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Puritanism and American Exceptionalism: A Genealogy of Their Impact on Native Americans 1620–1864

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Luís León, Ph.D.

Second Advisor

Sandra Dixon

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Puritanism and American Exceptionalism: A Genealogy of Their impact on Native
Americans 1620-1864

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The Faculty of Arts and Humanities
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Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Jeremiah Jones
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Advisor: Luis Leon

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Author: Jeremiah Jones

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This work traces the influence that a strand of Protestant Christianity had upon the idea of American Exceptionalism and its effect on the treatment of Native Americans.

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Chapter One: Introduction

On the morning of November 29, 1864, cold frost clung to the grass at Black Kettle's camp of five hundred Cheyennes in Southeastern Colorado. In the pre-dawn hours, volunteers with the Colorado Third militia had surrounded the camp, and awaited orders to attack. Their one hundred day enlistment papers were to expire soon and they were itching for a fight. Nicknamed the "Bloodless Third" due to the fact they had yet to see any action, they were desperate to cast off their nickname in glorious battle. Their commander, Col. John Chivington, was a Methodist minister from Illinois who had fervently fought slavery, and was the hero of Glorieta Pass, where he had pulled off a daring maneuver that destroyed the Confederate force's supplies and insured a Union victory in the West. Now he found himself in the early morning chill with nearly seven hundred troops at his command. As dawn approached, Chivington sent a detachment of soldiers to secure the Cheyenne's horses and then signaled for the attack to begin.¹

Eye witnesses disagree on the basics of the fight and since then, historians have clashed over the true sequence of events and the final death count. What is certain is that many Cheyennes were killed, mainly women and children, and that a portion of Chivington's troops refused to participate in the attack.²

1 Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. New York. Bantam Books, 1972. Print., pg. 86-91

2 Hoig, Stan. *The Sand Creek Massacre*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1961. Print. pg. 161

Four hundred miles directly south of Sand Creek on that same November day, nearly 8,000 Navajo and Mescalero Apaches were being held on the Bosque Redondo Reservation in New Mexico. Only 12,000 acres had been provided for them, and on this pitiful amount of land they had nothing but alkaline water to drink. There wasn't enough firewood and money for basic supplies, like flour and blankets, had been used on umbrellas and top hats instead, filling the pockets of friends of the purchasing agent. Navajos and Apaches who had been enemies for generations now found themselves in the same ration lines, using tokens to purchase a piece of molded bread or green meat. On the reservation, the Apaches and Navajos were forced to pursue agriculture and farm the ground using European methods. The Mescalero's had never farmed before and the Navajo were traditionally shepherds. They once grew peaches in the bottom of their sacred Canyon De Chelly, but their orchards had been destroyed in the previous years due to Kit Carson's scorched earth campaign against the Navajo. They attempted to grow peaches on the reservation, but the poor soil and lack of water wouldn't allow for their prized crop to grow.³

Within a year all the Mescaleros would vanish from the reservation in one night during a valiant escape. They would continue to fight the Americans and Mexicans for ten more years, before surrendering and being placed on a permanent reservation. The Navajo would suffer at the Bosque Redondo for another four years before being allowed

3 Locke, Raymond Friday. *The Book of the Navajo*. New York: Kensington Pub., 2010, C2001. Print. pg. 323-391

to return to Dineteh, their beloved homeland. Nearly three thousand of them would perish during their time on the reservation.⁴

These two events are examples of the tactics America has used in its policies toward Native Americans. Since the discovery of the “New World” by Europeans there has been two courses of action that Europeans and their descendents have pursued regarding Native Americans: extermination or forced removal (with the goal of eventual assimilation). At Sand Creek, Chivington and his men attempted to wipe out the Cheyenne tribe who had been in the way of settlers moving into the territory of Colorado. At the Bosque Redondo, Navajo and Mescaleros were taken from their lands for raiding settlements and depriving ranchers of their stock. They were forced to learn farming, the value of labor and the Protestant Christian faith. On the surface these events seem to have little to do with Christianity, but a closer examination of the history of American and Indian relations exposes the role that specific Protestant Christian ideals have played in the destruction of the Indians. These two events are not unique in the annals of history, but they are important because they allow expose the consequences of Christian Manifest Destiny at its most transparent.

The purpose of this work is to examine how strains of Protestant Christianity created American Exceptionalism (the notion that the United States has been blessed by God) and how this affected Native Americans who were in the way of “progress.” It will trace the history of this idea of the United States being a nation set apart by God, with its major focus being the effects this idea had on Native Americans. Beginning with its

⁴ Sides, Hampton. *Blood and Thunder: An Epic of the American West*. New York: Doubleday, 2006. Print. pg. 394-481

origins in Calvinist Puritanism and ending with the events of 1864, this paper intends to show that the conquest of lands that would make up the United States were cloaked in religious language and that the manner in which it played out would not have been possible without Protestant Christian ideals concerning Providence guiding the nation westward.

In order to do justice to this endeavor, it is necessary to first look at the differences between the Christian and Native world views. We will engage primarily with Vine Deloria's *God is Red* for this purpose. These differences are located primarily in the way they view history, space and economics. In regards to history, the Christian view of a linear progress of time, in which the life of Jesus is the central event, will be juxtaposed against the cyclical view that many Native Americans hold. Besides time, land and space will be discussed. The relationship between the Native Americans and their land, which they believe to be the center of their universe and sacred, will be contrasted with the Christian view that land should “bear fruit” and that its resources are there simply to be exploited and used for profits. Capitalism plays a major role in this world view and the Puritan views of being a steward and God's elect as explained by Max Weber will be explored.

Using the works of Roy Harvey Pearce and Brian Dippie as a foundation, we will investigate white Christian attitude's towards the Indians. The predominant Protestant opinion that the Indians were 'heathens' and 'devil worshipers' justified their actions towards the Indians and turned the expansion of settlements into a pseudo Holy War. We

will explore this belief in their complete justification of murder and theft using primary sources and the religious texts which promoted this mindset.

With the advances brought on by the Enlightenment, the reasons for the plundering of Indian lands were no longer limited to religious reasons alone. The works of Kant, Rousseau and others influenced the founding fathers in their understanding of the Native Americans and though the tone of the language changes, the results remained the same. This paper will look at the theory of natural law, how it affected national policy towards Indians and prove that it was nothing more than racism disguised as secular science.

Once these basic ideologies are explained, the next chapter of this paper will look at the relationship between Christianity and American Exceptionalism, especially as it pertains to Manifest Destiny and expansion. The idea that America is a place blessed and set apart by God, and that this justified the treatment of Native Americans will be explored using concrete historical examples and quotes by those who played leading roles in this enterprise. The history of the forced assimilation and later removal of Indians from their lands will be scrutinized using George Tinker's definition of "cultural genocide" put forth in his book, *Missionary Conquest*. First the Cherokee's plight in the early part of the nineteenth century will be examined, paying particular attention to how white intrusions affected their way of life. This event was a direct predecessor to the Navajo and Mescalero experience at the Bosque Redondo and by its inclusion it should be made plain that the United States has always moved Indians to distance locations and forced their western values upon tribe members.

Then events that were preludes to the Sand Creek Massacre will be discussed. These events are examples of instances where white American's goals were the outright slaughter and destruction of peoples. The events that will be examined are the Mystic Massacre during the Pequot War (1634-1638), the Gnadenhutten Massacre of 1782 and the Battle of Blue Water Creek of 1855. By showing that such extermination tactics existed in the past, it is the hope of this paper to prove that what occurred at Sand Creek was simply business as usual for the military.

It is the intent of this essay to put these events in their proper context and to show that they were not isolated incidents. They were the results of long standing United States policies towards Indians, which were directly influenced by Puritanism and its role in creating the notion of American Exceptionalism. Though this connection between Manifest Destiny and Christian ideals has been established in the past, this project will trace the history of the relationship between these two ideals, using historical events to illustrate how they affected the Native Americans.

Chapter Two: Roots of the Conflict

I. Differing World Views of Native Americans and Christianity

The Christian view of history is one in which time, not space, is the motivating factor of human actions. This emphasis on the passage of time (and the progression of humanity along with it) is not found in most indigenous cultures. Vine Deloria has written that “The very essence of of Western European Identity [and its descendents in the “New World”] involves the assumption that time proceeds in a linear fashion; further it assumes that...the peoples of Western Europe became the guardians of the world.”⁵ In contrast the “American Indians hold their lands – places – as having the highest possible meaning.”⁶ The two ideologies were at odds from the time of their first contact because neither understood the fundamental way the other found meaning in the world. The Christian view of history is one that:

Would declare that it is God, who in his divine sovereignty, writes history, allowing for the contingencies of nature and the decision of men, and weaving all their partial meanings into the coherent pattern of his sovereign purpose. Thus the meaning of history must be sought in the nature and the purpose of God.⁷

5 Deloria, Vine. *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. Golden, Colorado, Fulcrum Publishing, 2003. Print, pg. 62

6 Ibid., pg. 61

7 Rust, Eric Charles. *The Christian Understanding of History*. London: Lutterworth, 1947. Print. pg. 17

Christianity has traditionally viewed the purpose of God in a linear fashion with distinct events that effect the meaning of the passage of time. Creation begins this process, Jesus fulfills the promise of the Old Testament and the end of all of history is the unification of believers with their Father in heaven. The Christian worldview is “dependent upon the historical accuracy of the Hebrew religion... [and leads to] the death of Jesus...as the culminating event in a direct sequence of events going back to the creation of the universe.”⁸ The belief in the historical accuracy of these texts gives the believer a concrete story that they can believe in and creates the idea that their religion is unique in that it is set apart from other religions due to its historical accuracy.

The uniqueness of Jesus, and the event of his life and death, are central to the understanding of history from the Christian perspective. They affirm that:

Jesus of Nazareth was a unique historical event who gives this unique significance to the whole series. He is the supremely unique event, the keystone to the whole structure of that history, which is also revelation. He is indeed, as Tillich says, the centre of history, for it is in Him that the true and universal meaning of history is unveiled.⁹

With all of history organized around Jesus being at the center, there is no room for ideologies that do not incorporate the event of Jesus into their worldview. All other religions are false because they do not believe in the uniqueness of Jesus.

When settlers from Europe came to the colonies of North America they brought with them this understanding of Christianity's monopoly on truth. When they encountered the tribes already populating the continent, they saw peoples without

8 Deloria, pg. 102

9 Rust, pg. 49-50

religion, or even worse, worshipers of Satan. A Puritan writing shortly after his arrival in North America stated that, “whereever the Indian opposed the Christian, there Satan opposed God; Satan had possessed the Indian until he had become virtually a beast; Indian worship was devil worship.”¹⁰ It was nearly impossible for the Christians to come to grips with the reality that there were those who did not want their religion or their understanding of the world. Not only were their religions different, but the way they oriented themselves to the world was completely at odds.

