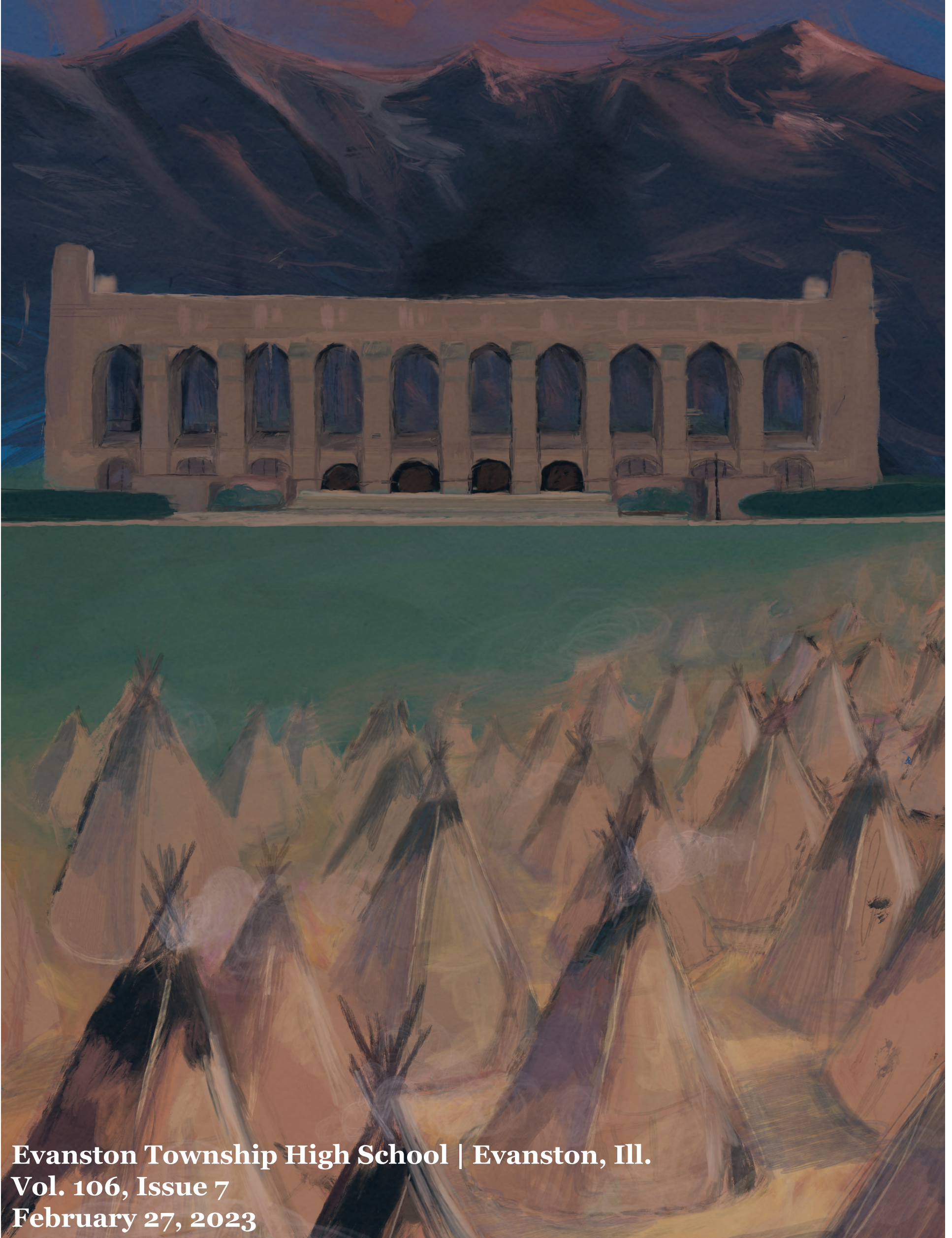


The Evanstonian



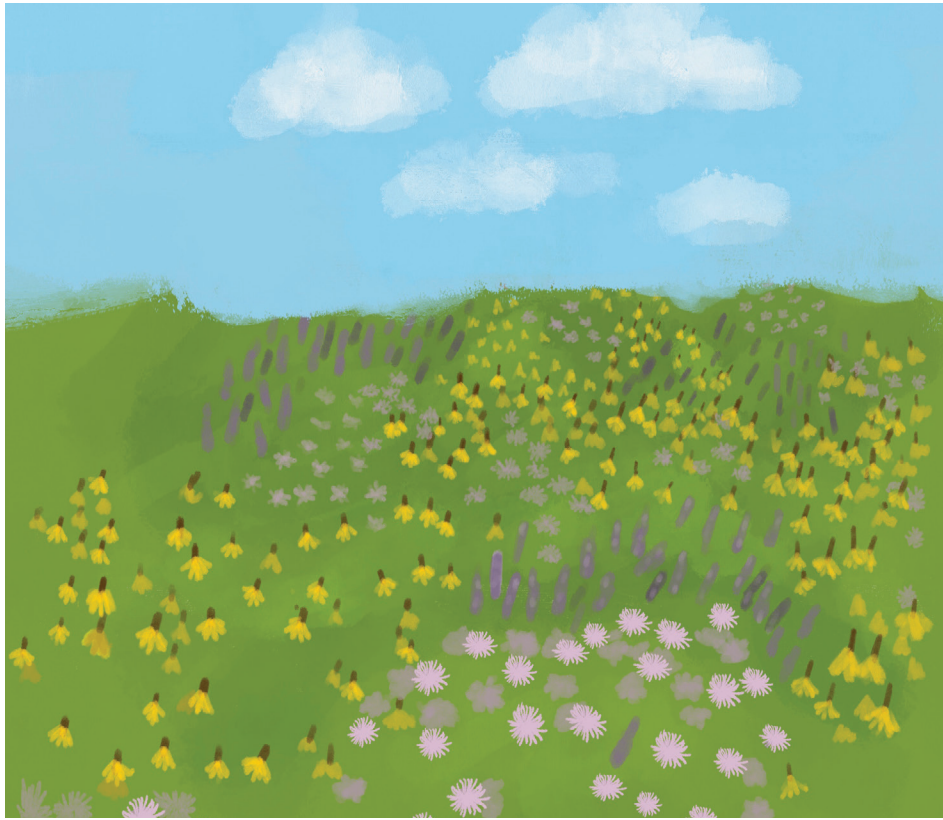
Evanston Township High School | Evanston, Ill.
Vol. 106, Issue 7
February 27, 2023

2 - introduction

Land acknowledgement

Before we begin this issue, we feel a responsibility to acknowledge the Native folks who continue to cultivate their humanity despite the persistent and pervasive forces of oppression, disinvestment and colonialism that have long attempted to erase their existence. Indigenous people have and continue to be essential to the American story.

The first non-Native people settled in Evanston in the 1830s and Ridgeville Township was organized in 1850 with scattered settlements throughout. Northwestern University founders purchased land in the township for their new University in 1851 and platted the village of Evanston in 1854. They named it for John Evans, one of the University's founders. Evans was later appointed Territorial Governor of Colorado Territory where he was culpable for one of the worst Indigenous massacres in American history: the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. Two hundred and thirty Cheyenne and Arapaho people, many of whom were women and children, were slaughtered in the massacre.



Evanston sits on the ancestral homelands of the Council of Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa—as well as the Menominee, Miami, and Ho-Chunk Nations. Before European settlement, Evanston was a site of “trade, travel, gathering, and healing,” according to Northwestern University.

It is important that we acknowledge whose lands we reside on and also recognize how Indigenous people have continued to resist and persist through colonization. The Chicago land area is currently home to 40,000 Native people, who represent over 150 tribes.

As we've reflected on Evanston's role in colonialism and attempted to navigate these often challenging conversations about memorializing racist figures, we ask that you do the same. Reflecting on America's history and honoring the contributions and traditions of Indigenous people is one step towards fighting their erasure.

Art by Ahania Soni



Accountability and visibility: How NU, ETHS, Evanston can hold John Evans accountable, ensure Indigenous cultures can thrive

Right as the sun broke on Nov. 29, 1864, 700 volunteer soldiers entered sacred land in Fort Lyon, Colorado. Home to the Cheyenne and Arapaho, this vast prairie had become a community for over 700 Indigenous people. Yet the nation's growing desire towards westernization would disrupt their way of life in an event known as the Sand Creek Massacre—our focus for this issue.

According to eyewitness reports, animosity began to arise between the Cheyenne and Arapaho and Colorado settlers after Colonel John Chivington dispatched the Third Colorado Regiment to investigate accusations that they had stolen cattle from neighboring white farmers on May 16th, 1864. When Cheyenne Chief Lean Bear rode out to meet the volunteer military group to make peace, the soldiers shot and killed him. In the months that followed, anxiety ran high between Colorado settlers, many of whom anticipated a full-out war in reaction to Lean Bear's death.

To ensure this didn't happen, John Evans, the Territorial Governor of Colorado, founder of Northwestern University, and namesake of Evanston, authorized all Colorado citizens in mid-August to “kill and destroy all enemies of the county whether they may be found; all hostile Indians.” In September, Fort Lyon commander Major Edward Wyncoop arranged a meeting with Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle, six other Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs and John Evans in an attempt to preserve peace. Evans refused, and responded to the request by saying, “[B]ut what shall I do with the Third Colorado Regiment if I make peace? They have been raised to kill Indians, and they must kill Indians.” Then, upon daybreak on November, 29th, 1864, Colonel Chivington led men from the Regiment to Black Kettle's camp and attacked without warn-

ing. Over 200 died, many of whom were women and children.

In the aftermath of the massacre, John Evans was forced to resign his position as territorial governor but received no formal punishment. In fact, Evans was welcomed back to Evanston and remained a donor of Northwestern University until his death in 1897. Decades later, his legacy continues to be memorialized in Evanston, most notably on the steps of the John Evans Alumni Center, located between Sherman and Dodge.

As a publication, it is vital that we address historically significant topics relevant to Evanston. John Evans remains a presence in our streets, curriculum, awards and buildings; his influence follows us from the plains of Sand Creek to the shores of Lake Michigan. With such a large impact, Evans' racist actions need to be recognized. For too long, Evans' involvement in the Sand Creek Massacre has been minimized to protect white people from experiencing guilt. In light of Evans' contributions to creating infrastructure for Evanston, both ETHS and Northwestern often fall into the pattern of celebrating his legacy rather than acknowledging a difficult truth. It is essential that his racism is not overlooked by his material accomplishments. To do this, both institutions must critically reflect on their perpetuation of memorializing colonialism.

Ultimately, both institutions must build greater capacity to center Indigenous voices. In American culture, there is a predisposition to whiteness as the central narrative because of its accepted normativity, yet this reinforces forms of supremacy and power that produce and maintain inequality. If the Evanston community wishes to move forward in building a more just future, we must acknowledge the past so that history doesn't repeat itself.

It is no lie that John Evans was a racist who

did not view Indigenous people as human. Rather than respect the reservations of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, he believed that the land served a better purpose if it was owned by white people. There is documented proof that Evans made statements instructing Colorado citizens to kill and destroy “all hostile Indians.” Evans' violent language highlights the intentional forging of differences between Native people and whites to justify heinous acts like Sand Creek. In his eyes, the Cheyenne and Arapaho were “enemies,” blocking white farmers from moving west, and therefore, they were a problem. His hatred further manifested in his complete denial of his participation in Sand Creek, which you will read about later. His silence is profoundly emblematic to his disregard of Native people and their lifeways.

For ETHS and Northwestern University to commit to diversity, equity and inclusion, we need institutional transformation, and that begins by talking about John Evans' culpability in a historic tragedy. With that said, we would like to provide a brief overview of our sections prior to your reading of them.

Our first section focuses on the early life of John Evans—his childhood, educational career and his founding of Northwestern University. Our second section examines Evans' fight for political capital in Colorado through his position as territorial governor. Our third section describes the events leading up to the Sand Creek Massacre and what occurred the morning of. Our fourth section looks at the immediate response to the massacre in Colorado, the Midwest and New York, as well as the federal military trial that took place which indicted Evans. Our fifth section dissects the components and complexities of massacres in the United States from a sociological perspective. Our sixth section navigates both

the Colorado and federal governments attempt at providing accountability for the massacre, including the 2013 federal class action lawsuit filed by descendants of Sand Creek Massacre victims. Our seventh section compares two reports, one published by Northwestern University and the other by the University of Denver, that examine John Evans' financial and moral culpability in the Sand Creek Massacre. Lastly, our eighth and final section discusses Evanston's contributions to Indigenous erasure from an educational, political and ethical standpoint.

As you read these stories, we hope that you feel inspired to discuss the impacts of colonization and use it to inform your actions and beliefs. The Evanstonian recognizes that the Sand Creek Massacre is a nuanced topic, and we have not addressed all aspects of this conversation. As a result, it is vital that the conversation doesn't end here. The community must commit to tackle this historically significant topic through ongoing reflection, dialogue and action. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, we encourage you to engage with resources like podcasts, books, websites and movies.

Additionally, we would like to acknowledge our position when analyzing this topic. As a primarily white editorial board and publication, we acknowledge that our reporting cannot fully capture the multidimensionality of Sand Creek, and as a result, our personal experiences affect our ability to accurately report on these stories and see our identities reflected in these pieces. We have a long way to go to undo centuries of oppression, erasure and racism, but we hope these pages will foster meaningful dialogue towards sustained change.

Meg Houseworth, Jessica Sehgal, Ahania Soni
Executive Editors

Meet the February staff:



Meg Houseworth



Jessica Sehgal



Ahania Soni



Mr. Phillips



Bridget Baker



Lydah Coates



Jilian Denlow



Sadie Dowhan



Sam Froum



Charlotte Geyskens



Clara Gustafson



Hazel Hayes



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Sophia LaFleur



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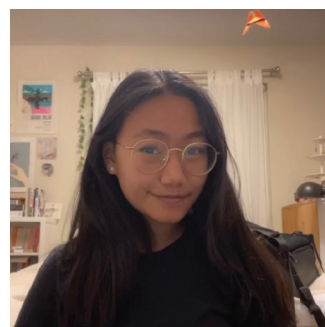
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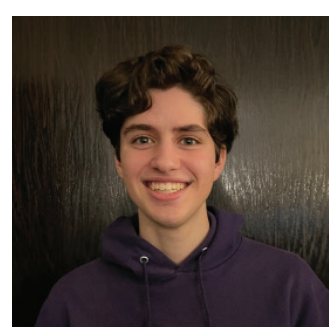
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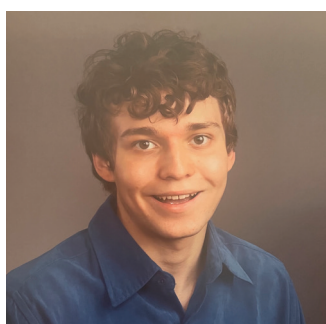
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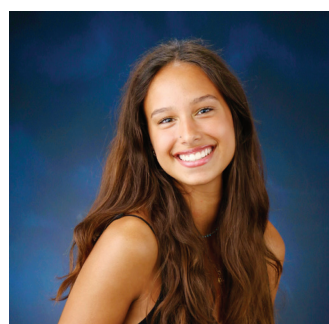
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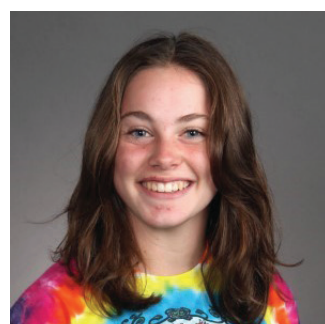
Marin Ubersox



Christopher Vye



Aaliya Weheliye



Rosie Witt

4 - prologue to a massacre

Always craving more: Evans' early life

By Sam Froum, Ethan Ravi, Mack Jones

Assistant A&E Editor, Assistant News Editor, Staff Writer

As John Evans lay dying in his Denver home on July 3, 1897, around 173 miles from the site of the Sand Creek Massacre, his life flashed before his weary eyes. Evans, the territorial governor of Colorado at the time of the massacre, had stated in prior interviews he bore no regrets for the tragedy that had resulted from his blinding thirst for power. Born in Waynesville, Ohio, Evans had come a long way from home.

David Evans, John's father, led a simple life compared to the one his son would go on to lead.

A merchant in the small town of Waynesville, Evans and his wife, Rachel, were against the sale of liquor, both being decidedly religious Quakers. They professed values of integrity, peace and equality. These were values expected of their newly born son, John.

It was Mar. 9, 1814, when Evans came into the world inside a modest log cabin in Waynesville, located between Dayton and Cincinnati. He was the first of 11 children, although only nine made it past childhood—a survival rate that was quite high for the time compared to other families.

In addition to running his store, David Evans worked as a real estate investor and a prosperous toolmaker. All of his work increased the Evans family's financial status to be fairly well-off, and they could afford things that made John Evans' early life much easier than many other children across the country. For example, his education was of a high standard, only available to upper-class white men at the time. His earlier school experience took place in and around Waynesville, after which he went to the Academy at Richmond, Ind., then Gwynedd Boarding School for Boys in Pennsylvania, ending his pre-college education at Clermont Academy near Philadelphia.

David Evans wanted John to follow in his footsteps and take over the successful businesses he had cultivated over the years after John finished his secondary education. However, Evans, showing his ambition from a young age, felt destined for more than owning a small shop in a small town.

"I am persuaded there was something more than this meant when I was made. I have long been of this notion, and for me, by irresolution, to thwart the design of my creation would be more wicked than a refusal to knuckle to any particular mode of getting along in the world, or any particular creed of faith," wrote Evans in a letter to his cousin Benjamin on the subject of his schooling.

Evans' pride was so great that he refused to accept any financial help from his father after they had decided he was to go to Lynn Medical

College in Cincinnati. Evans, however, had no money. To attend school in 1836, he needed financial support from two practicing physicians in Waynesville. The two physicians agreed with Evans' stance on not asking his family for money, and they were impressed by his vocation, so they covered the entire cost of his higher education.

Evans' ambition presented itself throughout his college career as well.

"If you will not attribute it to vanity I will say I think I am about as devoted a student as we have in the college—my waking hours are almost wholly occupied in study, and I very frequently dream over whole demonstrations after hearing them in the day. So you see I think pretty well of my industry whatever others may say of it," he said in a letter dated Nov. 13, 1837, and addressed to Hannah Canby, his future wife.

The obsessive mindset Evans took on in college would hurt him over the course of his life, but it served him well enough to get through university and graduate in two years, finishing medical school in 1838. Despite earlier reservations about John being a part of the collegiate system, David was so proud of his son that he presented John with a horse, saddle and ten dollars, equivalent to about \$3,200 today. John was married the same year and began his medicinal practice immediately after graduation.

Following his medical school education, Evans set out into the world to pursue medicine. After failed attempts to set up practice in Illinois and Ohio, he eventually landed in Attica, Ind, in 1839. He set up a medical practice with a man named Isaac Fisher, and together they found success. Evans was a staunch supporter of the efforts to build a state asylum and lobbied hard to make it happen. In 1843, he moved his family to Indianapolis so that he could continue his lobbying efforts and eventually succeeded. He was named the hospital's first superintendent in 1845.

As part of his duties, he oversaw the construction of the facilities. He was careful to ensure that the institution would be run humanely and toured several similar hospitals to learn all he could. The construction was completed in 1848 and was named the Central Indiana Hospital for the Insane (later renamed the Central State Hospital) located in Indianapolis. At first, the institution served only five patients but expanded over time, serving patients from all over the state. Later on, as other psychiatric hospitals were established elsewhere in Indiana, Central State Hospital only served the middle counties of Indiana. In 1994, Central State Hospital closed its doors due to allegations of patient abuse and a lack of funding.

During this early stage of his career, Evans was offered a position at Rush Medical College in Chicago and accepted. For a few years,

Evans balanced that job and his duties as superintendent of the psychiatric hospital in Indiana. He eventually quit his job in Indianapolis, committing completely to his work at Rush. He moved with his wife to Chicago in 1848, the same year the hospital finished construction.

Besides his interest in medicine, another pillar that guided Evans throughout his life was his devotion to Methodism, despite not having grown up in a Methodist family. His parents were Quakers, and while Evans respected their religion throughout his life, he chose a different path.

