramatic, especially in comparison with the limited public attention received by other Native American massacres, such as Bear River. As a result of the hearings, Sand Creek rightfully retained its place as one of the most brutal and bloody massacres in American Western history. The reports compiled by the investigations also caused widespread awareness, among Euro-American communities nationwide, of the injustices committed against Native Americans by the American military. In one of the early studies of the Sand Creek Massacre, *The Fighting Cheyenne* (1915), George Grinnell argued that it was the published results of the enquiries that first made the general American public aware of the Cheyenne.[88] I believe the testimonies of Silas Soule and Edward Wynkoop, as well as the letters from Soule and Cramer, were essential to the outcome of the federal investigations. In particular, Soule's testimony assured the investigators and the American public not only that Black Kettle's camp was peaceful but also that military action at Sand Creek could not be justified as a battle. It was clearly a massacre.

The investigations damned Colorado's leading men, and ruined their political reputations. Even though some members of the American public had initially supported the removal of the Indians, and some had even visited the sickening parade of war trophies taken from the bodies of Cheyenne and Arapaho by the Colorado Volunteers,

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[88] G.B. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyenne*, Kindle version (The Pergamum Collection, 2013), Loc 2511 [Downloaded 2014].

the public hearings seemed to confirm the attack as horrific in the eyes of the general American public. Whilst Chivington was clearly deservedly blamed for his role in the massacre, the investigations were at their most interesting when they assessed the calculating character of Governor Evans. The Committee concluded that Evans was culpable of the massacre. They that decided Evans knew, at the very least, that the Indians that were encamped at Sand Creek were peaceful. The Committee's report also implied that Evans' failure to answer its questions substantially was evidence that he was aware that Chivington was planning a military engagement against the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Interestingly, Evans' reactions to the Committee, as well as his limited justifications for the massacre, were in line with his previous vague statements concerning Indian affairs. By analyzing the progression of Evans' rhetoric about the Indians, it is clear he had a history of creating calculated political decisions by which he was able to pass responsibility elsewhere for aggressive actions committed against Indians. As well as informing us about the brutalities of the Sand Creek Massacre, the federal investigations gave insight into and confirmation of Evans' calculating political character.

It is important to contextualize the federal investigations against Sand Creek within the history of the Civil War. Sand Creek was, after all, a military engagement that occurred during the war under the authority of Union-affiliated soldiers. The massacre's relationship to the Civil War was, however, complex and often conflicted. The reports also demonstrated that, perhaps as a result of limited federal interference, the Civil War in the American West was chaotic and unpredictable. Untrained militia were effectively in charge and higher political authority was not closely observed by Washington, although subsequently Sand Creek was meticulously investigated by federal authority. Gary Roberts writes that, of all the battles that took place during the Civil War: "No

other Civil War engagement was investigated so thoroughly or condemned so strongly."[89] The substantial investigations into Sand Creek contradicted notions such as those of Josephy's that the Civil War was ignored in large sections of the nation. I believe it too broad a statement to claim that Washington ignored the Civil War in the American West, even though their primary concern was the East Coast. The attention the investigations gave to Sand Creek is evidence of this. Furthermore, that Evans was given permission by Washington to raise a 100-day Volunteer militia unit confirms that the securing of Western territories was essential to either a Union or Confederate victory.

However, although some attention was paid to the Civil War in the American West, the federal reports on Sand Creek proved that the war in the West remained an isolated sub-topic of American history. The investigations detached the Sand Creek Massacre from other Civil War engagements, especially battles of the East Coast. The reports make very limited attempts to acknowledge Sand Creek as part of the Civil War, aside from statements that refer to how the soldiers had disgraced the army of the United States. The lack of acknowledgement of Sand Creek as a Civil War engagement may have happened because the Committee, made up of Washington Congressmen, did not want to be associated with the level of depravity of actions at Sand Creek. The reports demonstrated the massacre of peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho could not be overlooked in the Civil War struggle. However, it is unlikely that Sand Creek would have received this level of attention had it not been for the damning accounts of Soule and Cramer and the fact that they had refused to fire. Their input, and Wynkoop's incriminating testimony, drew much public attention to the massacre and arguably forced Congress to investigate. It is notable that no committee was drawn up to investigate the Bear River

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[89] Sutton & Latschar, *American Indians and the Civil War*

Massacre, which also occurred during the Civil War and involved higher numbers than were massacred than at Sand Creek. Despite Sand Creek being the most "thoroughly investigated" Civil War engagement, it nevertheless still exists on the fringes of Civil War history.

The federal investigations and subsequent reports were responsible for the widespread condemnation of Sand Creek, as well as its renowned place in American history. It is likely that, if the Bear River Massacre had been subject to a similar level of federal investigations, it would have received similar attention. Instead, Bear River remains relatively obscure. Unlike Chivington and Evans, leading Utah figures associated with the Shoshoni massacre have not become synonymous with the Bear River Massacre. Neither Brigham Young nor Patrick Connor were investigated for their roles in Bear River.

Despite the federal investigations into conduct at Sand Creek, the massacre had devastating effects for Colorado, just as Wynkoop had predicted in his testimony when he claimed the "country was ruined" after the massacre. Firstly, many Cheyenne and Arapaho family units were destroyed, largely because the highest number of those killed were women and children. Furthermore, the tribes lost many of their leading members in the massacre, resulting in their leadership structure being greatly diminished. Bent concluded that the massacre was the "worst blow ever struck at any tribe in the whole plains region, and the blow fell upon friendly Indians."[90] Secondly, the massacre damaged any lasting possibility of peace between the Plains tribes and Euro-American settlers and was credited with starting the Indian War of 1865. Thirdly, Sand Creek had destructive political effects on Colorado. As mentioned above, Evans and Chivington

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[90] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 159.

were removed from their positions and, perhaps as a result of the political turmoil, Colorado did not receive statehood until 1876. Chivington left Colorado following the massacre, with his reputation severely damaged. He returned to Colorado twenty years later where he died, still defending his actions at Sand Creek.

One important result of the widespread condemnation of the massacre was that, in 1865 when Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes gathered with governmental leaders to negotiate the Treaty of Little Arkansas, the government admitted culpability for Sand Creek and agreed to pay reparations to the families of those killed in the massacre. Unfortunately, this never happened, a fact that was returned to repeatedly by the massacre descendants during the contemporary memorialization process at the massacre site. George Bent, who himself survived the massacre, wrote: "The night of November 29, 1864 will never be forgotten as long as any of us who went through it are still alive."[91] Bent's statement stands true, as surviving massacre victims and then descendants have continued to keep the history of the massacre alive within their oral tradition and through personal memorials and commemorations. What is more, the severe condemnation of Sand Creek drew Euro-American attention to the massacre and the public attention it has received over the years has meant that the atrocity has survived as a major horrific event in Coloradan and American history.

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[91] Bent quoted in V. Klinkenborg, 'The Conscience of Place: Sand Creek', *Mother Jones*. November/December 2000 [Online]. Available at: http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2000/11/conscience-place-sand-creek [Accessed 27/01/2017].

Chapter Two: Sand Creek: The State of Scholarship to Date

Introduction to Sand Creek's Scholarship

The Sand Creek Massacre has been widely documented and appears in popular histories of the West, general American histories and Civil War texts, particularly those dedicated to the western section of the nation. Because of Sand Creek's fairly extensive scholarship, this historiography will primarily assess texts that relate particularly to the memory and memorialization of Sand Creek in order to contextualize it within my central argument. There was an increase in texts dedicated to Sand Creek's memory during the 1990s and 2000s as a result of the memorialization process at the site, following renewed interest in the massacre. The memorialization project reflected wider concerns about memory in America in the 21st century. Whilst there has no doubt been an increase in writing dedicated to the memory of Sand Creek, there are no texts that focus on the difficulties inherent in cultural perceptions of place and their relationship to the construction of collective memory. This thesis will therefore contribute specifically to this emerging topic of memory at Sand Creek. I shall also assess, although in lesser detail, key texts on Sand Creek, highlighting central themes and temporal differences in the massacre's scholarship from the 1900s to the present day. This is important in order to assess how Sand Creek scholarship has changed from simple chronological accounts of the massacre to analytical political assessments of Chivington's slaughter and the impact the massacre retains in contemporary tribal and Euro-American relationships.

In comparison to Bear River, Sand Creek's historiography is large because of the central position the latter massacre occupies in the history of the American West. Sand Creek was subjected to very public condemnation following the military and congressional hearings that examined the atrocity. The outcome of the investigation into the massacre was exceptional in that the government admitted culpability for the murder

of the Cheyenne and Arapaho. This has meant that, unlike in the case of Bear River, historians of Sand Creek and the American West have had a wealth of primary information to analyse, in the form of congressional and military documentation, newspaper accounts, political letters, and personal accounts of Sand Creek.

Definitive Accounts of the Sand Creek Massacre

I shall firstly detail what I believe to be the definitive accounts of the Sand Creek Massacre in relation to my study of cross-cultural and collective memory. Whilst the texts I consider may not be the most well-known histories of Sand Creek, they are highly relevant to this study and I aim to contribute to, as well as challenge, their arguments. To date, for the purpose of this study, Ari Kelman's study, *A Misplaced Massacre, Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (2013), is the most interesting and definitive account of the Sand Creek Massacre.[1] Kelman provided a first-hand account of the decade-long struggle to turn Sand Creek into a National Historic Site. He interwove the massacre's history with the recent process of memorialization at the site, thereby bringing the history of Sand Creek into the present. To do this, Kelman detailed the conflicts between the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, the NPS and local Euro-American communities in their attempts to locate what he terms the "misplaced massacre." To represent tribal memories, as well as current Euro-American perspectives, Kelman conducted his own interviews with Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, in addition to attending meetings between tribal representatives and the NPS during their efforts to memorialize the site.

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[1] For reviews of *A Misplaced Massacre* that praise Kelman's account of Sand Creek, see B. Krondorfer, *Book Review: A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (2014). Available online: http://historicaldialogues.org/2014/06/26/book-review-a-misplaced-massacre-struggling-over-the-memory-of-sand-creek/ Accessed [27/01/2017]. J. Weiss, *Buss on Kelman, 'A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek',* (2013). Available online: https://networks.h-net.org/node/2718/discussions/4164/review-buss-kelman-misplaced-massacre-struggling-over-memory-sand [Accessed 27/01/2017].

Kelman produced a successful local history of Sand Creek that is linked to wider concerns about how the massacre has been remembered in Colorado, demonstrating the lengthy and conflicted process involved in memorializing the massacre site at a national and local level. However, and particularly relevant to this study of cross-cultural memorialization projects, Kelman also provided an interesting account of how local Euro-American communities and Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants strove to work together in attempts to memorialize the site. *A Misplaced Massacre* is therefore the account of Sand Creek that is most directly related to my research. Although I have made extensive use of Kelman's work, this thesis differs from his research in the following ways. Firstly, Kelman's study was primarily concerned with the search for the massacre site, yet he does not analyze the culturally specific relationship the tribal massacre descendants and local Euro-American communities had towards the concept of place in any detail. Unlike Kelman, I believe this to be a very important aspect of any study of Native and Euro-American collective memory because Native and non-Native notions of place are distinctively different, and these dissimilarities greatly hinder collective remembrance when building a memorial at a shared site of atrocity. Again, unlike Kelman's study, this thesis aims to assess critically the problems disparate cultural concepts of place have played in the struggle to remember across cultures. To do this, unlike Kelman, I have analyzed in detail the Cheyenne and Arapaho Oral History Project. Finally, Kelman does not take a critical approach to collective memory or situate his work within wider debates surrounding the theoretical concept of collective memory. I contextualize events at Sand Creek into broader theoretical debates about collective memory and place so we can better understand the cultural struggle to remember collectively this contested area of American history.

I have chosen next to consider the letters of Cheyenne Warrior, George Bent, in *Life of George Bent (1968)*, compiled by George E. Hyde. This source has remained the definitive Cheyenne eyewitness account of the massacre and was also instrumental during the memorialization process at the site.[2] It is highly regarded in Native and non-Native communities because of its value as a first-hand Cheyenne account of the massacre and it stands out from previous scholarship that was dominated by Euro-American histories. Furthermore, it has a central location in Cheyenne accounts and oral histories of the massacre. One reviewer summed up the importance of Bent's work: "If the measure of the significance of a historical work is the extent to which it influences or is later relied upon by the public, particularly scholars, the *Life of George Bent* … is destined to rank among the most important books in the American West."[3]

As well as chronicling the daily life of the Cheyenne in his account, Bent, who was injured in Chivington's attack but survived the massacre, dedicated a chapter to the attack, "Disaster at Sand Creek". Here Bent explained that the arrival of the Colorado Volunteers was an utter surprise to those camped at Sand Creek. He wrote of Black Kettle's response when he became aware of the troops overlooking the bluffs: "I heard him call to the people not to be afraid, that the soldiers would not hurt them; then the troops opened fire from two sides of the camp." According to Bent's account, Black Kettle believed the Cheyenne and Arapaho were guaranteed peace. Bent's chapter on Sand Creek also provided a map, which he drew, of the Sand Creek Massacre site, entitled: *The Cheyenne Camp at Sand Creek.* Bent's map detailed the layout of Black Kettle's camp, the positioning of the Chief's tents in relation to the creek and where the

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[2] Throughout his life Bent had sent a series of letters to George E. Hyde, detailing his life as a member of the Cheyenne tribe. Bent's letters were collated and published by Hyde in 1968. The resulting text was *Life of George Bent, Written from his Letters*. In the mid 1960s Hyde rediscovered letters that had been written by George Bent from the early 1900s until his death in 1918. In his introduction Hyde states that the arrival of the First World War meant it was impossible to find a publisher for the text and "the manuscript was put away in a box and forgotten." Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, v.

[3] W. Ernest. 'Review of *Life of George Bent, Written from His Letters*', *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 74, 4 (1969), 550-551: 51. 74.

Arapaho were camped, as well as the route Chivington and his men took as they advanced.[4]

I have referred to Bent's work extensively throughout this thesis because of the controversy the letters caused during the memorialization process and Site Location Study. Bent's map, in conjunction with his letters, was to become closely associated with 1990s and 2000s efforts to locate the site. It was widely agreed amongst the Cheyenne community that Bent's map outlined the exact location of the massacre site, a factor that was contested by some members of the NPS.[5] Bent's letters clearly demonstrated contemporary juxtaposed cultural attitudes towards place across Native and non-Native groups and I have used them to highlight the inherent difficulty of remembering across disparate cultures.

Although not among the best-known studies on the Sand Creek Massacre, Jerome A. Greene and Douglas D. Scott's, *Finding Sand Creek: History and Archeology and the Sand Creek Massacre Project* (2005), is particularly relevant to this thesis because, like Kelman, the authors detailed the memorialization process, specifically noting archaeological attempts to locate the site. Scott and Greene's study chronicled the search for the site with examples of inter-disciplinary research methods, including the historical record of the massacre site, the maps used and ethno-histories conducted with

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[4] Hyde, *Life of George Bent,* 152, 150. There are problems with Bent's letters. As a first-hand account and member of the Cheyenne tribe his accounts are somewhat biased. He does not, for example, provide many accounts of atrocities carried out by the Cheyenne. Secondly the letters were compiled by Hyde and it is difficult to ascertain either his motivations for publication and to what extent Bent's letters were edited prior to publication. Thirdly, as a well educated Cheyenne who could write, Bent's accounts cannot be regarded as representative of the majority of Cheyenne lives. However, in his introduction, Hyde noted: "Over the years I have been asked … what I thought of George Bent's reliability as an informant, and I have always said at once that I placed him very highly." (Hyde, vii). Despite these problems, *Life of George Bent* is a unique Cheyenne portrayal of the Sand Creek Massacre and up until its publication Native voices were woefully under-represented in Sand Creek's scholarship.
[5] During the 1990s and 2000s memorialization process at Sand Creek, Bent's writings and map were a focal point of efforts to locate the massacre site. For validity of Bent's work in providing a Cheyenne perspective of Sand Creek see, Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre*, 94-95. For conflicts over the validity of Bent's map between the NPS and Cheyenne massacre descendants see, Kelman, 102-103 and 143-145.

the Native massacre descendants, as well as geographical and archaeological surveys of the site. Their work coincided with the collaborative memorialization process at Sand Creek. Greene and Scott's contribution demonstrated a new approach to the study of Sand Creek. They produced not a primarily historical account or assessment of Sand Creek, but an archaeological and scientific study of the NPS's attempts to locate the extent and boundaries of the massacre site. Greene, a regional National Park historian and Scott, a state archaeologist, detailed the methods used by the NPS during their site location study. *Finding Sand Creek* was unique in demonstrating the relevance of Sand Creek in the present and the importance of establishing the location of the massacre site. One reviewer noted that, as well as reacquainting readers with the history of the massacre, *Finding Sand Creek* was also: "a book about historical memory and a very good one at that."[6] Whilst Greene and Scott produced an excellent analytical account of archaeological attempts to locate the massacre site, their work is not contextualized within the field of collective memory, and, as I shall detail, unlike this study, they make very limited use of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Oral History Project. Thus, while useful to my project, Greene and Scott's work is dissimilar in both its central arguments and methodology.[7]

Governor John Evans in Scholarship

I shall now consider areas of Sand Creek's scholarship that have not been considered in great detail previously. This will demonstrate how I aim to add to the massacre's historiography. One element that is notably missing from Sand Creek's historiography, and that this thesis will analyze, is a proper assessment of Governor Evans' *Indian*

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[6] K. Hackemer, 'Review of *Finding Sand Creek: History, Archeology and the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre Site* by J. A. Greene & D. D. Scott, *The Magazine of Western History*, 56, 1 (2006), 79-80: 80.
[7] For another study of Sand Creek and its representation in American memory, see L. Calhoun, *Public Memory of the Sand Creek Massacre* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012). This is a self-published work in which Calhoun attempted to contextualize Sand Creek within memory and memorialization by situating Sand Creek within performance and ritual acts at the massacre site. Despite its apparent relevance to this study, I have chosen not to analyze Calhoun's work in detail primarily because it is a confused study that reaches no conclusive points and considers too many themes to make any significant impact on Sand Creek's historiography.

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Affairs Letterpress Book, detailing his correspondence with Washington regarding the volatile relationship the Governor had with the Plains tribes in the lead-up to and immediate aftermath of the massacre. As I shall detail, brief assessments of Evans' character and his role in Sand Creek have emerged recently in response to the increased interest in the massacre following the memorialization project. Considering these new assessments of the Governor, it is even more surprising that the *Letterpress Book* has not been published as a complete source. However, throughout the development of Sand Creek's scholarship, authors have increasingly considered Evans to have been heavily involved.