In stark contrast with the Christian idea of history, the way Native Americans orient their world is around place, not time. “The way I hear it' or 'it was a long time ago' usually preface any Indian account of a past tribal experience, indicating that the story itself is important, not its chronological location.”¹¹ Where the story took place is of more importance than when. As an example, the Navajo have a story in their mythology in which a monster is killed by their hero, Monster Slayer, and turned into stone. This stone that is the trapped monster is better known today as the famous Shiprock monolith in the northwest corner of New Mexico.¹²

This emphasis on space is shared by tribes all around North America.

The Sioux, Cheyenne, Kiowa and Arapaho all have traditions that describe Bear Butte in South Dakota and the Devil's Tower in Wyoming. The most notable characteristic of the tribal traditions is the precision and

10 Pearce, Roy Harvey. *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1953. Print. pg. 22

11 Deloria, pg. 97

12 Reichard, Gladys Amanda. *Navaho Religion: A Study of Symbolism*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona, 1983. Print., pg. 22

specificity of the traditions when linked to the landscape, a precision lacking in most other religions.¹³

When the Cherokees were ordered to leave their native lands in the Southeast, Chief Aitooweyah wrote a letter in which he explained that, "We, the great mass of the people, think only of the love we have for our land. For we do love the land where we were brought up. We will never let our hold of this land go. To let it go will be like throwing away our mother who gave us birth."¹⁴ This hold the land held upon the Indians had a great deal to do with their understanding of death, and of their ancestors.

According to Deloria, in contrast with Christianity, there is no heaven in tribal religions. No place where the souls of the departed are joined with a heavenly father. Instead "Indians perceived not only that the next life was a continuation of the present mode of existence, but also that the souls of people often remained in various places where they had died or suffered traumatic experiences."¹⁵ Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce tribe recalled that his father's dying words were, "This country holds your father's body. Never sell the bones of your father and mother."¹⁶ The land was not used merely to grow crops or hunt, but was integral to their very way of life and understanding of the cosmos. This understanding grew from their observations of the natural world and its cyclical nature.

13 Deloria, pg. 121

14 Woodward, Grace Steele. *The Cherokees*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1963. Print., pg. 202

15 Deloria, pg. 171

16 Ibid., pg. 173

The tribes that lived in what became the United States were attuned to the rhythm and flow of the land they inhabited. The change of the seasons, life cycles of crops and animals all informed their view of the world. “In traditional Native cultures, humans experienced time by interacting with these natural cycles, and by orchestrating their actions to fit the cycles' rhythms.”¹⁷ Because the cycle is seemingly endless there is no eschatology within native cultures, though in some tribes this continuation of the cosmos is dependent upon human action. The Pueblo Indians of the Southwest hold ceremonies throughout the year to insure that the deities will continue to show favor upon the tribe, but more than this the entire universe is dependent upon these ceremonies. During these ceremonies:

Humans impersonate, and thus become, sacred beings. This periodic return of the deities reestablishes contact with the realm of the sacred. Without the seasonal enactment of these rites and ceremonies tribal members believe that the recycling of the sacred world – and life-sustaining powers will cease, the world will die and the people will be no more.¹⁸

These ceremonies that recreate the world occur at specific places and are replayed every year. In Christian eschatology the return of Jesus will signal the beginning of the end of the world, the end of history. “He must stand at the end of time, as he stands at the beginning, and as He appears, veiled in the flesh, to become the centre, the very focal point of the movement of history.”¹⁹ While many of his original followers believed that

17 Brown, Joseph Epes., and Emily Cousins. *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions*. Oxford,: Oxford UP, 2001. Print., pg. 12

18 Ibid., pg. 13

19 Rust, pg. 294

he would return in their lifetime, history has shown that that was not the case. The delay of his return has been attributed to various reasons, but it was answered by a “substantial portion of Christians who believed that until every nation had heard the message of Christianity, Jesus could not come.”²⁰ This mission, along with the rise of global trade and exploration, directly lead to the conflicts between Westerners and the indigenous people they encountered in their travels. Missionary work was largely secondary to the primary goal of those Europeans who expanded into new territories. The desire for natural resources, land and labor, were the driving forces for this expansion, but there were those who had a sincere desire to convert Indians, such as the priests who accompanied conquistadors in the Americas. After Columbus landed in 1492, Pope Alexander IV wasted little time in declaring the Catholic stance towards the New World. In his *Inter Caetera* of 1493 he proclaimed:

Among other works well pleasing to the Divine Majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially, the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.²¹

In essence, he had proclaimed open season upon the natives of the newly discovered continent and even went so far as to issue grants to noblemen, giving them title over the lands, villages, resources and people populating those new lands.²² The

20 Deloria, pg. 105

21 Deloria, pg. 258

22 Ibid.

“good news” was soon spreading over the continent, along with Western ideals concerning economics and the proper use of land.

II. Capitalism and Calvinism

In Max Weber's book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he sought to explain the relationship between economic success and religion. The Europeans who first settled in America were those who Weber described as Puritans and their understanding of labor and salvation would have far reaching implications for the Native Americans they encountered. One of the major tenets of his work is the understanding that for Puritans “God does not exist for people; rather people exist to serve the Will of God. Everything that takes place, including the fact that only a small part of humanity will be called to be saved, becomes meaningful only in light of their service to a single goal: the glorification of God's majesty.”²³ This glorification comes through the works of those who believe that they are members of God's elect. These “good works are indispensable as signs of election. They are technical means, but not ones that can be used to purchase salvation. Rather, good works serve to banish the anxiety surrounding the question of one's salvation.”²⁴ While the spiritual results of good works is the knowledge of one's salvation, the material results of good works are much more tangible and the accumulation of material goods was a sign, both to the individual and the community, of that person or community's favor in the eyes of God.

23 Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: With Other Writings on the Rise of the West*. Trans. Stephen Kalberg,. New York: Oxford UP, 2009. Print., pg. 105

24 Ibid., pg. 113

In Paul's maxim of "if anyone will not work, let him not eat," the Puritans saw their values reflected. For them, an "unwillingness to work is a sign that one is not among the saved."²⁵ The wealthy along with the poor must live by this maxim. The refusal to be idle is what is important, but the type of work one does is important as well. The Puritans called their work their "calling" and it should "involve a consistent, ascetic exercise of virtue. One's state of grace is testified to through the conscientiousness with which the believer pursues his calling."²⁶ There are three aspects of a calling that determine whether it is pleasing to God and therefore worthy of pursuit. The first is if the calling is morally sound. The second is if the calling produces goods intended for the "community." The third criterion is the calling's profit for the individual:

If God show you a way in which you may, in accordance with His laws, acquire more profit than in another way, without wrong to your soul or to any other and if you refuse this, choosing the less profitable course, you then cross one of the purposes of your calling. You are refusing to be God's steward, and to accept His gifts, in order to be able to use them for Him when He requireth it. You may labour, for God, to become rich, though not for the flesh and sin.²⁷

This essentially gives the believer free reign to acquire as much profits as possible in the name of God. Striving for riches is not only permissible, it is required of the believer. The acquisition of wealth also meant the acquisition of the land that produces such wealth. When the Puritans reached the New World, they discovered a bountiful land which they deemed ripe for the picking. The chaplain of John Endicott's Massachusetts

25 Ibid., pg. 143

26 Ibid., pg. 145

27 Ibid., pg. 146. Weber is quoting the Puritan Theologian Richard Baxter.

Bay Colony told his commander in 1633 that, “There are three thousand miles of wilderness behind these Indians, enough solid land to drown the sea from here to England. We must free our land of strangers. Even if each mile is a marsh of blood.”²⁸ Armed with the assurance that God was on their side, they preceded into the American wilderness.

III. The Native American in the Colonial Imagination

While the Spanish Catholics who conquered Central and South America deserve close examination, the focus of this work is the United States and Native Americans and as such, the colonists who settled the Eastern portion of the country will be emphasized here. This history of the United States being in conflict with the Natives began almost as soon as the Puritans came off the Mayflower. The Puritans, who were among the first to arrive and settle the “New World,” “believed that civilization must clear the way for the Word.”²⁹ The Puritans saw in this new land the possibility of Christian imperialism. Roy Harvey Pearce, in explaining the Puritan mindset, wrote that, “God had meant for the savage Indians' lands for the civilized English and, moreover, had meant the savage state itself as a sign of Satan's power and savage warfare as a sign of earthly struggle and sin. The colonial enterprise was in all ways a religious enterprise.”³⁰

Divine law was the guiding principle that Puritans followed to the letter. This law amounted to “whereever the Indian opposed the Christian, there Satan opposed God;

28 Drinnon, Richard. *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1980. Print. pg. 4

29 Dippie, pg. 8

30 Pearce, pg. 21

Satan had possessed the Indian until he had become virtually a beast; Indian worship was devil worship.”³¹ The Indians of New England might have fared better had the Puritans focused on conversion rather than destruction, but to them it was a Holy War. This was a battle for God's will to be achieved and though the Bible speaks of mercy and compassion, it also speaks of smiting one's enemies, which is the interpretation the Puritans clung to. A Puritan, after killing some Indians, justified his actions by stating that, “Sometimes the Scriptures declareth women and children must perish with their parents. Sometimes the case alters; but we will not dispute it now. We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.”³² This type of ideology was prevalent among the Puritans and other early colonists.

Preachers were some of the most vocal in their opposition to the Indians. The Reverend Samuel Purchas wrote that the Indians, “are so bad people, having little of Humanitie but shape, ignorant of Civilitie, of Arts, of Religion; more brutish than the beasts they hunt...captivated also to Satans tyranny in foolish pieties, mad impieties, wicked idleness...”³³ The flames of religious intolerance towards the Indians were spread by such writings and sermons, though the encouragement wasn't necessary. Every European knew that the Indian's were heathens thanks to travelogues written by such explorer's as John Smith (of Pocahontas fame). In one of his accounts, he wrote, “their chiefe God they worship is the Divell...in this lamentable ignorance doe these poore

31 Ibid., pg. 22

32 Ibid., pg. 23

33 Ibid., pg. 7-8

soules sacrifice themselves to the Divell, not knowing their Creator.”³⁴ Such writings were printed throughout England and the rest of Europe. Between preachers calling out for blood and explorers publishing accounts of devil worship, it is no wonder that the original settlers of America, and those who followed them, were prejudiced against the Indians from the very beginning.