In 1841, Matthew Simpson, a Methodist Episcopal minister, came to Attica to preach. He was promoting the newly established Indiana Asbury University (now Depauw University), which had been created in 1837. Simpson had recently been named president of the university and was trying to bring attention to it while promoting his Methodist belief system. He was already well-established in the political and religious world and was on his way to becoming the Methodist Church's most prominent bishop of the mid-nineteenth century. He had also been a close acquaintance of Lincoln, even delivering the eulogy at his funeral. Simpson was trying to get more Methodists into prominent political positions, and as it turned out, Evans was the perfect man. In Attica, he preached at an old mill, and Evans was in attendance. The contents of the speech were not recorded, but that day changed Evans' life forever.

Peter Hayes, a professor emeritus of history at Northwestern University and committee member of Northwestern's John Evans report, describes Evans' early experience with Simpson and Methodism.

"[Evans] talked about a sermon that he heard. This was before he got to Chicago. [He listened to Simpson,] and apparently, it was like an epiphany, and from that moment on, he identified with the Methodist faith," says Hayes.

As Evans put it, "He is the first man that ever made my head swim in talking. He carried his eloquence up to a climax, and I had to look around to see where I was."

Instead of coming into his religion by family history, like most people did at the time, Evans decided to become Methodist himself. After that evening, Evans and his wife became devoted Methodists. He remained good friends with Simpson until the bishop's death in 1884.

As it turned out, Methodist beliefs aligned perfectly with what Evans was starting to value in his career and the world. Simpson's words already meant something to him, and his conversion to Methodism only reinforced his pre-established values.

"Simpson's theology rested on the foundational traditions of Methodism, emphasizing that vigorous and constructive social engagement, when combined with conscientious self-discipline, was a form of religious practice," writes the Northwestern report.

This belief system convinced Evans that education was a priority and that it was his spiritual duty to continue the advancement of it, especially in towns that were relatively new back then. He thought that the character of an individual could be determined by his contributions to education. Later on, that conviction, along with his religious affiliations, would serve as a resource he used to establish one of the most prestigious universities in the modern world.

As the Northwestern report comments, it is important to note how Evans approached Methodism. Rather than partaking in the deeply thoughtful, reflective process that often accompanies many religious practices, he used a more pragmatic method. He dutifully participated in Methodism, which reflected his character as a whole; he was a very ambitious man who liked to get things done.

Part of Evans' character was being an abolitionist. While he didn't believe the federal government should go as far as some, such as future president Abraham Lincoln believed it should, in the years leading up to the Civil War, Evans believed that slavery should be abolished in D.C. as well as any federal territories. His abolitionist views weren't uncommon in the North back then, and his religion contributed to that view.

"Evans was a very committed Methodist," says Hayes. "In those days, what distinguished Methodism from other Protestant denominations is that they were world improvers; they were always trying to make the world in which they lived better than it had been before. I think that's his route to ultimately supporting emancipation and opposing the expansion of slavery."

As Hayes mentioned, the connection between Methodism and 'world improvement' would be a trend shown throughout the life of John Evans.

"His political ambitions were always connected to his desire to improve the world," says Hayes.

When Evans moved to Chicago in 1848, after three years of balancing his job as superintendent of the first mental hospital in Indiana and being chair of obstetrics at Rush Medical College in Chicago, Chicago's population was expanding rapidly. From 1850 to 1860, the population nearly quadrupled, going from 30,000 to 110,000. Chicago was viewed as a prosperous home for commerce, a rapidly-developing business hub located far from any ocean ports.

"Chicago was clearly going to be the kind of capital of, what was called in those days, the Northwest Territories," says Hayes, referring to



prologue to a massacre - 5

an area consisting of modern-day Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin.

Evans thrived in Chicago, quickly gaining prominence in the Chicago medical community due to his work at Rush Medical College. He achieved further success by becoming the owner and editor of the *Northwestern Medical and Surgical Journal*, co-founding the Illinois General Hospital of the Lakes and establishing the Chicago Medical Society. During his time in Chicago, Evans also made advancements in medicinal practices. He invented a tool called an “obstetrical extractor,” which replaced the use of metal forceps in the field of obstetrics, and he published an article in 1849 revealing new information on Chicago’s then-ongoing cholera outbreak.

Even with all his success in the medical world, Evans craved more. Ambitious white men like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and Cornelius Vanderbilt seized on the various opportunities that came with America’s expansion, becoming immensely rich and powerful. Evans wanted more success of this nature for himself.

He dabbled in business during his time as a medical practitioner, purchasing the building at the site where today’s Chicago City Hall and Cook County Building are located, and as time went on, he directed his gaze more and more towards business.

In 1852, Evans sold his medical journal in exchange for five acres of land in Chicago, on which he helped orchestrate the construction of the Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad. It was a wise investment that led Evans to become wealthy and further propelled him into business. Due to his wealth, Evans no longer needed to practice medicine, quitting the medical profession by the mid-1850s.

In 1850, Evans recognized Chicago’s growing

children of their own. In 1855, when Northwestern opened its doors to students, he and his family moved to a new house in Evanston near the university campus. The house, which no longer stands, included gardens, gravel walkways and a barn.

Political power was another common aspiration among privileged white men of Evans’ time. Evans followed this trend, becoming an alderman of Chicago from 1853-1855. Evans provided many key developments in Chicago’s growth. He supported the construction of waterways, sewers, streets, sidewalks and alleys in the city. Values instilled in him by Methodist teachings also came into play during his time as an alderman. Education is an integral component of Methodism, and during his time as an alderman, Evans became a proponent of improving public education in Chicago. He was chair of the council’s committee on public schools, and during his time in this position, he made great strides forward. He increased the number of schools, united them, selected a superintendent and opened the first public high school in Chicago, aptly named Chicago High School.

However, not all of Evans’ political actions were for the benefit of others. Some were primarily for his own financial gain. One ordinance he introduced allowed the Fort Wayne and Chicago rail line to travel to the Indiana state border. Evans owned this rail line, and its increase in size deepened his pockets even further.

As the 1850s progressed, Evans only became more involved in politics. Previously a member of the Whig party, Evans transferred to the Republican Party in the mid-1850s due to the Whigs’ anti-slavery views. Around this time, Evans met fellow Illinois Republican Abraham Lincoln and became a supporter of his campaign.

tors.”

Ultimately, Oreapolis ended up not taking off as it may have if not for the Civil War, and, with that, Evans’ craving for expansion had not been satisfied. He was offered two more chances by President Lincoln, one as territorial governor of Nebraska and the other as the governorship of the Washington Territory. However, Evans did not capitalize on either of these opportunities, getting passed over for territorial governor of Nebraska and refusing the governorship of Washington because he felt it was too remote.

Finally, Evans’ golden opportunity arrived when President Lincoln appointed him to the

position of territorial governor of Colorado in 1862. Evans went to Colorado harboring desires for greater wealth and political power.

“[Evans] was very active in pushing Colorado statehood, and he very much wanted to be one of the first senators. Incidentally, so did [Colonel John] Chivington, the man who commanded the Sand Creek Massacre,” remarks Hayes.

Evans headed west for Colorado, a land full of gold and political power. There was one thing standing in the way of everything he wanted: the Native people.

Art by Peter Krzystofiak

The Early Life of John Evans



John Evans' Childhood

MARCH 9, 1814

John Evans is born to Welsh immigrants Rachel and David Evans, in Waynesville, Ohio.

John Evans' Education

MARCH 1838

John Evans graduates from Lynn Medical College in Cincinnati with a degree in medicine.

Asylum/Early Medical Work

1843

Evans moves to Indianapolis and begins lobbying to build a state asylum. Once he gets the policy passed, he becomes the 1st superintendent of the Indiana Central State Hospital.

John Evans moves to Chicago

1848

Evans teaches at Rush Medical College, prompting a move for work. He helps found Mercy Hospital, a Catholic teaching hospital still open today.

John Evans founds Northwestern

JUNE 4, 1850

Along with a group of other Methodists, Evans founds Northwestern and is elected the 1st president of the Board of Trustees.

John Evans' Railroads & Politics

1850S - 1880S

Evans establishes multiple railroads. The power he gains makes him Alderman and founder of the Illinois Republican Party. Evans becomes friends with Lincoln because of this.

“He was typical of people who went out West. He was typical in the sense that he had the driving spirit that they were going to civilize the continent, and he was typical in his feelings [towards Native Americans]. They looked at the Native Americans and they saw nomads.”

- Peter Hayes, Professor Emeritus of History at Northwestern University, committee member of the Northwestern John Evans report.

importance in the country and realized the next step for the area was establishing a university. This led to one of his most well-known accomplishments, establishing Northwestern and its surrounding area, later known as Evanston.

“After Rush was established as a medical college, the next logical step would be to have a university, and Northwestern began as the university of the Northwest Territories,” says Hayes.

Evans and a committee of eight other prominent Chicago Methodists established Northwestern University in 1850. He made many contributions to the creation of the university, writing a draft of Northwestern’s charter, choosing the first president and—his biggest contribution—buying a farm north of Chicago on which Northwestern and the surrounding town would be built. Evans also ascertained that the town would have contact with Chicago by ensuring the building of a rail line to connect the two. In 1854, after being elected chairman of the board of trustees, Evans’ fellow trustees decided to name the town Evanston in his honor.

Evans was a crucial component of Northwestern’s founding and remained on the Board of Trustees for years, even after he left Evanston. However, in the wake of Northwestern’s 2014 report on John Evans and his part in the Sand Creek Massacre, his role as founder of Northwestern is often downplayed.

Despite professional success in medicine and business, Evans’ personal life was full of sorrow. Three of his children passed at a young age, with only his daughter Josephine surviving. In 1850, Hannah Canby, his wife of twelve years, died of tuberculosis. Evans was a caring and committed husband, and Hannah’s death was devastating.

“John Evans’s letters to both his wives reveal that he was a devoted suitor and loving husband who shared his most personal thoughts and feelings with them,” writes the Northwestern report.

Evans eventually overcame this loss and married Margaret Grey in 1853. Margaret was the sister of the wife of another Northwestern board of trustee member, and she and Evans had four

Evans’ view on westward expansion fit his extremely ambitious personality. As a Methodist, he was interested in improving the world, but his intentions often lay in his own personal financial and political gain. As it turns out, that worldview was not uncommon for men of his status in those days.

“He was typical of people who went out to the West. He was typical in the sense that he had the driving spirit that they were going to civilize the continent, and he was typical in his feelings [towards Native Americans],” says Hayes. “They looked at the Native Americans, and they saw nomads.”

For Evans, making productive use of the land involved building towns around railroads. This would ensure a steady flow of commerce throughout the developing West and would result in money in Evans’ pocket.

“He had a mentality that was based on agriculture, farming and developing cities that connected with railroads,” says Hayes. He continued, “[They thought the Native Americans] were not making the land produce wealth. The mentality of these people was that land was only good for producing wealth. They looked down on the Native Americans as unproductive, and their justification for taking the land from them was that they were going to make the soil more valuable.”

In 1857, Evans, along with other enterprising people of the time, attempted to establish a town called Oreapolis on the eastern border of the Nebraska Territory. Oreapolis would be similar to Evanston, with a university, a Bible institute and a Methodist seminary. The town aspired to be a hub of railroad activity, one of many hopeful railroad centers established across America. Wealthy entrepreneurs such as Evans founded towns like these in hopes of attaining even more wealth.

As the Northwestern report writes, “Oreapolis was one of the era’s countless would-be railroad centers that were conceived by speculators hoping to cash in on the lure of the West to settlers, prospectors, and other businessmen and invest-

Infographic by Mary Lister

6 - the price of legacy building

Gaming the system: Evans' power grab



By Jilian Denlow, Christopher Vye, Jared Tucker

Feature Editor, Sports Editor, Staff Writer

Manifest Destiny, a philosophy coined in 1845 by American journalist John Louis O'Sullivan, was the belief that the infant nation that was the United States was destined to settle the continent from sea to shining sea, expanding its dominion and extending its power through negotiations, purchase and war.

Commonly romanticized through nationalist ideology, Emanuel Leutze's mural study, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, highlights an idealized version of American migration to the west. Leutze suggests that, while European colonization was inherently dangerous, the American West contained an abundance of resources and revealed the potentials of American "greatness."

Against the backdrop of abstract sentiments, the stories of Native American populations are often overlooked. Treaties, formally concluded and ratified agreements between sovereign states, intended to establish strict borders and advise controlled behavior between the United States and its Indigenous counterparts.

"In accordance with Article 6, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution—known commonly as the Supremacy Clause—the ratification of a treaty acted as an explicit and formal acknowledgement of a nation-to-nation relationship—in the case of Native people, a Native nation and the United States government," the University of Denver (DU) John Evans Study Report reads.

The origins of treaty-making trace back thousands of years; this instrument of facilitating international relations is among some of the earliest forms of peacemaking.

The Revolutionary War came to a formal end on Sep. 3, 1783 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. With this legislation in effect, the British Crown recognized American independence and ceded most of its territory east of the Mississippi River to the newborn nation, ultimately doubling the size of the United States and laying early foundations for westward expansion.

Following the American Revolution, the United States continued the British approach of treaty-making with Native populations. Recognizing tribes as independent entities, President

George Washington adopted treaty-making as the most appropriate form of international diplomacy. During the century from the Revolutionary War to the aftermath of the Civil War, hundreds of treaties were negotiated. These formal, legally binding contracts defined the relationship between the United States and Native Americans and set a precedent for cultural coexistence.

"George Washington established the principle of federal supremacy in Indian affairs in 1789," the Northwestern University (NU) Report of the John Evans Study Committee states. "Washington adopted this approach because he wished to block states or individuals from negotiating land purchases with tribes on their own or initiating hostilities with local Indians and thus drawing the entire nation into wars. By calling agreements with tribes 'treaties,' Washington wanted to ensure that the national government would handle all formal interaction with tribes. He also wished to demonstrate that his young country would be a nation of just laws and high principles."

Treaties are not exclusively harmful; they have been used to communicate the conclusion of prolonged wars and ease tensions over land disputes.

"In general, there were some good intentions behind treaties, and they had some value to them," says Hoxie. "However it was a dynamic, changing, evolving reality on the ground."

The nation's history is littered with unfulfilled promises. As white settlers continued to migrate westward in search of better opportunities, Native American populations were often disregarded. America's fifty states are representations of our nation's splintered past, one that was often masked by bandages, suppressing only entrance wounds rather than deep-rooted concerns.

"Treaties were inherently problematic from the beginning, because of the difference between the cultural outlook of the Native people and the U.S. government," Hoxie continues, "They were often negotiated by small groups of people and then enforced on others. Treaties had some benevolent potential, but they also were instruments of conquest and harm."

Under the leadership of President Andrew Jackson from 1829–1837, legal precedents

were implemented to constitute a systematic approach for Native American removal. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 utilized treaties as the principal means for the relocation of Indigenous peoples. While the statute itself did not formally order the involuntary removal of Native Americans, it granted the Jackson administration the ability to incite, provoke and intimidate Indigenous peoples. The act offered financial and material aid to Native tribes to entice them to relocate to designated lands and form new livelihoods with supposed "guaranteed" protection from the U.S. Government. When tribes expressed resistance towards these relocation policies, Jackson would exert force tactics.

"The desire for Indian lands by white settlers created an uncontrolled momentum that would break any promise by the American nation," says Donald Fixico, Thomas Bowlus Distinguished Professor of American Indian History and Director of the Center for Indigenous Nations Studies at the University of Kansas in a PBS interview.

The 1840s signified a time in which large numbers of white settlers began their journey west to settle in the newly acquired territories of Oregon and California. The discovery of gold in 1848 initiated vast migration, as a rapid influx of ambitious colonizers sought after the wealth that was believed to coincide with its possession. Anticipating the immediate need for treaties with the Indigenous nations that occupied the Plains, the federal government began to facilitate legal agreements in an effort to ensure a harmonious passage for its westward-bound citizens and perpetual settlement of the interior West. That same year, the U.S. government purchased Fort John, a notable 19th-century trading post, and renamed it Fort Laramie, which surrounded the nation's desire to sustain an active military presence.

Signed in 1851, the Treaty of Fort Laramie was negotiated between the federal government and several tribes that occupied parts of present southern Wyoming and northern Colorado. The treaty presented traditional territorial claims and put a temporary end to hostilities. However, the Colorado Gold Rush of 1858–59 encouraged white settlers to enter and travel through the plains in masses, seeking vast fortunes in Colorado; as whites trespassed on Cheyenne and

Arapaho land that was allegedly preserved, the treaty's initial purpose was blatantly dismissed.

As the territorial governor of Colorado starting in 1862, John Evans also served as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the territory, a role he exploited through overcompensation and unethical behaviors. Just a decade after the Treaty of Fort Laramie, the 1861 Treaty of Fort Wise—which intended to eliminate Natives from valuable lands—was ratified, which jeopardized prior gains, lessening the tribes holding to less than one-tenth of what they had been formerly granted. This legislation ultimately appropriated the encroachment of colonizers.

"Ten days before Colorado became a territory, ten Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs signed a treaty at Fort Wise, ostensibly ceding all of the area to the United States except a small reservation north of the Arkansas River, including the Sand Creek site. This was the dubious Fort Wise Treaty that most Indians rejected and that John Evans was expected to induce them to accept," the NU Report communicates. It continues, "The treaty promised the future division of the new reservation into individual farms and the provision of agricultural and other supplies to the tribes, which were expected to abandon their nomadic culture and take up a pastoral life. [It] implicitly acknowledged that only a few chiefs had signed it by calling on them 'to induce all that are now separated to rejoin and reunite with them.' It also pledged that the Indian Office would 'notify' the absent bands and 'induce them to come in and unite with their brethren.'"

The Treaty at Fort Wise aroused fierce opposition. Several members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes claimed that United States officials had warped its intent and that the treaty had been consented by only a small percentage of the tribe, leaving the vast majority in a state of oblivion.

The agreement not only increased hostilities between Indigenous populations and the United States government, but also caused disunity within Native tribes; these disruptions ultimately contributed to the presence of heinous acts.

"With the resources in Colorado, Governor Evans wanted Indians removed," says Dallin Maybee, the Director of Development who is Northern Arapaho and Seneca at the Native American Rights Fund (NARF). "There were

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proclamations that essentially allowed the killing of anything or anybody that was considered hostile, which was a very subjective definition, but it was a precursor to things like the Sand Creek Massacre.”

The practice of treaty-making with Native Americans ended in 1871 with the passing of the Indian Appropriations Act, which asserted that Indigenous nations were no longer sovereign entities capable of creating and maintaining diplomatic relations. From that moment on, agreements with Native Americans have typically been ratified through Executive Orders, Executive Agreements and Congressional acts.

In the case of Sand Creek, America proved to be far from an alleged “promised land.”

“This is a classic broken treaty,” says Mark Hirsch, a historian at the National Museum of the American Indian in a Smithsonian article. “It is such a naked example of a treaty abrogated by the United States in which the U.S. shows profound lack of honor and truthfulness.”

‘An Even Grander Stage’ for Evans

As the United States existed as a fractured nation in the mid-19th century—fighting to preserve unity and instill freedom in a country that had relied on slave labor since its conception—political figures were still vying for power. The acquisition of new territories in the American West had, in part, served as the catalyst for the Civil War. As the fighting ravaged the eastern and southern coasts, some politicians viewed the abundance of land in the west as an opportunity—not only to develop industry, but also their independent careers.

Abraham Lincoln appointed John Evans as the territorial governor of Colorado in 1862. At the time, the Confederate South was overwhelmingly Democratic; the Union North, Republican. In the event that Colorado gained enough population to become a state, Evans knew that the industrialization, urbanization and modernization would essentially guarantee the state to become a Republican stronghold—with him at the top of the list of potential senators for the territory-turned-state.

Evans’ political ambitions were longstanding. With fewer states in the nation, becoming a senator meant Evans, were he to become a senator, would be one of the most powerful men in the country. Instead of campaigning for election in states that had already been established, Evans sought to make a name for himself in the ever-expanding west. Evans’ support of Lincoln’s candidacy and presidency can be viewed as a tactical endeavor to achieve this goal.

“The Republican Party had risen very quickly. On one hand, they were powerful; Lincoln was reelected, which was a huge political achievement. But [the party members] were scrambling constantly to build and maintain their support. They did this by rewarding the loyalty of people and using those people as building blocks to political power. However, the [Republican Party] was involved with the Civil War, so they had grown even more worrisome about opposition. There was every incentive to really demonize the opposition to encourage supporters. John Evans is a [prime] example of this, rewarded with political office,” says retired Professor of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Frederick Hoxie.