The first and only full-length biography of Colorado's Governor Evans (in office, 1862-1865) is Edgar Carlisle McMechen's, *Life of Governor John Evans, Second Territorial Governor of Colorado* (1924). It is surprising that this only book-length study of Evans' life and political career is a 1924 self-published work that is no longer widely available, for Evans was a stimulating political figure, deserving of a biography. One reviewer noted of McMechen's work: "Governor Evans is worthy of a place in United States history, and the publication of this volume presents and preserves data which assures him recognition."[8] Unfortunately, McMechen's text has been little used by historians of the Sand Creek Massacre. There remains a lacuna in the historiography for a detailed analytical study of both Governor Evans' character and political career. Of twelve of McMechen's chapters, seven address Evans' political career in Colorado, including the Sand Creek Massacre. McMechen was one of the first historians to make use of original sources pertaining to Evans' career in Colorado, including examples of correspondence with Washington in the years preceding the massacre and his public pronouncements to the Indians and settlers of Colorado. The account McMechen provided of Evans'

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[8] L.R. Hafen, 'Review of *Life of Governor Evans, Second Territorial Governor of Colorado* by E. Carlisle', *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 11, 4 (March 1925): 614-615: 614.

political character during the Sand Creek years is useful for the purpose of this study as it relates directly to the Governor's engagement in Indian affairs. It can be concluded from McMechen's work that the Indians were an obstruction to Evans' nation-building ambitions. Whilst McMechen produced an accurate and detailed portrayal of events at Sand Creek, he did not suggest that Evans could be held in part responsible for the massacre. He does, however, recognize the ruthless political ambition of the Governor, which certainly served to increase violence against the Plains Indians.

A more recent text that assessed Evans' role at Sand Creek was Margaret Coel's, *Chief Left Hand, Southern Arapaho* (1981). Coel's study of this little-known Arapaho leader has contributed to the scholarship not only of the Arapaho but also of the Sand Creek Massacre. Coel contextualized Sand Creek within the broader political environment of Colorado and compared Left Hand's leadership style alongside that of Colorado's leading men such as Chivington and Evans. Coel's work is significant in that it is one of the first texts that went some way to implicating the Governor in events at Sand Creek. As McMechen did, Coel documented examples of correspondence between Washington and Evans, as well as with other officials in the territory, to argue that Evans was aware that a massacre had been carried out against the Cheyenne and Arapaho. However, considering her contentious attitude towards Evans, it is surprising that she did not analyze the Evans' *Letterpress Book* as a complete source to document Evans' increasingly volatile position with respect to the Plains Indians.

Following Coel's account of Evans, another work that assessed Evans' role at Sand Creek was David Svaldi's *Sand Creek and the Rhetoric of Extermination* (1989). This was a published PhD thesis that provided an excellent account of the public rhetoric in the years preceding, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the massacre. Using

newspaper accounts and public proclamations and statements from the Governor, Svaldi argued that Colorado citizens came to accept the massacre for the following reasons. Firstly, public rhetoric repeated reports of Indian violence, detailing gruesome acts so that citizens saw Natives as savages. Secondly, the public statements of Colorado's leading political figures encouraged the extermination of the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek. Svaldi's aim was not to unearth new evidence on Sand Creek, or to produce another chronological account of the massacre, but to provide an analytical account of a violent public rhetorical wave that contributed to Coloradan citizens' acceptance of the massacre. Although Svaldi at no point directly implicated Governor Evans in the massacre, he did produce one of the first analytical assessments of Evans' rhetoric and dedicated much of his text to assessing the Governor's character and his role in stirring up anti-Indian sentiment in Colorado. His study has been useful in determining the calculated nature of Evans' in relation to my use of the *Letterpress Book*. This study develops Svaldi's work by adding analysis of Evans' role in the massacre.

Following the renewed interest in the Sand Creek Massacre, especially after the publication of Kelman's 2010 study, *A Misplaced Massacre,* and the memorialization project, two reports emerged that considered the life of John Evans. Both these accounts paid expansive attention to John Evans' actions and, importantly, his lack of action before, during and after the Sand Creek Massacre. Full-length studies of Evans' life are overdue, considering the last biography of the Governor had been published in 1924. In May 2014, Northwestern University produced a document entitled: *Report of the John Evans Study Committee.* The report examined Evans' political career, with primary emphasis on the extent of his involvement in Sand Creek. The report concluded that Evans did not help plan the Sand Creek Massacre, nor did he have any knowledge

of it in advance.[9] The researchers conceded that Evans did not believe the Cheyenne and Arapaho camped at Sand Creek to be a threat and that he probably would have opposed the massacre had he known it was going to take place. However, the committee did conclude that Evans was one of several individuals that helped create a situation that made Sand Creek possible. As Svaldi suggested in *The Rhetoric of Extermination*, Evans created a hostile political environment in Colorado that made the massacre of the Cheyenne and Arapaho feasible.

Following the publication of Northwestern University's report, the University of Denver produced its own report on Evans in November 2014. This was designed as a supplement, but also as a response to the findings in the Northwestern University document. The Denver report stated: "We conclude that John Evans's pattern of neglect of his treaty-negotiating duties, his leadership failures, and his reckless decision making in 1864 combine to clearly demonstrate a significant level of culpability for the Sand Creek Massacre." This was a markedly harsher assessment of Evans' role in Sand Creek than the report by Northwestern University because it directly implicated him in in the massacre. The report stated: "While not of the same character, Evans' culpability is comparable in degree to that of Colonel John Chivington.… Evan's actions and influence, more than those of any other political official in Colorado Territory, created the conditions in which the massacre was highly likely."[10]

I agree with the findings carried out by the University of Denver, believing Evans was more culpable of events at Sand Creek than the Northwestern University report implied.

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[9] Northwestern University, *Report of the John Evans Study Committee*, May 2014. Available online: http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/committees/equity-and-inclusion/study-committee-report.pdf [Accessed 24/01/17], 92-95.
[10] University of Denver, *Report of the John Evans Study Committee,* November 2014. Available online: https://portfolio.du.edu/evcomm [Accessed 24/01/17], iii.

Unfortunately, however, in all accounts of Evans' role at Sand Creek, it has been difficult for historians to argue properly that Evans was blameworthy for events at Sand Creek because of a lack of definitive evidence that stated outright that he knew what was going to happen. However, I hope to go some way to redressing this problem by analyzing the *Letterpress Book* as a complete source. Considering the letters in their entirety led me to believe that Evans was far more responsible for events at Sand Creek than has previously been assumed in existing literature. Evaluating the changes in Evans' attitudes and statements concerning Indian affairs in his letters has meant I assert the Governor's accountability for events at Sand Creek.

Using Native Sources

A further omission from Sand Creek's historiography is detailed and varied Cheyenne and Arapaho sources. Instead, the history of Sand Creek has been dominated by Euro-American scholarship, the majority of which has excluded tribal oral histories or representations of the massacre. Although there are two excellent studies dedicated to the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek, Coel's, *Chief Left Hand, Southern Arapaho* (1981) and Hatch's, *Black Kettle, the Cheyenne Chief who Sought Peace but Found War* (2004), biographies of influential Native characters by Euro-American historians are relatively rare. Aside from the definitive Cheyenne account of the massacre, *Life of George Bent,* there are no full-length studies of the atrocity written by Cheyenne or Arapaho. In fact, tribal histories of Sand Creek have often remained private within the massacre descendants' communities, with the result that the Cheyenne and Arapaho are not widely represented in Euro-American scholarship. In part this is because of a lack of historical documentation and written evidence pertaining to tribal perceptions of Sand Creek. However, a repeated observation that has appeared in recent works on Sand Creek, as well as in reviews of these texts, is that more attention should be paid to the

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oral histories of the massacre descendants. This has been symptomatic of increased awareness of Cheyenne and Arapaho voices at Sand Creek but also of a wider respect for Native voices in America. I aim to begin to redress this gap in scholarship by considering in depth the Cheyenne and Arapaho Oral History Project. Although this was carried out in conjunction with the NPS, it provides an enlightening view into Cheyenne and Arapaho perceptions of place.

I shall now detail the accounts of Cheyenne and Arapaho who witnessed Sand Creek, as well as the limited number of tribal sources that exist in Sand Creek's historiography. Coel's 1981 publication, *Chief Left Hand, Southern Arapaho,* was the first biography of an Arapaho chief who was present at Sand Creek. This work has previously received little attention in scholarship, primarily because he was not a fighting warrior. Coel used the limited primary sources available on Left Hand to construct a detailed account of his life, situating his leadership style within the broader context of Coloradan politics. She presented him as a skilled and diplomatic leader who worked tirelessly to maintain peace between the settlers and his tribe. Unfortunately, Coel had access to very limited written - or any other form of - historical documentation pertaining to Left Hand's early life, so much of Coel's assessment of his earlier years is made up of probabilities and guesswork.

Another assessment of Sand Creek considered from the Native perspective was Hatch's, *Black Kettle: The Cheyenne Chief Who Sought Peace But Found War* (2004). This was an important work because it was the first full-length biography written of a Cheyenne who was present at, and survived, Sand Creek. As Coel had done in her assessment of Left Hand, Hatch portrayed Black Kettle as a peaceful, clever diplomat, arguing that he understood that the Euro-Americans would finally come to occupy Cheyenne land.

Black Kettle, argued Hatch, "worked relentlessly to establish peace between the two races without bloodshed."[11]

A major problem with both Hatch and Coel's work is that neither author uses oral histories of Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants. Hatch's work on the early years of Black Kettle's life is mainly speculative and most of his biography is dedicated to Black Kettle's last years, from Sand Creek until his death at Washita. Hatch relied on government transcripts and documents to construct his history. For both Coel and Hatch, Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories would have made useful contributions in constructing the early years of each leader's life, as well as providing Cheyenne and Arapaho representations of their later years, especially at Sand Creek. There exists a significant lacuna in Sand Creek's scholarship for further representation of Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories that this thesis will attempt to fill.

Nevertheless, Cheyenne and Arapaho representation in Sand Creek scholarship is increasing as a result of the renewed interest in the massacre following the memorialization process. I have reiterated throughout my literature review that Sand Creek received increasing attention as a result of the publicized memorialization process. Scholarship has shifted to consider how Sand Creek had been remembered in the public sphere and has become increasingly concerned with how the Cheyenne and Arapaho remembered the massacre. The tribal massacre descendants have become much more vocal in publically voicing their histories of Sand Creek and were actively involved in the memorialization project. This has produced an increase in studies that have used oral histories and interviews with Cheyenne and Arapaho. Ari Kelman relied on interviews with Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, as well as tribal oral

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[11] T. Hatch, *Black Kettle: The Cheyenne Chief Who Sought Peace but Found War* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004), 1.

histories, as a primary source of historical knowledge when constructing his text, *A Misplaced Massacre.* To date, Kelman's remains the work that most successfully pays close attention to the massacre descendants' voices. However, unlike this thesis, he does not consider in detail the Oral History Project, instead attending meetings with massacre descendants and interviewing them himself on site.

Another recent work that takes into account the tribal oral histories is Greene and Scott's *Finding Sand Creek.* The authors considered the histories as they were used as evidence in an attempt to locate the site. However, although the authors referenced the Oral History Project, they did not make use of specific examples from it. Instead, the oral histories appear to exist as a sub-topic within Greene and Scott's broader archaeological study. As a result of failing to significantly use oral histories or interviews with Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, Green and Scott do not provide a detailed analysis of the historical and cultural impact that establishing the location of Sand Creek had on local Native and non-Native Coloradans. One reviewer noted: "We must always be cognizant of the fact that while identifying events like Sand Creek is important, it is less important than what actually happened there."[12] Importantly, by analyzing the Oral History Project, this thesis explores the significance of place as essential to Cheyenne and Arapaho attempts to remember the massacre. This sense of place, by comparison with the arguments of Scott and Greene, was ultimately more important to the massacre descendants than establishing the exact location and boundaries of the massacre site. This work will add to and challenge the current historiography of Sand Creek by using the Cheyenne and Arapaho Oral History Project as a complete source, providing a detailed assessment of the insights it provides into Native memories of Sand Creek. Using the oral histories also contributes to current

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[12] J. H. Monnett, 'Review of *Finding Sand Creek: History, Archeology and the1864 Massacre Site* by J.P. Greene & D. D. Scott, *The Journal of Military History*, 69, 3 (2005), 847-848: 848.

collective memory scholarship by demonstrating conflicting cultural attitudes towards place in the construction of collective memory at Sand Creek.

Scholarly Shifts in Sand Creek's Historiography

I shall briefly assess early texts on the massacre before outlining how shifts in American societal attitudes have altered the scholarship on Sand Creek and how I have used these texts in relation to my study. For the purpose of this thesis, I characterize early as 1900 until the late 1950s because, as I shall detail, the 1960s saw a marked change in Sand Creek's scholarship in relation to broader cultural and political movements in America.

One of the earliest works that focused entirely on the study of the Sand Creek Massacre was George Bird Grinnell's, *The Fighting Cheyenne* (1915), in which the ethnographer and anthropologist provided one of the first published accounts of the atrocity. Grinnell dedicated two chapters to the Sand Creek Massacre, "Before Sand Creek" and "The Sand Creek Massacre", in which he provided an account of events that led to the massacre as well as a description of the Chivington's attack. Grinnell takes a relatively sympathetic view towards the Cheyenne and Arapaho, especially considering the time his book was published. At that period, empathetic historical portrayals of Indians were still rare, aside from texts such as Helen Hunt Jackson's 1881 *A Century of Dishonor,* which had already argued for the injustices committed against Native Americans in the West. Grinnell's sympathetic stance is further reflected in his use of George Bent's letters, for he was one of the first authors to use first-hand Cheyenne and Arapaho accounts in his study of the massacre.[13] For its time, Grinnell's text was a rarity as the majority of early studies did not use Native sources, and representations of key tribal members such as Bent were rarely used in early portrayals.

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[13] Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyenne*, loc 2150-2349 and loc 2356-2585.

One text that stood as an anomaly - and is juxtaposed to Grinell's work in its attempts to justify Chivington's actions at Sand Creek - was the 1959 publication of *The Fighting Parson: Biography of Colonel John M. Chivington.* Chivington's grandson, Reginald S. Craig produced a biography of Chivington that detailed his life from his birth in Lebanon, Ohio, in 1827 until his death in Denver in 1894. Craig spent much of his study defending the actions of his grandfather at Sand Creek, claiming Chivington was a frontier hero who fought tirelessly against hostile Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek. *The Fighting Parson* is an anomaly among the majority of works on Sand Creek because it painted a heroic picture of Chivington as both a dedicated Methodist minister and a brave Western soldier. Craig stated he wanted to present a truthful image of Chivington, claiming that: "after nearly a century of inaccurate and unfounded tradition the facts will be brought forth and the reader left to assign to [Chivington] his proper place in the history of the Rocky Mountain Region." Craig concluded: "The members of the Third Colorado Cavalry could well be proud" of their part in the Sand Creek campaign.[14] Craig's views were surprising as they contradicted the unanimous views of both the federal reports that Chivington's actions at Sand Creek were utterly unjustified as well as the general opinions of scholarship on the massacre.

I have not made extensive use of either Grinnell's or Craig's work. Relevant because of the first-hand account of Cheyenne life he produced, I have chosen instead to use the work of Bent to add to primary accounts of the Cheyenne perspective of the massacre. I believe this to be a more authentic source and one that is still used by the Cheyenne today. I have not used Craig's work because *The Fighting Parson* contained obvious bias, in that Craig was the grandson of Chivington. It was denounced by reviewers as an

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[14] R. S. Craig, *The Fighting Parson: A Biography of Col. John M. Chivington* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1959), 10, 201.

inaccurate account of a man that had been rightfully condemned, and considered as aimed largely to justify the brutal actions of the Colonel rather than portraying a legitimate historical assessment. Craig did not analyze any of Chivington's motivations for the massacre.[15] Unfortunately, *The Fighting Parson* is one of only two full-length biographies of Colonel Chivington, excluding the now out-of-print work by J. P. Dunn, published just before Craig's biography. The other text, William R. Dunn's, *I Stand By Sand Creek* (1985), also defended Chivington's actions. Chivington remains an interesting character, worthy of balanced biographical study.

Scholarly shifts in Sand Creek's representation have often related to wider movements within American society, such as the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975), as well as general disaffection towards federal authority, especially among America's younger generations. In particular, this era of the mid-20th century saw an increasing concern with the representation of minority histories, as well as more specific attempts to publically remember Sand Creek within scholarship. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a definitive change in Sand Creek scholarship. Although the majority of scholarship had presented a sympathetic portrayal of the Cheyenne and Arapaho camped at Sand Creek – in texts which were still written largely by Euro-American authors - the tribal perspective on Sand Creek was now portrayed more thoroughly. The attention of the public was now focused on the plight of under-represented and minority histories. This era also saw the emergence of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in 1972. On November 20[th,] 1969, American Indian tribes from across the country began a nineteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island, near San Francisco. They protested the case for Indian self-determination, autonomy and a better

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[15] One reviewer noted that the correspondence between the heroic image Craig paints of Chivington and the reality of the man is "about as close as that between Eisenhower and Macbeth." M. Straight, 'Review of *The Fighting Parson: A Biography of Col. John M. Chivington* by R.S. Craig', *The Magazine of Western History*, 36, 10 (1960), 76-77: 76.

understanding of tribal cultures. The occupation, although it received far less attention than the African-American Civil Rights Movement, was crucial in drawing public opinion to the plight of Native Americans across the country.