IV. Savagism (Racism Disguised as Secular Science)

From the time of the colonists to the founding of the United States, there was a distinct shift in the rhetoric that Americans used to describe Native Americans. This change in tone can be attributed to Enlightenment ideals that trickled into the New World from Europe and had lasting implications for all involved. The contrasting views of humanity's inherent state, voiced by Hobbes and Rousseau, gave people ways to think of indigenous cultures outside of the simple Christian versus heathen paradigm. These enlightenment works saw life as either: nasty, short and brutish, or innocent, yet corrupted. Those who wished to see the natives as the antithesis of civilization could point to their lack of Western arts, religion or morality to make the case that the Indians were at the bottom rung of man's ladder of progress. Those who saw them as non-corrupted innocents could look at their 'pure state of nature' and see the “real youth of the world” - or as close an approximation of it as man would ever witness again – and 'all ulterior improvements' were illusory, for natural man epitomized the human species at its

³⁴ Ibid., pg. 15

happiest.”³⁵ Both views saw indigenous people, for better or worse, as a window into humanity's past.

Those in the United States who agreed with Rousseau's critique of natural man believed the Indians simply needed access to culture in order to rise above their current low station of life. For them, “Education and inducements to industry would curb the savages' dangerous individualism and bring them within those restraints of civil society, the sole protection from man's natural depravity.”³⁶ After the Indian became “civilized” it would be possible for them to become Christians. It seems that, “before they could find God, they would have to become Englishmen.”³⁷ The goal, for those who believed it to be possible, was to civilize the Indian in order to later save his soul with the final aim of the Indian being both saved and civilized.

Others believed that no amount of exposure to culture would improve the character of the Indians. Edward Everett, America's first holder of a PhD and professor at Harvard, wrote in the *North American Review* that civilization and barbarism “are not themselves different degrees of the same thing. There appears to be an essential difference between them, which makes the highest point of barbarism a very different thing from a low degree of civilization.”³⁸ In this line of thinking it appears that no matter what degree the barbarian reaches, they will never become part of civil society. This is why people who shared Everett's point of view sought to remove the Indians from

35 Dippie, pg. 18

36 Dippie, pg. 9

37 Ibid., pg. 10

38 Ibid., pg. 29-30

lands that were becoming settled by Europeans. Proponents for removal viewed the Indians, “not as one to be civilized and to be lived with, but rather as one whose nature and whose way of life was an obstacle to civilized progress westward.”³⁹ Some of the most extreme views towards Native Americans were voiced the same year as Lexington and Concord by a historian of Florida. In his *Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, Bernard Romans wrote that Native Americans were “a people not only rude and uncultivated, but incapable of civilization...that look down on us and all our manners with the highest contempt...See there the boasted, admired state of nature, in which these brutes enjoy and pass their time here.”⁴⁰ Those who shared his opinion that the Indians were savages and not capable of ever entering into the white man's world believed that the Indians must be removed from it. The story of Indians and Americans became one not of purely religious terms, but became a “morality play about virtue (civilization) and vice (savagery).”⁴¹ As the newly founded nation progressed and grew in population and land, the understanding of the Native American could be best summarized by saying that:

The Indian was the remnant of a savage past away from which civilized men had struggled to grow. To study him was to study the past. To civilize him was to triumph over the past. To kill him was to kill the past. History would thus be the key to the moral worth of cultures; the history of American civilization would thus be conceived of as three-dimensional, progressing from past to present, from east to west, from lower to higher.⁴²

39 Pearce, pg. 41

40 Pearce, pg. 47-48

41 Dippie, pg. 42

42 Pearce, pg. 49

We can add to this list that the Indians progressed from having plenty to poverty, from freedom to controlled, and from traditional religions to Protestantism. What follows is the history of this transition using specific historical incidents as examples of this “progress.”

Chapter Three: Manifest Destiny and Removal

I. A Nation Set Apart

When Alex De Tocqueville toured America in the early 1830's he observed that:

In the United States the sovereign authority is religious, and consequently hypocrisy must be common; but there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence on the souls of men than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity, to human nature than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation on the earth.⁴³

The country was less than forty years old, but it was two hundred years removed from its Puritan fore-father. Despite this distance from the past and even though it had been founded on the ideals of the Enlightenment, the United States still clung to its religiosity.

Protestant Christianity influenced the founding and expansion of the United States (and their impact upon Native Americans) to such a degree that it is nearly impossible to imagine the country without it. From its founding, the United States was seen as special in the eyes of its inhabitants and in the eyes of God. Ezra Stiles preached in a sermon in 1783, after the Treaty of Paris formally gave the United States existence, that “God has still greater blessings in store for this vine which his own right hand hath planted...the

⁴³ Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy in America Volume I*. Trans. Henry Reeve. Comp. John C. Spencer. New York: G. Adlard, 1839. Print. pg. 303

Lord shall have made his American Israel 'high above all nation he hath made.'"⁴⁴ Even those who were not as religious, such as Benjamin Franklin, believed that "Providence itself had called America to a post of honor in the struggle for the dignity and happiness of human nature."⁴⁵ This tradition of seeing the United States as exceptional is even older than the country. It began when the Puritans first settled in New England.

Though the Puritans will be examined in much greater detail in the next chapter, they must be used as a starting point in order to understand the relationship between the United States and Protestant Christianity. Out of all the colonizers that landed on the New World, be it Spain, Portugal, or England:

Only the New England Puritans conceived the territory itself as sacred, or sacred to be. As the appointed bearers of the true Christian mission, they made it so by being there...this, then, was the New Canaan, a land promised, to be reconquered and reworked for the glory of God by His select forces, the saving remnant in the wilderness.⁴⁶

This understanding of their world, and their place in it, led the Puritans and their heirs to spread out over New England. The influx of more and more settlers forced them further into the interior, which created conflict with the Indians. The most devastating of these conflicts was the Pequot War, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The period between the Puritan landing and the First Great Awakening was one of religious decline in the colonies. The urgency that had landed with the Puritans had

44 McDougall, Walter A. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. Print. pg. 18

45 Weinberg, Albert Katz. *Manifest Destiny; a Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1935. Print. , pg. 17

46 Stephanson, Anders. *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995. Print., pg. 6

slackened and created “clerical jeremiads about sinful ways and the need to repent so as to fulfill destiny.”⁴⁷ The answer to this religious malaise was the First Great Awakening with such preachers as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield. Beginning around 1730, the religious in the colonies were imbued with a new sense of purpose and fulfillment in their individual religious lives. Not merely individualistic, the movement also re-ignited the flames of American exceptionalism.

In his writings, Jonathan Edwards proclaimed that the colonies of North America will be the site of the new millennium:

This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the new heavens and new earth...And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America.⁴⁸

Edward's ideas reinforced the colonist's notion of themselves as a redeemer nation that began when the Puritans wanted to establish the true church on its soil. What is most important about Edwards and the First Great Awakening in general was that:

As America's first post-millennial thinker, he furnished an evangelical basis for the aggressive historical optimism which (in an increasingly secularized form) would support the nation's concept of itself as leader and model for all other peoples. In his urgent call to "all sorts of persons" to acknowledge and promote "the mighty work" because of what it would mean to the country and to the world, Edwards anticipated the messianic impulses of crusading churchmen and politicians for the next two centuries.⁴⁹

47 Ibid., pg. 12

48 Edwards, Jonathan, *The Millennium Probably To Dawn in America, Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 4, Great Awakening*, ed. C.C. Goen (New Haven Yale University Press, 1970), pg. 353-45

49 Ibid., from introduction by C.C. Goen. pg. 72

Besides this foresight into what the United States would become, Edwards also “enlarged the biblical frame to include the advances of secular activity, and enlarged the Puritan genealogy to include all white Americans in a proto-national story, ready for appropriation by the nation to be.”⁵⁰ This inclusion of the non-religious whites into the elect would allow for future Americans to see the destiny of the whole country and its white inhabitants as blessed, not just the ultra-religious.

The Great Awakening was an attempt to rise against strict Puritan and Anglican control over the personal affairs of their parishioners and the formalities of the church. Prior to the Great Awakening the church was “clergy-centered, with church attendance often required by law and seating in church determined by social status.”⁵¹ With the tearing down of these structures, American evangelical Christianity (created by the Great Awakening) was the first uprising against authority in the American colonies. It planted the seeds for the Revolutionary War, as British Statesman William Knox explained, “Every man being thus allowed to be his own Pope, he becomes disposed to wish to become his own King.”⁵² The fight against British tyranny would come later though as the colonists had a more pressing problem to take care of first: France and its Catholicism.

50 Stephanson, pg. 13

51 Kidd, Thomas S. *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution*. New York: Basic, 2010. Print. , pg. 21

52 Church, F. Forrester. *The American Creed: A Biography of the Declaration of Independence*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003. Print., pg. 27

Though disputes over land use in North America between the Protestant English and Catholic French had been going on for nearly a century, it didn't break out into all out warfare until 1744 when the French and English clashed over the fort at Louisbourg in Nova Scotia. When the English, with colonial allies, triumphed, it seemed to colonists that victory had been “providentially given by God...Jonathan Edwards counted the victory as evidence “of its being a day of great things, and of the wonderful works of God in this part of the world.”⁵³ Some in Boston believed that it was a sign of the beginning of the millennium, God's thousand year reign on earth.⁵⁴ This, of course, did not come to pass, but further warfare between the French and British forces continued on the continent for almost twenty years. During those years of conflict events took place which the colonists interpreted as God's providence providing for them and a linking of liberty with Protestantism.

After the defeat of French forces at the Battle of Quebec, a broadside was printed and dispersed through the colonies which read in part, “The Time will come, When Pope and Friar/ Shall both be roasted in the fire/ When the proud Antichristian Whore/ Will sink, and never rise more.”⁵⁵ This illustrates the colonial view of the Catholic French, and of their feeling of Protestant superiority. A more transparent statement was made by the Governor of North Carolina following the fall of Havana to British forces. When news of the French banishment from the Caribbean reached him, he declared that it was a sign of “Divine Providence in favor of Protestant apostolic religion and the cause of

53 Kidd., pg. 26

54 Ibid., pg. 27

55 Ibid., pg. 29

liberty.”⁵⁶ This assurance that God was on the side of liberty played an integral part when the colonists rose against Britain 14 years later.

A land blessed by God would indicate that the nation erected upon that soil would be set apart as well. Though Jefferson's Declaration of Independence was inspired mainly by Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers, its tone of natural rights and freedom were not entirely incompatible with Christianity and can be seen as inspired by it. The deistic variety of Christianity (which Jefferson was a member) held that God, being the incarnation of reason and rationality, had put history into motion and then withdrawn to watch humanity progress. The culmination of that progress would be the rational, independent, free individual living in a form of government which would bequeath and assure that liberty. The United States was to be the culmination of progress in that it allowed for that predestined liberty to reveal itself.⁵⁷ With this notion in mind, the Declaration of Independence was not merely a call against tyranny, but the founding document of the United States as a place set apart, but this time in civil, not religious language.