Evans initially expressed interest in the governorship of the Nebraska Territory. Introduced in 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, a bill proposed by Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois, ultimately divided the land west of Missouri and created two new territories; Kansas and Nebraska, both of which had the potential to become crucial to the west.

When discussion surrounding a transcontinental railroad ramped up in the mid 1850s, Tom Cuming, Nebraska’s acting governor, viewed Nebraska as an essential aspect of its route. John Evans saw Nebraska as a place where he could establish political roots; in 1857, Evans intended to create a thriving commercial center near present-day Plattsmouth, located at the convergence of the Missouri and Platte rivers. Already a man of great influence when he began to design Oreapolis, Evans wanted it to become a transportation hub.

“I shall make a road that will be a great thoroughfare to the gold regions and when the road is once opened it will make Oreapolis the great starting point for the overland routes to those points,” he wrote in a letter at the time.

While Oreapolis struggled in the onset of the Civil War to develop as Evans had planned, Lincoln made the offer to Evans for him to become territorial governor of Washington state, a proposition he declined. Washington state was isolated, which meant it would be years before it gained the population necessary to become a state—making it impossible for Evans to gain senatorship there. However, when William Gilpin, the governor of the Colorado territory at the time, was ousted amid a financial scandal, Lincoln prompted Evans to step into the role. Evans accepted and was sworn in on April 11, 1862 as Gilpin’s replacement. Now, Evans had a territory to develop despite the thriving Native presence there.

Evans centered his term as territorial governor around his push for Colorado statehood, which he argued would increase public willingness for the construction of an intrusive railroad in Denver, sustain active military presence and secure a smooth transition to senatorship.

“[Evans] also knew that Republicans looked forward to Colorado becoming a state, since it almost certainly would send two more party loyalists to the Senate. Evans had every reason to believe that he would be one of those senators, which would furnish him an even grander stage from which to advance the interests of his country, his church, his family, and himself,” the NU Report communicates.

Still, Colorado voters actively repudiated Colorado’s admission into the Union. If Colorado had gained statehood, the U.S. government would be less involved in their affairs, which would mean much less military support. The threat of an active Native presence was a determining factor in Coloradans’ fear of becoming an independent entity. They were concerned that Colorado didn’t have the means to protect themselves or create a flourishing industry without federal protection.

Evans viewed the occupation of land by Native populations as an obstacle that prevented the United States from reaching their potential. This belief is emblematic of the approach of white Americans at the time.

‘Chivington and His Friends’

While Evans made political moves over the 1850s and early 1860s, Colonel John Chivington was a prominent Methodist minister who would go on to become a Civil War hero who was revered and highly respected by the people of the Colorado territory.

Previous to his military experience, Chivington worked for many Methodist establishments, including the Payson Circuit Conference in Illinois, where he resided for ten years. In 1853, Chivington became a missionary for his church, attempting to convert the Native people in the Kansas territory. However, his abolitionist beliefs put him at odds with the Kansas methodists, and Chivington was convinced to leave Kansas for Nebraska.

When the Civil War began, Chivington was offered a position in the Colorado Methodist Church. But Chivington saw military experience as a faster way to increase his political standing and become a senator. Instead of taking on a position of religious leadership, he asked for a military position. During the war, he gained fame by destroying a Confederate supply train as part of the New Mexico campaign at the Battle of Glorieta Pass, forcing the Confederates to retreat. Chivington’s exploits in Colorado led to him becoming a commander.

It was in Colorado where Chivington met Evans, and where their political relationship began, a relationship that ultimately led to the massacre at Sand Creek.

Evans and Chivington had shared political goals, religious values and motivations for their involvement in Colorado territory. During the height of tensions between the Colorado government and the Indigenous population, Evans appointed Chivington to be the general of military engagement between the government and the tribes, heading up the Third Regiment, which was established for 100 days to help with

the increase in tensions between Native groups and white settlers. Chivington headed this entire volunteer group of soldiers, a role which eventually led to Chivington’s leading role within the Sand Creek Massacre.

A year after the slaughter at Sand Creek, Evans, along with colonels, majors and soldiers, took the trek to the state capitol to sit in front of a congressional committee to be questioned about their roles in the massacre. The hearings loomed large, as the political careers of both Evans and Chivington were at risk.

In the hearings, Evans was quick to defend Chivington.

“I would say ... that the reports that have been made here, a great many of them, have come through persons whom I know to be personal enemies of Colonel Chivington for a long time, and I would rather not give an opinion on the subject until I have heard the other side of the question,” Evans claimed before the committee.

While it is known that Evans had meetings with Chivington, the extent of their conversations is unknown. As Evans defended Chivington, the military leader made statements in which he lied about the events of the massacre.

Chivington expressed, “The first shot to fire was by [the Native people]. The first man to fall [was] white.” Later at the congressional hearings, Evans claimed that “Chivington and

his friends” had stated that “these Indians had assumed a hostile attitude,” seemingly confirming Chivington’s remarks. However, Evans later attested that he didn’t know if Chivington’s account was true.

Evans continued to contradict himself throughout the hearings, to the point that Congressmen were notably dissatisfied with his testimony. Massachusetts representative Daniel Gooch became frustrated and instructed Evans that he wanted to hear the truth rather than Evans’ opinion. That prompted Evans to claim that he was unaware of any of the factors that would justify the massacre.

While Evans was not physically present during the massacre at Sand Creek, his background presence—and his enabling of Chivington’s actions—loomed large.

To Hoxie, the role Evans played in Chivington’s actions is clear.

“It’s impossible to believe that [Evans] was discouraging Chivington from doing what he did. Chivington obviously is guilty, in my view, and he would not have acted had he not believed that what he was doing was gonna be okay.”

Art by Ahania Soni, Clara Gustafson
Infographic by Ethan Ravi

How does a territory become a state?

01

Referendum

The existing government of the territory lets the Federal Government know that it wishes to become a state. This usually happens in the form of a referendum.

02

Constitutional convention

If the bid for statehood is approved by Congress, the next step is to hold a convention to draw up the state constitution.

03

Approval of state constitution

Once the state constitution has been made, it must be approved by the people of the state and then by Congress.

04

Joint resolution

The bid for statehood then goes up for vote in Congress. A majority vote is all that is needed to approve the bid, and if it passes, it does so as a joint resolution.

05

Approval by the President

Once the joint resolution passes Congress, the President must sign the resolution as the final step in the process.

06

Proclamation of statehood

Once the bid for statehood has been signed by the President, a proclamation is issued announcing that a new state has been added to the Union. For Colorado, this happened in August of 1876.

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Mourning and loss: the events at Sand Creek

By Jessica Sehgal, Clara Gustafson, Frank Herman
Executive Editor, News Editor, Staff Writer

Content warning: This article includes descriptions of the violence that occurred during the Sand Creek Massacre.

Historically, buffalo have served as the lifeblood of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. No part of the body would go unused—from the bones that were repurposed into tools to the flesh and fur that became covered tipis and lined robes. Providing warmth and sustenance over time, the buffalo has long been a sacred animal, representing opportunity and prosperity.

After migrating from the Smoky Hill River to Sand Creek, the village of 750 Cheyenne and Arapaho people hadn't seen a buffalo since they settled, meaning it had been weeks since having fresh, abundant meat.

On Nov. 29, 1864, when the sun had just begun inching above the horizon, the rumbling sound of approaching hooves abruptly awoke the sleeping tribes. A few village patrons presumptively celebrated at what appeared to be buffalo in the distance. However, the truth of what lay before them that morning was far from the hopeful symbol of buffalo and, instead, grew to be one of the most gruesome and inhumane massacres in American history.

Before

Three core tensions pervading America in the mid-19th century were simple: money, land and power. But as history has shown, these seemingly elementary entities stem issues tangled in complexity.

The late 1850s brought an influx of white settlers across Colorado's Great Plains, thirsty for prospective gold in the Rocky Mountains. The settlers trespassed upon Cheyenne and Arapaho territory, which was distinguished by the Northern border of the Arkansas River and the Southern bounds of Nebraska and diminished the area's natural resources; land tensions between Indigenous tribes and white settlers rapidly escalated.

In 1861, the long-anticipated Civil War broke out between the Union and the Confederacy, and the federal government found itself in dire need of funding to support the war. Luckily for the government, the recent gold rush proposed a seemingly perfect solution, but at a loss for transportation, the push for a transcontinental railroad came into play in order to move the gold for use in Washington.

"One thing to keep in mind is [John Evans, Colorado Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs at the time,] was there to build railroads," notes Tinker, a professor emeritus at the University of Denver's (DU) graduate school, Iliff School of Theology. Tinker also served on the committee that investigated Evans' role in the Sand Creek Massacre for a 2014 DU report. "How do you build railroads across a large piece of country that is mostly—I'm going to use the white word here—'owned' by Indian tribes?"

In the eyes of Evans and his supporters, Indigenous people were seen as obstacles that stood in the way of their economic and political agendas.

"John Evans was a wealthy white man. He was connected to the railroad industry, so he directly profited off of the building of railroads. In order to build railroads out west, which was a huge thing at the time, you needed to secure Native land. A huge part of westward expansion with the railroads was the removal, which often included murder, of Indigenous people," explains Forrest Bruce, a PhD student at Northwestern and founding member of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. "John Evans was a person who profited off of that. It was in his financial interest for Indigenous people to lose their land so that he could build his railroads."

On May 16, 1864, Colorado troops invaded Cheyenne and Arapaho land, killing peaceful Cheyenne Chief Lean Bear, who, just prior to the attack, had received a peace medal from President Abraham Lincoln. Lean Bear had approached the soldiers in an attempt to explain the tribe's peaceful presence, but he was quickly shot down. The Dark Soldier Clan were the warriors that fought on behalf of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, and in retaliation, they began to attack the ranches and wagon trains of white settlers. Amidst the Civil War, there was a separate war brewing: one between the Indigenous tribes of Colorado and the Colorado government.

"Lincoln and then, of course, what the [Civil] War produced was a new vision of the nation state, and the Civil War was, in many ways, a triumph of the nation. That, in terms of slavery, was a powerful thing because it created a national government that was strong enough to abolish it," notes Frederick Hoxie, a professor of History and American Indian Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a committee member for the DU report. "On the other hand, nationalism has produced expansion and chauvinism and hatred of people who are different from all of the rest of it. That's the irony of it: nationalism can have two — at least two — sides."

American nationalism was the fuel driving westward expansion, which manifested itself in different ways for different leaders.

James Duane Doty was appointed to be Utah's Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1861 and later maintained his superintendent position while taking on the new status of governor in 1863. Doty prioritized treaties with native tribes; seeking partnership over conflict, he oversaw a commission with the purpose of crafting treaties. Nevada had a similar approach, and both states, while facing the same tensions of westward expansion between settlers and Indigenous tribes that Colorado was, managed to form effective alliances that prevented the same level of violence that Colorado exhibited.

"It struck me that Evans—his actions really were counter to the policy of the U.S. government at the time with regard to Western Indians. The government was very concerned that the Confederates wouldn't be able to do in the west what they had been able to do in the southeast, which was to get Native American allies, to fight with them, to fight on their side. [Utah and Nevada] authorized these treaties, peace and friendship, to be negotiated and to ensure that this wouldn't happen out west," explains Rich-

ard Clemmer-Smith, a professor emeritus at the University of Denver and a member of the DU report committee. "Evans actually seemed to encourage hostilities."

As tensions progressed, violence grew with it and vice versa. In June of 1864, the Hungates, family of Colorado residents, were murdered by Native Americans. Word of their murder circulated throughout the press, which was almost entirely white at the time, igniting fear and hostility in Colorado's white population. On June 27, 1864, Evans sent out a proclamation directing "friendly" Native Americans to migrate to military outposts; he ordered the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes near the Arkansas River to move to Fort Lyon to "show them a place of safety." The letter continues, "The object of this is to prevent friendly Indians from being killed through mistake. None but those who intend to be friendly with the whites must come to these places ... The war on hostile Indians will be continued until they are all effectually subdued."

On Aug. 11, 1864, Evans sent out a second proclamation that instructed Colorado citizens "to kill and destroy, as enemies of the country, wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians." In return, Evans stated that citizens could capture and keep any stolen property from the Indigenous people. On that same day, Evans was informed of the authorization by the U.S. War Department to create a temporary regiment for the purpose of battling the "hostile" Native Americans that Evans described. This became Colorado's Third Regiment, also known as the 100-Daygers, because the group, which was formed of inexperienced volunteers, was only permitted to last 100 days.

However, due to lack of efficient communication at the time, the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes along the Arkansas River didn't receive the first proclamation until much later. In response, Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle wrote a letter that reached Major Edward Wynkoop at Fort Lyon on Sept. 6, 1864, stating his community sought peace; furthermore, the Cheyenne tribe had seven white prisoners that had been passed onto them from other tribes, and they would free the prisoners in return for peace. The mention of prisoners caused Wynkoop to lead 130 men to the Smoky Hill River, and, once there, he was outnumbered by Indigenous warriors, leaving Wynkoop with no other choice but to place his trust in Black Kettle.

On Sept. 28, 1864, Black Kettle and other Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs, alongside

Wynkoop, met with Evans in an attempt to negotiate peace. Evans declined such offers, asserting that he had men already in preparation for violence. Although Evans neglected to form a treaty, he guaranteed them peace if they were to surrender to the U.S. army, and the chiefs did just that. They went to Fort Lyon and surrendered to Major Wynkoop in order to ensure their protection against violence from the U.S. government.

At Fort Lyon, Wynkoop provided the hundreds of Cheyenne and Arapaho people with food, but once Wynkoop's superiors discovered that he was feeding the tribes, his position at Fort Lyon was given to Major Scott Anthony, who began to feed the Cheyenne and Arapaho people as well. Knowing that the Colorado government deemed it illegal to provide Native Americans with food, Anthony instructed Black Kettle and accompanying Cheyenne Chief White Antelope to reside in Sand Creek, which existed 20 miles from Fort Lyon, where the Indigenous people would be able to hunt for food. He also provided the chiefs with a white flag, which could be used to indicate their peacefulness to government officials. The tribes were to remain in Sand Creek until Anthony came to give them further directions, but Anthony never came, and instead, the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes were met with a horrific surprise.

During

By the end of November, the time limit on the Third Regiment was reaching its end, and Chivington grew impatient as jokes about the 100-dayers' lack of action grew stronger, receiving the nickname "Bloodless Third." Commanding the approximate 250 soldiers from the First Regiment and approximate 425 soldiers from the Third, Chivington marched the men—the majority of whom were heavily under qualified volunteers—to Fort Lyon.

"It's a specially raised regiment of troops under a simply sadistic madman with career ambition," notes Northwestern History Professor Carl Smith about the 100-dayers.

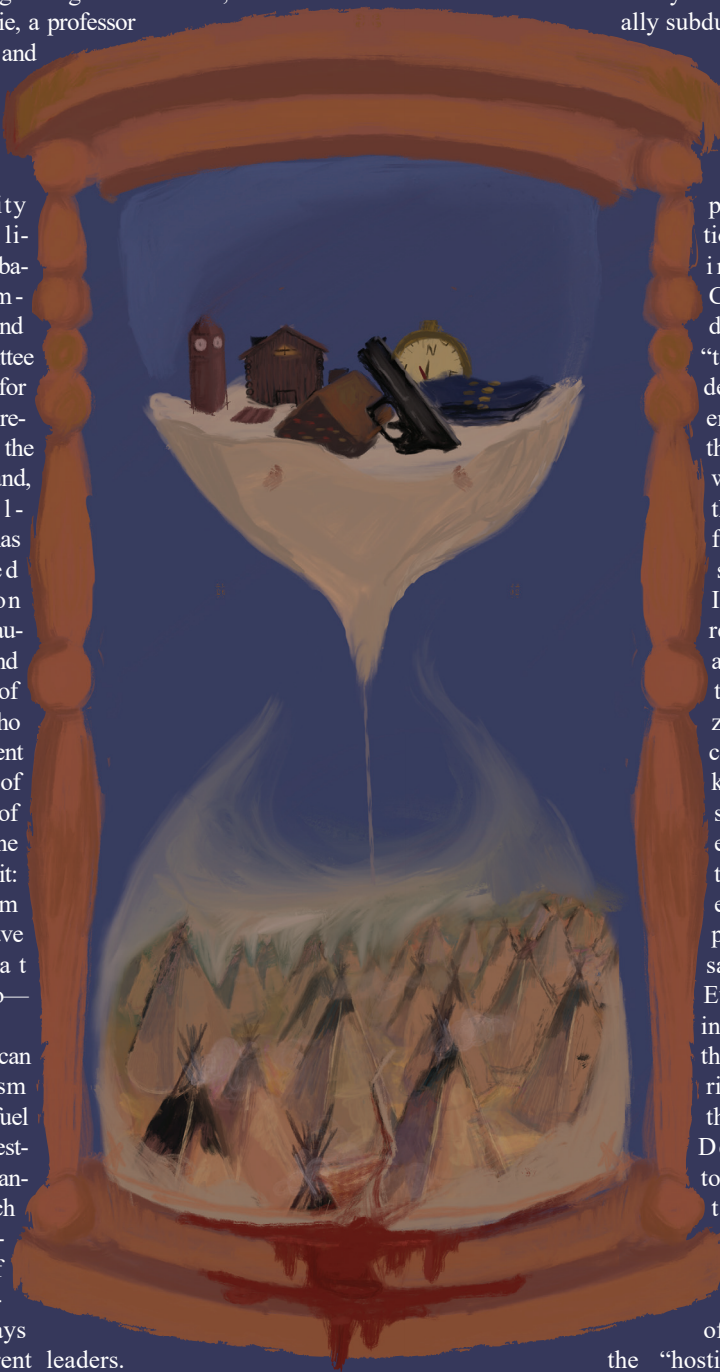
On Nov. 28, 1864, Chivington and the Third Regiment reached the fort in search of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. Anthony informed Chivington that they were at Sand Creek, and they were a peaceful tribe that complied with the government. Chivington ignored all agreements with the tribes and marched his men over to Sand Creek.

"Chivington knew exactly where they were, and Chivington needed a quick victory against Indians in order to satisfy the political climate, so he decided to attack this peace village early in the morning," Tinker says. "John Evans spent the summer building the public up for making war against Indians, any Indians. Evans and Chivington both, but Evans particularly, divided Indians into two groups: 'friendlies' [and] 'hostiles.' Hostiles are those who refuse to surrender their homes to the white advance, and friendlies are those who got out of the way. Well, those at Sand Creek were actually friendlies, but John Chivington got to qualify them as hostiles, because Indians don't decide which are hostile and which are friendly. That's entirely up to the discretion of the white men."

To Chivington, peace and promises meant nothing, his one pursuit was violence. He instructed his troops to kill every Native American, including infants and children, because according to a 1864 speech he gave in Denver, "Nits make lice." One of Chivington's main officers stated, "When we came upon the camp on Sand Creek, we did not care whether these particular Indians were friendly or not."

At the first glimpse of sunrise, Chivington and his men attacked the sleeping village of approximately 750 Cheyenne and Arapaho people.

Upon their arrival, Black Kettle ran to meet them with the American flag and white peace flag, indicating that the tribes were protected, as they had done what they were



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told to do by surrendering to the U.S. Army.

“When I looked toward the chief’s lodge, I saw that Black Kettle had a large American flag up on a long lodgpole as a signal to the troop that the camp was friendly. Part of the warriors were running out toward the pony herds and the rest of the people were rushing about the camp in great fear,” reads an eyewitness report from George Bent, a half-white, half-Cheyenne survivor of the massacre. “All the time Black Kettle kept calling out not to be frightened; that the camp was under protection and there was no danger. Then, suddenly, the troops opened fire on this mass of men, women, and children, and all began to scatter and run.”

The Cheyenne and Arapaho people began digging holes in the sand to in and hide, while others ran up the bed of the creek. The village was a Chief’s village, where over 20 Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs lived, so the majority of the village’s population was composed of women, children and elders, who stuck by the chiefs for protection. Consequently, the village was left nearly defenseless against the troops, as Cheyenne and Arapaho men who were in condition to fight were scarce.

White Antelope was the first chief that the troops murdered. Unlike many of the scattering Cheyenne and Arapaho people around him, White Antelope remained at the scene, approaching the troops with his arms open, singing, “Nothing lives forever, only the earth and the mountains,” right before being shot down. In 1851, White Antelope had received a peace medal in Washington D.C., and now, he lay dead, as the malicious volunteers terrorized the community around him and cut off his genitals to keep as trophies, memorializing their gruesome acts.