The essential work that was representative of this scholarly shift was Hoig's chronological account, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (1961), one of the first full-length accounts detailing what happened at Sand Creek. Hoig's meticulously researched work was empathetic toward the Cheyenne and Arapaho. He made extensive use of the federal, military and congressional hearings that followed the massacre. His work remains one of the most cited histories of Sand Creek and is well-respected amongst the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants for providing an accurate portrayal of events at Sand Creek. I have used Hoig's work only in relation to what happened at Sand Creek, primarily because, problematically, it was not an analytical history. He did not ask important historical questions that would situate Sand Creek in the broader political context of Colorado as he failed to evaluate the reasons behind the massacre's occurrence or the political motivations that could have fostered an environment where the massacre was possible. For the purpose of this study, it would have been useful if Hoig had analyzed the role of key figures such as Evans and Chivington.[16] Another problem with Hoig's account of Sand Creek was his failure to successfully represent the Cheyenne and Arapaho when constructing his history. Although sympathetic to the plight of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, Hoig did not use tribal oral histories or interviews with Native massacre descendants to portray their history of the massacre. Instead, he relied upon public statements by chiefs of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes in their dealings with Evans, Chivington and Wynkoop. As a result, Cheyenne and Arapaho

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[16] One reviewer criticized Hoig for failing to "delve into the motives of the 'Fighting Parson.'" M. L. Hayman Jr., 'Review of *The Sand Creek Massacre* by S. Hoig', *Journal of the Southwest*, 4,1 (1962), 90-91: 91. Another reviewer stated that Hoig "deliberately" avoided important questions that related to the massacre's occurrence. R. W. Goodwin, 'Review of *The Sand Creek Massacre* by S. Hoig', *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, 43, 2 (1962), 179-180: 179.

sources are under-represented in Hoig's work. Overall, however, Hoig created a well-researched factual account of what happened at Sand Creek that remains regularly cited within the scholarship. However, as one reviewer noted " … his efforts have not produced the definitive account of perhaps the most celebrated example of white perfidy toward the Indian."[17]

Following Hoig's sympathetic portrayal, the 1970s saw the publication of one of the most significant popular histories of Native American life in the West from the mid to late 20th century: Dee Brown's, *Bury My Heart at Wounded, An Indian History of the American West* (1970). Although widely criticized by academic historians as being factually inaccurate, Brown's work was representative of sympathetic minority histories of the Civil War that now emerged and coincided with shifts in American society, such as attitudes to the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War.

Further examples of situating Sand Creek within the broader American political context are the Civil War texts that emerged during the 1990s which contextualize Sand Creek within broader debates about the Civil War in the American West. This thesis contributes to these debates. I have focused more extensively on Civil War texts that discussed the Bear River Massacre because it was rare for this under-studied slaughter to appear in histories of the Civil War. Sand Creek occupies a central place in Western Civil War histories because it was subjected to intensive federal investigations, whereas Bear River received minimal federal or public attention. Texts I consider include Josephy's, *The Civil War in the American West* (1991) and Hatch's, *The Blue, The Grey and the Red: Indian Campaigns of the Civil War,* (2003). Both these works were influential as they re-positioned Indian massacres such as Sand Creek within the context

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[17] M. L. Hayman JR., 'Review of *The Sand Creek Massacre* by S. Hoig', 91.

of Civil War as opposed to regarding them as isolated Western military engagements. In both Josephy's and Hatch's studies, massacres such as Bear River and Sand Creek became part of the Civil War rather than events in histories purely focused on the conquest of the American West. My thesis contributes to this growing field of Civil War history because it synthesizes isolated subtopics of American history, such as Native American history, as well as giving attention to prominent Western characters, such as Evans, who are often unexplored in Civil War history. Unlike the work of Josephy and Hatch, I consider events at Sand Creek through the lens of cross-cultural memory. In particular, this has emphasized that Sand Creek's memorialization has been excluded from Civil War commemoration and remains detached from Civil War narratives.

In the 21st century there have been an increasing number of texts dedicated specifically to the Sand Creek Massacre, its memory and commemoration. As well as reflecting the memorialization project, this upsurge of work may also be linked to wider concerns about memory in America. The United States was increasingly exercised about its identity and public presentation after 9/11,which resulted in what Erika Doss referred to as "memorial mania."[18] Contextualizing Sand Creek in wider political concerns was amplified by texts in the 21st century that assessed the impact of Indian and Euro-American relationships at the time of the massacre. Importantly, these texts included assessments of lesser-known figures in Sand Creek's history.[19] The 21st century has been among the most important eras for Sand Creek Massacre scholarship,

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[18] Erika Doss defined "memorial mania" as "an obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts. Doss claimed the ever growing number of memorials represented heightened "anxieties about who and what should be remembered in America." E. Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America,* London, Kindle version (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), loc 210. [Downloaded 2014].

[19] Following the renewed interest in Sand Creek during the memorialization project, there was an emergence of texts dedicated to previously unexplored characters involved at the Sand Creek massacre. See, C. Turner, *Forgotten Heroes and Villains of the Sand Creek Massacre* (Charleston SC: The History Press, 2010). L Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop and the Lonely Road from Sand Creek* (Norman OK: University of

as demonstrated by my assessment of the work of Kelman and of Greene and Scott. My research can be most relevantly situated within the growing concern with Sand Creek's memory. By contextualizing my thesis in broader debates about collective memory, particularly the significance the massacre still holds in contemporary Native and non-Native society, I contribute to this growing field of scholarship.

Anomalies in Sand Creek's Historiography

Before concluding this section, I shall briefly consider texts within Sand Creek's historiography that stand as anomalies among the majority of histories of the massacre. Whilst most texts have tended to portray a sympathetic history of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, such works have either defended the actions of Chivington and his men or considered Sand Creek from a military perspective. The first and most brazen example of these texts was Lt. Col. William R. Dunn's *"I Stand By Sand Creek": A Defense of Colonel John M. Chivington and the Third Colorado Cavalry*" (1985). Dunn created a misguided account of the massacre, producing bold statements not based on evidence, such as: "It is true that the fingers were cut off some Indian dead to obtain a ring - but where did these rings come from in the first place? Yes, off a dead white man's or women's finger."[20] Dunn's work was not widely reviewed but he certainly did not create a history that successfully justified Chivington's actions at Sand Creek, despite its attempts to do so. However, it reflected a continuing interest in Sand Creek's historiography.[21]

Oklahoma Press, 2011). T. Bensing, *Silas Soule: A Short Eventful Life of Moral Courage* (Indianapolis IN: Dog ear Publishing, 2012). Soule in particular received more scholarly attention in the 21st century following the resurfacing of the Soule/Cramer letters in 2000.

[20] W. R. Dunn, *"I Stand By Sand Creek": A Defense of Colonel John M. Chivington and the Third Colorado Cavalry*, (Fort Collins, CO, Old Army Press, 1985) 10.

[21] For another text on Sand Creek's military perspective see, B. Scott, *Blood at Sand Creek: The Massacre Revisited*, (Caldwell ID: Caxton Press,1994). Scott reexamines Sand Creek using the military records of Chivington and the Volunteers. However, his work was discredited for historical inaccuracy.

Although such histories are not directly linked to my research, they do provide an interesting perspective, particularly of reactionary Euro-American memories that countered tribal and other Euro-American memories during the memorialization process. For example, Gregory F. Mincho's history, *Battle at Sand Creek: The Military Perspective* (2004), emerged in response to the damning Chivington suffered by Native and non-Native communities during the 1990s and 2000s memorialization efforts at Sand Creek. Mincho's is an interesting account because he assessed the views of Euro-American settlers and their opinions of Indians in Colorado. This had not been done to any extent before. Mincho used these accounts to claim that the Cheyenne and Arapaho camped at Sand Creek were not peaceful but were hostile aggressors. Mincho sought to restore what he regarded as Chivington's damaged reputation. One reviewer noted: Mincho had: "not really 'sided' with soldiers at Sand Creek. He does not condone the military actions."[22] Mincho did not defend Chivington outright, as Dunn had done, but he did suggest that what happened at Sand Creek was not a massacre and he took a relatively sympathetic view towards Chivington, noting in his introduction: "Sand Creek was not a stellar event in American history, but the fight, the surrounding events, and the people involved did not get a fair hearing."[23] In relation to other texts of the other author of this period referred to events at Sand Creek as a "battle" or went any way to sympathizing with Chivington's actions. Mincho's work, especially considering he was briefly embroiled in the memorialization efforts at Sand Creek, often reads as a counter-narrative to the more scathing accounts of Sand Creek that emerged during the memorialization process rather than as a successful historical account.

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[22] A. Cook, *Battle at Sand Creek: The Military Perspective,* (2004). Available online: http://www.historynet.com/battle-at-sand-creek-the-military-perspective-book-review.htm [Accessed 27/01/2017].
[23] G. Mincho, *Battle at Sand Creek: The Military Perspective* (El Segundo CA: Upton and Sons), 10.

Conclusion

In this literature review of the Sand Creek Massacre I have detailed the most significant studies of the Sand Creek Massacre as they relate to my research on collective memory and the cultural specificity of memory. I have highlighted key similarities and differences in studies of Sand Creek, as well as contextualizing the massacre within broader events in American society. I have relied on the majority of texts above to construct a balanced history both of the massacre itself and also of how Sand Creek has been remembered in Native and non-Native communities.

To conclude, several elements are unique in my study of Sand Creek. Firstly, the focus of this work is primarily on Native and non-Native attitudes to place and their role in constructing the collective remembrance at Sand Creek. I use place at Sand Creek to critique the American concept of collective memory. There are no previous studies on Sand Creek that focus specifically on cultural perceptions of place at the massacre site and its relationship to collective memory. Unlike previous studies, I critically examine cultural perceptions of place in a Native American and Euro-American context before examining specific problems inherent in cross-cultural notions of place and the construction of collective memory at Sand Creek. Secondly, although other scholars have made use of the collaborative attempts between the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho to locate the site, I have used the memorialization project, particularly analysis of the Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories, to highlight disparate cultural perceptions of place. This has not been done previously. Thirdly, I have made use of John Evans' *Letterpress Book* in order to analyze his role in the massacre. His correspondence has provided key reasons I believe he was more involved in the massacre than had been previously thought. This collection of letters has not previously been used as a complete source.

Chapter Three: The Significance of Place in Collective Memory

Place and Collective Memory

The Sand Creek Massacre has reverberated throughout the collective memories of Coloradans, Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants and broader Euro-American and Native American communities. A sense of place and the meaning of its significance have been essential in forming and establishing the collective memory of Sand Creek, especially during the 1990s and 2000s efforts to turn Sand Creek into a National Historic Site. In order to contextualize events at Sand Creek within broader ideas about place and its relation to collective memory, I shall analyse the predominant yet disparate cultural role that place plays in attempts to construct the collective remembrance of historical events. By analysing both Euro-American and Native attitudes to place, this chapter will highlight that ideas of place are not easily transportable across ethnic boundaries as they are so varied and culturally specific.

My use of the word place refers to a specific site that is regarded as integral to the memory of an individual or community because it is possessed with significance and meaning. People of all societies and cultures rely on places to remember, be they places in the mind or physical locations. Sociologist and collective memory theorist, Pierre Nora, remarked on the importance of memory rather than history at historically significant sites: "Memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events."[24] People need sites to construct and recall their memories. The prominent collective memory theorist, Jeffery K. Olick, argued: "Without an externalization of memory in 'artificial' sites, the social location of memory is not as clear."[25] Unlike Nora, Kelman, in his work on the Sand Creek Massacre memorialization project, argued

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[24] P. Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Memoire', *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7-24: 22.2
[25] J. K. Olick & J. Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), 105-140: 113.

that landscapes can encapsulate historical events because they remain permanent and often unchanging, providing a place capable of trapping history: "Even as turbulent changes shake American society, history's insights will remain accessible at such places."[26] Nora, Olick and Kelman have all agreed that place is important to our sense of recall, both as individuals and societies.

Keith Basso has focused on the study of place, specifically in Western Apache culture, demonstrating that sense of place is essential to the identity of Native individuals. He argued historical knowledge and memory are difficult to achieve without the recourse to place and the "place worlds they engender." By "place worlds" Basso implied locations in the mind to which we can repeatedly return in order to remember: "For wherever one journeys in the country of the past, instructive places abound." Many of these places, Basso argued, are encountered in the "country of the present" as material objects. Our imaginations and personal feelings have the power to transform places, making the "country of the past" very important in the present. This Basso called "place making," which is a common response to normal curiosity, posing questions such as: 'What happened here? Who was involved?' Basso argued this was a universal tool of the historical imagination.[27] Basso's "place worlds", or the significance afforded to place, implied a highly individualist attitude towards place because it was up to the individual to decide on the transformative power and meaning of a specific site, an act that relied heavily on the personal mind. However, "place worlds" could manifest themselves in external or material objects that everyone could access, providing a strong communal tie to place. This implied that a certain place, especially one of historical significance, could be accessed by all to remember an event. However, each individual would attach a different and personalised memory of the event onto the site.

[26] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre*, 4.
[27] K. H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 4, 5.

Despite the power place can exercise on individual memories, it must also be stressed that place can provide an inherent form of communal or collective memory by serving as a unifying force. The eminent Sioux scholar, Vine Deloria Jr., argued that place was fundamental to the ability of communities to remember: "Every society needs these kinds of sacred places because they help instil a sense of social cohesion in the people and remind them of the passage of generations that have brought them to the present."[28] Place provides different groups, who can often be at odds with one another, a collective and unified connection to the past. In 1912 the sociologist, Emile Durkheim, posited that the emotive response to sites of atrocity or memorial grounds was, "solidarity in the absence of common belief."[29]

Today place remains significant in creating solidarity in societies, cultures and groups that have become disparate. Edward Said, in his article, *Invention, Memory and Place*, (2000), argued that there was a new academic obsession with place and its role in the formulation of memory because the world had shrunk and people were now undergoing the most rapid social transformations in history. Said stated: "Ours has become an era of a search for roots, of people trying to discover in the collective memory of their race, religion, community, and family a past that is entirely their own, secure from the ravages of history and turbulent time."[30] Place, according to Said, therefore provided the stable roots of a unified, communal memory based upon a specific connection people held in common with one another. Sites, particularly those that are publically commemorated, are often viewed as areas where people can unite in the face of divisiveness and share history. In America this is particularly evident at memorial sites that hold cultural significance and commemorate events that have been the source of

[28] V. Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1973), 272.
[29] E. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Translated from French by M.S. Cladis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 290.
[30] E. Said, 'Invention, Memory, and Place', *Critical* Inquiry, 26, 2 (2000), 175-192: 177.

much conflict, such as the Vietnam Veterans' memorial and Ground Zero in New York.

Place can be utilized to conjure up shared patriotism and create accord and shared

memory out of potential memory chaos. Themes of solidarity are continually repeated at

memorial sites. James Mayo in *War Memorials as Political Memory* said that the

'utilitarian' purpose of memorials gave them meaning. Memorials in America have

worked to create a unified emotive response to deepen the public's involvement in

historic events.[31]

Despite the possibility of unification, collective memory in a shared place is highly

complicated and not without conflict. Memory can be revised, produced and reproduced

to reflect different ideals of the past and then assigned to a specific place. Nora inferred

that modern memory had been absorbed by reconstruction: "Its new vocation is to

record: delegating to the *lieu de memoire* [site of memory] the responsibility of

remembering, it sheds its signs upon depositing them there, as a snake sheds its skin."[32]

Basso wrote: "Building and sharing place worlds … [provide] not only a means of

reviving former times but also of *revising* them."[33] Potential therefore exists for one

group to dominate and construct memory and history according to its view, ignoring the

memories of smaller communities or those whose memories are afforded lesser

importance. Sites of memory can often be exclusionary for those who fail to share the

specific memory the place has been accorded. Doss, in *Memorial Mania,* argued that,

specifically in America, memorials have become places that underscore modern

obsessions with memory and history, and the desire to express and claim memory in

"visibly public contexts."[34] Often concern with place or memory is intended to create

national unity and collective remembrance as a means of controlling history, personal

[31] J. Mayo, 'War Memorials as Political Memory', *Geographical Review*, 78, 1 (1988): 62-75: 62.
[32] Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 13.
[33] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 6.
[34] E. Doss., *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America,* London, Kindle version (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), loc 1145. [Downloaded 2014].

memory and even the future. In this regard it is almost impossible to create social cohesion at a specific place: just because a group of people, usually those in positions of dominance, have imbued a site with historical significance, this does not automatically imply a shared collective remembrance. The Holocaust historian, James E. Young, offered an important solution to this problem. In *The Texture of Memory*, Young argued that, at sites of remembrance, memory should be seen in light of collected as opposed to collective memories. When competing memories attach to a specific site they can challenge dominant collective memory and open important dialogues across cultures, forcing disparate groups to confront their combined engagement with the past.[35]

Place and Memory in Native Cultures

Sacred places are essential in Native American cultures. Place is interlinked with, and not detachable from, identity, community and religion. Deloria stated: "Sacred places are the foundation of all other beliefs and practices because they represent the presence of the sacred in our lives. They properly inform us that we are not larger than nature and that we have responsibilities to the rest of the natural world that transcend our own personal desires and wishes." Deloria further argued that place serves as a form of communal being: "Indians who have never visited certain sacred sites nevertheless know of these places from the community knowledge, and they intuit this knowing as an essential part of their being."[36] Place therefore holds continuous importance in tribal life, providing a present connection to the past. Basso argued that, for the Western Apache, the landscape speaks the word of their ancestors to them stating that the main objective of the place-maker is to: "speak the past into being … to produce experience by forging ancestral worlds in which others can participate and readily lose

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[35] Young, *The Texture of Memory,* xi.
[36] Deloria, *God is Red*, 285, 275.

themselves."[37] Certain landscapes can provide a vital connection to Native identity, past and present. The Pulitzer prize-winning, Kiowa author, N. Scott Momoday, has put great value on place in Native culture: "From the time the Indian first set foot upon this continent he centered his life in the natural world. He is deeply invested in the earth, committed to it both in his consciousness and in his instinct. The sense of place is paramount. Only in reference to the earth can he persist in his identity."[38] It must be pointed out, however, that relation to place is always tribally specific. Not every site holds the same level of sacredness for all Native Americans or in any way evokes the same emotions or connections.

The most important and comprehensive writer on the significance of place in Native cultures is Deloria, who divided Native sacredness of place into four categories. Firstly, he defined a sacred place as a location where something of great importance took place in indigenous history (that is, separate from Euro-American conquest). Secondly, a sacred place is a location where Native peoples have had the experience that: "something specifically other than other than ourselves is present." Thirdly, he posited places of overwhelming holiness where: "Higher Powers have revealed Themselves to human beings." Although human beings come and go, there will always be places where these higher powers reside. Finally, Deloria argued that, because there are higher spiritual powers that can communicate with people, there must be a fourth category: "People must always be ready to experience new revelations at new locations."[39] The notion and breadth of places that are considered sacred in Native cultures evidence the inherent importance of place for indigenous tribes.

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[37] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Place,* 32.
[38] N. Scott Momoday quoted in N. Hill Jr., (ed.), *Words of Power: Voices from Indian America* (Golden CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994), 1.
[39] Deloria, *God is Red,* 277, 281.