Jefferson may have been a deist, but he was very much inspired by Christian motifs and myths. In 1785, he proposed that the seal of the United States should represent the children of Israel led by a pillar of light, and at his second inaugural address in 1805 he “resurrected in morally rationalized form the Puritan's Calvinistic dogma of God's elect – the conception that 'God led our forefathers, as Israel of old.’”⁵⁸ Though

⁵⁶ Kidd, pg. 30

⁵⁷ Stephanson, pg. 16

⁵⁸ Weinberg, pg. 39-40

Jefferson was inspired by Christianity, there were a great many founding fathers who actually professed the Christian faith. Samuel Adams was a Calvinist, who once wrote a proclamation declaring that all of Massachusetts should set aside a day for fasting, humiliation and prayer because of their need to “express sorrow and repentance for the manifold transgressions of His Holy Laws.”⁵⁹ John Jay, the president of the Continental Congress and later first chief justice of the United States, was a devout Episcopalian who believed that, “the Bible contains...divine revelations and dispensations.”⁶⁰ These men worked together with deists, like Jefferson, to shape the United States into the land of the free and the home of God's favor.

With the nation now established, its inhabitants turned their eyes westward to the vast tracts of land that seemed ripe for the picking. The Treaty of Paris in 1783, which gave the United States independence, also expanded its territory to the Mississippi River. The squatters that had been there prior to the treaty were now part of the United States and more settlers poured into the region. Armed with John Quincy Adams' notion that “The whole continent of North America appears to be destined by Divine Providence to be peopled by one nation, speaking one language and professing one general system of religious and political principles,”⁶¹ they set forth to achieve this goal. The Louisiana Purchase and the acquisition of Florida gave the United States the room it needed for its expanding population and the ease with which the United States expanded further proved

59 Holmes, David L. *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Print. pg. 148

60 Ibid., pg. 154

61 Horsman, Reginald. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-saxonism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981. Print., pg. 87

its blessed nature. “As American prosperity increased so did American confidence that Providence was working through the American people.”⁶² But those lands could not truly be part of the American experiment if Americans did not reside there, and in this move to the west Manifest Destiny took on its most pure form.

Between 1803 and the Civil War, the United States underwent a major growth in western expansion. Oregon, Texas, California and the rest of the west had been opened up either through wars or treaties and Americans flocked to the valleys and gold fields. They sought to bring their form of government and way of life to the whole continent. Their commitment and reverence for their systems was crowed by the *Democratic Review* in 1840 when it wrote that, “Democracy in its true sense is the last best revelation of human thought. We speak, of course, of that true and genuine Democracy, which breathes the air and lives in the light of Christianity – whose essence is justice, and whose object is human progress.”⁶³ This progress would lead them west and into conflict with those who had been inhabiting “their” land for generations.

II. Cherokee Removal

When Thomas Jefferson put quill to parchment to write the Declaration of Independence, he wrote only one sentence regarding the Native Americans. In the eighteenth (and final) transgression of King George III, he wrote that, “He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an

⁶² Ibid., pg. 85

⁶³ McDougall, pg. 79

undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.” Jefferson used the conflict between Native Americans and settlers to further his political agenda, whereas the truth is much more complex. Though the Indians had attacked settlers, it must be remembered that the settlers were encroaching upon the Indian's lands. Further, his proposal that the British were manipulating the Indians into attacking the colonists reeks of superiority, as though the Indians could not think or act for themselves. Thus the document which proclaimed freedom in the New World cast the original inhabitants of that world as mindless savages who mercilessly destroy all who they come into contact with.

The Indian response to the revolution was as varied as the responses by the colonists. Most were neutral, as they saw the disagreement between the colonists and England as a family feud and did not want to get involved.⁶⁴ Some did side with the British and ultimately lost all their land after their defeat.

Those who sided with the soon to be United States were treated in the same way. In August of 1775, Solomon Unhaunawwaunnutt, a Stockbridge sachem (clan leader) and captain in a Massachusetts minutemen company, told the newly formed Congress that:

Wherever you go we will be by your Side. Our Bones shall lay with yours. We are determined never to be at peace with the Red Coats while they are at variance with you...If we are conquered our lands go with yours, but if we are victorious we hope you will help us recover our just rights.⁶⁵

64 Wunder, John R. 'Merciless Indian Savages' and the Declaration of Independence: Native Americans translate the Ecuinnaunuxulgee Document.” *American Indian Law Review* 25.1 (2000/2001) pg. 67

65 Ibid., pg. 69

Though the Stockbridge Indians fought alongside the colonists in New York, New Jersey and in Canada, they were ultimately unable to hold onto any of their land and the promises made by Congress were broken. In 1822, they were finally moved to Wisconsin, where they remain to this day.⁶⁶ The Stockbridge tribe were lied to and eventually removed and is one of the first examples of this process.

The Stockbridge were one of many tribes that were removed from their homelands due to American progress, but the one that remains most vivid in the American imagination is the removal of the Cherokees. In their story we see the various ways that the Christian United States dealt with the native inhabitants of the land they believed was rightly theirs. There is violence, assimilation, conversion and finally removal and it is the ideal case to illustrate the impact Christian ideals had upon the Native Americans.

By the time the United States was founded there had already been a long and complex history between the Cherokees and white settlers. The relationship began around 1670 after colonial settlers at Jamestown began to explore the interior of the continent. The next hundred years would see shifting alliances between the Cherokees, other tribes and British and French forces. During the French and Indian War, George Washington was unable to convince the Cherokee to fight on the side of the British, but was able to have them fight the Shawnee, who were allies with the French.⁶⁷ After weeks of fruitless campaigning, the one hundred Cherokee warriors who had signed on to fight

⁶⁶ Ibid., pg. 70

⁶⁷ Conley, Robert J. *The Cherokee Nation: A History*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2005. Print., pg. 45

with the British, decided to return home and along the way they found some horses wandering wild and so they took them. This simple act would have disastrous consequences for the Cherokees. They were attacked by a band of Virginians and twenty four of them were killed, scalped, mutilated and their scalps taken back to Governor Dinwiddie, who had put out a bounty on enemy Indians. This event caused retaliations which led to further bloodshed that lasted until 1761, when a treaty was made between Virginia and the Cherokees. This peace didn't last long, because after the French and Indian war ended in 1763, King George III issued a proclamation which forbade colonists from going into Cherokee lands.⁶⁸ This new rule was disregarded, as the colonists would let nothing impede their progress west.

The tone was set for treaties to be signed, settlers to encroach on lands, and new treaties signed with the ceding of Indian Lands. The federal government attempted to set limits on where settlers could go with the passage of the Northwest ordinance of 1787 which stated that:

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians, their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress.⁶⁹

This law, along with the Indian Non-Intercourse Act of 1790, was perpetually disregarded by settlers who saw the Indian land as fair game. To them it was a question of the use of land. Ever since the Puritans there had been an argument that land that was

⁶⁸ Ibid., pg. 52-54

⁶⁹ Berger, Thomas R. *A Long and Terrible Shadow: White Values, Native Rights in the Americas, 1492-1992*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992. Print., pg. 70

not being cultivated, was being wasted. It goes back to the Calvinist teachings of making a profit and work for the sake of the soul that was discussed earlier with Weber. When John Winthrop took the lands of Indians in New England he did so because he argued that:

That which lies common and hath never been replenished or subdued is free to any that will possesse and improve it, for God hath given to the sonnes of men a double right to the earth, there is a naturall right and a Civil right...And for the Natives in New England they inclose noe land neither have any settled habitation nor any tame cattle to improve the land by, and soe have noe other but a naturall right to those countries. Soe as if wee leave them sufficient for their use wee may lawfully take the rest.”⁷⁰

This argument was used over and over again. In 1810 the governor of Indiana rhetorically put forward the question, “Is one of the fairest portions of the globe to remain in a state of nature, the haunt of a few wretched savages, when it seems destined by the Creator to give support to a large population and to be the seat of civilization, of science, and of true religion?”⁷¹ These sorts of arguments were used to justify the settlers conquest of the Indian lands. If the Indians weren't using them the way God had intended, then it was the settler's duty to make that land “bear fruit.”

While many Indians did indeed cling to traditional ways, the Cherokees were unique because after their initial conflicts with white settlers, they attempted to assimilate white culture, but it lead to tragic consequences for the tribe. George Tinker has defined this process of forced assimilation as “cultural genocide.” This is the “effective

70 Weinberg, pg. 74-75

71 Weinberg, pg. 79

destruction of a people by systematically or systemically (intentionally or unintentionally in order to achieve their goals) destroying, eroding or undermining the integrity of culture and system of values that defines a people and gives them life.”⁷² Tinker goes on to describe that this destruction comes about through political, economic, religious and social processes. In the case of the Cherokee, all of these aspects are present and combined to effectively destroy the Cherokee way of life.

The political aspect of cultural genocide is defined by Tinker as “the use of political means and political power, always with the threat of military or police intervention, by a more powerful political entity in order to control and subdue a weaker, culturally distinct entity.”⁷³ Regarding the Cherokee, it is impossible to separate the political from the other aspects of culture genocide because they were implemented at the government's urging. The most blatant use of political power to manipulate and subdue the Cherokee was through the many treaties that were signed, the results of which always ended with the Indians ceding more land to the United States

Though the Cherokee were seen by the government as a sovereign nation, it still manipulated and claimed to hold jurisdiction over the tribe. After the murder of a Cherokee by a fellow Cherokee in 1828, the superior court of Georgia held that they, not the tribal courts, had jurisdiction over the case. Their argument was that “savages could have no lawful government.”⁷⁴ When the Cherokees took their complaint to the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Marshall declared that the Supreme Court could not even hear

72 Tinker, George E. *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993. Print., pg. 6

73 Tinker, pg. 6

74 Berger, pg. 76

the case because the Cherokee nation was neither a state of the union or a foreign state and so had no legal standing concerning the high court. However this case led to the Cherokee nation, and all other Indian tribes, to be seen as “domestic, dependent nations” and in his writing of the case Marshall described the Indians as being “in a state of pupillage. Their relationship to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian.”⁷⁵ Though this wasn't put into law until 1828, the United States had been acting as though they were the benefactors of the Indians since its inception.