Captain Silas Soule and Lieutenant Joseph Cramer from the First Regiment refused to contribute to the violence, ordering their troops to hold fire. Later, they reported on the atrocities they witnessed. In Soule’s testimony, he stated, “I heard a soldier say he was going to make a tobacco pouch out of them,” in reference to White Antelope’s castration.

In a letter sent to Wynkoop two weeks after the massacre, Soule wrote, “hundreds of women and children were coming towards us, and getting on their knees for mercy.” He witnessed children “have their brains beat out by men professing to be civilized.” He described seeing, “two Indians [take] hold of one another’s hands, chased until they were exhausted, when they kneeled down, and clasped each other around the neck and were both shot together, they were all scalped, and as high as half a dozen taken from one head. They were all horribly mutilated. One woman was cut open, and a child taken out of her, and scalped.”

Four days later, Cramer wrote a similar

letter to Wynkoop in which he detailed soldiers cutting fingers off of dead Indigenous people to steal rings and shooting women and children who pleaded for mercy. Cramer also begged Wynkoop to deny Chivington the position of brigadier general, explaining that Chivington anticipated the promotion.

The violence continued for nine hours, killing a total of approximately 200 Indigenous people with a similar estimate injured. The majority of casualties were women and children.

“There’s a famous painting in 1872, painted by John Gast, sometimes called [American Progression], and you’ll see the Angel of Progress coming across the painting. You’ll see cities binded to the east and fleeing wildlife: wolves, deer, buffalo and Indians—part of the ‘wildlife’—flee out of the way of this Angel of Progress as she sweeps across the continent,” Tink describes. “That’s the American romance, and unfortunately, it wasn’t that sweet—especially if you’re an American Indian.”

After

Federal policy regarding western territories, as well as government presence in the area, was considerable, so when word of the massacre spread to government employees, they were quick to report what happened to the capital. While local newspapers, and Chivington himself, hailed it as a triumph against the “savage” Natives, federal officials were far more scrutinizing and wanted a further investigation of the event.

By early 1865, a military investigation of the massacre was underway, and it was clear to Chivington that he would need to justify his actions. However, it seems that he overestimated his position and assumed that the blame would fall on Evans. Chivington’s beliefs were not unfounded, since local newspapers and settlers had praised his actions as “peacekeeping.” What he didn’t realize was that Evans’ relationships in government initially kept him shielded from scrutiny, and since there was no proof that Evans had ordered the massacre, Chivington would get the blame.

Despite never being put on trial, Chivington would become the subject of a military investigation, during which he sought to create the image of a large and dangerous Native military force. He claimed there were 1200 Natives, mostly warriors, 700 of whom were killed. In actuality, modern estimates put the number of Natives present at Sand Creek at around 750, and almost all of them were women or children.

During the investigation, he testified that the Natives were responsible for killing whites, along with causing hundreds of thousands—today millions—of dollars in

property damage. Chivington’s claims were nothing more than fallacy, as the Natives at Sand Creek had earlier surrendered themselves peacefully under the provisions of the peace talks at Fort Lyon. He also claimed that he possessed “the most conclusive evidence” of a hostile military alliance between the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanche River and Apache tribes. At this point, however, organized cross-tribe resistance to American dominance in the region was either severely weakened or nonexistent, and Chivington exaggerated to exacerbate fears of Native revolt. Chivington’s version of the Sand Creek story is a reflection of himself, one that seeks to frame him as a hero and protector of whites in the region.

Evans too was admonished but never at quite the same level as Chivington. Evans had the advantage of having friends in Washington, namely Ohio Congressman James M. Ashley. Ashley wrote an appeal to Secretary of State William Seward which argued that the criticism of Evans was unjust because “Gov. Evans was not in the territory at the time and could not be responsible for the acts of any military officer acting under the direction of a Major General of the United States army,” according to the 2014 DU report.

The shadow of Sand Creek followed Evans throughout his life, but he consistently downplayed his role in the massacre.

“We know that 20 years later in an interview with a famous historian in California that John Evans told the historian: ‘However you judge the Sand Creek Massacre, the one thing we know is that it was successful in securing Colorado territory,’ or white Christian occupancy, so he’s unrepentant,” Tinker shares.

Evans tried to rewrite the perception of the massacre when he testified to the Secretary for War in the aforementioned military investigation. He attempted to define the massacre as an honest mistake by Chivington in differentiating “peaceful” Natives from “hostile” ones.

“While a general Indian war was inevitable, it was dictated by sound policy, justice, and humanity that those Indians who were friendly, and disposed to remain so, should not fall victim to the impossibility of soldiers discriminating between them and the hostile, upon whom they must do any good, inflict the most severe chastisement,” Evans stated at the time.

In other words, Evans is asserting that conflict with the Natives was inevitable, and the government couldn’t tell the difference between those resisting American expansion and those submitting to it.

However, not everyone involved at the time complied with the rhetoric of Evans and Chivington that justified the events,

both leading up to and taking place, at Sand Creek.

In 1865, Soule testified before a military commission that was ordered to inquire into the Sand Creek Massacre. His candid testimony revealed an ugly truth behind the Sand Creek Massacre that Evans and Chivington had previously masked through their propaganda.

In contrast with Chivington’s description of a village full of “hostile” Indigenous warriors, Soule shared an opposing narrative.

“[The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes at Sand Creek] said they were desirous of making peace with the whites,” he noted. He also continued to explain how other officers at Fort Lyon felt similarly to himself in holding Chivington responsible for the violence that took place. “I heard them say that [Chivington] ought to be prosecuted, and that, when the facts got to Washington, he was liable to be, or words to that effect.”

Soule’s testimony was one component of a larger report by the Secretary of War, published in early February of 1867, that concluded that Chivington and Evans were both at fault in regards to the Sand Creek Massacre. Following Soule’s testimony, Chivington resigned from the military before he could be put on trial, voiding him of legal consequences. Evans was removed from his governorship of Colorado in June of 1865. Likewise, Evans tried to distance himself from the massacre and those involved, but his efforts couldn’t save him from the pressure to resign.

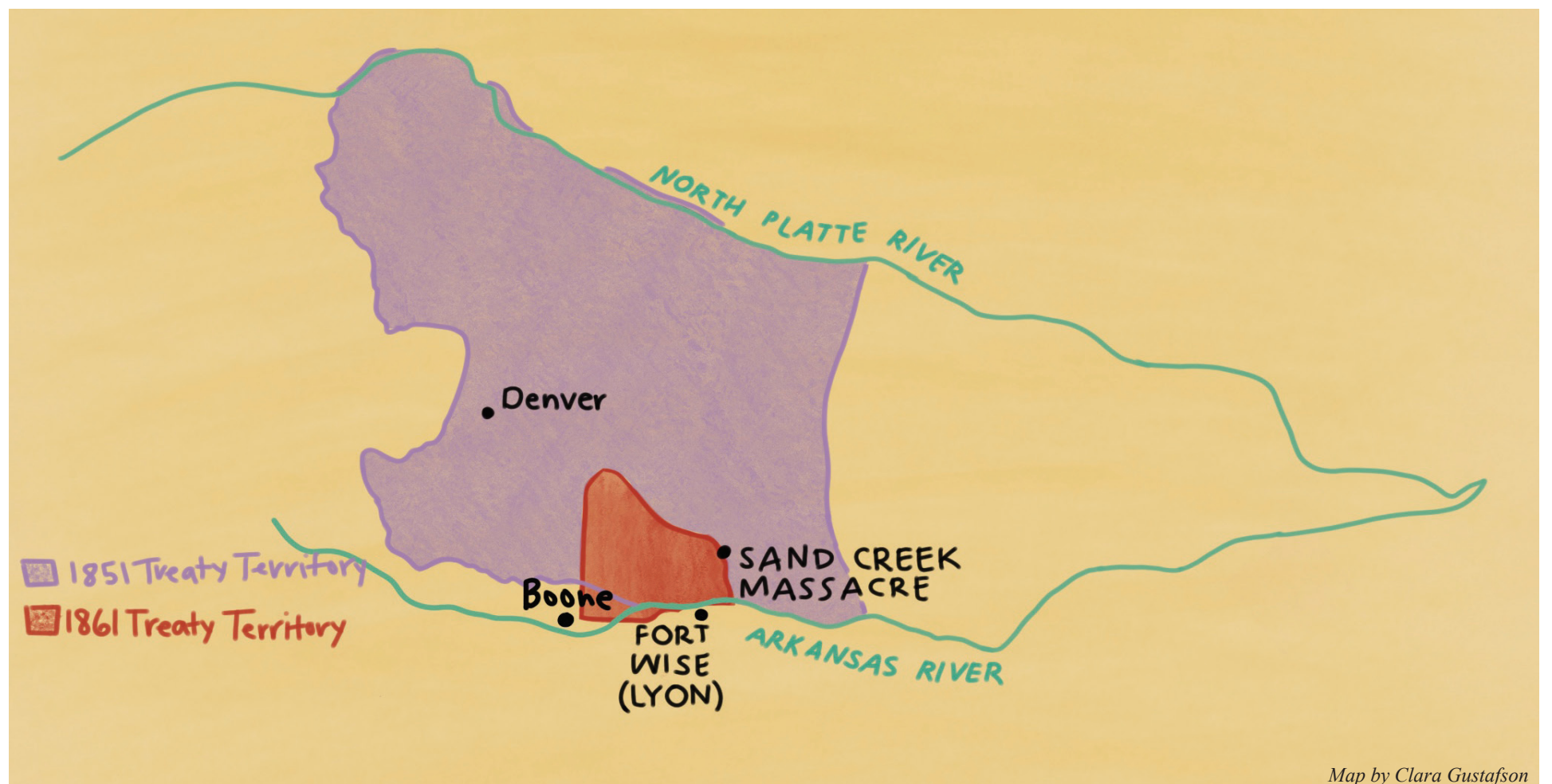
While Evans and Chivington were dishonest about their role in the massacre, Soule strived to tell the truth, and he paid a deadly price.

On April 23, 1865, a few months after the trial, and soon after Soule was married, he went to explore a gunshot heard nearby. When Soule got there, he was greeted by his murderers and fatally shot. Though it hasn’t been proved, it is speculated that Chivington hired men to kill Soule because the two that were arrested, and eventually escaped before the trial, had been part of Chivington’s army.

Evans and Chivington lost their positions; Soule lost his life. Once again, the atrocities committed against Indigenous tribes became buried amongst the thirst for land, money and power.

“Two different worldviews,” Tinker describes, in regards to the views of white settlers and Indigenous tribes. “Unfortunately, one of them gets to eat the other and totally erase it.”

Art by Kupunoli Sumi



Map by Clara Gustafson

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In years after Sand Creek Massacre, media, p



By Ahania Soni, Bridget Baker, Aaliya Weheliye, Rosie Witt

Content warning: The following article contains graphic, disturbing descriptions of the aftermath of the Sand Creek Massacre.

Dec. 22, 1864. The streets of Denver, Colo. were roused in grotesque celebration. Colonel John Chivington's troops returned merely a month after the Sand Creek Massacre, parading the "trophies" they had taken from the mutilated bodies of native people through the streets. They displayed limbs, scalps, male and female genitalia and a fetus which had been cut from the body of a murdered pregnant woman. Rather than recoil, the citizens of Denver welcomed these soldiers back with open arms. Upon their arrival in the city, Chivington's Third Regiment was met by crowds of admiring onlookers. His soldiers bragged about their bravery on the "field of battle" and were celebrated as heroes by Coloradans. A Denver newspaper described the scene of this parade.

"As the 'bold sojer boys' passed along, the sidewalks and the corner stands were thronged with citizens saluting their old friends: and the fair sex took advantage of the opportunity, wherever they could get it, of expressing their admiration for the gallant boys, who donned the regimentals for the purpose of protecting the women of the country by ridding it of red skins," read the Rocky Mountain News on Dec. 22, 1864.

Although we now know it as the Sand Creek Massacre, for over a century the events of Nov. 28 were called a "battle." The men who are now condemned as murderers were—in many cases—celebrated and revered. Despite the graphically disturbing testimonies of soldiers, and the eventual congressional investigation which led to the resignation from the governorship of John Evans, the territorial governor at the time, the prevailing narrative in Colorado was one of brave American troops warding off dangerous Natives.

In 1864, The Rocky Mountain News published a story titled "The Battle of Sand Creek" in which it explained, "Among the brilliant feats of arms in Indian warfare, the recent campaign of our Colorado volunteers will stand in history with few rivals, and none to exceed it in final results," and "In no single battle in North America, we believe, have so many Indians been slain [...] All acquitted themselves well, and Colorado soldiers have again covered themselves with glory."

This glorification of violence against Indigenous people was far from uncommon. As more Americans moved west, in search of freedom or wealth, more land had to be taken from Native Americans—all too often violently. But white settlers didn't want to see themselves as thieves or murderers, so they created a narrative where they maintained their moral standing while simultaneously

encroaching further and further into the territory Natives had lived on for centuries. In their story, God intended America for white folks, and Native people were a violent, frightening obstacle in their path to the coast.

This concept—the idea that women and children had to be protected from fierce savages—shifted the way white Americans viewed violence against natives.

Megan Hyska, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University who studies propaganda, puts how settlers may have rationalized the massacre into perspective.

"People tend to have some kind of personal or cultural code about when it is okay to harm other people. So, any narrative about an act of killing or harming being 'heroic' has to function within those parameters. When you suggest that the people murdered were combatants, then this is an instance of self protection. Or, for instance, you say it's just war—the same kind that any two European powers would wage against one another. It's fine to kill other combatants in a war," says Hyska.

Colorado was in the perfect social and political climate to support Chivington. Denver had struggled with violence between settlers and nearby Native populations for years. In the lead up to the massacre, in 1864, a young family called the Hungates were murdered and mutilated just outside of the city. They were presumed to have been killed by Indians, and their bodies were brought into the

"People tend to have some kind of personal or cultural code about when it is okay to harm other people. So, any narrative about an act of killing or harming being 'heroic' has to function within those parameters."

-Megan Hyska, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University

city and put on display in order to show the dangers that Native communities might pose to homesteaders. With this event at the forefront of people's minds, the assumption that all Natives wanted to kill and scalp white women and children didn't seem far-fetched to the people of Denver. The widespread fear led Evans to create the Third Regiment of the Colorado Militia, a volunteer army with the specific goal of killing Native Americans in order to "protect" white Coloradans. Evans also issued a proclamation in August of 1864 which encouraged white settlers to kill Indians in order to defend their land.

"In his August proclamation, August 1864, [Evans] basically gave carte blanche to vigilantes to go after Indians. And that was something of a surprise. And I think that was what basically gave Chivington permission to attack these peaceful Indians that were liv-

ing on their reservation," says Richard Clemmer-Smith, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Denver.

Reaction Outside of Colorado

Colorado was primed to accept the brutal violence against its Native population, but in the months after the massacre, pushback began to build on the East Coast. Witnesses to the massacre were beginning to share what they had seen in letters to their friends and family, and their gruesome testimonies prompted moral concern from metropolitan areas in New England and the Midwest. The New York Times wrote in July of 1865, "The truth is that [Chivington] surprised and murdered, in cold blood, the unsuspecting men women and children on Sand Creek."

Beth Redbird, a Northwestern Sociology professor who focuses on Indigenous wellbeing, explains that the western states were much more inclined to dehumanize Native populations.

"The West is a place of significant Native population. There's a sociological theory called 'population threat,' which is that, when a group is large compared to yours, you find it threatening [...] That idea was certainly prominent in the minds of people in the West at the time." Redbird says, "The people in the West had memories of conflicts with Native groups—they had witnessed conflicts with Native groups. The conflict was real in a way

that it wasn't in the east."

The increased eastern concern over the massacre soon prompted a Congressional investigation by the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, a committee composed of Union generals who investigated internal mismanagement within the Union Army. Suspicious of the claim that the events at Sand Creek had been a "battle," the Committee asked soldiers who had been present to testify about their experience. Silas Soule, the captain of the First Colorado Cavalry at the time, was one of the few soldiers willing to condemn his Colonel in a testimony for Congress.

First, Soule described that "the Indians seemed very anxious to make peace." He reported that he protested the idea of attack to his commanding officer, Major Anthony, and described Anthony's response, saying,

"He told me that we were going on Smokey Hill to fight the hostile Indians; he also said he was all in 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."

His testimony, along with others which corroborated his story, was convincing. It became clear to the Committee that the attack had been unprovoked and unrequited. Contradicting the early news reporting, the Committee's statement explicitly outlined that the attack was in fact a massacre, and condemned Chivington for his role in orchestrating it, saying:

"He deliberately planned and executed a foul and dastardly massacre which would have disgraced the veriest savage among those who were the victims of his cruelty. Having full knowledge of their friendly character, having himself been instrumental to some extent in placing them in their position of fancied security, he took advantage of their in-apprehension and defenseless condition to gratify the worst passions that ever cursed the heart of man."

But despite its abundance of evidence and damning conclusion, the report's effect only extended so far. Chivington resigned from his position before he could suffer any disciplinary action from the Union military. Although the commission recommended that charges be brought against the instrumental players in the massacre, namely Chivington, none ever were. In fact, instead of swaying the public against Chivington, after its release, it seemed to strengthen the anti-Indian sentiments of Coloradans. They perceived the government council as an upper-class institution which has no comprehension of what they lived through on the frontier. Despite all that the report illustrated, the people of Colorado only wanted to see the narrative which they had written—the one where they were brave heroes.

"Indignation was loudly and unequivocally expressed, and some less considerate of the boys were very persistent in their inquiries as to who those 'high officials' were, with a mild intimation that they had half a mind to 'go for them.' This talk about 'friendly Indians' and a 'surrendered' village will do to 'tell to marines,' but to us out here it is all bosh." Rocky Mountain News, 1864.

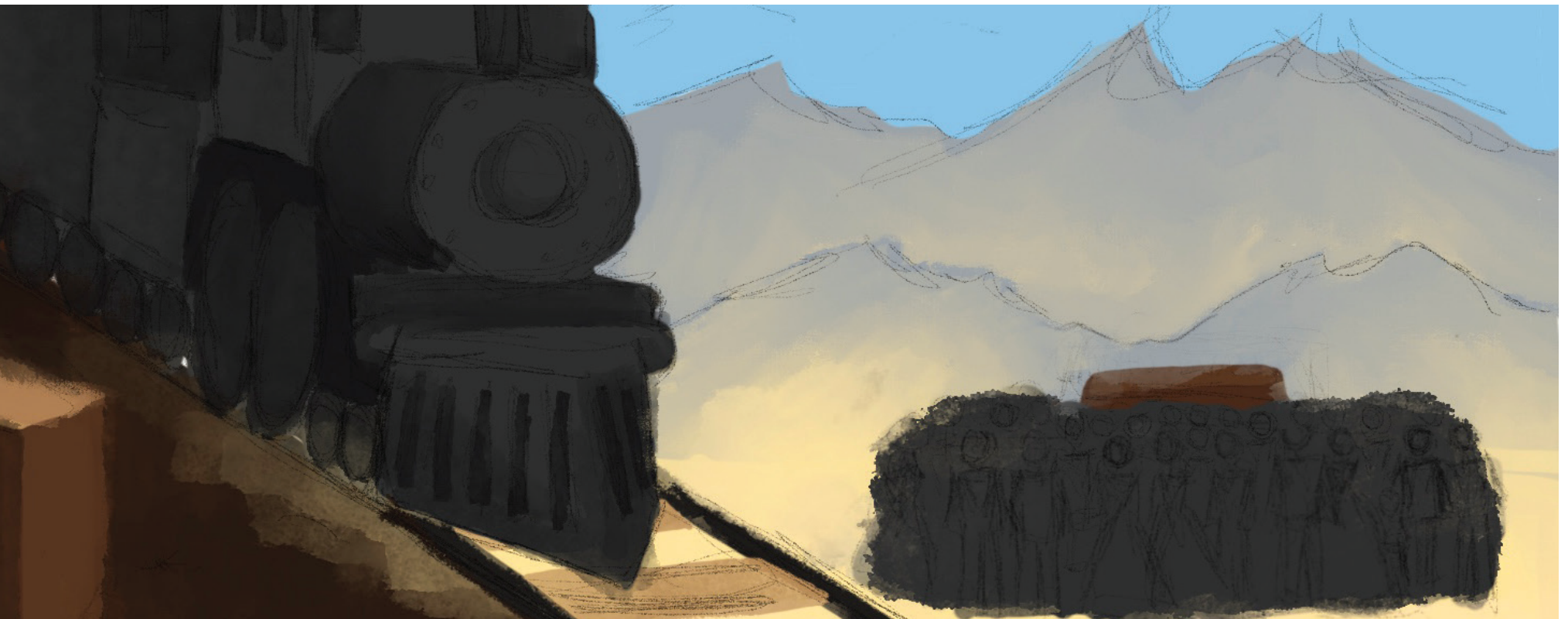
The press even used the Hungates' murders as explicit justification for the massacre, claiming that:

"The confessed murderers of the Hungate family, a man and wife and their two little babes, whose scalped and mutilated remains were seen by all our citizens—were 'friendly Indians,' we suppose, in the eyes of these 'high officials.' They fell in the Sand Creek battle," read another article in the Rocky Mountain News, 1864.