Native ideas of place differ from non-Native ideas in the central and integral role they play in the identity and everyday life of tribal communities. They are not as narrowly defined by time as non-Native connections to place but exist as continuous links to past, present and future. However, problems occur when we attempt to remember across distinct cultures such as Native and Euro-American. Collective memory, according to Richard Archibald, is "chimera"; though we do "create shared memory to establish our self-identity in juxtaposition to the identities of others" (78). Archibald stressed the need for "collaborative effort" to establish a "shared space."[40] This view firmly puts forward the need for a multiplicity of voices to be involved in constructing a memory. Place can be used as a tool to manipulate collective memory, whilst simultaneously serving as bridge between disparate groups, I shall now briefly consider the equally conflicting, Euro-American and Native attitudes to land.

The Landscape in Native and Euro-American Culture

I define land as the wider environment that has limited significance, in terms of human meaning, until something significant happens to create place. Outlining the historical connection both Euro-American and indigenous cultures have to land is essential because it has had a key role, particularly in how the Sand Creek Massacre has been collectively remembered. The landscape at Sand Creek has been subject to much conflicting and varied cultural interpretation. For Euro-Americans, historical engagement with the landscape may be split into three areas: discovery, conquest and categorization. Firstly, Europeans arrived in the New World believing they had discovered it and laid claim to what was, in their eyes, new and virgin land. The discovery of the New World had its roots in the traditional European notion that an earthly paradise lay somewhere in the West. In a special edition of the *Journal of American History*, "Discovering America", the renowned historian Frederick E. Hoxie

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[40] R. Archibald, 'A Personal History of Memory', in J.C. Cattell (ed.), *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Altamira), 79.

wrote that the arrival of Columbus in the New World in 1492: "enshrine[d] discovery as the founding myth of America." Discovery remains integral to the national narrative of Euro-America.[41] The 'new' land was, however, already occupied by Native inhabitants and Patricia Nelson Limerick pointed out that: "we [Euro-Americans] take it as our premise that the European discoverers found people as well as places."[42] The land, therefore, only had to be new to the discoverer. After discovery came conquest, originally on the Eastern Seaboard, but then many Americans, especially during the 1800s, moved further west, seeking wealth and new beginnings on land they believed it was their God-given right to occupy. Anders Stephenson, in *Manifest Destiny*, wrote: "For Europeans, land not occupied by recognized members of the Christendom was theoretically land free to be taken." This was in accord with the American ideology of Manifest Destiny, another enshrining myth of the American narrative. The phrase was coined in 1845 by John O'Sullivan, who argued that it was the mission of the United States to: "overspread the continent allotted by providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions."[43] Native inhabitants were subsumed by this myth, becoming the people to be conquered and destroyed in the name of Manifest Destiny. Limerick wrote: "All the cultural understanding in the world would not change the crucial fact the Indians possessed the land and that Euro-Americans wanted it."[44] For Euro-Americans the Western landscape became a symbol of the struggle between them and indigenous cultures and conquest was the prize.

The last defining area of engagement with the land is the Euro-American categorization of landscape according to intellectual or economic trends. In his excellent study,

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[41] F. E. Hoxie, 'Discovering America: An Introduction', *The Journal of American History*, 79, 3 (1992), 835-840: 835.

[42] P. N. Limerick, 'Disorientation and Reorientation: The American Landscape Discovered from the West', *The Journal of American History*, 79, 3 (1992), 1021-1049: 1025.

[43] A. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 2, xi.

[44] P. N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West,* legacy of conquest (New York: Norton and Company Inc.,1987), 190.

Wilderness and the American Mind, Roderick Nash[45] argued that, throughout different stages in American history, the perception of land and its meaning has changed, moving from romanticized visions to feared wilderness. However, according to Nash, in Euro-American perception, land has always existed as separate and 'other' from people and as an entity to be contained and managed. Deloria has been very critical of this 'land as other' attitude: "Lost whites came to the West to love the environment, and they end up paving the whole damn thing and subdividing it."[46] Containing the landscape has happened throughout Euro-American history and continues today. These three Euro-American perceptions of land are very much at odds with how Native cultures perceive the landscape. Discovery and conquest, of course, had a devastating impact on indigenous cultures and viewing the land as 'other' was an alien concept to Natives.

Historically and presently, many indigenous cultures have a similar attitude to the landscape as they do towards place: land is sacred and exists in connection and unification with other areas of their life, in what Deloria defined as a "co-operative enterprise."[47] The Lakota Sioux, Luther Standing Bear, wrote: "From Wakan Tanka, there came a great unifying life force that flowed in and through all things - the flowers of the plains, blowing rocks, trees, birds, animals - and was the same force that had been breathed into the first man."[48] The landscape remains vital and bound up with indigenous identity. Deloria wrote: "In the western European context human experience is separated from the environment. Indians do not talk of nature as a concept; they talk about the immediate environment in which they live."[49] Implicit in Native views of nature are conceptions of knowledge: people gain wisdom directly from

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[45] R. F. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* Fourth edition (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2001),1-8.
[46] Deloria, *Spirit and Reason*, 229.
[47] Deloria, *Spirit and Reason,* 223.
[48] L. Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle,* New Edition, (Lincoln, NB, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 193.
[49] Deloria, *Spirit and Reason,* 223.

nature. Standing Bear eloquently pointed out: "Knowledge was inherent in all things …

The world was a library and its books were the stones, leaves, grass, brooks, and the

birds and animals that shared alike with us, the storms and blessings of the earth."[50] The

landscape is interconnected with all other areas of life and community, and defines

Native humanity. It is important to note, however, that different tribes have different

connections to the land. They do not embrace all rivers, mountains and animals but

what is important is the particular relationship they have with an area of nature that is

integral to their tribal life. Deloria wrote: "You can find an extremely intimate

connection between the lifestyle, the religions and sometimes the political organizations

of Indian tribes and the land in which they live." Relationship to land and nature is

tribally and even individually distinct: within a tribe people will have different kinship

relationships to nature. Deloria stated that describing Native connection to the land as

simply communal is far too vague. Instead, land, nature and the environment must be

considered in terms of specific responsibilities, insights and particular tasks in the

world. Invasion and conquest of Native lands, forced removal and the reservation

system all greatly impacted on the indigenous connection to the land and therefore on

broader areas of identity. However, it is important to note that this connection to the

land is not just historical but persists into the present. Deloria noted that we should not

look at the Indian view as primitive and dated but as one that was generated by

experiences in nature that proved: "so intense and so encompassing that Indians did not

move away from them."[51]

Opposing Native and non-Native ways of interpreting the land were foregrounded

during the Sand Creek Massacre, when conquest separated the Cheyenne and Arapaho

from land that was vitally important to their survival. The Euro-American settlers of the

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[50] Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, 194.
[51] Deloria, *Spirit and Reason,* 223, 229.

Great Plains were intent on fulfilling their self-proclaimed Manifest Destiny and in their path were the nomadic Cheyenne and Arapaho people who were dependent on the buffalo and the landscape that settlers were moving into and destroying. At stake were vastly disparate ideas on how the land should be used. The NPS leaflet stated: "The clash of these two cultures produced a great American tragedy."[52] Chivington personally believed that the Sand Creek Massacre had been part of a noble conquest in Euro-America's winning of the West and that he had made the Plains a safer place for the advance of civilization. From Chivington's point of view, Native Americans stood in the way of American progress and continued westward conquest. Kelman notes that Chivington's perception was that Colorado's indigenous population had to be removed: "or in the case of Sand Creek, exterminated."[53] In an article commemorating 150 years since the Sand Creek Massacre, the Western Shoshone scholar, Ned Blackhawk, stated that Sand Creek was part of a larger campaign to occupy the Cheyenne's once vast land holdings across the region: "A territory that had hardly any white communities in 1850 had, by 1870, lost many Indians who were pushed violently off the Great Plains by white settlers and the federal government."[54] The effects of violent removal have reverberated profoundly throughout the history of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes and continue in the present.

Contemporary Attitudes Towards the Landscape

I do not intend to imply that nothing has changed since the era of colonization, yet the legacy of conquest and control of the landscape has had a major impact on how Euro-America constructs a memory of its past. Conquest, expansionism and Manifest Destiny are still celebrated in Euro-American culture, with official days of remembrance

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[52] The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, *Sand Creek Massacre*.
[53] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre*, 46.
[54] N. Blackhawk, 'Remember the Sand Creek Massacre', *The New York Times*. 27 November 2014 [Online]. Available at: //www.nytimes.com/2014/11/28/opinion/remember-the-sand-creek-massacre.html [Accessed 27/01/17].

dedicated specifically to American triumphs such as Thanksgiving and Columbus Day. Blackhawk stated: "We commemorate 'discovery' and 'expansion' with Columbus day and the Gateway arch, but nowhere is there national recognition of the people who suffered from these 'achievements' and have survived among continuing cycles of colonialism."[55] These days of remembrance have formed a cultural memory that is symbolic of Euro-America's national identity. Said stated: "Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority."[56] The legacy of conquest has been turned into a form of patriotic memory that ignores or distorts the impact Euro-American historical conquest has had on Native American communities. In "Beyond Memory and History," Nora stated: "History's goal and ambition is not to exalt but to annihilate what has in reality taken place."[57] Celebrating and using such core historical ideals as conquest and expansionism as cornerstones of American memory highlight the difficulties that can arise when remembering an area of American history such as the Sand Creek Massacre, allowing the sinister side of these American ideologies to emerge.

In contrast to celebrations of conquest, many sites of remembrance are associated with displacement and loss for Native American communities. Deloria claimed this was a relatively new reason for the sacredness of place in Native America: "Unfortunately, many of these places are related to instances of human violence." This has meant that the idea of holding a battlefield or massacre site as sacred was new and foreign to many tribes because they did not consider war a holy enterprise.[58] Sand Creek, for the Cheyenne and Arapaho, remains a place to honour the dead and dispossessed: "a place they are not forgotten."[59] The massacre descendants possess a continuous connection to

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[55] Blackhawk, 'Remember the Sand Creek Massacre'.
[56] Said, 'Invention, Memory, and Place', 176.
[57] Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 8.
[58] Deloria, *God is Red*, 275-276.
[59] The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, *Sand Creek Massacre*.

the place, making it very much a site of present memory: "Many descendants identify themselves as being 'from' Sand Creek, or Washita, or Little Bighorn, or Fort Robinson." In the same vein, Kelman wrote: "The massacre remained a living memory for many descendants; it shaped their daily lives, helping to forge their individual and collective identity, as well as their relationship to family and history."[60] The Cheyenne and Arapaho have never been historically detached from Sand Creek. Rather, their memories of the atrocity are integral to their present identity.

By contextualizing Sand Creek into broader concepts of place and its relationship to collective memory, I have demonstrated the essential yet disparate and culturally specific Native and non-Native concepts of place in the formation of collective memories. I have also highlighted the juxtaposed yet inherently interlinked diverse manner in which Native American and Euro-American groups have historically engaged with the landscape. Having outlined general cultural conflicts in perceptions of place and land, it will be apparent how Sand Creek, a site of substantial interconnected Native and non-Native loss, has been subject to too many conflicting interpretations to present a viable expression of collective memory. Despite cultural conflicts over place, however, this chapter has also demonstrated that place can serve as a unifying force of remembrance, something that will be further emphasized in the following chapter.

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[60] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre*, 8.

Chapter Four: Cultural Conflicts Over Place and Memory at Sand Creek

Introduction

Historical and contemporary treatment of the landscape, as well as differing Native and non-Native perceptions of place, have had a key role in shaping and constructing the modern remembrance of the Sand Creek Massacre. This section will consider the conflicting Native and non-Native cultural attitudes towards place and landscape during the memorialization process at the Sand Creek Massacre Site. This process was carried out as part of a collaborative project between the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants. The time frame considered for this analysis will be from the late 1990s, when the memorialization process began, until the site's dedication as a National Historic Site on April 28th, 2007. It was opened to the public after over a decade of bitter disputes between the massacre descendants and Euro-American communities over how the fateful day should be remembered. Diverse connections to the landscape resulted in the resurfacing of historical clashes which were key in producing contemporary disagreements over Sand Creek's remembrance.

I argue that juxtaposing Native and non-Native attitudes towards place highlighted profound cultural differences in the way societies and cultures remember. The memorialization project and the search for the site was often the subject of bitter debate among Euro-American communities and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. On the one hand, the act of publically commemorating place at Sand Creek, specifically by Euro-American communities, can be seen as an attempt to dominate, re-shape and ultimately forget elements of the massacre and the usurpation of Native land, and the need to make amends with the Native communities. That said, the process of working through conflicting memories at a specific site of remembrance accumulated the memory of disparate groups that may not have come together without the project. This ultimately challenged Euro-American dominance over the public memory of Sand Creek that had

previously governed commemoration at the site, and importantly allowed the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants actively to challenge dominant perceptions of their past and re-interpret the memory of Sand Creek. Massacre descendants used the renewed interest in Sand Creek during the memorialization process to foreground tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

To consider how the use of place in remembrance paradoxically highlights cultural contestation and inherent problems with collective memory, I shall begin by considering general cultural conflicts that arose when commemorating this disputed area of American history. Secondly, I shall look at the NPS's search for the site and the contestation this provoked from the massacre descendants. Thirdly, I shall pay close attention to the transcribed Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories, recorded during the memorialization project and obtained at the Stephen H. Hart Research Centre, to demonstrate tribal perceptions of place. The oral histories often existed in direct conflict to the archaeological and scientific views regarding the exact location of the massacre site. However, they also demonstrated the willingness of the NPS to work with the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants to create a cross-cultural memorialization project. Disagreements over place at Sand Creek demonstrated inherent problems in remembering across cultural divides. Cultural disputes did, however, lead to collaboration. Even though a unified cross-cultural memory was not achieved, the memory of Sand Creek demonstrates that collected memories that are culturally specific can exist together at a place of cross-cultural historical significance.

The Euro-American Search for the Site

I shall now consider the Euro-American attempts to establish the boundaries of the Sand Creek Massacre site, considering specifically local Euro-American communities and the

work of the NPS. Establishing the exact location of the site was of primary importance for these groups before they were to memorialize and dedicate it as a National Historic Site. I suggest location was deemed essential in the memorialization process at Sand Creek amongst Euro-Americans for the following reasons. Firstly, the local Euro-American landowners who claimed land that potentially rested within the boundaries of the site believed that, if the massacre had happened on their land, it would increase in value. Simultaneously, other landowners feared there would be an influx of unwanted tourism if it was concluded that the site lay within the boundaries of their property. Secondly, the dedication of memorials, particularly in Western cultures, often relies upon establishing the location where an event actually occurred. The process of finding the site within local Euro-American communities and the attempts made by the NPS demonstrated the significance of place in establishing Sand Creek's specific location: after all, Kelman referred to Sand Creek as a "Misplaced Massacre." As I shall demonstrate in my assessment of the Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories, this attitude to location did not apply for the Native massacre descendants who relied much more on abstract conceptions of place, such as sensing and feeling a connection to their relatives when they visited the site. I have chosen to consider the oral histories of the Cheyenne and Arapaho in more detail than the records of the NPS and Euro-American efforts to locate the site, primarily because Kelman detailed the process of locating the site in *A Misplaced Massacre.* To date, less scholarly attention has been paid to the oral histories of the Cheyenne and Arapaho. It is, however, important to consider Euro-American approaches to place at Sand Creek in order to highlight contrasts and similarities between the meaning of place in both cultures.

On October 6th, 1998, President Clinton signed the *Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site Act* into law. This authorized the NPS to: "identify the location and extent of the massacre area and the suitability and feasibility for designating the site a unit of

the National Park System."[1] Before I outline the aims and implications of this project, it is important to point out that Cheyenne and Arapaho played a key role in pushing this bill through Congress. From 1997, Colorado Senator Bill Nighthorse Campbell of Southern Cheyenne descent had been putting pressure on the NPS to consider the creation of a National Historic Site. This was not necessarily because the Native massacre descendants thought the location was essential to their remembrance but rather because, if the Sand Creek Massacre location turned into a National Historic Site, it would give the tribe an opportunity to portray their historical representations of the massacre and essentially challenge dominant Euro-American perceptions that had governed the memory of Sand Creek. Once Clinton had passed the bill, the NPS set to work immediately. The resulting text, which detailed the methodology and interdisciplinary methods of the project, was entitled, *Sand Creek Massacre Project, Volume 1: Site Location Study*. This document was prepared in conjunction with the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. The NPS provided an account of exactly what the site location study was and its aim in establishing the location of the site: "The National Park Service Sand Creek Massacre project team - comprised of the National Park Service staff, Colorado Historical Society staff, and representatives of the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and the Northern Arapaho Tribe - had taken a multi-disciplinary approach to finding the massacre site. As part of the site location effort, Cheyenne and Arapaho descendants of the Sand Creek Massacre told stories that had been handed down to them through the generations, including traditional tribal knowledge about the location of the site. Historians researched maps, diaries, reminiscences, and congressional and military investigative reports for information that might shed light on where the Sand Creek

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[1] *Site Location Study*, 138.

Massacre occurred."[2] Considering the significance the NPS gave to establishing the location of the site, it is important to define what the organisation meant by the location of the site. It included the Cheyenne and Arapaho village area, the Sandpits area, where the most intensive fighting took place and where many of the Cheyenne and Arapaho hid during the attack, as well as the point from which Chivington first entered the camp.

To carry out the study, the NPS used multiple sources, including evidence from people who were at the scene of the massacre, Native and non-Native, and from people who were at the site within five to 35 years after the massacre. Finally, they considered post-1900 historical documentation, including letters, maps, military reports and diary accounts. Using the sources listed above evidenced the NPS's traditional approach to historical research. However, as part of the interdisciplinary effort, the NPS also relied upon traditional tribal methods to help establish the location. These included tribal members: "sensing spiritual presences and/or of hearing the voices of woman and children and horses and other animals or of seeing domed lights while on the site of the massacre." They also relied upon the respected Cheyenne, Arrow Keeper, who in 1978 had dedicated what is now referred to as the Dawson Southbend as the Sand Creek Massacre site when he blessed it as sacred Cheyenne earth.[3]

The site location study is a prime example of the inter-disciplinary research methods used in the project. In theory, this would provide the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho the opportunity to work together and produce united remembrance and promote cross-cultural understanding between local Euro-American and Native American communities. The methods used by the NPS in the study highlighted the

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[2] *Sand Creek Massacre Project Volume One: Site Location Study*,1. This project was partially funded by grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program. It was prepared by the NPS's Intermountain region in consultation with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the Northern Arapaho Tribe and the State of Colorado.
[3] Greene and Scott, *Finding Sand Creek,* loc 1551. Scott and Greene explain the Sacred Arrowkeeper: "In Cheyenne society the Arrowkeeper occupies a supremely responsible religious position as keeper of the *Mahooste,* or four Sacred Arrows, that stand at the heart of tribal religious belief, embodying the future welfare of the people and representing a cornerstone of Cheyenne origin and culture."

almost obsessive connection local Euro-American communities had with establishing the location in order to memorialize it. To this extent, the inter-disciplinary research methods were Euro-centric because they were based on location, a concept that stemmed from Euro-American historians and the NPS and not a factor with which the Cheyenne and Arapaho were concerned. The project highlighted that the importance of place for the local Euro-American citizens and the work of the NPS was tied up in physical, geographical location.