One of the major ways the United States attempted to improve the lot of the Cherokees was to make them farmers and in this way they were guilty of Tinker's second aspect of cultural genocide which is “allowing the economic systems to manipulate and exploit another culturally discrete entity that is both politically and economically weaker.”⁷⁶ This process began in 1793 when Congress began appropriating funds to give the Cherokee livestock and tools in order for them to learn to change their economy and become producers like the other settlers. Their prior economy had mostly been based on the trade of deer skin, but with the increase in hunters and loss of land it could no longer support them.⁷⁷ By all accounts, some of the Cherokees took to farming quite well. They were “progressing steadily toward civilization, prospering and on the increase.”⁷⁸ But their dependence on agriculture did nothing to elevate their status among the white settlers. Some said that it was a “mistake to imagine a nation civilized because it has

75 Berger, pg. 78

76 Tinker, pg. 7

77 Perdue, Theda, and Michael D. Green. *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*. New York: Penguin, 2007. Print., pg. 28

78 Dippie, pg. 43

black cattle, or plants a few potatoes in the weeds, or spins a gross of broaches of very indifferent cotton.”⁷⁹ Despite their working towards becoming what the Americans wanted them to be, the Cherokees were still moved whenever more whites settled into their territory. Old prejudices concerning the Indians natural inability to become civilized and that they were essentially inferior to whites persisted.⁸⁰ Though some Cherokees quickly adapted to agrarian living, there were many who still carried on traditional beliefs and practices. Those who did adopt the white ways were normally mixed bloods who were the children of white traders who married into the tribe and raised their children to speak English and dress as whites.⁸¹ This divide between the mixed bloods and the traditionals would escalate and further deteriorate the solidarity of the tribe.

Tilling the soil was not the only change that came to the Cherokees during this time period. Missionaries came to Christianize the Indians as part of the civilization process and is representative of the the third of Tinker's aspects of cultural genocide which is the “overt attempt to destroy the spiritual solidarity of a people.”⁸² However, the Cherokees did not initially give up their traditional beliefs as soon as they heard about Christianity. This is because:

Every scholar of Indian missions has confirmed the view that Christianity succeeded only when a tribe had lost its autonomous ability to control its affairs, either through military conquest, or by losing it's hunting grounds to white settlers, or by removal from its homeland to some barren

79 Ibid., pg. 44

80 Ibid., pg. 63

81 McLoughlin, William Gerald. *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*. Athens: University of Georgia, 2008. Print., pg. 19

82 Tinker, pg. 7

reserve, or by the ravages of epidemics for which it had no immunity.⁸³

The Cherokees were able to hold onto their traditional beliefs until at least 1819. Various missionaries had attempted to convert them, but the Cherokees were more interested in the skills they needed to interact with Americans than the white man's religion.⁸⁴ In 1819, President Monroe and congress passed the "Civilizing Act," which granted government funds for the "civilization of the Indian tribes adjoining the frontier settlements."⁸⁵ These funds mainly went to missionary societies, such as the Northern Missionary Society of New York and the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Affairs. With the government's money these organizations set up missionary schools to teach the Cherokee not only to read and write English, but also how to be farmers and homemakers. Alongside these practical lessons, the curriculum was embedded with instructions in Christianity. Most of the pupils at these missionary schools were mixed bloods which further added to the discord within the tribe.⁸⁶

The missionary enterprise among the Cherokee was inspired directly by a religious revival in the United States that is known as the Second Great Awakening. Like the Great Awakening before it, this movement sought to regenerate America, to prepare for Christ's thousand year reign on earth through mass conversion, and to renew

83 McLoughlin, pg. 16

84 Dowd, Gregory Evans. *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992. Print. , pg. 159

85 Dippie, pg. 52

86 McLoughlin, pg. 22

Christianity from stale Calvinist dogma.⁸⁷ The goal of these missions was to make the United States a Christian nation, and “ultimately the world was to be brought to live in the image of America...[its goals were] no less than the moral renovation of the world.”⁸⁸

This revival rang throughout the west and changed the landscape of American ideology at the time. Timothy Smith has argued that, “The civil religion of the American people thus came to rest not on the faith the Enlightenment had awakened in man's moral powers...but on revivalistic, reform-minded, and millennial Christianity.”⁸⁹ The main goal of the revival was to gain new converts and it did not matter the race of that convert.

Along with their exposure to and, in some cases, acceptance of Christianity, the everyday routines of the Cherokee tribe were compromised by the Americans. It is the fourth of Tinker's aspects of cultural genocide and it “involves a wide variety of social changes that have been imposed on Indian nations with disruptive consequences.”⁹⁰ In the case of the Cherokee not all disruptions or changes were completely bad. There was the creation of the Cherokee alphabet that made it possible for them to write their own works in their own language, as well as printing a newspaper.⁹¹ Other aspects were detrimental such as becoming farmers who were responsible for their individual families, instead of the clan. They had the schools that the missionaries had set up, but these were

87 McDougall, Walter A. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. Print. , pg. 81

88 McLoughlin, pg. 53

89 Smith, Timothy L. "Righteousness and Hope: Christian Holiness and the Millennial Vision in America, 1800-1900." *American Quarterly* 31.1 (1979): 21-45., pg. 38

90 Tinker, pg. 7

91 Dippie, pg. 57

all taught, by law, in English, even though the Cherokees had their own written language.⁹²

Other missionaries believed that isolation was the key to transforming a young Cherokee child into a model American citizen and so they set up “model Zions’ – small settlements or stations in the wilderness where Indian children would be congregated, free from the contaminating influences of home and instructed in Christian values through daily exposure to education and industry.”⁹³ Later these methods would be used for most boarding schools that housed Indians and believed in the method of “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.”⁹⁴ Their children being taken from them and forced into such institutions weakened the link between the generations of Cherokees. Fathers could not understand the English their sons spoke and daughters now knew more about mopping a floor than they did their traditional roles.

The Cherokees might have completely assimilated into white culture if given enough time, but the government had other plans. Even though they had tried to make the Indians and settlers act like neighbors, they eventually wanted the rest of the Cherokee's land. When gold was discovered on their land in 1829 it was the final nail in the coffin. Andrew Jackson proposed that the Cherokees should move to the area west of the Mississippi and that removal was the only way to save them from racial extinction.⁹⁵ It is one of the great ironies of history that Indians who were forced to assimilate, were

92 McLoughlin, pg. 3

93 Dippie, pg. 52

94 Ibid., pg. 113-121. This comment was made by Richard Pratt, an army officer who was linked to the Carlisle school in Pennsylvania that has become notorious for its treatment of children in its care.

95 Dippie, pg. 59-60

later removed in order to preserve their way of life. Over 13,000 Cherokees were moved to Indian Country, present day Oklahoma, from 1835 to 1840 following the passage of the Indian Removal Act.⁹⁶ Their Trail of Tears has become the stuff of legend. When Alexis De Tocqueville toured the country and learned of what happened to the Cherokees he wrote that the Americans had achieved their purposes concerning the Indians with, “singular felicity, tranquilly, legally, philanthropically, without shedding blood, and without violating a single great principle of morality in the eyes of the world. It is impossible to destroy men with more respect for the laws of humanity.”⁹⁷ Though he was wrong about the shedding of blood, concerning the rest of his statement, De Tocqueville was eerily accurate. With the removal of the Cherokees, the Protestant Americans, heirs of Puritan ideals of blessedness, were able to settle upon lands that they had had their eyes on for years.

III. The Navajo Hweeldi

Like the Cherokees before them, the Navajos of the southwest were put through cultural genocide at the hands of the United States. Though they were 1,500 miles away from where trouble began for the Cherokee, progress and manifest destiny eventually caught up with them. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the Navajo were pastoral people whose lives were revolutionized by the livestock the Spanish had brought with them in the 1500's. Before the arrival of sheep and horses, the Navajo were mainly hunter

96 Perdue, pg.

97 Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy in America (Part the Second - The Social Influence of Democracy)*. Ed. Phillips Bradley. Trans. Henry Reeve. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945. Print., pg. 380

gatherers with a rudimentary grasp of agriculture. Livestock changed not only their livelihoods, but their societal structures.⁹⁸ Their economy and social hierarchies were now based upon the number of livestock an individual owned and how successful they were at raiding Spanish settlements. It has been estimated that the Navajos were so successful at raiding Spanish livestock that by 1775, the Spanish had to import horses from Spain to make up the deficit.⁹⁹

Relations between the Spanish and Navajo were tense, but the Navajos were never subjected to assimilation and forced religious conversion in the way that their neighbors, the Pueblo Indians, were. Whenever a large force of troops was assembled against them, the Navajos would simply flee into their beloved Dinete'h (homeland), whose canyons and caves gave them protection. Things were relatively peaceful from 1680 to 1694 following the Taos Revolt (in which the Navajos did not participate directly, but supported) which led to the Spanish fleeing the area, leaving behind most of their livestock. But the Spanish came back with a vengeance in 1694, bent on retribution and punishment of the native tribes, whether they participated in the revolt or not. The story of the Navajo from this time to the American conquest of Mexico in 1846 was one of constant warfare and raids between them and the Spanish of the Rio Grande.¹⁰⁰

When Americans did enter the Rio Grande Valley, they came upon tribes that were used to fighting foreign invaders. The Apaches, Utes, Comanches and others had all been at war with Spanish settlers for almost two hundred years. These tribes were battle

98 Bailey, Lynn R. *Bosque Redondo; an American Concentration Camp*. Pasadena, CA: Socio-Technical, 1970. Print., pg. 7

99 Locke, pg. 161

100Ibid., pg. 167-181

hardened and would not succumb quickly to those who carried the American destiny forward.

At the time of the Mexican War (and before that, the annexation of Texas) the belief in American expansion was at a fever pitch. Oregon had been opened for settlement, trading forts were being established across the territories included in the Louisiana Purchase, and the Sante Fe trail was exchanging goods between St. Louis and the Southwest. These settlers and adventurers were propelled forward by the idea put forth by John L. Sullivan who wrote that “the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of Liberty and federated self-government.”¹⁰¹ Despite already overtaking the Indian lands up to the Mississippi, the Americans continued their progression to the west. War with Mexico was declared and Sen. Herschel Johnson distilled the American sentiment into a few choice words when he proclaimed that:

I would not force the adoption of our form of Government upon any people by the sword, but if war is forced upon us, as this has been, and the increase of our territory, and consequently the extension of the area of human liberty and happiness, shall be one of the incidents of the contest, I believe we should be recreant to our noble mission, if we refused acquiescence in the high purpose of a wise Providence.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹McDougall, pg. 84

¹⁰²McDougall, pg. 94 Historians seem to be in agreement that the real aggressors of the Mexican War were Americans, first through the seizure of California through a filibuster and then open aggression to the southern Mexican states. It was also called “Polk’s War,” due to the vigor that the President pursued expansion after Mexico declined to sell their northern lands.

According to those who supported Manifest Destiny it was as though Americans had no choice but to follow Providence when it provided for them the means to increase liberty and happiness across the continent (and later in history across the world). If coincidentally they also acquired more lands, than all the better.