By associating the Indians at Sand Creek with those who allegedly killed the Hunt-

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political operatives salvage Evans' reputation



gates they spoke to the much broader idea that “Indians are killers.” If they could believe that any Native person was capable of scalping a baby, then even though the natives at sand creek were unarmed and peaceful it was still “morally sound” to murder them. By establishing that all Indians are murderers, the court of public opinion sentenced them to death.

It didn't take long for the resentment for the investigation into Chivington's behavior to spiral into even more violence. After receiving numerous death threats for his decision to aid the Commission, just two months after his testimony in front of congress, Silas Soule was murdered.

Native Retaliation

August 1864. Evans issued a proclamation explicitly commanding Coloradans to murder any Natives outside of a few areas which became designated safe zones. For Indigenous people, Colorado became a warzone.

“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 call to rendezvous at the points indicated. Also, to kill and destroy, as enemies of the country, wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians.”

The tribes that would eventually converge at Sand Creek all originally traveled to Fort Lyons, one of the areas where Evans had claimed they would be protected. Many chiefs and other tribal leaders, mostly Cheyenne and Arapaho, brought their women, children and elders to the safety of the fort, where they were given sustenance and protection from American troops. But after some time at Fort Lyon they were asked to relocate to Sand Creek, around 40 miles away, still with the promise of governmental protection.

“He deliberately planned and executed a foul and dastardly massacre which would have disgraced the veriest savage among those who were the victims of his cruelty.”

-Joint Committee on the Conduct of War

But of course, Sand Creek was not safe, and hundreds of those women and children were massacred by the same troops who had been sworn to protect them. The Sand Creek Massacre shook the Colorado Native community in many ways. On top of the emotional strife caused by such destruction, power structures in Native society were weakened

by the death of a large number of chiefs and political figures who had stayed in the village. With little to no safety in the Colorado territory, the majority of survivors of the massacre joined the “Dog Soldiers,” a group of Cheyenne warriors, and retaliation began in earnest.

Although many chiefs still called for peace, over the winter months of 1865, the Dog Soldiers essentially waged war on white Coloradans. They attacked the town of Julesburg, eventually burning it to the ground. They continued on a campaign, raiding towns along the Platte River. In their attacks they were often indiscriminate, killing women and children as well as soldiers.

The massacre at Sand Creek was the catalyst of large-scale, widespread violence. Like so many other oppressed communities, Native people were radicalized by the violence perpetrated against them by settlers. This radicalization served as the tipping point—pushing the already on-edge Native groups to the point of warfare. But the Natives' retaliation only served to further whites' fear and hatred, and so a cycle of violence was born, which plagued Colorado for years after the massacre, and ruined hopes of potential peace between Native and white communities.

Evans' Town

March. 1865. While in D.C., John Evans justified the Sand Creek Massacre in front of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. He claimed that there were “hostile intentions” amongst the Indians at Sand Creek and blamed the influence of other Native tribes for the unrest in Colorado saying that he had “no doubt . . . that emissaries from the hostile tribes who were driven out of Minnesota have got us into these difficulties.”

During the same testimony, Evans attempted to distance himself from the massacre. Despite his proclamation encouraging attacks on Native communities, Evans claimed

that he had given “no orders” and had no prior knowledge of the attack. But despite his attempts to wash his hands of blame, when the Committee recommended that charges be pressed against Chivington, they also heavily pressured Evans to resign from his position as territorial governor. Although he attempted to use connections in Washington to avoid

his exile, Evans eventually acquiesced, and on Aug. 1, 1865, he gave up the governorship and his chance at a future political career.

But despite the ruin of his political career, Evans' social status in Colorado was barely altered. According to the Northwestern Report, he returned to Denver, and much like Chivington's soldiers just over half a year before, was met by a brass band, and a congregation of soldiers serenading his residence. Although he couldn't fulfill his dreams of go-

“Chivington is the recognized hero of the fight, and his grand colossal frame, which seems to defy the ravages of time and to stand against the wind and weather like the rocky front of some sturdy mountain, is well calculated to carry all the honors that may be heaped upon it.” reads the Chicago Tribune on Aug. 8, 1887.

In all of the reporting about the Sand Creek Massacre—whether good or bad—Evans was hardly mentioned and never held culpa-

“Evans is an appointee of Abraham Lincoln's [...] He's is somebody who represents the president. He's sent there specifically to help Colorado become a state. He's made this promise [to natives], and this promise is broken by the actions of his cavalymen. That reverberates back through the reputations of people from the east. In some respects, it's personal to them.”

- Beth Redbid, Professor of Sociology at Northwestern University

ing to Washington, Evans maintained prominence in local politics, and soon after the end of his governorship he entered into the railroad business.

Evans created the railroads linking Denver to Union Pacific's Transcontinental lines, as well as the remote mine-heavy areas of the state, and New Orleans. With these lines of transportation established Denver boomed as a Western hub, with its population increasing from 5,000 to 35,000 in 1870, the year that the railroad was established there. In essence, the railroads made Denver the city it is today, and Evans became the face of that progress, with The Rocky Mountain News writing about him dissolving railroad conflicts, and describing him as a “pioneer capitalist.”

On top of his position in industry, Evans became a vital part of the Denver religious community. He was an important donor to many congregations and eventually was elected to the Methodist Church's primary leadership body.

For Evans, in Denver, it was almost as though the Sand Creek Massacre hadn't happened. His condonement of brutal murder was ignored, if not celebrated. His life was lavish, his investments were lucrative, his family was prominent and well-received and he was looked up to as a community leader. Despite having a hand in one of the most immoral attacks in our history, Evans lived a good life.

In John Evans' other home, Evanston II., where he spent his early years and had a role in the formation of Northwestern, the reaction wasn't much harsher. In the early days there was some condemnation of the actions of the Third Regiment, with one clipping referring to Chivington as a “cowardly butcher,” it was dispersed amongst pieces that glorified the soldiers to nearly the same extent as the Colorado media.

ble for the role he played in inciting violence against the Colorado indigenous population. Evanstonians didn't question the morality of Evans, who had been linked by Congressional trials to the mass murder of innocent men, women and children. In fact, Evans served as the president of the Northwestern Board of Trustees until 1895. When he died in 1887, 15,000 Evanstonians gathered to pay their respects to the ex-governor.

“Mayor Dyche spoke of the loss Evanston and the whole country had sustained in the death of ex-Governor Evans, and at his suggestion, resolutions were adopted expressing the sincere grief with which the people of Evanston received the news of his death and their appreciation of his public spirit, great generosity and devoted interest in the cause of education which characterized his life,” reads the Chicago Tribune, July 6, 1897.

Evanstonians saw Evans as the kind of man who fit in with their society. They stressed his dedication to education, portraying him as a benevolent elite who strove to help young people search for knowledge and truth. For a man like that, a man who in many ways was a personification of everything Evanston stood for, to be instrumental in a grotesque, inhumane, slaughter would fracture their ideas of upper-class white society.

“Evans is an appointee of Abraham Lincoln's [...] He's is somebody who represents the president. He's sent there specifically to help Colorado become a state. He's made this promise [to natives], and this promise is broken by the actions of his cavalymen.” Redbird says, “That reverberates back through the reputations of people from the east. In some respects, it's personal to them.”

Art by Ahania Soni

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Mass killings in America reveal pattern



By Sadie Dowhan, Marin Ubersox, Hazel Hayes, Lily Roback
Digital Content Editor, Assistant In-Depth

The Sand Creek Massacre is not uncommon history—it's emblematic of the United States functioning as it was structurally designed to. When the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution, they neglected people of color, leading to centuries of oppression, bigotry and persecution. The country's continuous struggle for political and social egalitarianism results in racial violence often going unnoticed. There have been 121 massacres against Indigenous people in the United States since 1830. For Northwestern Professor of Law and member of the NU John Evans Study Committee Andrew Koppelman, the act of naming this violence will help mend the unjust foundation upon which this country was built.

"I think that it's important for us to understand the past, because it explains why the world we are in is what it is," says Koppelman.

A key component of understanding the past begins with thorough dissection. Although no two massacres are identical, oftentimes history overlaps in an algorithmic manner, and identifying the elements that comprise such atrocities can help to recognize the deeper issues at hand.

The Foundation

A massacre begins with conflict between two groups, oftentimes over a struggle for land, power or money, and an attempt to mend such conflict frequently produces treaties.

"Treaties, in many ways, were valuable and useful for Indians as well as white people because they established borders [and] rules. Treaties, being ratified by the Senate and signed by the President of the United States should have some weight; with also heavy discussion," shares Frederick Hoxie, a professor of history and American Indian studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Although treaties serve to be a tool for peace, they frequently evolve into the antithesis of eased tensions. Treaties are rooted in compromise, which almost always leaves dissatisfaction within an individual or party. Time after time, broken treaties have established rising tensions in a region and diminish trust. In the case of Sand Creek, the Cheyenne and Arapaho

tribes were angry that their leaders had agreed to a land treaty with the settlers. The settlers then broke this treaty, and General John Chivington's troops ignored the white flag the tribes were told to raise to signify peace. At a surface level, treaties appear to be an ultimate resolution, but as history has shown, they rarely have that effect.

Long before the events at Sand Creek, treaties had revealed their tendency to initiate conflict. King Philip's War, also known as the First Indian War, took place from 1675 to 1676 and is recognized as one of the last efforts the Wampanoag people made to keep their land from white colonists in New England.

Despite a negotiated peace treaty by Wampanoag chief Metacom, who later became known as King Philip, the English colonist's attempts to encroach Native lands continued. Philip led an attack on an English settlement resulting in several Wampanoag people to be hanged. The war was incited against Philip's confederacy by forming colonies, named the New England Confederation. The battle ended with the death of King Philip, who was killed by a member of the Wampanoag tribe, John Alderman. Philip's head was placed on a spike for two decades at Plymouth colony. King Philip's War is deemed the bloodiest war per capita in the United States and forced the Wampanoag tribe and countless other Native Americans to be sold into slavery or indentured servitude. This war inevitably set the scene for many future events and led to the progression of Native American slavery.

In an article written by Lindred D. Fisher, a history professor at Brown University, "between 1492 and 1880, 2 to 5.5 million Native Americans were enslaved in the Americas." Slavery for Natives existed as early as 1636, but the finality of King Philip's War opened the door for enslavement in large numbers and the dehumanization of Native lives.

But history has shown that the moving elements that bring massacres into execution extend far beyond just conflict and treaties. At the foundation, these two pieces provide a climate for bigotry to emerge and have influence. Conflict establishes an increased state of tension, and bigotry feeds off of the vulnerability.

Racial Violence

In early American history, perpetra-

tors of Indigenous violence wanted their land, and they were able to justify their violence by establishing a rhetoric that dehumanized Indigenous people. The atrocities committed against Indigenous people happened because the perpetrators didn't view them as humans.

"Part of the mindset of the troops was devaluing the lives of Native Americans," Koppelman explains. "[It] seems pretty clear that quite a lot of what was done [at Sand Creek] would not have been done to white people, that they would have been unwilling to engage in this level of killing of white victims."

Violence on the basis of race has repeatedly happened throughout American history, because racism is embedded into the fabric of the United States. From the first injustice against Native Americans to the modern day, these factors of a massacre have sparked suffering throughout history that continue to affect Indigenous groups. Massacres are not defined by the murderous rampages of a single instance, but the massacre of culture and freedom that Native Americans had cultivated for centuries prior.

Native Americans were not the only group impacted by this bigoted dehumanization. Just a few weeks after the Sand Creek massacre, the blood of hundreds of African-Americans were on the hands of members of Sherman's Army, commanded by General William Sherman, who served for the Union Army in the Civil War. Sherman ordered his soldiers to refuse to assist families escaping from slavery across Ebenezer Creek, leaving them to drown.

This massacre further proves that when it comes to power, positions of authority are more inclined to condone cruelty by neglecting to acknowledge humanity in groups that differ from them. Sherman didn't consider the lives of the people he killed to be worthy, because they obstructed the potential for wealth within the broader economic system that enslavement founded and sustained. As history has shown, humanity within the supremacist's eyes is conditional, only granted to those with the power to supply it.

Attacks on the basis of race did not stop. Eighteen months following Sand Creek, 46 African Americans were murdered, along with plenty more injured in the acts of burning schools and churches in an event known as the Memphis Massacre. This three-day act of racial violence was fueled from anger around the aboli-

tion of slavery and animosity over the liberated status recently given to African Americans.

Although Native Americans and African Americans had varying experiences in American history, the violence that occurred against these communities were not always separate.

The attack at the Apalachicola River was a direct form of mistreatment based on race to the groups of Native Americans and African Americans residing there. A report from the National Park Service explains, "Located in northwest Florida's Franklin County, approximately 15 miles from the mouth of the Apalachicola River, British Fort is a symbol of the strong relationship between runaway slaves and the Seminole Indians."

The Seminole tribe provided shelter and safety to African slaves who had run away from the states just north of Florida, and the formerly enslaved people would assist the Seminoles with farm work and other chores within the village.

White men in power at the time had already established a fear factor within white Americans regarding different racial groups, but adding to this threat was the potential for oppressed groups to gain power by working in alliance. Massacres begin when the perpetrator feels at a loss for control. Conflict establishes motivation, bigotry fuels influence and threats initiate action. Seminole people and African Americans pairing up was a threat to the authority of white people, and therefore, they resorted to violence.

In July of 1816, General Major Andrew Jackson commanded his troops to attack the Native people and African Americans at the Apalachicola River, and as a result, his soldiers killed about 300 people.

These events are certainly not abnormal when compared to what happened in 1864 in Colorado. Throughout the 1800s, there were waves of massacres against minority groups that all revolved around a central theme: a white man's craving for power. Above all, other tensions and components, every massacre has a leader, and every leader craves power in some facet. In the case of Sand Creek, the militia was ordered to attack by Colonel John Chivington. Chivington was an ordained minister before he became a major in the First Colorado Infantry. He'd had success previously in Civil War battles and felt that he had a reputation to uphold. He also wanted to ascend the ranks in his military

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division, and in order to do so, he needed to pull off something that he considered to be great. His hunger for power led to his violent attack.

But leaders rarely work alone, and a drive for power is never enough.

The Leader

When these horrific massacres of Indigenous people occurred, their leaders represented something bigger than themselves: hatred, racism and bigotry. A leader that serves as a symbol for a larger group of people is vital to the making of a massacre, because it allows for room to manipulate the public, and it is one of the reasons that John Evans' legacy persisted for decades.

Massacres have varying consequences for these blood-thirsty leaders, but generally speaking, few consequences are given to white colonists. In contrast, the aftermath for the victims is gruesome; the loss

In fact, for many years after the massacre, there was a sign posted at Sand Creek labeled "Sand Creek Battleground." This misrepresentation of the massacre prevented it from getting properly recognized. This meant that white people in power were able to retain their positions and ignore their past faults, at the expense of generations of Indigenous people. Northwestern is a prime example of this. The university didn't publish anything formally acknowledging its founder's history until May of 2014. Until then, John Evans' name was on scholarships, buildings and plenty of other university-related establishments.

Predictably, idolizing the perpetrators behind massacres was far from unique in the case of Sand Creek. In the Dakota Massacre of 1862, Henry H. Sibley led the killing, and he was demonized in the press for not being fast enough to attack. The portrayal of massacre leaders throughout the history of the United States as heroes

ed conflicts, racism, a hunger for power and a lack of accountability leave us with these tragic events scattered all too often throughout history. The massacres that occurred throughout the history of the United States and the effects that they had, and continue to have, on society are abundant. These effects must be acknowledged so that the true nature of America's unheroic and unjust past isn't hidden, and those who've felt the greatest impact of these massacres have the opportunity to heal.

Massacre descendant, explains in a PBS documentary about the massacre. Sand Creek is now marked as the site of a historic massacre, where Cheyenne and Arapaho descendants often go to experience healing. This loss sustained when this massacre happened is still being felt. What happens in almost every massacre is the creation of generational trauma, and that fact must always be kept in mind when dissecting these horrific events.

It's important to consider the sociological aspects of massacres as well as the physical and psychological ones. This mixture of factors can show not only what sparks a massacre, but why massacres truly occur and how deeply they affect those victimized. The acts that have happened in the past are things that can not be forgotten. The combination of escalat-

ed conflicts, racism, a hunger for power and a lack of accountability leave us with these tragic events scattered all too often throughout history. The massacres that occurred throughout the history of the United States and the effects that they had, and continue to have, on society are abundant. These effects must be acknowledged so that the true nature of America's unheroic and unjust past isn't hidden, and those who've felt the greatest impact of these massacres have the opportunity to heal.

Art by Siobhan Monahan
Infographic by Mack Jones

"I think that it's important for us to understand the past, because it explains why the world we are in is what it is."

- Northwestern Law Professor Andrew Koppelman

of land, the infliction of disease and visceral greed slaughtered countless Native Americans, but retellings of these stories often implicate the damage was not that impactful. Scholars have argued that the failure of the American education system to mandate correct and culturally sensitive education on Indigenous history and massacres is preventing generations of Indigenous people from getting the recognition they deserve. The history of Native American slavery in this country and the devastating loss to Native American culture has been overlooked for centuries.

"In general, the Native American history has been missing from the curriculum, and it is important that there be more," Carl Smith, Northwestern Professor of English, American Studies, and History says.

The lack of education on Indigenous massacres and history has perpetuated

executing an morally good task that aligns with patriotic ideals greatly contributed to the lack of recognition of the horrors that occurred. However, this pattern of behavior has grown outdated over time.

"Today, when [a massacre] happen in the United States, it is generally perpetrated by some individual or a pair of mass shooters, so it is done by marginal characters who don't represent anybody but themselves. This is progress ... it is progress that these people do not present themselves and are not authorized, to represent us all," Koppelman says.

Modern-day massacres, which often take the form of mass shootings, are most often carried out by individuals with biases or other mental illnesses contributing to their actions. They are never portrayed in mass media as valiant heroes, but the coverage they receive surrounding their actions still allows for their beliefs to ob-

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tain a platform, which gets to the root of a massacre: the lasting effect.

The Aftermath

When analyzing a massacre of this scale, it is critical to look at not just what happened back in the 19th century, but how its impacts have affected the modern generations of Cheyenne and Arapaho people. In every massacre, the lives lost signify a greater loss to an entire community of people. To this day, descendants of those alive at the time of the massacre are trying to heal from the social, emotional and spiritual damage that Sand Creek caused.

"If you're Cheyenne or you're Arapaho, you need to go to [Sand Creek] and you need to do some healing, because I feel like people don't realize that we carry this tragedy within us," Vanessa Braided Hair, a Northern Cheyenne Sand Creek

the legacy of racists and murderers. John Evans allowed the atrocities committed at Sand Creek to occur under his watch, yet after the massacre, he was revered. For years after it occurred, the Sand Creek Massacre was labeled a "battle" and completely overlooked, and today, Northwestern still honors his legacy by maintaining the John Evans Alumni Center. In Sand Creek's case, the aftermath of the massacre was one of dishonesty and masking.

Despite the Sand Creek Massacre's high casualty toll, it was cast in the shadow of the Civil War. While many Colorado locals were privy to what happened at Sand Creek, the rest of the world was pre-occupied. In fact, for a few years after the massacre, the Civil War was used to cover up the true nature of the killings.

"It was listed as a Civil War battle, and when the troops came back to Denver... they talked about all their bravery," Smith explains.

Massacres in the U.S.

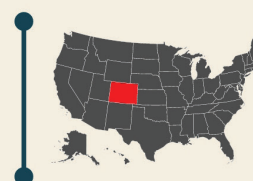
1864-1868

April 12, 1864 - Fort Pillow Massacre



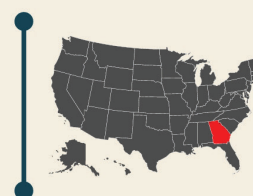
Confederate troops murdered over 500 Union soldiers at the Battle of Fort Pillow in Tennessee. Most of the Union soldiers were Black, and all had surrendered.