In discussing a long-term collaborative project between white scholars and members of the Alutiiq tribe, anthropologist James Clifford stressed that it is vital to "keep in view multiple producers and consumers of Native heritage" (8) Clearly, the Native voice should be included in projects that discuss their culture. Renegotiations between Native Americans and the academic establishment are required and noted the forward direction involved collaborative projects after the Native Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990, as well as the Smithsonian's "decisive" move towards "collaboration with indigenous communities" in the 1990s.[4]

The NPS and Colorado historians and archaeologists all relied upon maps and archaeology to establish the location of the site. Both these methods were Euro-centric in their approach and often produced contention between the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho. The search for the site began in 1993 when Colorado's Chief Historian, David Haalas, received information from a group of amateur archaeologists who had been on a dig at the Dawson Southbend, where it was originally believed, by both

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[4] J. Clifford, 'Looking Several Ways: Anthropology and Native Heritage in Alaska'. *Current Anthropology* 45, 1 (2004) 5-30: 10. Clifford's 'Looking Both Ways' project, in line with this approach, showed that texts accompanying artifacts, that included both contextualizations and quotes from elders recorded at meetings made for striking "multivocality," and the result of collaboration was "a sharply increased Native presence in Alaska public culture" The project made a great effort not to objectify the Alutiiqs. Clifford, *Looking Both Ways*, 10, 11, 14.
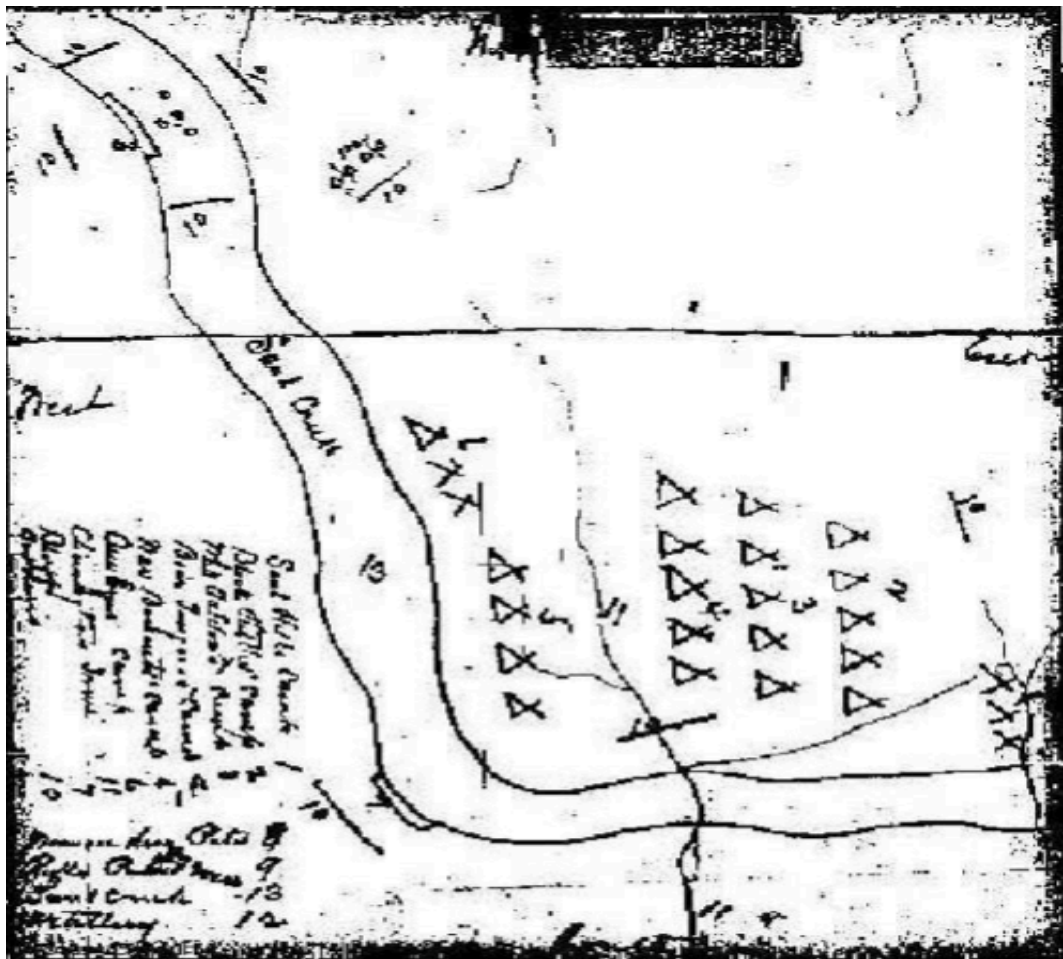
Native and non-Native communities, that the massacre had occurred. However, the archaeologists returned from their expedition empty-handed, causing debate over the location of the site. Haalas began the search which laid the basis for the NPS's project to turn Sand Creek into a National Historic Site. The regional National Park historian Jerome A. Greene and archaeologist Douglas D. Scott were key figures involved in the NPS efforts to locate the site. Both men argued that the location of the site was conclusively evidenced in a map drawn by Lieutenant Samual A. Bosnall in 1868.[5] Bosnall had been present at the Sand Creek Massacre as one of the Volunteers under Chivington's command. His map resurfaced in 1992 and suggested that the location of the site was in a different place to the area suggested by Cheyenne Warrior, George Bent. Bent's was the map relied upon by the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants as evidence of Sand Creek's location. Greene and Scott were adamant that Bosnall's map showed the correct location because it coincided with archaeological findings discovered in the area on a dig conducted by members of the NPS and Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants. Remnants of the Cheyenne and Arapaho camp and evidence of the Volunteers' weaponry was found at the site delineated in Bosnall's map.

There were problems for the Cheyenne and Arapaho communities regarding the NPS's use of Bosnall's map, as well as the subsequent excavation of the land. Firstly, although the location of the massacre site was later agreed upon, using information from both Bent's and Bosnall's maps, the initial determination that Bosnall's map pinpointed the site was met with contempt by the Cheyenne and Arapaho who had always relied upon Bent's map. For the Cheyenne and Arapaho, Bent's map, coupled with his words detailing the massacre, proved that the atrocity had happened on the Dawson ranch, which the descendants had been visiting for many years and conducting ceremonies.

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[5] Greene and Scott, *Finding Sand Creek,* loc 730-731.

Bent stated that the camp was near running water, about "forty miles northeast of Fort Lyon."[6] Bent referred to a bend in the creek where people were running from Chivington and his men. Bosnall's map, however, was used unabashedly by the NPS as evidence of Sand Creek's location. This was regarded as discourteous by the Cheyenne and Arapaho because it undermined their position. Secondly, the NPS's excavation of land that could potentially house the graves of Cheyenne and Arapaho killed in the massacre was deemed disrespectful by some massacre descendants. Clearly, the methods used by the NPS sometimes exhibited a lack of cultural understanding of Cheyenne and Arapaho.

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[6] Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 151.

Figure 4: George Bent's Map. This image depicts George Bent's original map, drawn soon after the massacre, depicting the layout of the Cheyenne and Arapaho village. The numbers, although hard to decipher, demonstrate the advance of the massacre. Number 10, for example, depicts where Chivington entered the camp in relation to the village which is numbers 1-6, *Site Location Study*, 39.

Figure 5: Bent/Hyde Map, 1890-1891. This map depicts the vicinity of the Sand Creek Massacre and was made in conjunction with George Bent and his biographer George E. Hyde. Hyde asked Bent to annotate his map, which was traced from the 1890-91 USGS map. Bent placed the massacre between points one and two on the map. 1 marked the Dawson South Bend and 2 marked a spot near Sand Creek. *Site Location* Study, 24. Bent's map and the one above were relied upon by the Cheyenne and Arapaho as the correct placing of Sand Creek.
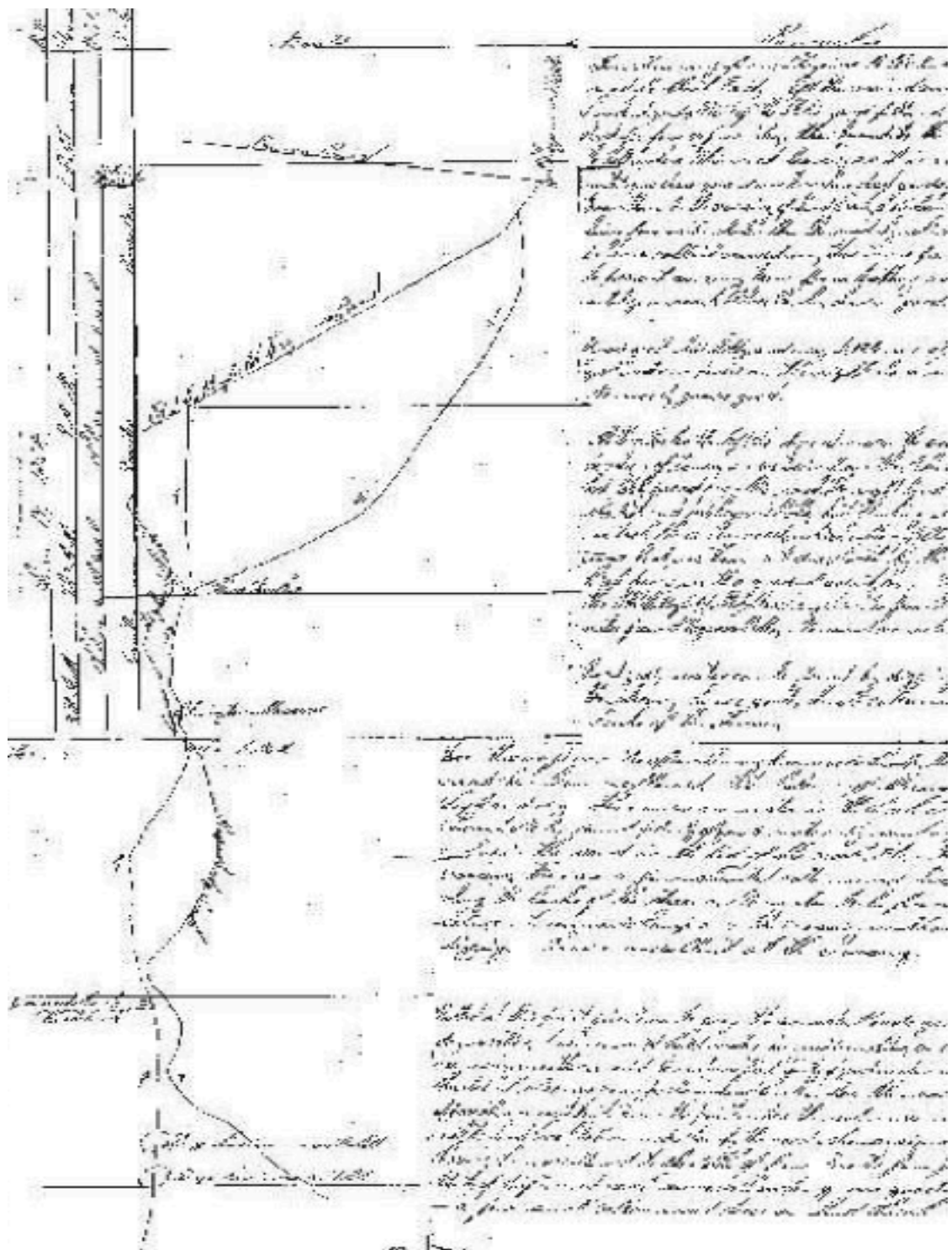
Figure 6: Samual A. Bosnall map, 1868. To date, the Bosnall map is the most contemporary indication of the massacre's location. Although not clear, "Chivington's Massacre," is depicted by the line on the center of the map. *Site Location Study*, 41. It was agreed by historians and archeologists that this map depicted the most accurate location of the massacre.

Problematically, although efforts to locate the site were interdisciplinary and used some Cheyenne and Arapaho methods, the project was decidedly Euro-centric in that mapping and archaeology were overwhelmingly used to establish the site location and were regarded as superior methods to Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories. Furthermore, for Euro-American communities, the foundation of remembering Sand Creek lay in the establishment of territory and boundaries. Without first establishing a firm perception of place, it seemed unlikely that a memorialization project would happen.

To conclude this brief assessment of Euro-American efforts, the interdisciplinary methods used by the NPS in their attempt to establish the extent and boundaries of the Sand Creek Massacre site highlighted cultural differences in perceptions of place and how place at Sand Creek was used by Euro-American communities to formulate remembrance of the massacre. For the NPS and local Euro-American communities, it was essential that the exact location of the site be established before the massacre could be memorialized. Perceptions of place were based upon scientific evidence as opposed to the more abstract Cheyenne and Arapaho conceptions. Most significantly, the inter-disciplinary efforts to locate the site highlighted the NPS's attempts to dominate the process of memory at Sand Creek with Euro-centric methods. This emphasized the problematic nature of collectively remembering such a contested area of American history. The specificities of finding the site highlighted that what was of concern for Euro-American communities to commemorate and remember were very different to the Cheyenne and Arapaho methods of remembering.

I shall conclude by arguing that these conflicts over place and location brought together a disparate cast of characters and opened the possibility of creating a culturally diverse form of remembrance. This is further demonstrated by the oral histories of the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants.

The Sand Creek Massacre Oral History Project: Cheyenne and Arapaho

Perceptions of Place and Memory at Sand Creek

The Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants' Oral History Project was conducted in conjunction with the NPS in 1999 and formed part of the *Sand Creek Massacre Project Volume One, Site Location Study*. I have made extensive use of this study that I obtained at the Stephen H. Hart research Centre, because it contains excellent transcriptions of oral histories. It is important to stress that this project has not been used as a complete source before its inclusion in this thesis. Historians of the massacre, with the exception of Kelman, have paid scant attention to the oral histories of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, yet, as I demonstrate, the Oral History Project provides a compelling insight into Native relationships with memory, place and the massacre site.

Oral histories formed part of the NPS's inter-disciplinary research methods and the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants' oral histories were a primary line of enquiry in efforts to locate the site. Oral history is the collection and study of historical information using sound recordings of interviews with people who have personal knowledge of past events. For the purpose of *The Sand Creek Massacre Site Location Study*, oral history is defined thus: "Approached in its broadest sense as a primary source material derived from recording oral tradition: the transmission of social group or family knowledge of its own history through repetition of stories from one generation to the next."[7] The interviews demonstrated the culturally specific significance the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants attributed to the site in the formation of their memories: a sense of place was integral to the memories of Sand Creek for the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Secondly, the project highlighted the juxtaposition of Native and non-Native conflicts over the meaning and importance of place at the site. However, more positively, it was simultaneously an example of the NPS and Native

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[7] *Site Location Study*, 139.

communities working together in an attempt to reconcile their often disparate memories of Sand Creek.

Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories challenged perceptions of place, including the initial NPS obsession with locating the exact boundaries of the site using scientific and archaeological methods. The massacre descendants' reaction to place, and what I refer to throughout this section as their spiritual and continuous connection to the site, often existed in direct conflict with the scientific methods used by the NPS. The oral histories implied that the Cheyenne and Arapaho were not necessarily preoccupied with the precise location of the site in order to remember and memorialize the massacre. Instead, they were primarily concerned with connecting in the present to their relatives killed at Sand Creek and remembering them according to their own tribal histories, whilst working to preserve their memories for future Cheyenne and Arapaho generations.

I shall consider the methodologies used by the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, the oral transcripts of the Native massacre descendants and how these demonstrate their strong and continuous connection to place, but also their desire to keep their memories private to prevent them becoming distorted by federal authority. Finally, I shall consider the problems inherent in the inter-disciplinary Oral History Project. Through analysis of the project, I shall highlight that place at Sand Creek was too contested to be a viable source of collective remembrance, but also that the process of inter-disciplinary research helped cultural understanding as Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants challenged dominant historical perceptions of Sand Creek.

In 1998 the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Study Act directed the NPS to gather Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants' oral histories in order to help

establish the locations and boundaries of the massacre site.[8] The project, under the

leadership of Dr Alexa Roberts, who at the time of the study was an anthropologist with

the NPS Intermountain Support Office, gathered 32 oral histories of Southern

Cheyenne, Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho massacre descendants. These oral

histories were compiled into *The Sand Creek Massacre: Site Location Study* and were

used as a primary source of evidence to locate the massacre site. The report stated: "The

oral history component of the Sand Creek Massacre's site location study … is intended

to record and document Cheyenne and Arapaho family stories about the Sand Creek

Massacre, with an emphasis on traditional knowledge and geography of the massacre

site."[9] Whilst the report was produced for the official record of the NPS investigations

of the massacre site's location, it was noted that the oral histories would also provide

unique insight into Cheyenne and Arapaho histories of the massacre.

It is important to note that, before the Sand Creek Massacre Study Act was signed into

law in 1998, Colorado Congressman Bob Schaffer told the NPS that a collection of

Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories would be an essential component of NPS efforts

to locate the site. Had Schaffer not stressed the importance of incorporating the oral

histories, they may not have been included. This is significant as it points to NPS

dominance over the project and a failure to recognize oral histories as a valid source of

historical evidence until explicitly asked to do so. The project's preamble reminded

readers of the cultural sensitivity of the oral histories and stated they exist as a "record

of the cultural patrimony and the intellectual property of the individuals to whom the

story belongs."[10] Despite this, the problem of Euro-centric historical attitudes continued

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[8] The purpose of the bill was as follows: "Under the bill as it passed the House and Senate, the secretary is directed to consult with the State of Colorado and the Tribes to conduct a resource study of the site. Such consultation should necessarily include efforts to record the histories of tribal elders. I urge you to see that every effort is made to do that. Besides providing valuable insight and historical information, those recollections may even establish the precise location of the massacre site." (*Site Location Study*, 138)
[9] *Site Location Study*, 139.
[10] *Site Location Study*, 138,

to arise throughout the Oral History Project and, as I shall detail below, Cheyenne and Arapaho questioned whether their histories were being considered with due sensitivity by the NPS.