With the acquisition of the southwest, Americans began pouring into the area surrounding the Navajos homeland in the mid 1840's. The United States army was now in charge of the area and wanted to make peace with their former foes, the Mexicans. When General Kearny entered the town of Las Vegas, he told the Mexicans that:

We come amongst you as friends, not as enemies; protectors, not as conquerors...The Navajos come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep...My government will correct all this. It will protect you in your persons and property. Your enemies will become our enemies. We will keep off the Indians.¹⁰³

The Mexicans and Navajos had been attacking and raiding each other for years when the Americans came upon the scene. Both took livestock and slaves from the other, but when the Americans conquered New Mexico they offered protection to the Mexicans, who they just finished fighting, if they pledged allegiance to the United States. Tellingly this pledge always ended with “In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Though the Mexicans were Catholics, they shared a common faith with the invading Americans, something the Navajos did not, which goes a long way in explaining why the Americans sided with the Mexicans. With this promise the army began to try and subdue the twelve thousand Navajos who roamed the country.

¹⁰³Sides, pg. 74

The process began with negotiations of peace. When these negotiations ended at an impasse, Kearny left New Mexico to continue his march to California and published permission “for the people of New Mexico to retaliate and make war on the Navajos...to form war parties, to march into the country of their enemies, the Navajos, to recover their property, to make reprisals and obtain redress for the many insults received from them.”¹⁰⁴ By giving free reign over to the Mexicans to continue attacking Navajos, under the protection of the army no less, Kearny destroyed any chance of lasting peace.

One of the main problems with maintaining a lasting peace was the way the Americans assumed Navajo tribal system worked. They thought that there was a main chief who controlled the tribe and that if they signed a treaty with him the rest would fall in line. Navajo culture is not based upon such a system and is one of the most egalitarian societies known. When a problem presents itself, every member of the tribe has a say and when a decision is made, it is only for the small clan who discussed it, not the entire Navajo population. Those not present would continue doing as they pleased and for this system the Navajos achieved the reputation of being the “most treacherous, treaty-breaking tribe with whom the westward-expanding Americans had yet to come to contact with.”¹⁰⁵ This lack of understanding led to continued violence which would not come to an end until the army changed their tactics.

On February 22, 1847, the St. Louis *Weekly Reveille* published an article which stated that the “Navajos will continue to steal sheep and commit other outrages, until they

¹⁰⁴Locke, pg. 208

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pg. 200 This lack of understanding Indian political systems would play a similar, critical role in the American encounters with the Sioux which will be discussed in the next chapter.

are well whipped a few times.”¹⁰⁶ They were correct that the Navajos would continue fighting for their homeland and way of life, but were mistaken in the measures it would take to subdue them. The army recruited Christopher “Kit” Carson to begin a new method of fighting Navajos and with this new method he ushered in the cultural genocide which had befallen the Cherokees before them.

Unlike the Cherokee, the Navajos downfall began with economic, not political maneuvers. They had not ceded any land to the United States, nor had they given up their traditional way of life. So the army attacked their livelihood directly in order to force them to surrender their freedom. Carson was ordered by General Carleton (who had been appointed military commander of the territory of New Mexico) to “perform such services among the Navajos as will bring them to feel that they have been doing wrong.”¹⁰⁷ What this meant was that war was declared against the Navajos until “they have been efficiently punished for their long series of atrocities.”¹⁰⁸ The method this punishment would take was a scorched earth policy of total war. Using the same tactics that Sherman would implement the next year on his march to Atlanta, Carson destroyed everything of the Navajos that he could lay his hands on. It was the hope of the army to annihilate the means by which the Navajos live, in order to force them into relying on army provisions at the newly created reservation in New Mexico, Bosque Redondo. During this campaign:

106 Ibid., pg. 215

107 Bailey, Lynn R. *The Long Walk; a History of the Navajo Wars, 1846-68*. Los Angeles: Westernlore, 1964. Print., pg. 149 Long Walk

108 Bailey, Paul D. "The Navajo Wars." *Arizoniana* 2.2 (1961): 3-12. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Jan. 2014., pg. 11

Cornfields were destroyed, squash rooted up, sheep and livestock taken or shot on sight, peach trees cut down to stumps, everything that could possibly sustain Navajo life was rooted out and destroyed. Every Navajo man showing the least fight or defiance was butchered on the spot. Women and children, and such menfolk who came forward in abject surrender, were herded into camps at the Fort [Defiance, near the present day Arizona/New Mexico line], and made ready for the long walk to their new home.¹⁰⁹

The Navajos who survived the ravages of the war, but could not provide for themselves, came to the forts asking for mercy. They were starving and weak, the will to fight taken from them by the ruthlessness in which their lands had been devastated. Those who were absent were the strongest members of the tribe, like Manuelito, who said, "I shall remain here. I have nothing to lose but my life, and that they can come and take whenever they please, but I will not go there."¹¹⁰ It was the weakest and poorest of the tribe that were forced to leave their homeland.

When the march east began, Carleton thought it was a:

Beautiful metaphor, an image that epitomized the inevitable last stages of Manifest Destiny – an eastward-moving counterpoint to the greater westward migration of the Anglo-Saxons... He wrote, 'they have defended their mountains and their stupendous canyons with heroism; but at length, they found it was their destiny, too, to give way to the insatiable progress of our race.'¹¹¹

109 Ibid.

110 Locke, pg. 369

111 Sides, pg. 361

He told his soldiers to treat their charges with 'Christian kindness' and reminded them that the Navajos were now “proteges of the United States – a people who, having given up their country, should be provided for by a powerful and Christian nation.”¹¹²

This is the beginning of the religious aspect of cultural genocide being implemented in an institutionalized and organized manner. Carleton's plans for the reservation “stressed education and religious instruction for the Indians.”¹¹³ Two years earlier he had written to his superiors of his plans to “settle 'those wolves of the mountains,' the Navajos and Apaches, at the reservation and make 'Christian farmers' out of them.”¹¹⁴ For this purpose he brought priests and built a church for the Navajos to attend services. It must be noted that Carleton's ambitions to turn the Navajos into Protestants was not successful. Unlike the Cherokee, there were not enough mixed bloods for integration to take place. In the desperate circumstances that they found themselves in at the reservation, they clung to their traditional beliefs. At the reservation they suffered meager rations and were forced to farm in ways which were foreign to them, they were exposed to many diseases for which they had no immunity. Syphilis and malaria were rampant and the Navajos attempted to cure their ill the only way they knew how, through their traditional ceremonies.

These ceremonies acted on the belief that all maladies were caused by violations of Navajo religious practices, contacts with ghosts, or witch activities. The ceremony attempted to treat the causive factor of the illness, not the disease itself. Though there

112 Sides, pg. 360

113 Thompson, Gerald. *The Army and the Navajo*. Tucson: University of Arizona, 1976. Print., pg. 19

114 Locke, pg. 348

was a hospital at the Bosque Redondo, very few Navajo visited it because of their fear of places where death has struck. In traditional Navajo practice, if a death occurred in a building it was immediately abandoned and a new one was built to replace it. This system worked fine when they had simply hogans which were easily remade, but a hospital was a building that could not be torn down whenever a person died within its walls.¹¹⁵ For this reason the Navajos shunned the hospital and though many were sick and fearful they refused the white man's medicine. The reservation's doctor, George Guyther, wrote that "sickness has begot fear, fear begot superstition, and this nourished fear; they are sick, they die, and the frightened survivors lend an easy ear to the croakings of their medicine men."¹¹⁶ Try as they might, the army could not get the Navajo to give up their traditional beliefs during their time at the Bosque Redondo.

Ultimately the Navajo would become the "most missionaried people in the world"¹¹⁷ after they returned to their homelands following their experience at the Bosque Redondo. New policies were put in place regarding the treatment of the Navajos and the Board of Heathen Missions set up Christian boarding schools throughout the southwest. Children were taken from their homes, forced to speak only English, wear their clothes and hair in American styles and forbidden to cling to their traditions.¹¹⁸ Though it was years after the Bosque Redondo that Christianity took hold among the Navajos, its genesis can be traced back to their long walk and Carleton's hopes.

115 Ibid., pg. 370

116 Bailey, pg. 91 *Bosque Redondo*

117 Pavlik, Steve. "Navajo Christianity: Historical Origins and Modern Trends." *Wicazo Sa Review* 12.2 (1997): 43-58. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Jan. 2014., pg. 43

118 Ibid, pg. 45-47

Displacement to eastern New Mexico created social upheaval for the Navajos when they were forced to live and interact in ways that were foreign to them. Under supervision of the army, they dug irrigation ditches and built adobe houses. Each family had about forty sheep, which was considerably smaller than the flocks they were used to shepherding.¹¹⁹ These family units had been broken up by Carson's campaign and at the Bosque Redondo, "Navajos were strangers to each other in a strange situation. What with family ties broken, it naturally followed that traditional political mechanisms would likewise vanish – that was precisely what Carleton had planned."¹²⁰ The *natchit*, the traditional all-tribal assembly, was dismantled, and army law and procedures took its place. The Navajos would never use their traditional political systems again.¹²¹

Weaving, one of their most sacred traditions, was compromised when the women at Bosque Redondo began weaving for trade. "Working against starvation, they wove what would bring the quickest results."¹²² The act of weaving was taught to the Navajos by Spider Women and it had its own songs, prayers and even taboos.¹²³ But at the reservation, women began to sell them for profit to supplement the bare rations the army gave them. The quality was diminished and they even began to import wool from other areas instead of spinning and dying the wool themselves¹²⁴. When they returned to their

119 Thompson, pg. 72

120 Bailey, pg. 97 *Bosque Redondo*

121 Ibid., pg. 98

122 Locke, pg. 398

123 Ibid., pg. 33

124 The blankets from this period and shortly after are called Germantown blankets, after the city in Pennsylvania where the thread came from.

homeland after the Bosque Redondo, they continued to make trade blankets instead of making them with the care and passion they had once.

The Bosque Redondo was closed in 1868 thanks to federal investigations into the mishandling of funds, the drain it put on the budget of the territory and for the plain fact that it was not working. The failure of each year's crops and the increasingly brackish water brought dysentery to go along with the syphilis, malaria, and starvation the Navajos were already suffering from. The army was “powerless to hide the fact that the reservation was little more than a concentration camp.”¹²⁵ During the investigations, Carleton outlined his view on the future prospects of the Navajos and of Indians in general. He stated that:

In their appointed time, God wills that one race of men – as in the races of lower animals – shall disappear off the face of the earth and give place to another race, and so on in the Great Cycle traced out by Himself, which may be seen but has reasons too deep to be fathomed by us. The races of the Mammoths and Mastodons, and the great Sloths, came and passed away: The Red Men of America are passing away!¹²⁶

He was removed from command in 1866, but it would be two more years before the camp was closed for good. In 1868 General Sherman (of Civil War fame) signed a new treaty with the Navajos that allowed them to return to their homeland. They walked the four hundred miles back home, chanting:

Beauty before us

Beauty behind us

¹²⁵ Bailey, pg. 135 *Bosque Redondo*

¹²⁶ Sides, pg. 387

Beauty around us
In beauty we walk
It is finished in beauty.¹²⁷

127 Ibid., pg. 402

Chapter Four: Extermination Policy

I. Puritan Origins

The relationship between Native Americans and Americans included violence as well as removal. Through the past four hundred years there has been a distinct pattern that emerges. Europeans and their descendents come to a land, claim it as their own and either destroy the native peoples or move them to another area. This chapter shall focus on the destruction aspects of this pattern. Within this story there has been many instances of massacres that were perpetrated by both sides. Attacks by the Indians were normally preceded by settlers encroaching on their lands and they fought back. Settlers, on the other hand, either attacked tribes in order to get Indian lands, as reprisal for an Indian attack, or to annihilate them completely. What follows is a history of massacres perpetrated by Americans, or their ancestors, on Native Americans, all of which bear hallmarks of Manifest Destiny. As in instances of removal, the violence perpetrated by the settlers on Indians was justified by Puritan ideals that trickled down into the national consciousness and it is this influence that Protestant Christianity had over the treatment of Native Americans that will be investigated in this chapter.