Nov. 29, 1864 - Sand Creek Massacre



The Colorado Third Volunteer Regiment massacred over 200 people from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Over half of those killed were women and children.

Dec. 9, 1864 - Ebenezer Creek Massacre



On the march to Savannah, anywhere from hundreds or thousands of African American families who had just escaped slavery were left to drown in Ebenezer Creek.

May 1, 1866 - Memphis Massacre



From May 1-3, civilians and police killed 46 African Americans while burning their homes, schools and churches in Memphis, Tennessee.

July 30, 1866 - New Orleans Massacre



White residents attacked Black marchers gathered outside the Louisiana Constitutional Convention. 44 African Americans died as a result.

Sept. 19, 1868 - Camilla Massacre



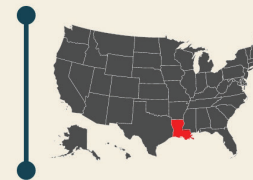
When Black republicans marched from Albany to Camilla to attend a political rally, White people opened fire and killed about a dozen.

Sept. 28, 1868 - Opelousas Massacre



In another Reconstruction-driven massacre, White mobs killed over 150 people, most of them African Americans.

Oct. 25, 1868 - St. Bernard Parish Massacre



A group of white men gathered to suppress recently emancipated voters by slaughtering 35-100 African Americans, who were dragged from their homes and murdered. Not a single perpetrator of the violence was questioned, let alone charged.

14 - accountability

Governmental action in recent years



By Sophia Sherman, Lydah Coates, Charlotte Geyskens, Leah Johnson
Opinion Editor, Staff Writers

Content warning: The following article contains graphic, disturbing descriptions of the aftermath of the Sand Creek Massacre.

After 149 years of oppression and ignorance from the government, Colorado Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the first Native American to ever serve in Congress, stood before the U.S. Senate on March 2, 1998 to introduce a bill that would the site of the Sand Creek Massacre.

The bill aimed to kindle the memorialization of the site at Sand Creek, protecting the area for the purpose of honoring the many Cheyenne and Arapaho people who were victims of the massacre. Campbell, who is American Cheyenne, was one of Colorado's representatives of its Third Congressional district prior to become one of the state's two senators, made the first governmental move toward preserving the historical site on that day in March.

Introducing the importance of the Sand Creek Massacre sight, Campbell highlighted the importance of preserving the land as a protected place.

"This bill authorizes the government to preserve such a significant piece of history that I believe is needed to remind us not just of the horrible deeds that took place in this country, but to the Native Americans and to honor their memory."

Campbell then described the atrocious events of the Sand Creek Massacre. Starting with the unsuspecting demeanor of the familiar peace chief, Black Kettle, he depicted the vulnerable state of the tribes going about their day. With the impending wave of soldiers taking over, Campbell touched on the large difference in scale between soldiers killed from the Colorado militia and the large number of Native Americans brutally murdered. He explained the grotesque forms of torture used on many people and the inhumane actions of such soldiers after the massacre eventually subsided.

"When the skirmish ended, the Colorado volunteers then scalped and sexually mutilated many of the bodies of these people and proudly displayed their trophies to jeering crowds on the streets of Denver while desecrating the

Cheyenne heritage," explained Campbell.

By examining the relentless torture and cultural denigration, Campbell made clear the justice and healing that has yet to become present for many descendants of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. He recounted the lack of reparations or attempts at remembering the tragedies that took place at Sand Creek over the last 149 years.

Campbell encouraged the preservation of the site by pointing out the unique opportunity of the government. With the site being sold, there is no better moment to do whatever the government can to obtain the land.

"This action," he said, "will provide remembrance to the event and allow present and future generations of Americans to learn from our history—including much more glory and grace."

Sand Creek National Historic Site

In October 1865, the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes signed the Treaty of Little Arkansas, which offered the tribes reparations for the Sand Creek Massacre in addition to access to the lands south of the Arkansas River. Less than two years later, however, the original treaty was essentially scrapped, and the Medicine Lodge Treaty reduced the allocated reservation lands by 90 percent. The promised reparations were never paid or even kept track of by the U.S. government, despite more than a hundred attempts to account for them over the last century.

Efforts to establish a Sand Creek National Historic Site began with the passage of Public Law 105-243, which mandated that the National Park Service determine the exact location of the massacre. Using historical documentation, oral history, aerial photography and archeology, a team of researchers pieced together answers and found the exact locations where the events of the massacre took place. The bill was sponsored by Campbell.

On Nov. 7, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed Public Law 106-465, which created the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. The site was dedicated and formally opened on April 27, 2007. It consists of 3,025 acres, of which about 1,560 acres are owned by the National Park Service and 1,465 acres are owned by the park service in connection with the

Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. The site, located in southeast Colorado, includes a bookstore, a visitor picnic area and Monument Hill, upon which one can overlook Sand Creek.

"Throughout all of that process, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes were very much involved. Every time they would study at the site, there were tribal representatives here," Teri Jobe, a park guide at the site, notes. "There were a lot of meetings between National Park Service Representatives, the tribal representatives and also local people from some of the towns nearby like Eve and Lamar."

Today, through the work of the site, people from all walks of life are educated on the atrocities that occurred at Sand Creek.

"It's not a conflict that a lot of people know about, and so it's helpful for people who are even just driving by on the road, they sometimes see the sign and will go, 'Oh, National Park. Let's go.' We get people that way," Jobe says. "Some people have prior knowledge. There has been a movement in Colorado to put this into schools. Some people have studied, and some people have come back many times over the years because they feel a connection to this place. We do not let people go into the site itself where the camp was and where the massacre actually took place, because that is considered sacred ground to the tribe today. People can see that site from what we call a monument hill, looking down into the valley and the same Big Sandy Creek, and you can see that area really well from monument hill."

Another significant change made by the bill was the name of the site itself. Previously, the site had been marked by a red granite headstone, referring to Sand Creek as a 'battle-ground.' This often skewed public perception in favor of John Chivington and the white militia he led.

"For about a hundred years, the people living in the territory, and later the state of Colorado, felt that what John Chivington had done, while not great, was justified," Jobe says, "[because] it helped the state become what it was."

Steps Towards Healing

Every November since 1999, about 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho Sand Creek descendants have gathered at the Sand Creek Massacre Historic Site to run a 173-mile relay. As they

make their way to the Colorado State Capitol, participants follow the route that soldiers took when returning to Denver after the massacre, reflecting on the atrocities that happened to their ancestors more than a century ago, even taking a moment to pause for Captain Silas S. Soule at the intersection of Arapaho and 15th Street in Denver, who told the truth about the military's motivations during a military court hearing and was subsequently murdered. When they arrive at the building, tribal members engage in tributes and prayers to honor their historical roots. This event is called the Spiritual Healing run, and up until the surge of COVID-19, had been an integral part of the Sand Creek Massacre Historic Site's programming.

"Before COVID, it was usually a very large event. We could have up to 200 people or more who would come to [the run]. There would be prayers offered by some of the elders of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, and it would be followed by a relay run from the site of Sand Creek to Denver," Jobe reflects. "Now, I've never followed that whole route, and I don't think it was quite the complete route, but it was large chunks of it. Then a couple days afterward, when the group got to Denver, there would be a further ceremony at the steps of the Capitol building. With the onset of COVID, that has changed a bit for health and safety reasons. Many of the tribes only send a few people to do prayers and ceremonies here at the site just to protect their communities."

In 2014, then-governor John Hickenlooper took the healing run as an opportunity to finally apologize for the harm he and preceding government officials have inflicted on the native tribes.

"Today, we gather here to formally acknowledge what happened: the massacre at Sand Creek. We should not be afraid to criticize and condemn that which is inexcusable, so I am here to offer something that has been too long in coming, and on behalf of the State of Colorado, I want to apologize," Hickenlooper said on that day in 2014. "On behalf of the good, peaceful, loving people of Colorado, I want to say we are sorry for the atrocity that our government and its agents visited upon your ancestors."

Before issuing the apology, Hickenlooper collaborated with former governors to ensure that the speech was coming from an accurate,

genuine place.

“That was from the state of Colorado. It wasn’t the federal government that did that, and he spoke on behalf of himself and all prior Colorado governors,” Jobe elaborates. “He’d actually spoken with the previous governors who were still living at the time just to make sure that all the governors that he could speak to were on board with that apology.”

While the apology made strides in terms of government accountability for the massacre, most feel it is merely the first step in making amends for the generational trauma and pain that descendants have endured for a century and a half.

Gale Ridgley, member of the Northern Arapaho tribe, reflects on the long-standing need for the government to do more.

“As an Arapaho person, an educator and former principal, I do believe that politics and power are stories of education,” Ridgley says. “I believe that when I go to Colorado or other places in America, it’s clear that there are still so many people who do not know anything about Sand Creek or other massacres that happen around the country. There is so much that needs to be done to heal.”

The Lawsuit

149 years.

After 149 years of generational trauma, loss and poverty, of broken promises and deception, descendants of the Sand Creek Massacre sought to gain reparations for the United States’ betrayal. In 1865, federal representatives joined Arapaho and Cheyenne tribal members to develop the Treaty of Little Arkansas, which renounced the massacre and promised compensation for family members of the victims. However, 149 years later in 2013, the Sand Creek Massacre Descendants Trust—backed by more than 15,000 identified descendants—filed a class action lawsuit under the belief that little of the money actually made it into the hands of their ancestors.

“First of all, there was a congressional appropriation [following the massacre], so Congress appropriated monies to pay for part of the damages,” explains Dave Askman, the trust’s lawyer and adopted father of two possible descendants of the massacre. “Those monies never made it to the Indigenous people; some of it actually went back into the U.S. Treasury. That may have been because they couldn’t find tribal representatives who wanted to take the money, or they couldn’t find the individuals, or they just didn’t know how to do it. I don’t know what the motives would have been of an agent of a Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1870, but we know that the monies did not make it to the individuals who are identified in the treat-

ties. We also found that some monies were paid to tribes. That seems on its face to be partial fulfillment of the obligations in this treaty, but paying the money to the tribes is like paying it to the government—you’re not giving it to the individuals who have agreed to get it, and no tribes are identified to receive monies in the treaty. There are individuals identified in the treaty.”

Before the lawsuit even began, the trust ran into a few challenges. Back when the search for reparations started brewing in 2012, Eric Gorski, then a reporter for the Denver Post, published an in-depth look into the case. At the time, there were four different groups all seeking justice, with arguments developing over who would qualify for the compensation.

“I think the number of different groups is a very tangible sign of the divisions within that community and frankly, so many communities,” Gorski notes. “In this case, it involves very profound disagreements—disagreements about which tribes were wronged and about when to stop counting the number of folks who would be eligible for reparations. That’s tough.”

In terms of its legal argument, the team had to find justification to sue. All the way back to the United States’ founding, a doctrine known as sovereign immunity was established, mandating that the government could not be sued without its consent or an express waiver. While no explicit language designated an express waiver in either the Treaty of Little Arkansas or the Appropriations Act that allocated its funds, much of the legislation within the Appropriations Act inferred a statute of limitations—a time limit on how long a person can sue someone for a particular cause. Thus, the trust’s legal team argued that the presence of these statutes implies consent to sue.

Ultimately, the trust’s case was not enough to convince the Colorado court. Their opinion stated that the government had not established an explicit trustee relationship with the tribes, nor was there unequivocal consent to sue in either of the cited documents. Later, in an appeal to Colorado’s Tenth Circuit Court, the lawsuit’s dismissal was upheld.

“The United States unfortunately argued successfully that the treaty did not create what they call a trust relationship between the persons identified in the Treaty and the United States. Now, I just think that that’s a gross miscarriage of justice. I think it’s absolutely wrong, and I think that the United States, when it makes a promise in a treaty, especially [with] tribes it’s in control of, [has to] fulfill those promises. Anyway, a district court decided if there was no enforceable agreement, no enforceable trust created, then the United States didn’t have to account for those monies,” Askman elaborates.

For Askman, the loss was hardly a surprise.

“When you’re a lawyer like I am, who practices Indian law, you get used to cases where you’re absolutely right on the facts, and you’re absolutely right on the equities involved in the case,” Askman says. “You’re on the right side of issues that somehow courts in the United States seem to always rule against, and they sometimes bend over backwards in order to rule against tribes. What it meant was we had to go back to the drawing board and figure out a different way to try to make our clients whole.”

The interests of the U.S. government in a case like this can’t be pinpointed, but it can be assumed that its lawyers will always protect the interests of the country.

“I can’t really speak to their motives, because I don’t know exactly what they are. There are a lot of lawsuits out there where tribes are making claims about violations of the United States’ trust’s responsibility to them, and I’m guessing they don’t want bad law on the books that might be precedent in another case. I think that, anytime you’re talking about the amounts of money that might be involved in a case like this, or if you’re talking about the amount of effort it would take to do and accounting for 150 years of mismanagement or non-payment of funds, that’s something they obviously don’t want to do,” Askman notes. “We fully expected the United States to put up a defense, and I honestly believe that, sometimes, lawyers, who are charged with defending the United States, their first reaction is not, ‘Is this right or wrong?’ but ‘How do we defend this case?’ instead of trying to figure out whether or not what they’re doing is correct.”

The battle for reparations isn’t over yet. After the legal team was struck down by yet another loss when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear their case in 2016, the plaintiffs sought out other methods to receive justice.

“There are other options available to us. I can’t really talk in detail about all of those because we’re working on them right now, but there are other branches of government. It’s not just the judicial system. If you can convince the legislature that the United States ought to keep its promises, especially to Native peoples, then maybe legislation could solve our problem. That’s certainly possible,” Askman elaborates. “There’s a possibility that an international court may hear this issue at some point. The United Nations is already aware of this case, and they sent an official to take a history from my clients, and they actually came up with the opinion that this was a wanton abuse of human rights in one where the United States really needed to make reparations.”

For the descendants of the massacre, the people that felt a duty to find justice for their slaughtered ancestors, winning the lawsuit

would mean more than just money—it would mean finally living in peace.

“They’re not people who have dollar signs in their eyes. They’re not looking to get rich. They are quite the opposite, actually. They are people who are much more concerned with the United States fulfilling its obligations to the tribes and trying to close a chapter in their life which these people feel every day,” Askman says. “It’s hard to imagine, from my perspective, being so affected by events that happened to my ancestors 150 years ago, but that is absolutely the case here. It would bring closure. I know that my clients, the trust itself, would be very interested in setting up educational facilities, tribal lands or lands for persons who are affected.

“It’s now been 149 years, and they’re still looking for justice.”

Continual Strides

On Oct. 5, 2022, Michael Bennet, a Colorado senator and American attorney, joined Hickenlooper and multiple leaders from the Northern Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes in remembering the tragic events of 1864 at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. Along with live music and multiple speakers from the members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, Bennet and Hickenlooper proudly announced the additional funds and 3,500 extra acres of land to the site. With them was Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the first Native American to serve as a member of a presidential cabinet.

“It is our solemn responsibility at the Department of the Interior, as caretakers of America’s national treasures, to tell the story of our nation,” said Haaland at the event. “The events that took place here forever changed the course of the Northern Cheyenne, Northern Arapaho and Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.”

Bennet and Hickenlooper hoped that by adding land to the site, there will be more access to the public. Creating more publicity will increase the acknowledgement and education of what happened during the Sand Creek Massacre.

“This is a long overdue step to respect and preserve land sacred to the Northern Cheyenne, Northern Arapaho, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes,” said Bennet. “We will never forget the hundreds of lives that were brutally taken here—men, women and children murdered in an unprovoked attack,” Haaland said. “Stories like the Sand Creek Massacre are not easy to tell but it is my duty—our duty—to ensure that they are told. This story is part of America’s story.”

Art by *Ahania Soni*
Infographic by *Sam Froum*

Government Response to the Sand Creek Massacre

November 2000

Bill Clinton creates historical site

Bill Clinton signs Public Law 106-465, which creates the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

November 2014

Governor Hickenlooper apologizes

On behalf of the Colorado government, Governor John Hickenlooper apologizes to members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations for the Sand Creek Massacre.

March 1998

Ben Nighthorse Campbell presents bill to Congress

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado introduces a bill to Congress that aims to turn Sand Creek into a memorial

April 2007

The site opens

The site is dedicated and formally opened. It consists of 3,025 acres, of which 1,465 acres are owned by the park service in connection with the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.

October 2022

Additional land is added to the site

Hickenlooper, leaders from the Northern Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes, and Colorado senator Michael Bennet announce added funds and an additional 3,500 acres to the historical site.

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Two different reports, two different tones



By Meg Houseworth, Mae Luning
Executive Editor, A&E Editor

Content warning: The following article includes quotes which contain profanity.

In May 2014, Northwestern University released the “Report of the John Evans Study Committee,” a comprehensive, 114-page document detailing John Evans’ involvement in the Sand Creek Massacre. The central question explored: was Evans’ financial support for Northwestern attributable to his practices towards Native Americans as territorial governor? The committee consisted of nine social science professors, four from Northwestern and four from outside the university. Nearly a decade after the report’s release, however, Northwestern is facing criticism for the ethical reasons behind the committee’s formation.

“Northwestern had absolutely no interest in this story until students forced them to [have it] essentially a decade ago. I still think there are lots of Northwestern supporters who dismiss [his culpability] as political b.s. [because] we’re judging 19th century people with 21st century standards, and so they reject this as a serious event,” says Frederick E. Hoxie, Swanlund Professor of American Indian Studies at UIUC and member of the John Evans Committee.

Like Hoxie mentions, the report was birthed from student activists denouncing Evans’ presence on campus. Most prominent in this push was the Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance (NAISA), an affinity-based student group working to increase visibility and awareness of Native American and Indigenous cultures at Northwestern and beyond.

“Efforts to reconcile and create relationships with the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes wouldn’t have been possible if it weren’t for NAISA,” says Isabella Twocrow, a co-chair for the organization. “If it weren’t for NAISA students, the John Evans report wouldn’t have been created.”

Broken into six chapters, the report examines Evans’ financial and political legacy as he attempted to gain social capital in Colorado. In a breakdown of each chapter’s contents, page 10 of the report reads, “[Chapter 1 is an] introduction. Chapter Two presents an overview of Evans’ life and his relationship with Northwestern University. Chapter Three describes the historical context of the massacre, including the settlement of Colorado, the history of U.S. land acquisition from Native Americans, the responses of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes to the arrival of American settlers and soldiers, and the effects of the Civil War on Colorado Territory. Chapter Four traces the course of events during Evans’ governorship that led to the Sand Creek Massacre. Chapter Five discusses the aftermath

of the massacre, focusing on the public outcry, Evans’ defense of his actions, and his resignation. Chapter Six states the committee’s conclusions regarding John Evans and the Sand Creek Massacre.”

One of the key conclusions established in the report is Evans’ direct involvement in the Sand Creek Massacre. While not completely absolving him of responsibility, the report ultimately found that Evans did not plan nor predict the massacre.

“No known evidence indicates that John Evans helped plan the Sand Creek Massacre or had any knowledge of it in advance. The extant evidence suggests that he did not consider the Indians at Sand Creek to be a threat and that he would have opposed the attack that took place,” the report reads.

The committee concluded that Evans had no intention of enacting violence despite testimony from the 1865 federal military hearing regarding the Sand Creek Massacre in which General James Connor shared that Evans had told him to “pursue[,] kill[,] and destroy” any Natives who posed a threat to western expansion, the committee concluded that Evans had no intention of enacting violence.

“Evans never favored killing Indians for its own sake or regardless of age or gender. He was

“This call for research into John Evans’ role in what happened at the Sand Creek Massacre has been long overdue. When we see this John Evans report, I think it’s lazy. It’s a way for Northwestern to say, ‘We got this report out, we did this work and we don’t have to do anything else.’ It’s a lazy piece of writing that ignores and tries to minimize the role that John Evans had in the Sand Creek Massacre.”

- Isabella Twocrow, senior at Northwestern and co-chair of NAISA

in fundamental disagreement with Chivington in this regard,” page 86 reads.

According to the committee, on page 86, Evans’ threatening statement “should be read in the context of his statements about the larger purpose of waging war.” Meaning, Evans’ bold request was not a formal, immediate invitation for the Third Regiment to attack Sand Creek, but that violence would inevitably occur if Natives did not adhere to their reservations and allow white farmers to expand west.