Considering the sensitive nature of their research, the NPS had to be very careful when gathering the oral histories. In order to carry out the project with respect, the NPS entered into a cooperative agreement with the Northern and Southern Arapaho and the Northern Cheyenne tribes. This essentially meant that interviews of massacre descendants were conducted by other tribal members, often in the Cheyenne or Arapaho language, as opposed to them being interviewed by a member of the NPS. The Southern Cheyenne did not enter into a cooperative agreement and their oral history interviews were conducted by the NPS. Background preparation for the project began in January and February 1999 when Alexa Roberts made preliminary visits to the tribes in an effort to discuss approaches to oral histories and implementation of the cooperative agreements. Roberts assisted tribal representatives in oral history data collection management, based upon methods each tribe deemed culturally appropriate. A preliminary list of questions was also prepared, "designed to elicit information as to the location of the site."[11] These questions were then moderated, based upon feedback from tribal representatives.

It was crucial to the descendants that the oral histories were gathered with respect to their histories and memories. Throughout the oral history report the NPS stressed the importance of conducting their research within a culturally sensitive framework. The massacre descendants did not want their stories distorted in any way: "participants were reminded that the first people the stories belonged to [were] the interviewees, and that their intellectual property rights must be guarded at all times." It was also stated that, even though the primary purpose of the studies was to establish the site's location, it

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[11] *Site Location Study*, 14, 149, 144.

was necessary to ensure that the information collected belonged to the "people who provided it." Concern was therefore raised by the massacre descendants that that their histories remain their own intellectual property. Following meetings about confidentiality of information, the massacre descendants drafted a memorandum of understanding between the NPS and the tribes. The memorandum stated the following: "Methods and protocols will be developed jointly by the NPS and the involved tribal organization may impose confidentiality restrictions to protect sacred or culturally sensitive matters."[12]

The methodology used to gather the Cheyenne and Arapaho histories was a good example of the collaboration between the NPS and the massacre descendants in an attempt to create a balanced cross-cultural representation of Sand Creek. However, despite the emphasis on cultural sensitivity, the methodological framework was constructed by the NPS. This meant it had a Euro-centric pattern in that the questions were formulated specifically to elicit the responses the NPS wanted answered about the site's location, as opposed to portraying the meaning and significance of the Cheyenne and Arapaho histories in their own right. To conclude, whilst the methodology was a good example of the interdisciplinary methods of the NPS and NPS and massacre descendants' cooperation, it also shed light on the very different attitudes to place of each group.

An Analysis of the Oral History Project

A close analysis of the Oral History Project provides a unique insight into the unique nature of Cheyenne and Arapaho memories of Sand Creek as well as the massacre descendants' connection to place at the site. Although there were 32 interviews carried out with members of the Northern and Southern Arapaho and the Northern and

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[12] *Site Location Study,* 151, 144.

Southern Cheyenne, I have made use only of the interviews that most directly relate to the descendants' opinion of place and memory. The oral histories showed just how different Cheyenne and Arapaho ideas of place at Sand Creek were from the views of the NPS. The key difference, garnered from the oral histories, was that the majority of massacre descendants felt a continuous connection to place at Sand Creek which informed their present memories of the massacre. By comparison, the NPS and many local residents relegated Sand Creek to the past. In their view, it was to be memorialized as a historic event. Memory, for the Cheyenne and Arapaho, was part of an on-going process and not a static event. This highlighted the problems of producing a collaborative cultural project which has been emphasized by ethnographers who have worked with oral histories.

Clifford, whose "Looking Several Ways" project is referred to above, discussed the "obstacles and opportunities" involved in using ethnographic material. Clifford considered the nature of collaborative work, stressing the need for "the potential for alliances when they are based on shared resources … and relations of genuine respect." This project contained the overall Alutiiq message of "We are still here, looking back to go forward," with a "multivocal, juxtaposing [of] voices without seeking to express a single, coherent 'Alutiiq' or 'scientific' perspective." No longer would "a white, usually male, curator [decide] by himself the theme and content of an exhibition." Using Alutiiq and scholarly input, the project used compromise. Consultation and "equality and respect" were its watchwords.[13]

One key factor brought forward during the Sand Creek Oral History Project was the spiritual connection the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants felt towards Sand Creek which the Euro-American historical team often found difficult to translate into usable evidence to locate the site. To consider the connection the Cheyenne and

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[13] J. Clifford, 'Looking Several Ways', 5, 21, 22.

Arapaho had to place at Sand Creek, I shall begin by looking at the spiritual and continuous connection the tribes had to place and what this communicated about the way they remembered. I shall then analyse why Cheyenne and Arapaho histories have remained largely within the confines of the tribes. Finally, I shall assess how the massacre descendants thought the site should be publically remembered and memorialized. By considering these key areas, I shall demonstrate that memory of Sand Creek was culturally and even tribally specific.

The most interesting element of the oral histories in relation to this particular study is what they communicated about tribally specific Native perceptions of place. The interviews also demonstrated deeply personal connections to the site. An analysis of the Oral History Project revealed that the descendants had what they described as a very real connection to their ancestors when they visited Sand Creek. The massacre descendants often said they could "feel" or "sense" their relatives when they visited certain locations at Sand Creek. The site became a place where they could reconnect with their past in the present. Unlike the NPS, the Cheyenne and Arapaho did not formulate their memories around establishing the exact location of the massacre site. Kiowa Arapaho massacre descendant, Robert Toahty, was asked by Alexa Roberts what he felt when he visited Sand Creek: "I sat there by the trees facing north, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and I could hear about a dozen children up in the trees. You could hear them giggling.… Later on when it started getting dark I went on down and you could hear old women talking around the trees." Toahty continued: "If you ever go out there, don't do any research on it, just go learn. Don't go with any hard feelings, just an open mind. If you sit on the ground, put some dirt on yourself. Pick up some rocks, because the rocks will talk to you.… The thing about rocks is you have to hold them and listen for a long time before you can understand what they are talking about because their time is slow." Toahty provided the most detailed description of his

psychological and physical experiences when he visited the massacre site. His reaction to the site and his connection to the past was real and physical. Similarly, Southern Cheyenne William Red Hat, spoke of a spiritual connection to the site. He was asked by Roberts if he thought the location where the original "Sand Creek Battle" memorial was erected in the 1950s could be the exact place of the Sand Creek Massacre, to which he responded that he felt nothing of his relatives when he visited the area: "We were told that was a place where people got killed, but as far as gut feelings, I didn't feel anything."[14] Cheyenne and Arapaho spiritual responses to Sand Creek ranged from feelings and senses to physical experiences of their ancestors at the site.

Neither Toahty's nor Red Hat's answer to Roberts' questions would necessarily be deemed useful to a Euro-American anthropologist concerned with locating the site but Toahty and Red Hat's explanations are valuable in providing excellent insight into the spiritual meaning of place for both the Cheyenne and the Arapaho. Southern Cheyenne Chief Laird Cometsevah also remarked: " … Cheyennes have a different view than other Indians or white men. White men call it a sixth sense, maybe the Cheyenne have an extra sense, where they can feel or see spirits or areas where spirits are present."[15]

Some of these accounts relating to senses and feelings were treated skeptically by the NPS as they were not regarded as historically factual or scientific information that would be useful in locating the site. The spiritual connection some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho felt to the site were not deemed enough evidence in their own right to identify the location of Sand Creek, but they did reveal the personal and very real connection these descendants felt to Sand Creek. As a side note, it has to be acknowledged that not every Cheyenne or Arapaho who visits the site feels a strong spiritual connection to the

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[14] *Site Location Study*, 217, 220, 212.
[15] *Site Location Study*, 228.

place, although the majority of interviewees did state that they felt the presence of their ancestors when they visited the site.

For the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, Sand Creek is not a historical event but is very much a part of their present lives. The oral histories evidenced that Cheyenne and Arapaho memory was part of a continuous process. In her introduction to the project, Roberts wrote: "For most people who ever talked about Sand Creek, it is evident that the Sand Creek Massacre is not an event relegated to the past, but is a very real part of the Cheyenne peoples' contemporary identity, as individual descendants and as a tribe." Southern Cheyenne Colleen Cometsevah remarked: "The stories are very much alive and handed down." Similarly, Cheyenne Chief Joe Osage stated: "As far as Sand Creek goes, I know the name of the place and I know that a lot of people died there and even though it's been many years and we've moved far from that place, we still grieve." Some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho felt a continuous connection to their ancestors at the site. Robert Toahty said: "After being at the site, it's like they [his ancestors] were trying to teach me something. Like 'hey don't forget us, we're still here. The old ones and the young ones doing battle and the babies, we're still here.'" Toahty, referring to the massacre, remarked: "We are reliving the nightmare over and over again."[16]

The oral histories demonstrate a continuous and present connection to place. Unlike the Euro-American communities involved in memorializing the site, place is not relegated to the past as a historical landmark by massacre descendants. Whilst not every Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendant felt a spiritual connection to their ancestors when they visited the site, nearly all those interviewed implied a continuous connection to the site. This may be because the tribes have not been reconciled to their past. It has not been remembered appropriately, specifically within Euro-American

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[16] *Site Location Study* ,59, 205, 215, 220, 215.

communities. What is clear is that Cheyenne and Arapaho memories of the site were much more associated with the present than those of the NPS and the local Euro-American communities.

Before the commencement of *The Site Location Study*, the majority of massacre descendants had retained their own histories of Sand Creek within the tribe. The reasons for this were as follows. Firstly, for the Cheyenne and Arapaho to speak publically of Sand Creek, especially amongst Euro-American communities, was a painful process as some had lost direct relatives in the massacre and it was a destructive time in their community history. Southern Cheyenne, Emma Red Hat, told Roberts about the painful process for the massacre descendants of telling histories of Sand Creek: "What they talk about is, well they never really forgot what happened. They would cry whenever they told about Sand Creek." Similarly, Northern Arapaho Evangeline C'Hair speaks of how her grandmother used to tell her of Sand Creek in the Arapaho language: "She told me, but I forgot you know, because she told me to forget what she told me, to get it out of my mind."[17] The pain of memory meant the history of Sand Creek was lost, even to some of the massacre descendants. If it was difficult to share this history within their own tribe, it has to be understood that to do so publically was very difficult.

Secondly, the descendants kept their histories of Sand Creek largely private because of the historical persecution they faced for publically speaking about their culture. In the introduction to the Oral History Project, Roberts stated: "The massacre … set the course for more than a century of federal policies that have induced poverty and eroded the transmission of cultural knowledge from generation to generation, to the extent that some Cheyenne ceremonial and traditional practices were almost extinct only 20 years ago."[18] Referring to the massacre descendants' relative silence surrounding their history

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[17] *Site Location Study,* 209, 184.
[18] *Site Location Study,* 159.

of Sand Creek, Kelman noted that tribes across North America had been discouraged, often violently, for speaking of their histories. This, he stated, happened from the reservation era until relatively recently. Kelman felt this meant that the stories often took on added significance because they were "endangered and thus preserved from prying eyes."[19] Historical abuse by federal authorities meant the massacre descendants were still wary of sharing their culture and history with an organization like the NPS for fear that their histories of Sand Creek would be distorted. Cheyenne Chief, Laird Comesetvah remarked that his family had personally kept their histories private for the following reason: "These families each have stories of the atrocities that happened to their family members. That's what stuck in their minds. My dad told me, but it was hard for a lot of our elders to tell these stories because they never did trust anyone again after that [the massacre.] They never trusted white people again."[20] The oral histories demonstrated a distinct lack of trust from the Cheyenne and Arapaho towards federal control, stemming from a history of persecution.

Despite the historical silence around Sand Creek, some massacre descendants conceded that it was time to speak publically of their past, if the dominant Euro-American memory of Sand Creek was to be restructured and told from their perspective. As Roberts noted: "No one wants to talk about it but some people concede that they must if the person might benefit the Cheyenne people."[21] Finally, the Oral History Project revealed how memorializing the site might benefit the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

An important set of questions throughout the interview process related to asking massacre descendants how they thought Sand Creek would be best remembered. The majority of massacre descendants interviewed thought that it was important that Sand Creek was dedicated a national historical site in order that their version of the massacre

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[19] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 47.
[20] *Site Location Study,*232.
[21] *Site Location Study,*159.

was displayed to the public but, more importantly, that the history of the massacre was kept alive for future generations of Cheyenne and Arapaho.

However, some massacre descendants had reservations because they did not want the slaughter of their relatives to become a tourist attraction. Robert Toahty remarked that he did not want the NPS profiting from a massacre: "If the park service is going to do something that has to do with the Indians, let the Indians decide. Let the Cheyennes and Arapahos have first say.… This is our legacy and we have to learn from it. So don't turn it into a national park where people can trample all over it." Similarly, Southern Cheyenne Joe Osage stated that he was wary about the NPS controlling the site: "That's why I feel strongly that it not be made a tourist attraction but a place people can grieve and express themselves in a way that traditional people and non-traditional people might not."[22] Massacre descendants wanted to memorialize Sand Creek in their own way, believing that they and not the NPS should direct the process, especially considering the history of wrongdoing towards tribes from federal organizations.

One significant element garnered from the oral histories was that the massacre descendants thought it was important to pass their stories down to future Cheyenne and Arapaho generations. Northern Arapaho, Mrs Cleone Thunder, expressed the importance of publically acknowledging the Arapaho version of history to prevent their communities from continued cultural annihilation: "You have to speak up. We were free at one time. Now the government are closing in on our land. Once we had a lot of land.… We have to hang on to our land for our kids and future generations." Keeping a grasp on their land was especially important so younger members of the Arapaho tribe would understand their history. Joe Osage also expressed the importance of younger Native generations being aware of their past: "Somehow we need to gather what

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[22] *Site Location Study,* 221, 214.

knowledge is left of that so that our grandchildren and great grandchildren have some knowledge of these places."[23]

The oral histories also revealed that memorialization of the massacre site was important to many Cheyenne and Arapaho because they could restructure the history of the massacre according to their own view and challenge Euro-centric ideas of memories at the site. Joe Osage stated: "We are not interested in compensation, we are interested in preserving the memory of our people. A memorial with the names would be good." The Cheyenne and Arapaho rightly believed that a memorial of the massacre told from their perspective would give them the recognition they deserved. Southern Cheyenne, Lyman Weasel Bear Sr., when asked how the site should be managed if it became part of the NPS said: "The site should be remembered.… America could have stepped into the Holocaust when the Jews were being killed but they didn't and now the Jewish people are honoured but the Indians still haven't been." Osage further stated: "The Jews won't let the world forget about the Holocaust, but the world has never been told about the pain and suffering our people have endured."[24]

The oral histories refer to the very different way the massacre descendants would memorialize the site in comparison to the NPS approach. Weasel Bear remarked: "We should ask the people that have come back as a new person and honour them and locate them.… They could give a spiritual location through the Spirit Lodge ceremony, but you can't speak lightly of that. It's very sacred and very hidden away."[25] For Weasel Bear, memorialization would be a sacred process that linked him to his past at Sand Creek, not something public for any visitor to the site, Native or non-Native, to experience. Therefore, although it was agreed that both the NPS and the descendants

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[23] *Site Location Study*, 167, 214.
[24] *Site Location Study*, 216, 190, 214.
[25] *Site Location Study*, 190.

wanted to memorialize the massacre, the cultural difference in the significance of Sand Creek meant this would be very difficult.

The connection the massacre descendants often feel when they visit the site is very different from what others may feel when they visit Sand Creek. Because of this, some Cheyenne and Arapaho did not believe that Euro-Americans have understood the significance of Native American massacre sites for those who lost relatives. Speaking of the massacre of Southern Cheyenne at the Washita Massacre in 1867, Joe Osage said: "A lot of non-Cheyenne don't feel that [connection to relatives] when they go over here. That's why I felt that anything people would do wouldn't be appropriate to memorialize it and I feel the same way about Sand Creek."[26]

To conclude, the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants' views on memorialization demonstrate how culturally specific memory is. The cultural differences between Euro-American groups such as the NPS, as well as their different historical connections to Sand Creek, revealed that it would be very difficult to create a cross-cultural memorial. However, the descendants' reactions to the memorialization process also revealed their willingness to work with the NPS to establish a suitable commemoration. Furthermore, it demonstrated that the Cheyenne and Arapaho were re-structuring dominant perceptions that had previously governed the history of Sand Creek.

The Oral History Project was not concluded without conflict. The majority of problems encountered by the NPS when they were gathering and using Cheyenne and Arapaho

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[26] *Site Location Study*, 214. Washita Massacre happened on November 27th, 1867. Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and the 7th US cavalry attacked Chief Black Kettle's Southern Cheyenne Camp. Approximately 50 Southern Cheyenne were massacred including Black Kettle. The attack was deemed a massacre because the encampment was made up of non-combatant Cheyenne, elderly, women and children. Therefore, the camp was un-prepared and defenceless. The massacre occurred nearly exactly four years after Sand Creek.

oral histories in the site location study were related to the cultural sensitivity of the information they were transcribing. Native massacre descendants worried about copyright of their histories, inappropriate methods used to gather their histories and cultural appropriation. Roberts stated: "From the outset, a source of frustration was the need to rush the process of consultation and asking such respected tribal members for stories." For the descendants, the process of gathering the oral histories was far too quick to give either the NPS or the tribes time to use the correct methods for gathering the stories. "According to the [Northern Cheyenne] tribal members if time allowed the use of appropriate traditional methods a respected, knowledgeable, older tribal member would have visited in advance and at length with each person from whom a story was being sought."[27] However, lack of time and access to funding meant this could not be done. In turn, this affected both the number of oral histories the NPS could collect and the quality of the interviews. Furthermore, it is likely that the massacre descendants were not as forthcoming with information as the short time-scale demonstrated a lack of respect from the NPS towards their sensitive histories.

There are, of course, problems with transcribing oral histories: meaning can get lost when the spoken word is written down. The NPS did recognise the problems involved with transcribing oral histories: "There is an irony in committing to writing stories that were meant to be handed down by way of spoken word, because by presenting these stories in writing, something is also taken away." Whilst the NPS stated that the report was prepared with respect, they also concluded that they could not represent the meaning or significance the histories held for the descendants, especially when these spoken histories were transcribed. Clearly, for the Cheyenne and Arapaho, Sand Creek was significant in different ways from its meaning for Euro-American communities. As a result of inherent cultural differences, it was impossible for many non-Native cultures

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[27] *Site Location Study*,157.