One of the first instances where Europeans found themselves in conflict with Indians in North America was the struggle between Puritans and the Pequot Indians in modern day Connecticut and Massachusetts. This event is vital to understanding the Puritan view of Indians and how their prejudice trickled into American policy regarding

Native Americans. It was their Christian ideology which demonized the Indians and turned what was a struggle over control of the fur trade, into a Holy War against the Pequots and other tribes.

After the landing and settling of Plymouth colony, there was an avalanche of settlers coming to the New World from Europe. The coastal lands became too crowded and settlers began to migrate west into territory that belonged to tribes such as the Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Pequots and further west the Mohegans and Niantics. Trade between these tribes and the English and Dutch had been relatively peaceful until the Europeans began to build long term settlements. About fifteen years before this land grab, an outbreak of small-pox decimated the Indian population. When “thousands of natives had vanished from the valleys and uplands of southern New England.,”¹²⁸ it seemed to the Europeans that God had a hand in this epidemic as they wrote that, “Thus farre hath the good hand of God favored our beginnings...in sweeping away great multitudes of the natives...a little more before we went thither, that he might make room for us there.”¹²⁹ At the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, John Winthrop, its principal shareholder, declared that, “If God were not pleased with our inheriting these parts why did he drive out the natives before us and why doth he still make roome for us, by dimishinge them as we increase?”¹³⁰ This interpretation of God destroying the natives in order to make room for the Christians was in keeping with the Puritan view of the world. To the Puritan, “the wilderness was seen as a Calvinist

128 Horowitz, David. *The First Frontier: The Indian Wars and America's Origins, 1607-1776*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978. Print., pg. 37

129 Thornton, pg. 71

130 Horowitz, pg. 38

universe in microcosm and also an analogy of the human mind. Both were dark, with hidden possibilities for good and evil. Through the darkness the Indians flitted, like the secret Enemy of Christ.”¹³¹

The Puritans had brought these prejudices against Native Americans with them from England. It was not based “so much from objective observation or actual experience as from subjective fears of the subversive potential of intimate contact with the other.”¹³² These fears came from writings from Europe that spread like wildfire. One such tract was a popular survey of world geography by George Abbott, future archbishop of Canterbury, which stated that the “natives of America were worshipers of 'vile spirits' and regularly engaged in incest, sodomy, witchcraft and cannibalism.”¹³³ Others, like Sir Walter Raleigh, believed that the Indians of America were in servitude to the devil.¹³⁴ Perhaps the most striking example of the connection between Indians and the Devil comes from the theologian Joseph Mede who declared that:

Shortly after the advent of Christianity, Satan induced the ancestors of North America's Indians to migrate with him to America, 'where they might be hid, and not be disturbed in the idolatrous and abominable, or rather diabolical, service he expected of his followers.' Though Mede hoped for the conversion of the Indians, he thought it more likely that they would join the legions of Gog and Magog predestined to assail God's people in the final days.¹³⁵

131 Clark, Alfred A. *The Pequot War*. Amherst. University of Massachusetts, 1996. Print., pg. 6

132 Ibid, pg. 20

133 Ibid., pg. 15

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

The Puritans sought out aspects of Native American culture which confirmed their prejudices when they arrived in the “New World.” The deaths that disease claimed could be attributed to the Indian's wicked ways and their alliance with Satan. They also lived modestly though there was plenty of material for them to exploit. Their simple wigwams in small villages caused the colonists to view them as an “unenterprising, indeed improvident, people.”¹³⁶ The fact that they would “rather starve than work,”¹³⁷ would have been against the Puritans Calvinist's teachings, in particular, their love of Paul's verse in his second letter to the Thessalonians.¹³⁸

This need for labor means nothing without the land on which to labor. To the Puritans, the Indians were not using the land. John Winthrop complained of the situation when he wrote, “why then should we stand here striving for places of habitation...and in ye mean tyme suffer a whole continent, as fruitful and convenient for the use of man to lie waste without any improvement.”¹³⁹ By not improving the land, the Indians were guilty of not following God's decree to replenish the Earth and subdue it.¹⁴⁰

This view of using God's land to prosper while the Indians merely misused it, led the settlers farther into the interior of the continent and caused the Indians, who had been

136 Ibid., pg. 30

137 Ibid., pg. 31

138 The Geneva Bible 2 Thess, 3:6,10. He says that idle and lazy persons ought not to be supported by the Church; indeed, they are not to be endured. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

139 Weinberg, pg. 74

140 The Geneva Bible Gen. 1:28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

mostly peaceful traders, to rise up. Two events led directly to the Mystic Massacre and they were the deaths of two English traders who had outstepped their boundaries.

The first death was that of John Stone, a man who had a reputation of being a “drunkard, lecher, braggart, bully, and blasphemer.”¹⁴¹ He had been thrown out of the Bay colony with charges of piracy and also for adultery (though it seems he had been too drunk to consummate the act and so was charged merely with drunkenness.)¹⁴² He died when he had abducted two Indians and was killed when the Indian rescue party attacked his boat. Though his death was not mourned by the Puritans, the need to apprehend his murderers became a rallying cry amongst them. They did not, however, apprehend the culprits because they had fled into the inner territories and the Pequots refused to hand them over, seeing the death of Captain Stone as the results of a fair fight. This episode strained the relationship between the Pequots and the Puritans almost to the breaking point. It would not take much incentive for the Puritans to strike if given a reason.

The reason came the next year with the death of an English trader and had dire consequences for the Pequots, even though they had nothing to do with the death of John Oldham. Oldham was killed off the coast of Block Island, which was inhabited by Indians who were linked to the Narragansetts tribe, and enemies of the Pequots. It has been shown by scholars like Alfred Clark that this linking of the death of Oldham to the Pequots was done after the Mystic Massacre in order to justify what occurred there. The Reverend William Hubbard, wrote years after the event, that “in addition to killing John Stone the Pequots 'treacherously and cruelly... in the like manner slew one Mr.

141 Clark, pg. 72

142 Ibid., pg. 73

Oldham...at Block Island, a place not far from the Mouth of their harbor.”¹⁴³ With the death of Oldham, the old wound of not getting the killers of Stone was reopened and the officials of the Bay Colony interpreted the murder and subsequent refusal to give up the killers a second time as evidence of an Indian conspiracy.¹⁴⁴ They decided to go on the offensive and the first place they hit was Block Island. Finding the island deserted, they consoled themselves by burning the barren villages and lush crops.

After four days of searching for the Pequots, the Puritans found them at a palisaded village near the Mystic River, nearly seventy wigwams on an acre of land.¹⁴⁵ The night before the attack, the Puritans surrounded the village, and at dawn they set fire to the palisades. From outside the village, the Puritans killed anyone who tried to escape from the blazing inferno through the village's two entrances. A few managed to escape, but when the flames subsided it was thought that they had killed between six hundred and seven hundred Pequots, the majority being women and children as many warriors were on a hunting party at the time of the massacre.¹⁴⁶

Captain Mason, who was in charge of the onslaught, wrote that “This was God seen in the Mount, crushing his proud Enemies and the Enemies of his People...burning them up in the Fire of his Wrath, and dunging the Ground with their flesh; it was the

143 Ibid., pg. 107

144 Ibid., pg. 109

145 Horowitz, pg. 47

146 Weidensaul, Scott. *The First Frontier: The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery, and Endurance in Early America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. Print., pg. 143

Lord's doings and it was marvellous in our Eyes!”¹⁴⁷ He gave the reason for God acting on the Puritans behalf as:

Not many Hours before [had] exalted themselves in their great Pride, threatening and resolving the utter Ruin and Destruction of all the English, Exulting and Rejoycing with Songs and Dances. But God was above them, who laughed at his Enemies and the Enemies of his People to scorn making them as a fiery Oven...Thus did the Lord judge among the Heathen, filling the Place with dead Bodies.¹⁴⁸

Their confidence in their own superiority and of the Indian's wretched state, was what caused this justification of immense violence towards the Indians. Though some white settlers were killed by Indians prior to the massacre, but they were killed because of their encroachment onto Native lands or for trying to seize captors to be sold as slaves at auction. Not all Indian slaves were shipped to the West Indies, as some of the Pequots who survived the war were “distributed as chattels among the victors – the first slaves in New England.”¹⁴⁹ The Pequots were no more. Those who were not killed or sold into slavery were absorbed into other tribes. They were destroyed as an example to all other tribes as to what happens when they stand in the way of the colonists. A further step was taken by the colonists a few years after the war when they formed the United Colonies of New England. It was a military alliance with the purpose of protecting settlers from Indians. The alliance's preamble states that “Wheras we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aime, namely, to advance the kingdome of our

147 Horowitz, pg. 48

148 Clark, pg. 151

149 Horowitz, pg. 50

Lord Jesus Christ, and to injoye the liberties of Gospell in puritie with peace.”¹⁵⁰ The spreading of the Kingdom of Christ into the New World is what lead to the destruction of the Pequots because they held the land that was needed for the Kingdom to prosper. Like so many other tribes, they were in the way of progress.

This first war between Indians and the Colonists is important because it establishes the language and reasons for all subsequent wars between the two. There is the dehumanization of the Other, the quest for land, the righteousness of the Americans and the destruction or removal of the Indians. Perhaps Roger Williams, one of the few colonists we know of who had a charitable view of the Indians, captured the essence of the colonial enterprise when he wrote:

How oft have I heard both the English and Dutch (not onely the civill, but the most debauched and profane) say, These Heathen Dogges, better kill a thousand of them then that we Christians should be indangered or troubled with them; Better they were all cut off, and then we shall be no more troubled with them. They have spilt our Christian blood, the best way to make riddance of them, cut them all off, and so make way for Christians.¹⁵¹

As the settlers began their advancement into the frontier, John Mason's words can be seen as both justification and the fulfillment of prophecy. Regarding the Mystic Massacre he said, “Thus was God pleased to smite our enemies and to give us their Land for an inheritance.”¹⁵² The bounty of the land that was seized was both the just cause and

150 Horowitz, pg. 52

151 Horowitz, pg. 55

152 Drinnon, Richard. *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota, 1980. Print. pg. 46

justification after the fact for the massacre and for the Christian imperialism that swept westward from the shores of the colonist's first landings.