“Evans was asking for a greater military presence in Colorado and promoting the punishment of unfriendly Indians, [but] he [also] took other, more peaceable steps as superintendent of Indian affairs that in his view would benefit Native people. He continued to prepare reservations for habitation and what he believed would be economic viability,” page 86 reads.

Affirmed by the committee, Evans’ desire to

open up Colorado’s vast, untouched land was a source of tension between himself and the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

“Evans implicitly criticized the Treaty of Fort Laramie for allowing the Cheyennes and Arapahos to think they could wander as they wished. It struck him as ‘ridiculous’ to assume ‘that a country a thousand miles long and five hundred miles wide, one of the most fertile in the world, should belong to a few bands of roving Indians, nomadic tribes . . . as their own property.’ The progress of the nation demanded that the territory be put to more productive use,” the report says on page 87.

Peter Hayes, Professor of History at Northwestern and member of the John Evans Committee, believes Evans’ sentiments about expansion were characteristic of the times. Evans was in office during the era of Manifest Destiny, an ideology that the Oxford Dictionary defines as “the 19th-century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the US throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable.” Influenced by a national culture of exploration and conquering, Hayes believes Evans acted in accordance with most other white Americans.

“I wouldn’t say that he had contempt for Native Americans, but I would say that he felt something that was very characteristic of 19th

century settlers, and that was that they felt that Natives were not making productive use of the land; therefore, he wasn’t going to condemn the massacre because that had been part of this process. He definitely felt [like] he was making a great improvement to the continent,” says Hayes. When describing the political climate in Colorado, the report expresses sympathy towards Evans as he attempted to navigate a tumultuous, divided environment.

“Complicating everything was the context in which Evans had to operate. As noted, support from Washington [D.C.] was unpredictable and inadequate. At home, he faced an anxious and fearful population that considered itself forgotten by the federal government, physically isolated, and constantly at mortal risk. Every raid or rumor of one conjured up what had happened in Minnesota in 1862 [during the Sioux Revolt]. When they heard the Indian delegation was com-

ing to Denver, citizens swung between calls to kill the Native leaders and hopes that something positive might come of a meeting. Above all, Evans faced the virtually impossible task of reconciling his competing obligations as governor and superintendent of Indian affairs,” the report describes on page 90.

Hoxie adds to this conversation, noting how Evans felt politically incentivized to act in the interests of white Coloradans to avoid criticism. By appeasing this audience, Evans felt that he would retain his leadership position and gain footing before running for a senator once Colorado had become a state.

“John Evans had absolutely no experience in dealing with Indigenous people or any particular interest. [He] saw his job as either a secure government job or as a stepping stone to higher office or as an opportunity for prestige,” he explains. “In a place like Colorado, which was experiencing a huge influx of population [...] there would be very little chance of maintaining or controlling that volatile community; there was no incentive for leaders to be strong leaders, and there’s no incentive to go against the crowd.”

On the financial aspect of the report’s investigation, Evans was found completely innocent. In the years following Sand Creek, Evans’ political reputation severely waned. Known for his participation in the atrocity, Evans lost his territorial governor position and chance at Colorado statehood—large sources of income.

“Whether or not his policies as governor were responsible for the Sand Creek Massacre, he did not profit from it. It cost him his highly advantageous position as territorial governor, and it contributed to his failure to win admission to the Union for Colorado and a seat in the U.S. Senate for himself. Had the massacre never happened, he probably would have become senator and been positioned to make even more money than he did in the years ahead,” the report reads on 92.

Evans still remained an active donor of Northwestern University, however. In fact, he was the university’s most generous benefactor when it initially opened. He gave Northwestern professional endowments worth \$100,000, at least 3 million in today’s money. Evans was by no means poor after Sand Creek—he still thrived while Cheyenne and Arapaho grappled.

While the report touches briefly on Evans’ disregard of Native peoples’ lifeways as he advocated for the construction of industrial infrastructure in designated Cheyenne and Arapaho territory, it lacks accountability. By broadening the scope and comparing Northwestern to “many other institutions,” the report expresses a sense of denial and understates Evans’ significant role in colonization. Kadin Mills, a member of NAISA and direct descendent of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, shares his thoughts about the

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reports downplay of Evans' actions.

"I think in one word, [the report is] bullshit. I mean, in a very technical use of the term, [it's] bullshit—not just linguistically. It is bullshit. The purpose of the Northwestern John Evans report, to me, is to negate a lot of the work that Native students and Native community members have done. I think it's very intentional, and that's why I call it bullshit, because it's very intentional in its negation of indigeneity."

Twocrow agrees, ultimately finding that the report is performative.

"This call for research into John Evans' role in what happened at the Sand Creek Massacre has been long overdue. When we see this John Evans report, I think it's lazy. It's a way for Northwestern to say, 'We got this report out, we did this work and we don't have to do anything else.' It's a lazy piece of writing that ignores and tries to minimize the role that John Evans had in the Sand Creek Massacre and the harm to Cheyenne and Arapaho people, so that Northwestern wouldn't have to do any more work beyond that, and it's frustrating," says Twocrow.

Representationally, the report falls short. Of the nine contributors of the report, zero had a relationship to the Indigenous community at Northwestern. As a result, the coverage of Evans' moral and ethical wrongdoings can appear minimized and impersonal. Mills speaks to the importance of having Native historians on the NU report in order to report authentically about the impact of Sand Creek.

"I'm looking at a list of the names and the committee, and nobody on this list is a part of the Indigenous community at Northwestern. I don't know what their involvement is, because there are people on this committee who are at the University of Oklahoma, Yale, Arkansas, mostly Northwestern professors and scholars, but none of them have any ties to the Native community at Northwestern," Mills explains. "That's a very, very serious problem because it tries to take away the stake that Indigenous peoples have in [this] research, considering Native peoples are very directly affected by everything that happened. To say that Native people don't have a stake in [this] and producing research on that is active and ongoing erasure of Indigenous peoples."

The University of Denver Report

Less than a year after Northwestern University released a report concerning the role of John Evans in the Sand Creek Massacre, the University of Denver released one of its own.

The 97-page document, published in November of 2014, discusses John Evans, his history in relation to the Sand Creek Massacre and the founding of the University of Denver. The goal of the report was to appropriately understand John Evans' connection to the death of over 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho people in 1864 and to evaluate his place in the history of the university. Especially considering that the 150th anniversary of both the University of Denver and the Sand Creek Massacre itself were coming up, it was important that the committee prepared for the coming commemorations.

The DU John Evans Study Committee, which was formed about two years prior to the report's publication, consists of six main authors ranging from members of the university's own staff to state historians. It also utilized the input of several other consultants including Native students at the University of Denver and members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

"[The committee] was supported in its endeavors by the [university]," DU professor and committee member Richard Clemmer-Smith says, commenting on the formation of the committee, "but the report is an independent investigation with a focus by scholars who came to it from different angles."

The committee was split into three distinct subcommittees all with the purpose of understanding different challenges related to Evans, the massacre and the university's founding. The subcommittees are as follows: "one to conduct research and report on Evans' role in the massacre; another to organize events and exhibits related to our institutional history, in preparation for the commemorations; and a third to review how other universities have engaged in similar efforts and consider how to productively address troubling historical events as part of an educational process within our community."

"We spent two years meeting on a regular

basis," explains Tink Tinker, a member of the Denver report committee. "Taking little bits of evidence here and there, working through it and trying to sort it out."

The result of their two-year-long history delve is an 18-chapter summary of Evans and Sand Creek with the first subcommittee's findings—which looked into Evans' role in the massacre—taking up the main body of the report and a conclusion that Evans' "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."

"One challenge was Evans himself," says Clemmer-Smith about conducting the research on Evans. "He's an enigma. Here he was—this staunch abolitionist, and why was he so obtuse, or even anti-Native American, while at the same time promoting the rights [of] slaves?"

These are the questions the committee set out to answer in 2014.

Evans' time spent as territorial governor of Colorado was crucial to the lead-up to the massacre, and according to the committee, what he did during that time was enough to give him significant culpability for the massacre at Sand Creek in 1864.

"Evans used his position of territorial leadership to accelerate war, rather than to apply every effort to promote peace," concludes the report on page 90. "His June 27 Proclamation ends with a threat of war, and his August 11 Proclamation not only announces war but endorses a vigilante campaign of aggression against all Native people in the territory not designated (by some mysterious, unnamed criteria) as 'friendly.'"

"He basically gave carte blanche to vigilantes to go after Indians," says Clemmer-Smith in simpler terms.

Beyond his two violence-inciting proclamations, the committee also concluded in the report that Evans' other actions as governor were "central to creating the conditions in which the massacre was possible and even likely."

With these conclusions in mind, another section of the committee delved deeper into the report from the John Evans Study Committee at Northwestern University and discussed their findings comparatively. The Denver committee had a few disagreements—starting with the fact that the Northwestern University report did not place any blame on Evans for the Sand Creek Massacre at all.

"We were coming at it from very different angles," says Clemmer-Smith. "Yet we all agreed that [Northwestern's] interpretation of the situation needed a bit of correction."

They discuss these corrections in the concluding pages of the report—the chapter titled "Reassessing Culpability: Departures from the Northwestern Report"—in which they cite multiple quotations from the Northwestern report that they believe needed amending. For instance, on page 92 of the Denver report they state that "we strongly disagree with this conclusion from the Northwestern report: 'The extant evidence suggests that he did not consider the Indians at Sand Creek to be a threat and that he would have opposed the attack that took place.'"

In the eyes of Northwestern professor and Northwestern committee member Peter Hayes though, "The Denver report left many of [the Northwestern committee] feeling pretty annoyed, because the conclusions of the two reports [in terms of] evidence about the factual record are almost identical," he explains.

Clemmer-Smith agrees with Hayes.

"I don't think [the two reports'] findings were all that different," Clemmer-Smith says. But he also stresses that, "when it really came down to it, [Northwestern's committee] was reluctant to pin any culpability on Evans, and that was not exactly accurate."

After the report's publication, the University of Denver Committee issued a list of recommendations following the report's findings. The committee worked alongside DU student representatives and Sand Creek Massacre descendant representatives to create a list of recommended actions for the university that range from establishing a Native American Center on campus to updating official DU histories to include the findings of the report.

"We worked closely with a committee from the Cheyenne and Arapaho," says Clemmer-Smith. "Their successors have continued to pursue the question of John Evans' place in

Colorado history."

Much like the main body of the report, the recommendations document adapts a tone of healing and remembrance.

"This is truly a new horizon," the committee states in the recommendations document. "DU should be a change leader illuminating a new path forward: a path of unity, collaboration and healing for all communities."

So far, the University of Denver has adapted to make many of these recommendations, including establishing lasting connections with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

"[The university is] open to being responsive to Cheyenne and Arapaho concerns," says Clemmer-Smith. "There is this ongoing relationship between the Cheyenne Arapaho and the University of Denver."

In the spirit of healing, the next focus is renaming titles attributed to John Evans. The University of Denver began this process with the renaming of the Evans Professorship and is continuing to make changes today.

Not only did the report result in significant changes for the University of Denver, but it also inspired the state of Colorado to take action against the memorialization of Evans as well. In July of 2021, the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board voted unanimously to recommend renaming Mount Evans and replacing it with a name of Native designation. The process is ongoing but it is likely that Mount Evans will have its new name before the end of 2023. Located in Clear Creek County, Colo., Mount Evans is home to North America's highest paved road and a name change would be seen as a huge step in the right direction.

"I think it's gradual," says Clemmer-Smith on the changes happening at the university and in Colorado. "Things have not been rushed into; there's still the question of renaming mountains or [other places]. To what extent do you do that and erase history? Those questions are ongoing, but I'm gratified to see some of these outcomes."

While the changes may be slow-moving, they continue to move in the right direction; the Denver report serves as a reminder that though people in the present day can't change history, they can always reflect upon it and take action toward connection and healing.

"It takes courage to face both the illuminated and the more shadowed aspects of history," states the committee on page 2, "but here we are invited to walk toward a fuller understanding, with humility. This report is an invitation to consider how Sand Creek and other tragedies impact not only the tribes and tribal descendants affected by acts of genocide but all of us in the here and now. It is time for us to begin to mend the broken relationships we have with ourselves, each other, and the land."

Comparing Both Reports

When one engages with the Northwestern and Denver reports, one thing stands out: tone. From word choice to syntax, the reports' connotations about John Evans' involvement in the Sand Creek Massacre read differently. These tonal differences not only impact the reader's interpretation of the text but also express the divergent values that each committee brought to their reports. "The only thing [that was different about the Denver report] is the tone [because] it was written by a committee that composed itself. It was basically a group of people who were already agitated about John Evans before they put the committee together. [As a result,] they adopted a very judgmental tone," says Peter Hayes.

Like Hayes mentions, the Northwestern committee was formed through an appointment process, while the Denver report was written by a group of volunteer historians. As a result, the research and writing procedure for Northwestern was objectively less biased.

"None of [the Northwestern Committee] had preconceived notions about John Evans. All of us came to the subject with very different backgrounds and levels of knowledge about what had happened at Sand Creek. We came at it much more coolly. And our report is more coolly phrased than the Denver report. But that's a result of the composition of the committee [even though] the substantial findings of the two reports are very, very close," Hayes concludes.

While maintaining credibility was important for both reports, it was especially crucial for the University of Denver to center the humanity of

Indigenous people both representationally and contextually. Of the 22 experts that worked on the DU report, six are members of the Cheyenne or Arapaho tribes.

"We worked closely with a committee from Cheyenne and Arapaho," says Richard Clemmer-Smith. "Their successors have continued to pursue the question of John Evans' statue in Colorado history."

Contrary to the Denver Committee's choice to incorporate Indigenous voices in their research and conversations, the Northwestern Committee felt that the inclusion of Cheyenne and Arapaho people would bias the report.

"Peter Hayes and [the Northwestern] committee refused to include a Cheyenne Arapaho historian, of which there are many, because in the provost words, 'they would not be able to be objective; they would bias the committee,'" says Heather Menefee, a PhD candidate in Native American and U.S. history at Northwestern. "And a year after they released their report, Peter Hayes and Andrew Koppelman, the lawyer from the committee, came to a class that I was taking and explained to [our] class that being descended from massacre victims makes people angry, and [as a result], they lose their ability to understand the truth."

Moments like this highlight the harm of telling narratives with Indigenous absence. Without Native voices, stories cannot accurately articulate the harm of these atrocities.

"[The report] has just done a lot of harm to the Cheyenne and Arapaho because of how inflammatory and violent the language is. [For example] they say things like 'savages' without quotation marks—they use full on, violent language. They [also] take the perspective of people who committed a massacre and try to contextualize it. They put Native people entirely in the past, instead of in the present," Menefee states.

Northwestern's language choice is a key criticism for the reasons Menefee outlines. The connotations behind words carry meaning and weight, and in the case of the Northwestern report, many agree that the university failed to use critical language when describing Evans' culpability in the massacre.

"Northwestern University completely failed to hold its founder accountable. They found excuses to relieve him of responsibility, and [they] blamed [John] Chivington entirely. But Chivington is not entirely to blame. I mean, he is to blame, but not alone, because people like John Evans set the table for him politically; [they] willingly and knowingly created the context," says Tink Tinker, a member of the Denver report.

In the aftermath of the report, Northwestern established several programs to strengthen their relationship with Native Americans through recruitment efforts, culturally-affirming curriculum, and campus support initiatives. As Northwestern integrates these recommendations, their administration is still navigating how to implement sustainable progress towards justice. Like any robust change, anti-racist work needs continual innovation and commitment.

"I think that the university has made some really genuine efforts; I do. But here's the thing, they've made genuine efforts within what they thought then about what it meant to do this work. If we've reached the glass ceiling, that's a problem. If we've built phase one, and we're moving to phase two, that's super exciting," says Megan Bang, Professor of the Learning Sciences and Director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research.

For Bang, Northwestern has undergone important structural changes to better support its Indigenous community, but it has a long way to go.

"Do I think Northwestern really needs to take a hard look about what their expectations are, and what it really means to have a robust, Native presence in intellectual work [and in] our representation? Yes. Are Native people included in every course at Northwestern? Are Native people even included in courses that take up issues of inequality at Northwestern? Probably not. I'm sure that across the university, most people are still teaching from Indigenous absence. A good university would have fluency amongst everyone that was committed to Indigenous people's presence in our software. I don't think we're there yet, but I also think Northwestern is not an outlier in that. We're coming along and doing alright, [but we still] have a long way to go."

Art by Ahania Soni and Aiyana Jehan

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Shaped by the past, crafting a more just future



By Isaac Suarez Flint, Milo Slevin
Staff Writers

When Kadin Mills and Isabella Twocrow think about the 2013 Northwestern study that explored the role of John Evans in the Sand Creek Massacre, they do not look fondly at the product. They do not find peace in knowing that well-educated historians from Northwestern and elsewhere inspected this topic and produced a 114-page report. Rather, they feel anger, frustration and hurt. They feel let down, not just by the study, which was published well before they were at Northwestern, but by the continued failure of Northwestern administrators to acknowledge the harmful legacy of Evans.

“[Northwestern] is a very privileged school, and oftentimes [it] leaves students of color to themselves. And I say that because I think it takes a certain amount of privilege to be able to turn away from history as deep and harmful as this,” says Twocrow, a senior at Northwestern and descendant of Oglala Lakota and Citizen of The Ho-Chunk Nation.

Like any American college town, Evanston is a reflection of the university it houses, with Northwestern significantly impacting economic, social and residential development within the community. While Northwestern and Evanston share similar values and priorities, they also share a history of Indigenous erasure, in part, because of both establishments’ direct connections to John Evans.

A Cycle of Inequality

Not only was Evans deeply involved in the founding of Northwestern, he is also the namesake and founder of Evanston. Due to this, the history of Evanston is inherently the history of Evans, with his influence appearing in the structure of Evanston streets, government and schools.

The nine founders of Northwestern University were all Methodists, including Evans, and many of Evanston’s streets are named after influential Methodists of the 18th and 19th century. Other Evanston street names can almost always be traced back to a professional or familial relationship to Evans.

Additionally, the John Evans apartment complex is located on Hinman Avenue, and Northwestern’s John Evans Alumni center sits off of Clark Street Beach, just blocks away from the Northwestern Center for Native American and Indigenous Research. Evans’ history stares back at Evanston communities each day, yet is seldom recognized by students, visitors and residents.

While the degree of Evans’ involvement within the Sand Creek Massacre is widely debated, the missteps taken by the Colorado gov-

ernment in November of 1864 clearly show that Evans was one of the prominent individuals involved with the initiation of the massacre. For Gail Ridgley, a member of the Arapho tribe and descendant of those murdered in Sand Creek, this is enough to hold Evans responsible for the attack.

“To me, personally, and to my tribe, [Evans] was culpable,” says Ridgley.

For current Evanston Mayor Daniel Biss, the controversy around Evans’ involvement is more complicated.

“I think the general point of view that’s helpful to take is that most heinous acts done under the umbrella of government are not the fault of a single individual but rather the deliberately generated consequences of a system,” says Biss.

The correlation between Indigenous erasure, governmental accountability and economic development, however, is not exclusive to Evanston. Heather Menefee, a graduate student at Northwestern and the first Native American Studies major at Northwestern, recognizes the same relationship on a national level.

“We’re living on land that was seized through violence from Indigenous nations, and that’s so baked into our federal government, our Constitution, our legal system, the radicalization of Native people in particular. The only group who gets mentioned in the Declaration of Independence is the ‘merciless Indian savages,’” says Menefee.

The Western interpretation of the founding of America often involves such language, dehumanizing Indigenous people and their histories. Enter the Evanston History Center through its intricate arched doorway, ask to explore the center’s archives, and a person can find out pretty much anything they want to know about John Evans and the founding of Evanston. However, ask about the Indigenous history of the land, and there will only be two or three records of land treaties.

Indigenous history was rarely recorded physically by non-Native people, but rather through oral history within tribal communities. What was recorded was either destroyed, hidden or manipulated by colonizers, further limiting the amount of written Indigenous history in America. Because of this, the western history taught in American curriculums at every educational level is starkly different from the history told within Indigenous communities. The American version of Indigenous history can be seen within the APUSH curriculum taught at ETHS, as well as various classes offered at Northwestern and other educational institutions.

Menefee credits the discriminatory teachings of Indigenous history to the standards of what is considered to be valid history and knowledge within American academia.