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to fully engage and empathize with the written oral histories and the depth of meaning these histories held for the Cheyenne and Arapaho. From the oral histories, it was ascertained that the descendants were far more attached to the site and its meaning than was understood by Euro-Americans. The report stated: "It is difficult but important to portray the depth of emotion attached to any discussion of the Sand Creek Massacre, among descendants, and its presence in peoples' everyday lives. Many descendants identify themselves as being 'from' Sand Creek, or Washita, or Little Bighorn [other massacre sites].…"[28] A certain amount of evidence provided by the tribes, such as the very real connection they felt to their ancestors when they visited the site, does not translate easily into Euro-American scientific and historical patterns of finding geographical location. This is a major problem with the inter-disciplinary nature of the research: it does not always cross cultural boundaries.

Some of the oral histories were conducted in the Cheyenne and Arapaho languages and then translated into English. The report stated that project staff were "extremely concerned" about the accurate interpretation of the oral histories into English. The depth of meaning was therefore difficult to convey in the transcripts, especially as some words from the indigenous language do not translate directly into English. Referring to the Oral History Project, Southern Cheyenne Joe Osage remarked on the difficulty with oral history if transcribed into a chronological piece: "We found that communication, even in our community, the stories get carried out and they've changed. It's the same way with oral histories."[29] One of the main issues with passing down oral information is that it becomes distorted as it takes on the personality of the teller.

The reliablility of oral history as a source of historical knowledge is questionable. Many of the massacre descendants' stories had been handed down over two generations,

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[28] *Site Location Study*,158.
[29] *Site Location Study*,158, 215.

meaning their factual accuracy is problematic. However, arguing that oral histories are an unreliable source of historical knowledge is a Euro-centric position. For example, the Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories are not intended to be a recording of historical fact: "Embedded in the Cheyenne language stories are statements that the storyteller is not vouching for the truthfulness of the story itself, only that it is being repeated exactly as it was heard."[30] Although this is accepted within Cheyenne culture, it is hard to translate the idea into Euro-American culture, especially when using oral histories to help formulate Euro-centric historical research such as the importance of maps and primary documents. We rely on the idea that these documents represent the basis of truth, or at least that their untruth can be proved. By comparison, the Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories are not based upon validating historical truth but on handing down stories from generation to generation. The connection to the past remains but is based upon family and community bonds as opposed to fact.

That oral histories are not necessarily concerned with detailed truthfulness demonstrates a problem of interdisciplinary research. Methods do not necessarily cross cultural boundaries and it is therefore difficult for one group not to argue their methods are superior and try to dominate the process. In terms of locating the extent and boundaries of the site, the connection that some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho felt to their ancestors when they visited the massacre site was not used as evidence of the site's exact location. For example, the Kiowa/Arapaho Sand Creek Massacre descendant, Robert Toahty, claimed that he could tell the battle had been scattered: "You can go there and you can just feel it." Toahty claimed he walked as far as he could "feel the Cheyenne and Arapaho people."[31] This was never used as independent evidence of the site's location. Instead, the oral histories were often used to support already established Euro-American historical perceptions. In, *Finding Sand* Creek, Greene and Scott noted that the oral

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[30] *Site Location Study*, 158.
[31] *Site Location Study*, 218.

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histories did "provide general topographical information ... that was consistent with the area of the projected site as archeologically disclosed."[32] The oral histories were used for the purpose of justifying what the maps and archaeology had already presented about the site. Native perceptions of place, or what tribal members could teach about place, were not necessarily regarded as important in their own right. Furthermore, I re-emphasize that the Oral History Project was designed by the NPS in an attempt to establish the exact location of the massacre site, a matter that was not of the primary concern of the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Clifford noted the change in "general assumptions of scientific authority" in the work of Western academics towards a view that these are now "understood as modes of colonial domination from the other side of a structural power imbalance" Yet ultimately, the collaborative efforts of oral histories and documentary evidence leads to a multi-layered approach to Native and Euro-American history. Clifford's project, like the Sand Creek Massacre Oral History project was the result of collaboration and inclusion. It did not, of course, "solve the problems of the situation of Native peoples in the contemporary world", this being perhaps in impossible task. However, the project did acknowledge the inequalities and the differences of values and made clear the importance of indigenous input.[33]

To conclude, the Oral History Project was the most fascinating area of the *Site Location Study*. Considering the purpose of the oral histories in establishing the exact location of the massacre site, it is difficult to ascertain how successful Cheyenne and Arapaho histories were at this. Greene and Scott wrote that the interviews did provide some insight into the location, although their reliability was limited because interviewee responses varied considerably.[34] However, the project demonstrated the productivity of inter-disciplinary research in crossing cultural divides and how disparate cultures could

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[32] Greene and Scott, *Finding Sand Creek,* loc 1538.
[33] Clifford, 'Looking Several Ways', 5, 19.
[34] Greene and Scott, *Finding Sand Creek,* 1536.

work towards understanding one another. It simultaneously exposed just how culturally specific memory of Sand Creek was for both the Cheyenne and Arapaho and the NPS. The project highlighted the different attitudes to place and especially to memory of Native and non-Native communities. Tribal perceptions of place often existed in direct conflict with Euro-American scientific ideas of place. Euro-American memory was focused on establishing the site's location in order to award Sand Creek Historic Landmark status, whereas, for the Cheyenne and Arapaho, the importance of the site lay in their memories there becoming a very real and continuous process.

To conclude, the site location study and the memorialization process at Sand Creek was complex and often divisive. Throughout the project, the varied Native and non-Native cultural perceptions of place demonstrated at Sand Creek were too different to provide a viable source of collective memory. However, the collaborative project did create the possibility of cross-cultural memorialization and understanding. Although the Euro-American and Native memories of Sand Creek were not collective, different memories now attached to a shared site of atrocity, creating a memorial of collected and different memories in the same sphere. Most importantly, the memorialization project saw the Cheyenne and Arapaho challenge dominant Euro-American ideas of Sand Creek that had previously governed the massacre's public memory, and construct their own public representation of the Sand Creek Massacre.

As a result of the site location study, the boundaries of the Sand Creek Massacre site were established. It was concluded that the initial point of entry from Chivington and the Volunteers took place on the Southbend of the Dawson ranch. However, it was believed that the Cheyenne and Arapaho encampment was actually at the northernmost edge of the Dawson Southbend, as suggested by archaeological evidence found at the site. In October 2000 the site finally won congressional approval to become a National Historic Site and was given to be held in trust by the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes by

the United States Government. On September the 9[th,] 2006, Tribal Bill 01-08-02 was signed into law: "A Bill to authorize the governor to sign the conveyance of the former Dawson Ranch to the United States to hold in trust for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes." This piece of legislation stated that: "the Sand Creek Massacre and its related history is central to the identity and sovereignty of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes."[35] Despite its Euro-centric tones, the site location study had been successful both in establishing the location of the massacre site and providing the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants a place where they could publically present their own histories of the massacre.

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[35] Tribal Bill quoted in Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 255.

Conclusion: The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

This section, *The Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 and the Topographies of Memory*, has argued that place at Sand Creek is too culturally conflicted to be a viable expression of collective memory. Sand Creek is the site of huge reverberating loss and has therefore been very difficult to remember across disparate cultural boundaries, as the collaborative memorialization project demonstrated. In fact, at the site currently, the local and national Euro-American memorials, as well as the Cheyenne and Arapaho memorials, represent over ten years of cultural disagreements and simultaneous understanding. Despite this, however, the Native and non-Native memorials remain culturally specific, each telling its own version of the history of Sand Creek. To complete this section, I want to consider the Euro-American and Native memorials that stand together at the massacre site today because they provide an excellent conclusion to this study of place and memory.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho memorials not only offer another interpretation of that day, but also emphasize how tribal processes of memory vary. My immediate impression, when I visited Sand Creek, was of the importance the place held for the massacre descendants, where their memory forcefully challenges Euro-American influence. Specific areas of the site are cordoned off from tourists and dedicated as "sacred ground." Here the Cheyenne and Arapaho have their own burial site, where remains of their ancestors have been repatriated and laid in a peaceful resting place. Only Native massacre descendants are allowed access to this area, which is also used during tribal ceremonies. Kelman wrote: "That the descendants set aside a cemetery within the historic site to house those remains, which they buried following strict tribal protocols, spoke volumes about the persistence of the Cheyenne and Arapahos as well as their

ongoing respect for a traditional way of life."[1] Importantly, the Cheyenne and Arapaho

massacre descendants have a unique and private place that is culturally specific, resting

outside the sphere of Euro-American influence.

Figure 7: Sand Creek Healing Cheyenne and Arapaho Sacred Ground. This space is used for annual Healing Runs, where tribal members walk from locations to the site, and for ceremonies to commemorate the massacre. Image: Author's own.

On the 27th August, 2007, the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, was opened

to the public. This final chapter on the Sand Creek Massacre will demonstrate that the

Cheyenne, Arapaho and Euro-American memorials that stand at the site today are

evidence of both conflict and reconciliation amongst disparate cultures. James E.

Young's idea of 'collected' as opposed to 'collective' memory is applicable to the

culturally specific Native and non-Native memorials that now exist. As stated in the

thesis introduction, Young argued that, at public sites of remembrance, individuals can

bring their own memories of an event to a site of collective memory established in

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[1] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 267.

memorial form.[2] The memorials at the Sand Creek Massacre site allow different groups, cultures and individuals to visit the site and construct their own memories of the massacre around the markers put in place by the Cheyenne and Arapaho and Euro-Americans. Whilst the memories remain disparate, they are retained at a shared site of atrocity.

In 2014, I was given the opportunity by the British Association of American Studies to visit the Sand Creek Massacre site. Unlike Bear River, Sand Creek has been dedicated as a National Historic Site. The Cheyenne and Arapaho interpretations, as well as memorials erected by the NPS, evidence the outcome of a decade of conflicts over place and memory. The culturally specific memorials are the result of attempts at transporting and interlinking memory across disparate cultures. As this section has demonstrated, opposing Native and non-Native attitudes towards place have seen disparate cultures working together in an attempt to reconcile their objectives over the significance of place in the construction of remembrance at Sand Creek. The memorials stand as testimony to the fact that this process has aided in reconciliation and cultural understanding amongst, particularly, local Native and Euro-American communities. Today, the memorials inform visitors not just of what happened on the day of the massacre, but also how the memory of Sand Creek has changed over the years.

Early perceptions of Sand Creek had referred to Chivington's unprecedented slaughter as a "battle." The oldest Euro-American marker that remains at the site, placed there in the 1950s and surrounded by commemorative items left by Native visitors, reads: "Sand Creek Battle Ground, Nov. 29 & 30, 1864." However, there is no mistaking that the current memorials, constructed by the NPS, regarded the atrocity at Sand Creek as a massacre. The first marker visitors come across, when touring the site, refers to the

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[2] Young, *The Texture of Memory,* xi.

attack as a 'national tragedy,' using the words of George Bent, a Cheyenne Warrior: "We ran up the creek with the cavalry following us…. 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…." It was clear that shifts in Euro-American memory of how Sand Creek should be publically remembered had taken place over the years. Importantly, these shifts also allowed for Cheyenne and Arapaho memorials. The Native massacre descendants had been leaving personal commemorative items, as well as conducting spiritual ceremonies at the site, since the time of the massacre. However, as with the Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River, it was not until the 2000s that the Cheyenne and Arapaho constructed official memorials detailing their histories of Sand Creek.

On my visit, I found one of the most striking differences between the Euro-American memorials and the tribal markers was the Native massacre descendants' focus on cultural continuity and healing. One marker, entitled "Returned to Sand Creek," read: "Many years have passed. The land is still here. We lived here, our clans lived here. The land here is our home - we have come back home." Another sign entitled "Healing," stated: "Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site reminds us not only of the atrocities that occurred here, but those that continue to be inflicted on cultures throughout the world." For the Cheyenne and Arapaho, memory was and is part of a continuous process that is closely linked to their recognition of the past. As with the Northwestern Shoshoni memorials at Bear River, the Cheyenne and Arapaho markers at Sand Creek are deeply rooted in tribal healing, cultural survival and forgiveness. This has challenged previous Euro-American markers, such as the one constructed in the 1950s, that suggested a static and unchanging version of history, rather than highlighting the relevance of the massacre within contemporary society.

Figure 8: Healing Memorial: This image depicts one of two Cheyenne and Arapaho healing memorials that currently overlook the site. Image: Author's own.

Most significantly, the Cheyenne and Arapaho memorials at Sand Creek demonstrate tribal success in reclaiming and restructuring the history of the massacre, according to their own traditions. Kelman wrote that the Sand Creek memorials provided the massacre descendants with a "platform from which they could tell their stories at a national historic site - stories of tragedy and betrayal, of loss and heartbreak, but also of survival and persistence."[3] Through memorialization, the Cheyenne and Arapaho have reclaimed their past, creating memories deeply rooted in healing and cultural survival. Memorialization for the massacre descendants was both a means to preserve and maintain traditional tribal perceptions of Sand Creek but also to challenge dominant Euro-American memory constructs.

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[3] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 270.

Visiting the site in 2014, I was aware of the lengthy, conflicted and aggravated process that had gone into trying to create a collective memory of a contested and shameful event in American history. The site reminded me that memory is difficult and is, of course, constructed to reflect current concerns. It had become unacceptable to call the events at Sand Creek a battle, if considering current American racial and cultural overtones; nor was it appropriate to ignore the Cheyenne and Arapaho voices. As demonstrated at Sand Creek, the past remains very much part of the present and this may be a lesson Euro-America can learn from Native Americans when memorializing and commemorating America's past. Collective memory, however conflicted, should offer lessons and warnings that can be of value in present circumstances.

To conclude, this topographical examination of the remembrance of Sand Creek has made significant contributions to both the scholarship of Sand Creek and to current debates about collective memory. Firstly, I have scrutinized previously un-explored archival evidence in the form of Governor John Evans' *Letterpress Book* to assert that Evans should be held accountable for events at Sand Creek. I have also used the Cheyenne and Arapaho Oral History Project because it provided a new and unique insight into the Native massacre descendants' perception of place and its relationship to memory at Sand Creek. This source was also important to demonstrate juxtaposed Native and non-Native attitudes towards place. For the purpose of this study, it emphasized how difficult it is to remember across disparate cultural groups.

Cheyenne, Arapaho and Euro-American conflicts and different interpretations over the meaning of place at Sand Creek have highlighted inherent problems with collective memory theory. Primarily, it does not allow for the inter-connectedness of polarized yet inherently linked cultural memories in its formation. It is clear that Native and Euro-American memory of Sand Creek, while attached to the same event, remain culturally

specific. Collaborative efforts to work through contrasting memories at a shared site of atrocity have highlighted the importance of cross-cultural remembrance. This attempt at creating a cross-cultural memory has shown that disparate cultural narratives can intersect and interlink in the construction of different memories of the same event, even if ultimately the memories remain culturally specific. Kelman wrote of the disagreements during the Sand Creek memorialization project: "NPS officials and the descendants will never concur on every element of Sand Creek's interpretation, but they might agree that the historic site should challenge visitors to grapple with competing narratives of US history, to struggle with ironies embedded in the American past. If that happens, then perhaps the massacre will no longer be misplaced in the landscape of national memory."[4] Visitors to Sand Creek are now able to engage with both Cheyenne and Arapaho and Euro-American representations of the massacre. Although, ultimately, cross-cultural memories of the massacre were not created, competing cultural narratives offer the visitor to the massacre site the possibility of challenging traditional historical constructs of Sand Creek.

The culturally specific Native and non-Native histories that have existed at Sand Creek show that a concept of place is not static and unchanging, but fluid and malleable. Kelman wrote: "That utility, it appears, is predicted on the misapprehension that place is more permanent, more stable, than narrative."[5] The fraught process of working through polarized cultural concepts of place at Sand Creek informs us that place is subject to re-configuration and is circumstantial. By assessing events at Sand Creek through the problematic lens of cross-cultural concepts of place, this section has problematized collective memory. The remembrance of Sand Creek is not collective but remains culturally specific. The attempts being made to form cross-cultural memories are vital if

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[4] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre* 279.
[5] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 278.

we are to understand the historical and contemporary significance of the Sand Creek

Massacre and the role the massacre plays in the shared lives of the Cheyenne and

Arapaho and local Euro-American communities.

Conclusion

Native American Massacre Sites and the Cultural Specificity of Memory

This thesis has studied the problematic and contested nature of collective memory within Native and non-Native communities at the Bear River and Sand Creek Massacre sites, from the time of the massacres until the present day. Both atrocities against indigenous peoples occurred during a similar time frame and both were committed by Union-affiliated soldiers during the American Civil War. However, as this thesis has demonstrated, Bear River and Sand Creek were the subject of vastly different memorialization and remembrance projects. Sand Creek has received a relatively large amount of scholarly and public attention and the Bear River Massacre remains comparatively obscure. The contrasts in the memories of these massacres has made them interesting case studies for problematizing collective remembrance at a shared Euro-American and Native American site of atrocity.

Bear River and Sand Creek were not isolated acts of violence carried out against Native groups but have to be contextualized within broader acts of violence against indigenous peoples during the Euro-American conquest of the American West during the 1800s. I have therefore contributed to those histories of America that emerged in the 1970s with the formation of New Western History. These histories provide indigenous peoples with a central role in an 1800s American history that is characterized by violence and cultural conflict. As Blackhawk stated: "Indian history is no mere curiosity or sideshow in the drama of the American past. The two remain interwoven."[1] This thesis has drawn upon entwined histories of the American West by considering the interconnected narratives of groups that have been significantly marginalized in grand narratives of the American past, including the Northwestern Shoshoni and the Mormon Church.

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[1] Blackhawk, *Violence over the land*, 3.

The aims of this thesis have been twofold: to re-evaluate the scholarship of Bear River and Sand Creek, thereby bringing a new understanding to the historiography of each massacre; and to challenge and contest currently held ideas about collective memory theory by contextualizing events at the massacre sites within the realm of collective memory studies. I have demonstrated that notions of collective memory, commemoration and even reconciliation at the Bear River and Sand Creek Massacre sites are inherently culturally specific and not easily transferable across ethnic divides. Examining the remembrance of the massacres through the lens of cross-cultural memory, this thesis has revealed how difficult it is to create a collective memory that crosses polarized cultural groups who share a history of atrocity. This research has highlighted that, particularly when memorializing, more effort needs to be given to acknowledge the inter-connected yet culturally specific memories that should form the collective remembrance of the past. Only when this happens can we properly understand the historical significance of events and the role they still play in contemporary society.

