

Hotel Albert
65 University Place
New York City
November 18, 1939

"Stanley Vestal", Esq.
The University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Thank you for your very kind letter in answer to my query on Sand Creek. I think probably Grinnell's word is pretty good authority for the display of the scalps in Denver, but I shall go on hunting for documentary evidence--the result of Dr. Willard's training. He was a close personal friend of mine, as is his wife, and I shall always be grateful to him for ramming the history of the West down my throat in the days when I much preferred to wander the hills with an engineering student. It was Dr. Willard, too, who insisted that I write a novel about irrigation, when I had published one on gold mining, THE GOLDEN LADY, and although I made no money out of SNOW-WATER I did learn a lot about water and the West, and the researches I did for it led directly to my present contract with Crowell for a History of the West for youngsters.

I have been making a sort of outline on the side-line after Sand Creek which I am trying to follow, and it has occurred to me that it might interest you, as apparently few people have discovered this particular trail. This summer a granddaughter of Col. A.G. Boone turned over to me some of her personal papers, most of them Boone documents, but among them the unprinted reminiscences of Mr. E.L. Gallatin of Denver, written in 1900. In this interesting document, which I copied, Gallatin, who knew Chivington, says of him, and of Sand Creek, "the famous Chivington massacre of Indians at Sand Creek, a more cowardly dastardly piece of savagery was (n)ever comited by any Indians on earth and this was concocted and carried out by a minister a former presiding elder of the Methodist Church..... Chivington took them (the Indians) by ~~xx~~ surprise and butchered men wimmen and children that crew were called the Colorado pet lambs a few of them yet survive, and must blush when they see a lamb...

"Chivington got off easy was cashiered and done manny dirty tricks after that, for one he married his own sons widow at Nebraska City tried to burn his house to get the insurancment went to Washington City to seal his affidavitts for rascally claims on the government--treated the young wife so bad that she came home to beg her parents pardon for her foolish act, he came back to Colorado and made a claim on the Wetening place Manatau which he had sold years before but thought all evidence was lost of his transfer in this he was mistaken and got beat. he then came to Denver to be cared for, and they made a position for him as markettmaster, and now have a life size oil painting of him at the Capitol on exibetion..."

I thought when I ~~xxxx~~ read that account that Chivington probably wasn't as bad as all that; after I had read the Military Commission testimony I wasn't so sure. Somewhere else, perhaps in Grinnell, I had seen that Chivington was supposed to have connived at one or perhaps two murders, and again I dismissed it--and again I changed my mind.