“I think the discrimination against Native and Indigenous Studies has to do with colonial standards about what counts as knowledge, what counts as research and who counts as an expert in something,” she says. “It’s also about who gets to claim that they are able to produce objective, reliable knowledge about something.

“There’s this way that systematically [Northwestern] and other universities—it’s not just Northwestern, but it’s pretty bad here—they devalue the expertise of native people,” continues Menefee.

The oral histories that shape Indigenous communities and culture are often delegitimized due to the standards described by Menefee. However, to Ridgley and his tribal community, these histories are sacred, and essential to honoring the past.

“We have oral histories. Our histories are very strong, and they’re real. People believe [western] history because it’s written with no input from tribal people, because we’re sub-citizens, right?” says Ridgley. “Western historians, they believe in written [histories], black and white. With us it is oral history. And we have that to guide us.”

Both government and educational institutions have actively prevented the teachings of Indigenous histories, while also aiming to “Americanize” indigenous people by disconnecting them from their culture. Residential boarding schools were the primary tool in achieving this, as well as the implementation of government controlled reservations. For Ridgley, his family was forced to change their name from Ridge Bear to Ridgely while living on their reservation. Others were forced to abandon their cultural practices and traditions to participate in American ones. Residential schools were in practice from the 1880s to the late 20th century, with over 150,000 Native children separated from their families to attend these schools.

With generations of Indigenous people being forced into American education and religious practices, cultural disconnection is common within many Native communities.

“Today, there are a lot of Arapaho people who don’t know their histories, or stories, or our people. They don’t know the language or the ceremonies and are just disconnected from culture,” says Ridgley.

In the past decade, mass burial sites have been discovered at the locations of many former residential schools, revealing the thousands of deaths caused by neglect and abuse faced by Native children.

Indigenous history is suffocated by traumatic events, such as the Sand Creek Massacre and the 20th century residential school murders. Beyond these events, other acts of violence, dehumanization and discrimination have led to severe trauma within native communities.

For the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, who are descendants of the victims of Sand Creek, this trauma is faced on a daily basis.

“Multigenerational trauma affects almost every aspect of our lives,” says Ridgley. “Its impacts are reflected in the place in Wyoming where we currently live. The language and the food that we eat, the health care, education and opportunities we have. All of these things are a reflection and result of the violence and genocide of the past, with Sand Creek being the most traumatic event of our past.”

Not only has colonization led to trauma and horrific events such as Sand Creek; its connection to capitalism and corporate America are also prevalent within contemporary society. The violent forced relocation of Indigenous people, as well as the lack of access to social and economic resources, has led to a harsh increase in poverty within Native communities today.

Almost all tribal land is managed by the federal government, leaving tribes with little to no control over economic growth within their communities. Lack of autonomy within employment, housing, entrepreneurship and land usage are key components that lead to these high rates of poverty.

“But yet, what compounds prejudice and racism that we deal with in our Indian communities ... is poverty. When you have poverty, you can’t afford a comfortable life. You have to scrape the bottom of your cards to have [access to] social programs. Healthcare, too. We don’t have the luxuries of an ideal corporate American lifestyle,” explains Ridgley.

Without access to the economic resources that a majority of American families have, Indigenous people are further separated from society, exacerbating the erasure and trauma that they already endure on a daily basis.

From the genocide that took place at Sand Creek to the honoring of individuals such as John Evans, Indigenous erasure is deeply rooted in American society. This erasure clearly presents itself as educational censorship, cultural discrimination as well as the notion that Indigenous people are not present in modern society.

“The reason [this erasure] is so problematic is it creates this idea not only with the ‘savage barbarity,’ but the concept of past tense,” says Miigis Curley, a Native American student and junior at ETHS. “You wouldn’t talk about so many different people this way... where you call them the Native Americans, but you wouldn’t say the Blacks, because that’s messed up. It puts us in the past tense, and that’s not true, because I am here. My family is here. I have so much more family all around me. I have hundreds and hundreds of cousins. I go to my reservation in Canada or Navajo Nation,

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and I meet new relatives every time I go. We are everywhere; it's just that this systematic Indigenous erasure makes it seem like we're extinct."

As Native students, Curley and their siblings have grown to expect the erasure present not only within society, but within their classrooms. This is a shared experience between Native students within the American school system, from elementary school to college and beyond.

Accountability at Northwestern

Both Mills and Twocrow are members of the Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance, which was founded in the 2011-2012 school-year as a space for Native students and their allies to connect with each other and grow their presence on campus.

"[NAISA] is a space on campus for us to come together. We reflect, we hang out, we plan events. And it's really a community space for us to be together on campus," Twocrow says.

NAISA was created following the controversial Northwestern investigation into John Evans, and students at the time hoped that this new organization represented a shift away from the university's shortcomings in Native American relations. Northwestern's failures remained.

Twocrow highlights a specific incident that occurred in November of 2021 during Native American Heritage Month. When NAISA painted Northwestern's famous rock, which has been a staple for protesters and artists on

were afraid [of] what donors would say that they don't have their students under control [or], you know, something's wrong," she states.

NAISA members believe that this incident sheds light on the university's priority of publicity over respect, which, from their perspective, is the same thinking that produced the disappointing Evans study. Despite their frustration, students continue to find the silver lining.

"I think [the rock incident and ensuing frustration] ultimately brought a lot of our community together," Twocrow remarks. "And so it's horrible that this incident happened, but it brought everyone into our space, and it made everyone loud and angry at what the university had done. And we had one of the largest Sand Creek commemorations this past year because of it."

The annual Sand Creek commemoration is a chance for Northwestern and Evanston community members to remember the lives lost in the Sand Creek Massacre. Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal elders and members are invited to Evanston to, as Twocrow says, "commemorate the massacre and heal together." This past November, the event started at the John Evans Alumni Center and proceeded through Northwestern's campus. It's a chance for the Native American community on campus to make themselves visible—to honor the victims of the massacre and carry on their legacy.

While Twocrow and the students at the NAISA appreciate the yearly opportunity to remember Sand Creek, they are disappointed with

Chicago native communities and two Northwestern students.

"[The task force was] put together... to create a set of recommendations for Northwestern to reconcile with its history, and also just gener-

direction for the university.

"I started my undergrad just over 10 years ago, and there's just been a world of difference that I've witnessed unfold. The change that has happened at Northwestern has been pretty in-

"I think it takes a certain amount of privilege to be able to turn away from history as deep and harmful as this."

- Isabella Twocrow, Northwestern senior and co-chair of NAISA

ally make a more welcoming and inclusive environment for indigenous people," Bruce says.

Menefee, who was the other student on the task force at the time, believes the goals that they laid out were critical to guiding the ensuing changes at Northwestern.

"The report that we came out with was a set of recommendations for the university to address lots of different areas. And I think that's been the more impactful report [than the Evans one], thankfully," she states.

Since the task force concluded its research in 2014, several improvements have been made on the Northwestern campus. For instance, the number of Native American students at Northwestern has increased in the past decade. In 2014, there were seven indigenous students across the entire student body. By comparison, 33 students in Northwestern's class of 2025 alone are Native or Indigenous. This marginal increase is still a win for Menefee, Bruce and the NAISA, who have advocated for more Indigenous representation in the student body.

Another advancement that came out of the task force is The Center for Native American and Indigenous Research. The center was created as a resource for Native American Students on campus.

"Now, on campus, there's a place that is distinctly Native where Native people can go and you don't have to explain yourself or who you are, because a common experience for a lot of Native people, especially at predominantly white institutions, is that no one really under-

credible. I think it still has a long way to go, but it's been really a cool experience to see the way that it has changed in that amount of time," he remarks.

These strides, however, don't mean that everything is fixed. For NAISA, progress doesn't mean that Northwestern should be content with its advancements. Because even if the university did everything right—if it invested in more Indigenous faculty, admitted more Indigenous students, attended the Sand Creek commemoration and acknowledged its many shortcomings in Indigenous student relations—it would still be bound by its origins. For generations of Indigenous Northwestern students to come, the university will forever sit on land taken from their ancestors. It will forever be bound by the reality that it was founded by a racist. It will forever benefit from the billions of dollars that are contributed by alumni who achieved success because of their whiteness in a society that has expelled and massacred people of color.

"Dehumanizing indigenous people has been one of the main ways that a very diverse melting pot of settlers have built their own identity here," Menefee voices. "And [that dehumanization] is the foundation of what makes life stable and possible for most white people who have inherited generational wealth."

Erasure at ETHS

While Indigenous erasure is a core aspect of private institutions like Northwestern, it is

"If we took Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty and personhood seriously, then we would have to deal with the fact that we're occupying sovereign territory."

- Heather Menefee, graduate student at Northwestern University

stands what it's like to be Native," Bruce says.

That sentiment also has to do with the lack of Indigenous faculty on campus. In 2013, hiring Native American professors became a main talking point for student advocates. Menefee sped that process along by carving out a new Native American Studies program.

"I took any class I could find related to Native American history, Native American studies, in 11 different departments. I think I took 23 classes total for the major," she states.

Her vision for a new program came to fruition in 2015 with the creation of the Native American and Indigenous Studies minor. Even though the process was complex and often challenging for Menefee, Northwestern administrators ensured that she would not be the last student at Northwestern to explore Native American Studies.

"Once there had been enough faculty hires, which started to happen in 2015, they hired an English professor and then the next year a history professor, someone in sociology, [and] those faculty came together and put together a Native American Studies minor and Native American Studies program, which is what we have now," Menefee says.

Overall, the changes have pleased many folks who have been dissatisfied with Northwestern's relationship to Indigenous people. For students like Bruce, these actions are a step in the right

also prevalent in the legacy of public schools. Schools in the northern suburbs of Chicago, which are dominated by white students, lie on land that was seized from Indigenous people. The halls that ETHS students walk in every day were built for a new generation of colonizers while Native Americans were forced out.

Rick Cardis, an AP U.S. History (APUSH) teacher at ETHS, is one of the few instructors at the school who opts to teach about the Sand Creek Massacre and John Evans.

"There's no expectation that [ETHS teachers] do anything with Sand Creek. And for APUSH, they don't tell us exactly what topics to teach," he explains.

However, Cardis believes that he can play a role in educating young Evanstonians on the city's complex history. He believes that the namesake of Evanston is not talked about enough and that the legacy of Sand Creek is relevant for all ETHS students.

"I bet if you asked most people, they wouldn't know why the city is named Evanston. And I don't know that we need to do anything like start a campaign to change the name of the city, but I do think it is important to know who our heroes are and who the people are that we name things after."

Indigenous history at ETHS isn't limited to history classes. Adriane Slaton, a Biology and

"We are everywhere; it's just that this systemic Indigenous erasure makes it seem like we're extinct."

- Miigis Curley, Native American student at ETHS

campus for decades, with red handprints that represented missing and murdered Indigenous women in North America, it was vandalized.

"Vandals spray painted 'Ojibwe? No Way' and changed a land acknowledgement, 'You are on Anishinaabe land,' to 'You are on China's land.' They also painted over some of the group's messages, including 'Happy Native American Heritage Month!' and 'Bring our children home,'" The Daily Northwestern reported at the time.

The NAISA members who painted The Rock simply sought to educate and uplift. They sought to celebrate a month dedicated to Indigenous history and to draw attention to the continuous oppression of Indigenous people. Hateful Northwestern students—people with whom those NAISA members may even have shared an address—couldn't accept Indigenous students' presence on campus. It exemplifies the huge gap between what Northwestern presents itself as: an inclusive institution that welcomes and cherishes all backgrounds, and what Northwestern, and any university, can be: a vessel for hate speech and culture wars.

Direct blame for this incident can go to no one except those who committed the crime, but, in Twocrow's eyes, others must take blame as well. Twocrow believes that Northwestern administrators are responsible for the inaction in the aftermath of the rock incident. She says that, since the rock was painted over in the same week as another incident occurred on campus,

school administrators' continued absence at the commemoration.

"Throughout all the years that I've been here, a president of Northwestern has yet to come to one of these commemorations," Twocrow emphasizes. "They don't see this as their responsibility. They're [still] trying to get their minds around what a land acknowledgement is for the tribes that we already have here, and it's hard for them to understand that Indigenous relationships move beyond just the space that we occupy, but actually relationships which have been built over centuries."

Twocrow's complaints are shared by Northwestern Professor of the Learning Sciences Megan Bang, of Ojibwe and Italian descent.

"There wasn't a special issued statement, which signals a lack of importance. But I also think it's partly because [administrators] didn't understand how horrific [the massacre] was. I think that part of what is happening is that people know so little that they don't really understand," she states.

While Northwestern administrators maintain shaky relationships with students and struggle to acknowledge the importance of recognizing Indigenous history, the university has made significant strides to uplift its Native American community. Many of those strides stem, not from the 2013 study, but from the Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force that was created shortly after the study was published.

Forrest Bruce, of Ojibwe descent, is a former

"We refuse to be defined by the tragedy and trauma of Sand Creek and other genocides our people have been subjected to."

- Gail Ridgley, member of the Northern Arapaho tribe and descendant of Sand Creek

administrators were more concerned with their image than their students' well-being.

"[Northwestern was] afraid to publish another announcement about an incident of this nature on campus the same week, because they

undergraduate student at Northwestern who is currently studying for a PhD in Learning Sciences. He was one of the 19 people on the task force, which was made up of university representatives, members of the Evanston and Chi-

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AP Environmental Science teacher at ETHS, covers Evans' history as well.

"We talk about how the namesake of Evanston was involved in the atrocity in the space that is now Colorado. Some years, I have had students look at what different university reports document as to John Evans' involvement," she says.

Slaton believes that Indigenous history is fundamental in education.

"I think in Environmental Science, and any subject, it is important to recognize the land we are on is colonized and stolen land. We cannot talk about the land we live and work on without recognizing, acknowledging and learning from our dark history—a dark history that still impacts all of us today."

These individual efforts, however, do not represent how Indigenous history is taught at ETHS and in high schools across the country. Textbooks and teachers often still fail to adequately recognize the legacy of colonization and genocide of Native Americans. This system of ignorance can be traced back to the boarding schools that stole Native American children away from their families and 'civilized' them by taking away their culture and identity.

"88 percent of teachers report that they never or once a year mentioned Native people," Bang states. "It means that [while] it's not boarding schools anymore, intellectually, nothing's changed. Native kids still have to learn U.S. base knowledge in order to get degrees."

Furthermore, ETHS' shortcomings have extended past the curricular issues that so many schools across the country face. At the 2022 graduation ceremony, Nimkii Curley, an ETHS senior and a Turtle Clan Ojibwe and Black Sheep Salt Clan Navajo, was not allowed to graduate with his peers. Based on reporting by The Daily Northwestern from the time, Curley had added an eagle feather and traditional Ojibwe floral beadwork to his graduation cap. An event coordinator and a security guard pulled Curley out of the line of ETHS students waiting to receive their diploma. They told him that he could only receive his diploma if he wore an unmarked cap. Curley refused and left that event—that culmination of four years of hard work and dedication—without a diploma.

Bang, who is Curley's mother, explains his refusal to walk the stage with an unmarked cap.

"[Nimkii] knew that the folks that wouldn't let him walk didn't really understand what it meant. They didn't understand that his grandpa had his hair cut and was not allowed to speak Navajo [when he was taken to a boarding school]." Bang continues, "The choice to walk with nothing

would have increased trauma in our family line."

This incident represents a failure by ETHS to recognize its facilitation of decades of generational trauma in Native American families. Despite the glaring problems that came to light last May, Bang credits administrators for their response to the incident.

"I've appreciated ETHS' response and want to honor that. And [I want to] have people know that ETHS is not behind. They're just the same about this. But ETHS is built on Indigenous absence."

ETHS is currently making an effort to create a detailed land acknowledgement. Superintendent Marcus Campbell cites similar ones done by the Evanston Public Library and District 65, the Evanston K-8 school district.

"We don't want to do it to be checking a box," Campbell says. "We want to do it because it has some meaning and to acknowledge and to have real meaning and power behind the acknowledgement."

"What the hell do we do all this equity work and have all of these conversations about if we can't apply the knowledge?"

Honoring Indigenous History

It is important to recognize that all of the significant change created at Northwestern and within other educational institutions has been initiated by the students. From Nimkii Curley's refusal to walk the stage at graduation to the formation of NAISA, Native students have carried the heaviest burden when it comes to the painful process of changemaking.

"A lot of the burden to create change is still on students because, historically, the students are the people who've had the most power to create change in universities, [since] without students, the university does not function," says Menefee.

As a Native American Northwestern student, Twocrow is used to being depended on to begin conversations regarding change.

"So many times, I talk to faculty, and they just remind us that we're the future, we're the ones creating the world that we're in. And if it weren't for Native American and Indigenous students, the John Evans report wouldn't have been created."

With students leading the charge on Northwestern's campus, steps towards acknowledging the past and initiating new conversations have been taken. Yet, broadly, looking at the past with honesty also means reassessing the way education, government and the economy function within American society. It also means address-

ing the fact that America is a nation built on land stolen from Native American people. Furthermore, it means honoring the past treaties returning land to its rightful owners.

"If we took Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty and personhood seriously," Menefee says, "then we would have to deal with the fact that we're occupying sovereign territory."

For Ridgley, governmental action is essential for his tribe to heal from the trauma faced by him and his tribal community.

"The United States of America needs to look at the past with honesty," says Ridgley. "Not just that, though, [they must take] the responsibility to make amends and honor agreements such as treaties that affect communities of people who are important and represent the foundation in our nation's history. There is so much that needs to be done. But we have to start somewhere, right?"

Evanston has not dealt with its history of tense Indigenous relations. The city has, however, begun to take steps towards accountability for generations of oppression of Black residents by developing a reparations program in the form of housing grants. This program is the first of its kind in the country, and has the ability to create much needed change for Evanston's Black community. Yet, the program lacks accountability for the harm that the city has caused to Indigenous communities.

"The reparations policy here is excellent," Menefee states. "But it's also interesting because Native people were legally barred from owning property here for a long time too. So that underlying problem is one that [the city] doesn't seem ready to address."

For Ridgley, Evanston taking accountability begins with the recognition of John Evans and his involvement with the Sand Creek Massacre.

"For Evanston, [accountability] means coming to terms with the reality of who John Evans was and what he did and what he was involved in," he says. "Ongoing work with state and local governments can continue to give us a bigger voice and recognition of our history. Ultimately, it would mean [coming to terms with] Sand Creek and honoring agreements their ancestors made with our ancestors," Ridgley continues.

As a Northwestern student, Twocrow is constantly surrounded by Evans' history, with the obvious representation of his influence being the John Evans Alumni Center. The controversy of keeping Evans' name on campus buildings has been the center of many debates surrounding Indigenous activism within the Northwestern community. However, for Twocrow, the university's top priority needs to be informing its students

about its history.

"I think his name should remain on campus so [that] we can force everyone to have conversations about this," she says. "I wish that Northwestern threw it in your face a little bit more. It's definitely not something that's talked about."

The lack of conversation surrounding Evans as well as Indigenous communities is a part of Evanston's problematic history and treatment of Native people. For the conversations that do occur publicly, such as during forums, Indigenous voices are rarely prioritized, with white people taking center stage.

For Menefee, in a country built on genocide and the land of Native people, centering Indigenous voices is a must.

"I think it is very important for people who are white and who are dedicated to decolonization, racial justice, economic justice and making institutions less violent to not be at the center of determining the vision for what that looks like or the most publicly visible for implementing it."

Healing After Tragedy

Today, Ridgley is an educator, activist, and spokesperson for the descendants of Sand Creek. His past, present and future are intertwined, and his ancestral connections present themselves in every aspect of his life.

"With Sand Creek, since learning about it in 1993, it changed my life," he says. "It gave me a new meaning of who I am, where I came from, [and] where I have to go."

While the past of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes have been incredibly traumatic, these histories have shaped who Ridgley is today.

"Sand Creek has been a journey on the historical remembrance, educational awareness and spiritual healing of our people. That's the theme that I carry when I talk all the time," he says.

If Sand Creek can show us anything, it shows the tremendous weight that the past holds. We carry our pasts with us, we carry the pasts of our ancestors. Ridgley and his tribal community hold this weight within their culture and connections.

"Although it's never easy, we have the stories and memories of our ancestors to guide us. That's our motivation and brings forth spiritual wealth.

"We refuse to be defined by the tragedy and trauma of Sand Creek and other genocides our people have been subjected to."

*Art by Isaac Suarez Flint
Infographic by Mack Jones*