We can conclude that, today at Bear River and Sand Creek, the disparate Native and Euro-American memories that stand in memorial form at the massacre sites are at best representative of collected memories, not collective memory. This is the term that I believe is most applicable to the public and scholarly remembrance of Bear River and Sand Creek where different, sometimes opposing, memories of the same event are collected at a shared site of atrocity. Today at both massacre sites individuals or groups can bring their own meaning and remember the massacres, perhaps in very different ways but at the same place. Despite the problematic nature of collective memory, this thesis has also demonstrated that the contested process of attempting to remember

across Native and non-Native groups at Bear River and Sand Creek has aided in a process of healing, reconciliation and cultural understanding between previously polarized cultures, thereby arguing for the importance of attempting to cross cultural divides when remembering. At Bear River, this was demonstrated through the creation of the Shoshoni's unique retelling of the massacre in their memorials. At Sand Creek the collaborative project of working through the massacre's history in a public sphere led the Euro-American communities involved in the project to acknowledge Cheyenne and Arapaho ways of remembering. This was most evident through their work on the Oral History Project.

As well as adding to the scholarship of Bear River, Sand Creek and collective memory theory, this thesis has foregrounded new archival evidence, synthesizing new source material with secondary literature, specifically of the Sand Creek Massacre. I have made extensive use of Governor John Evans Indian Affairs *Letterpress Book*, which is yet to be published as a complete source. By comparing Evans' correspondence with the existing historiography of the massacre, I have come to the conclusion that Evans must be held accountable for Chivington's actions at Sand Creek, just as much as the Colonel himself. This has brought a new understanding to the massacre's scholarship, as previous studies have placed the majority of blame on Chivington. My contribution has provided new evidence in a growing field of Sand Creek scholarship that considers the accountability and role of Colorado's leading figures in the massacre. I have also brought new evidence to the scholarship of Sand Creek in the form of the collaborative Cheyenne and Arapaho and NPS Oral History Project. Like John Evans' *Letterpress Book,* the project has never been analyzed as a complete source in scholarship before. By examining it closely, this thesis has produced an innovative understanding of the significance of both the massacre for the Native massacre descendants and the role of

place in the creation of their memories. Using the project, I have demonstrated the extent of conflict in Native and Euro-American notions of place at Sand Creek.

In order to establish the problematic nature of collective remembrance at Bear River and Sand Creek, I first examined the reasons for the obscurity of one of the West's most brutal and bloody massacres, the slaughter of approximately 250 Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River. Unlike previous historians of Bear River, such as Madsen, Miller and Fleischer, my aim has not been to ensure that the massacre retains its rightful place in American history, although I hope this will be a side-effect of this work. Rather, my primary concern has been with addressing its under-emphasis. To do this, I provided in-depth analysis of the role of the Mormon Church, both in the massacre's occurrence and in its subsequent scholarly and public under-emphasis, arguing that the Mormon Church has been unwilling to highlight its compliance in the massacre, either within Mormon historiography or public memory. Contextualizing events at Bear River within the broader context of Mormon politics in Utah and Southeastern Idaho, from early Mormon settlement until the aftermath of the massacre, has provided a unique study of Bear River from the angle of the Mormon Church. In particular, I have included an assessment of the leadership style of Brigham Young.

This thesis has also assessed the silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice as a significant reason for the massacre's under-emphasis. This has not been discussed in previous scholarship. I have argued that the tribe has been complicit in Bear River's obscurity because of the public silence surrounding their own histories of the massacre. Firstly, the tribe kept their histories private within their own communities, to prevent them from being distorted by Euro-American representations of the past. Secondly, some members of the tribe converted to Mormonism in the aftermath of the massacre

and tribal members remain in the Church today. This has resulted in a complex relationship between the Northwestern Shoshoni and the Mormons, whose histories are intertwined by the massacre. Whilst the tribe has not actively forgotten its histories of Bear River, tribal members have contributed to the lack of historical sources available for analysis, meaning their voice has often been excluded from scholarship.

By evaluating these previously unexplored areas of Bear River's history, I have intended to provide a better historical assessment of events that led to the massacre and its subsequent under-emphasis. I have argued that the massacre's relative obscurity was the result of limited cross-cultural representation between the groups that remain marginalized in American history. The massacre, and its relationship to other narratives of American Western history, will only be understood when it is contextualized within the historiography of sidelined groups such the Mormon Church and the Northwestern Shoshoni. I have sought to redress this problem in this thesis.

Secondly, I assessed the relatively well-known Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho. I considered contrasting Native and non-Native notions of place and their relationship to its meaning at Sand Creek, particularly during the memorialization process at the massacre site during the 1990s and 2000s. In comparison with other studies of the massacre, this thesis has demonstrated that public memories of Sand Creek are culturally specific. To do this I have used the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants' Oral History Project in conjunction with Euro-American efforts to locate the boundaries and extent of the site. Attempts to work through their culturally specific versions of the past enabled the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants, local Euro-American communities and the NPS to communicate and establish patterns of cultural understanding that had previously been absent. Ultimately, I contended that

conflicting cultural ideas about place and its meaning in relationship to remembrance are too contested to be a viable expression of collective memory and memories of Sand Creek remain culturally specific.

By exploring the massacre's history and remembrance within attempts at cross-cultural collective memory, I have uncovered a significant problem with collective memory theory, namely that it does little to acknowledge the interconnectedness of disparate group memories in the formation of a collective memory of a shared historical event. This thesis has argued that memory is culturally specific but that memory is also malleable and that varying memories at Bear River and Sand Creek are inextricably tied to one another and should not be parsed when attempts are made to remember collectively. However, at both massacre sites, examination of attempts to recall across Native and Euro-American groups has revealed just how difficult it is to remember collectively across cultures which possess different historical representations of a shared event.

To establish the problem with collective memory, I have critically explored the roots of collective memory theory from Halbwach's founding until the present day, as well as applying more specific theories about forgetting and place and their relationship to collective memory to the remembrance of Bear River and Sand Creek. To demonstrate the difficulties of remembering across cultures at Bear River, I produced an analysis of the limited scholarship available on the massacre, arguing that Bear River remains an isolated sub-topic of American history, despite its scale and impact. I asserted that this was because of the culturally specific, polarized memories of groups involved in the massacre that, for a variety of reasons, rarely interact with one another in Bear River's historiography. These memories include those of the Mormon Church and the

Northwestern Shoshoni, who are either under-emphasized in the massacre's history or omitted entirely, thereby limiting cross-cultural historical narratives.

Mormon historiography either neglects mention of the massacre or refers to it very briefly and, as noted, there is a curious silence from the Church surrounding the massacre, both historically and currently. The primary focus, particularly of traditionalist Mormon historians such as Arrington and Coates when addressing early Mormon settlement in the West, is the conciliatory treatment of the Mormons to Western tribes and the conflicts the Church experienced with federal authority. Bear River is therefore not part of the Church's history, despite it being a remarkable event during Mormon settlement in Utah and Southeastern Idaho. Simultaneously, the tumultuous relationship the Church had, and to some extent still has, with the federal government has meant the Mormon experience is often left out of wider American histories.

Similarly, the Northwestern Shoshoni history of Bear River is, to a large extent, isolated from broader narratives of Bear River. This has resulted in limited historical overlap when telling the story of what happened at the massacre. The public silence of the Northwestern Shoshoni voice has impacted the probability of collectively remembering across disparate cultures because the tribe has kept its history of the massacre relatively private. This has been done in an effort to prevent tribal history being distorted by dominant Euro-American perceptions of the past and because to publically remember a massacre of their people would have been a very painful process. Instead, aside from the Northwestern Shoshoni markers that stand at the massacre site and more recent efforts by the massacre descendants to include Shoshoni history within Utah's public education system, the Northwestern Shoshoni have typically remembered the massacre

through their own oral histories and private commemoration efforts. Northwestern Shoshoni history, to this day, remains an isolated sub-topic of American history, which has meant there have been very few Northwestern Shoshoni sources to analyze when producing Bear River's historiography. This has resulted in limited cross-cultural historical representation of the massacre, thereby hindering ability to remember across Native and non-Native divides.

This thesis has also highlighted the failure of collective memory theory to acknowledge disparate group memory in the formation of collective memory by situating Bear River's remembrance within broader theoretical debates about forgetting and its relationship to collective memory. Applied during public remembrance, forgetting is often a controlled process, achieved by dominant groups asserting their own specific ideologies in which facts or minority histories are omitted to preserve a particular local or national ideology. At Bear River, sometimes local Euro-American and sometimes Mormon groups controlled what was publically remembered in memorial form, often at the cost of Northwestern Shoshoni memory. The memorials commemorating the massacre remain culturally specific, thereby demonstrating an active engagement in forgetting by both the Shoshoni and local Euro-American communities, who disregard opposing versions of the massacre in favor of their own historical interpretations. Even though the massacre's remembrance involved overlapping cross-cultural historical narratives, this is not represented in the disparate Euro-American, Mormon and Northwestern Shoshoni memorials that currently stand at the massacre site.

At Sand Creek, in attempts to remember across communities, the NPS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants highlighted culturally opposed attitudes towards place and its meaning at the massacre site. This ultimately made the process of

collectively remembering across Native and non-Native groups extremely difficult. This was foregrounded during the 1990s and 2000s memorialization project when conflicts over how best to remember the massacre ensued within local Native and Euro-American communities. For Euro-American groups at Sand Creek, notions of place were inherently tied to mapping the exact location and boundaries of the massacre site. This often produced conflict with the Native massacre descendants who were less concerned with establishing the exact location of the site in order for it to be memorialized. According to scholars such as Deloria and Basso, Native American memory, although tribally specific, is inextricably tied to their current identity and community. The Oral History Project at Sand Creek showed that some, although certainly not all, Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre descendants had a continuous as opposed to historical connection to place that was intimately bound to their current identity. These juxtaposed attitudes towards place made remembering across Native and non-Native groups very difficult and was the root of much cultural and social contention. However, it has to be remarked that there were concrete efforts to remember across disparate cultural groups, which certainly aided in understanding and achieving some semblance of reconciliation. Yet today, Cheyenne and Arapaho and Euro-American, including NPS, memories of the massacre remain culturally specific, as represented by the different memorials that stand at the site.

By considering Bear River and Sand Creek's memory through the problematic lens of cross-cultural Native and Euro-American memory, I believe this thesis, as well as highlighting substantial problems with collective memory, has gone some way to redressing the problems emphasized at the massacre sites. For example, the attempts, successes and failures to collectively remember at both Bear River and Sand Creek have led me to the conclusion that more effort must be made to create a composite of

culturally specific, often opposing and competing, cultural memories when public and scholarly collective memories of the American past are formulated. At both Bear River and Sand Creek, increasing pains must be taken to create cross-cultural dialogues that consider the interplay of often competing tribal and Euro-American memories and the interconnected role they still play in current tribal and Euro-American communities. As Blackhawk stated: "National histories need to be shared by all, not imposed from above, and finding ways of celebrating the endurance as well as the ascendancy of contemporary Indian people appears a thread from which to weave to potentially broader narratives."[2]

I have re-iterated throughout this thesis that, only when we consider every group involved in the massacres and the entwined contribution they made to the massacres' histories, can we properly understand the historical and contemporary significance of events such as Bear River and Sand Creek. In order to redress this lack and produce a more coherent understanding of the historical impact of Bear River and Sand Creek, this thesis has examined in depth previously unexplored historical and modern narratives of the massacres. For Bear River, I have argued that a significant reason for its scholarly and public under-emphasis is the result of two large yet marginalized groups in Bear River's historiography: the Mormon Church and the Northwestern Shoshoni. By demonstrating the intertwined historical roles of these two historically sidelined and previously un-explored groups in both Bear River's historical and contemporary obscurity, I have aimed to provide a better understanding of events that led to the massacre and its subsequent under-emphasis. My intention has been to bring Mormon and Shoshoni history into broader narratives of Bear River.

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[2] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 293.

To address the problem inherent in remembering across ethnic boundaries, this thesis has demonstrated that, at Sand Creek, attempts were made to collaboratively remember across Native and non-Native groups. This heightened historical and cultural communication and understanding across all groups involved in the memorialization process. From using Cheyenne and Arapaho oral histories, in conjunction with Euro-American scientific and archeological attempts to locate the massacre site, we are better equipped to understand the historical and contemporary significance of the massacre for all groups involved. The Oral History Project, for example, provided local Euro-American communities with a new understanding of what the massacre site meant to the Native massacre descendants, and this made the former group more culturally sensitive when memorializing the site. The collaborative Euro-American and Native American project to find and memorialize Sand Creek certainly aided in cultural understanding and went some way towards reconciling previously disparate and culturally specific memories of the massacre.

Until it is acknowledged that a composite form of memory that takes into account all these competing, culturally specific memories is required, we cannot properly understand America's past. Tribal, local and national Euro-American memory, and Mormon narratives amongst others all need to be afforded equal significance in the formation of American history. At Sand Creek there have been attempts to reconcile polarized cultural accounts and the limited scholarly and public representation of Bear River demonstrates that there is more to be done before it is remembered as one of the worst massacres in the formation of the American West. By exploring the problems inherent in attempting to collectively remember the same historical atrocity across disparate ethnic boundaries, this thesis has aimed at enabling a reconsideration of how societies and cultures might attempt to remember collectively.

Importantly, research conducted for this thesis has emphasized the different ways each tribe publically remembers Bear River and Sand Creek. I believe there are lessons to be learnt from the way indigenous cultures remember. Although previously regarding memorialization as a Western preoccupation, Native memorials at Bear River and Sand Creek reveal their significance for the Native communities involved in the massacres and those who visit the site. Memorialization has been used by the Cheyenne, Arapaho and Northwestern Shoshoni to reclaim the past and create public memories that are deeply rooted in cultural survival. Native memory serves different cultural purposes within different, tribally specific groups that contrast, in particular, with Euro-American public memories of massacre. Oral history for many of the Cheyenne, Arapaho and Northwestern Shoshoni massacre descendants serves as a tool for healing and cultural continuation as opposed to a being a collective phenomenon rooted in written history and commemoration. Often Euro-America memorials create a static, unchanging version of history, where events are consigned to the past. I believe we need to make space for the fluid nature of memory when attempting to construct collective memories, as many tribal memories currently do. That the past remains very much part of our present is perhaps something we can learn from Native American communities when commemorating our histories. Remembrance, however conflicted, should offer lessons and warnings that are of value in the present.

This thesis will conclude by considering if there is any way to reconcile the problematic nature of collective memory at a shared site of atrocity, and those needs for future research that this study has bought to the fore. Although attempts at reconciliation between Euro-American and tribal groups have been made, more effort needs to go into establishing links between different cultural perceptions of the past. Concepts of reconciliation are central to Native scholars' histories of America. Blackhawk argued

that, within the misunderstood and ill-informed history of Native America, is: "a contest for reconciliation, if not for coexistence and redemption. Much like a family bereft of a tragedy, a nation unable to confront its past will surely compromise any sense of a shared civil culture."[3] Similarly, Vine Deloria Jr. argued: "Before any final solution to American history can occur, reconciliation must be effected between the spiritual owner of the land - American Indians - and the political owner of the land -American whites. Guilt and accusations cannot continue to revolve in a vacuum without some effort at reaching a solution."[4] Although it is currently difficult to imagine, if Euro-America publically recognized Native American histories in the formation of American history, beyond being passive victims of frontier violence and a declining culture, Native narratives of the past could intercept and re-shape dominant Euro-American histories. This would imply a reconsideration of the American historical narrative in which, as Blackhawk implied, Native Americans would be at the center: "As many attempt to reconcile the hopeful promises of America with the traumatic acts discovered in our nation's past, attention to such violence may yield some insight. Surely, the history of the Great Basin is also part of the American experience. Recognition must accompany resolution."[5]

If historians of America make a concerted effort to bring indigenous narratives into the American national experience and continue to understand the substantial role of tribal histories in the formation of the American past, Native memories can be reconciled with Euro-American memories of Bear River and Sand Creek as opposed to existing as subtopics of American history. Once historical reconciliation has been achieved, tribal sovereignty can be prioritized. For the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek and the

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[3] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 239.
[4] V. Deloria Jr., *Evolution, Creationism, and Other Modern Myths* (Golden, CO. Fulcrum Publishing, 2002), 20.
[5] Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land,* 265.

Northwestern Shoshoni at Bear River, reparations, which are long over-due, need to be paid. Although this has been a study of memory, for many Native massacre descendants, official attempts to memorialize atrocities against Native communities provide a space in which they can foreground reparation payments promised to them. Writing of events at Sand Creek, Kelman stated: "They [Cheyenne massacre descendants] saw a Sand Creek National Historic Site as the thin edge of a wedge: memorializing the massacre, they hoped, would lay the groundwork for forcing the government to acknowledge their open treaty claim."[6] Under Article six of the Treaty of Little Arkansas (October 14th, 1865), the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes were explicitly promised reparations.[7] Kelman wrote: "The Cheyenne descendants saw reparations and memorialization as intertwined, part of the broader project of revitalizing their tribes' sovereignty and traditional culture."[8] To this day, however, compensation has not been offered to the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, yet tribal sovereignty and reparation payments are important factors, deserving of substantial consideration in future studies of Sand Creek and Bear River and their memorialization.

To conclude, this study of Bear River and Sand Creek has argued that memory is culturally specific and is not easily transportable across disparate ethnic boundaries. For these reasons, the process of collectively remembering across Native and non-Native groups at Bear River and Sand Creek has been highly problematic and, to this day, Native and Euro-American memories of the massacres remain separated by culturally specificity. Remembering the past fully is essential if we are to understand where we

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[6] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 158.
[7] The Treaty of Little Arkansas was signed between Black Kettle's Cheyennes and Little Raven's Arapahos with US government officials. Article six of the treaty "repudiated the gross and wanton outrages perpetrated against certain bands of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians." The "Indians were at peace with the United States, and under its flag." The article stated that the government wanted "to make some suitable reparation for the injuries then done." Quoted in Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 156.
[8] Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre,* 158.

come from, who we are and how we shall impact the future. In Deloria's words: "A society that cannot remember and honor its past is in peril of losing its soul."[9]

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[9] Deloria, *God is Red,* 276.

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