II: Gnadenhutten and Blue Water Creek- Preambles of Sand Creek

The Moravian Indians had been Christians for nearly a decade when the massacre occurred. They had come to the faith due to the work of missionaries such as John Heckewelder and David Zeisberger. These men established towns in which the Indians could learn farming techniques and “hear the preaching of the Christian faith.”¹⁵³ Heckewelder had written that the reason the Indians were in such a pathetic state prior to his arrival was because they were “deprived of the light of the only true Christian Religion, unchecked by the precepts and unswayed by the example of the God of peace.”¹⁵⁴ At these towns the Indians were transformed from heathen savages to Christian farmers. They were seen, “Not as Indians, but as men responding faithfully and sincerely to the appeals of civilization and Christianity.”¹⁵⁵ Unfortunately for these pious Indians, the Revolutionary war broke out and though they had decided to remain neutral, they were caught in the middle of the conflict.

In 1781, the Wyandot Indians, neighbors of the Moravians, were at war with the United States. They had decided to side with England in the war in order to stop the flow of colonists into the Ohio River valley. As they attacked settlers through the valley, they would occasionally stop at the Moravian villages for food and shelter. Since the

153 Howells, William Dean. *Three Villages*. Boston. J.R. Osgood and Co, 1884. Print., pg. 146

154 Pearce, pg. 116

155 Howells, pg. 155

Moravians had been taught the gift of charity, they did not refuse the Wyandots and when settlers saw them departing from the Moravian camps, rumors spread that they were in alliance with them.¹⁵⁶ In order to escape the accusations, the Moravian Indians left their villages, but unfortunately returned to gather their corn crop at Gnadenhutzen a short time later.

A force of Pennsylvania soldiers under the command of David Williamson, surprised the Moravians while they were gathering corn in a field and took them as captives.¹⁵⁷ The soldiers separated the women and children from the men and held both parties in cabins. There was a discussion on whether to take the Indians to Fort Pitt for holding or to simply exterminate them there. In the discussion it appears that there was a vocal minority which wanted to do away with the Indians and though there was opposition, they ultimately ruled the day.¹⁵⁸ The manner of execution and the sheer number of victims is what makes this particular episode of frontier violence stand out, along with the religious affiliation of the victims. These were Christian Indians who had lived in harmony with the settlers for at least a decade, yet at the slightest rumor that they might be in alliance with violent tribes, they were condemned as guilty. The old prejudices continued to flow, even when they shared the same faith. Either the colonists saw the Moravian Indians, in their perceived alliance with the Wyandots, as undermining progress in further settling the west and in bed with the British, or that their conversion to

156 Ibid., pg. 160

157 Harper, Rob. "Looking the Other Way: The Gnadenhutzen Massacre and the Contextual Interpretation of Violence." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 64.3 (2007): 621-44. JSTOR. Web. 18 Jan. 2014. pg. 621

158 Ibid., pg. 630

Christianity, as it did with the Cherokee, did not change their status as second class citizens. It is hard to imagine colonists taking a cooper's mallet to the skulls of ninety six white Christians, but that is precisely what happened to the Indian Christians in the cabins at Gnadenhutten. After the first executioner was tired he handed the mallet to another, saying, "My arm fails me. Go on in the same way. I think I have done pretty well."¹⁵⁹ They then scalped the Indians and burned the cabins to the ground. No one was ever punished or brought to trial for the massacre. William Dean Howells saw the continuity of this massacre and the further expansion of America in the nineteenth century when he wrote, "in the ethics of the border, it was no more harm to kill an Indian than a buffalo, a sentiment which with contemporary moralists of our Western plains finds expression in the maxim, "Good Indians dead Indians."¹⁶⁰

Howells' contemporary moralists could have had the Sioux in mind when stating their maxim. Though Howell wrote those words in 1884, the Sioux of the plains had been a fierce enemy of white advancement of the frontier for a number of decades. The problem can be traced back to the Louisiana Purchase and the opening of the frontier to settlers. Though it took almost forty years before the new territories saw settlers come, when they did begin it was a torrent. The overland route to Oregon, and later for the California gold rush, became a highway of settlers seeking their fortunes. Between 1850 and 1854 an "estimated 145,000 people journeyed westward...through Sioux territory...leading one Sioux leader to ask, "Are there still any whites remaining there [in

159 Howells, pg. 187

160 Ibid., pg. 194

the east].”¹⁶¹ By this time there had already been forced removal of many tribes back east, but this onslaught of settlers was too much for the Indians who had either been relocated to the Indian Territory or, like the Sioux, were still on their traditional land which the Americans wanted. With less land available to allocate to the Indians the Secretary of the Interior drew the conclusion that “the policy of removal, except under peculiar circumstances, must necessarily be abandoned; and the only alternatives left are, to civilize or exterminate them. We must adopt one or the other.”¹⁶² On the plains what occurred was a mixture of both.

With the increase of immigrants passing through Indian lands, there were early attempts to make and keep peace with the varying tribes. At first the government tried to make treaties with the Indians, but fundamental differences in the understandings of government kept the two from groups from making peace. The American government believed that the tribes had chiefs who were “absolute monarchs akin to European royalty.”¹⁶³ This, however, was not the case as Indian tribes do not operate under that system of government. Native Americans did make treaties, but only the signer of the document was held accountable in their way of life. No one could make an agreement for someone else and they felt that if someone broke a treaty then that was none of their business. It was, in fact, more individualistic than most Americans at the time could understand. There was a treaty signed at Fort Laramie in 1851 between the Sioux and the United States, but most of the Sioux did not feel that they were held accountable to it.

161 Beck, Paul N. *The First Sioux War: The Grattan Fight and Blue Water Creek, 1854-1856*. Lanham (Md.). University of America, 2004. Print., pg. 9

162 Dippie, pg. 75

163 Beck, pg. 14

They were the “dominant tribe on the northern plains and did not need the Americans to set boundaries for them or to stop them from fighting their enemies.”¹⁶⁴ With the construction of forts along the Oregon trail route, which the Sioux resented, it was only a matter of time before conflict arose.

The forts and nearby trading posts operated as a common meeting place for the Indians and Americans. According to the treaty of 1851, the Sioux were to be given certain annuities every year and they also came into Fort Laramie to trade buffalo robes for supplies. The fort was a microcosm of the West in which soldiers, Indians, mountain men and settlers heading for the Pacific all rubbed shoulders. It was near the fort that the real trouble began for the Sioux and it all began with a settler's cow.

A wagon train of Mormons on their way to Salt Lake passed through Fort Laramie on August 18, 1854. One of their members came to complain to the superior officer that one of his cows had been stolen by the Sioux. The tribe was famished as they had been waiting for weeks for the annual annuities to come through and when a stray cow wandered near their camp they took it for food. Conquering Bear was the elected tribal leader of the Sioux at this time (which meant he was the go between for the army and the Sioux) and he was called to the fort to answer for the stolen stock. He didn't deny that his people had taken it, but offered the settler any horse from his personal herd to repay the man. The settler balked at the offer and wanted the Indian responsible for the killing of the cow brought to justice.¹⁶⁵ The Sioux chief went back to his camp and informed High Forehead, the killer of the cow, that soldiers would be coming the next day to arrest him.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pg. 16

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pg. 40-41

The officer sent out the next morning was a young, recent West Point graduate.

John Grattan was:

Impetuous, boastful, inexperienced, a hothead and a 'sort of blowhard...[he] insisted that with ten men he could defeat the Cheyennes and with thirty men he could whip all the Indians on the Plains..[he was] filled with the racist attitudes of nineteenth century American culture.¹⁶⁶

Armed with the conviction of his own superiority and twenty eight men, Grattan rode out to arrest High Forehead, who was in a village near the fort awaiting supplies that contained fifteen hundred Sioux. Grattan's brash demeanor and his drunken interpreter's repeated threats against the Indians lead to bloodshed. It is still debated who fired first, but the end result was the death of Grattan and all of his men. Conquering Bear was shot three times and died a few days later. This minor incident over a cow could not be allowed to stand. It was an embarrassment to the Army and led to reprisal attacks and broke the peace between the whites and the Sioux. Spurred on by the ease with which they had disposed of Grattan and his men, the Sioux began to raid more frequently and even robbed a stage coach.¹⁶⁷ The citizens near the area believed that retribution was in order. The *Missouri Republican* wrote that, "if those who had sympathy for the poor wronged Indians had seen the Indians and understood their motives...then this sympathy for such wretched red men might be changed to bitter hatred and a desire for revenge."¹⁶⁸

The Army decided that it was time for extreme measures and General Winfield Scott

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pg. 35

¹⁶⁷ Utley, Robert Marshall. *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indians*. New York. Macmillan, 1967. Print., pg. 115

¹⁶⁸ Paul, R. Eli. *Blue Water Creek and the First Sioux War, 1854-1856*. Norman, University of Oklahoma, 2004. Print. pg. 83

wrote to the new commander at Fort Kearney, General Harney, that a victory against the Sioux would be “no victory at all, in the eyes of the Indians, unless we destroy more of them than they do of us...Savages must be crushed before they can be completely conquered.”¹⁶⁹ With orders of annihilation, Harney rode from Fort Laramie to two small villages situated on Blue Water Creek, declaring as he left the fort, “By God, I'm for battle – no peace.”¹⁷⁰

The massacre at Blue Water Creek (also known as the Battle of Ash Hollow) was interpreted from the start as both a retribution for past wrongs and a show of force. It was the largest assembly of troops gathered together against Native Americans to that time in the west. On the morning of the massacre, Harney gazed across the river at the Indian camp and told his troops that, “There are those damned red sons of bitches, who massacred the soldiers near Laramie last year, in time of peace. They killed your own kindred, your own flesh and blood. Now, by God, men, there we have them and if you don't give it to them, you deserve to be -----, Don't spare one of those damned red sons of bitches.”¹⁷¹ With this command his troops rushed the camp, but found the Indians had already begun to strike their lodges and retreat away from the troops. Little Thunder rode to the general under an umbrella of truce and Harney told Little Thunder to “give up the warriors who had caused the trouble, otherwise 'the day of retribution had come,' and if he [Little Thunder] did not want to get hurt he had better get out of the way.”¹⁷² This

169 Ibid., pg. 47

170 Utley, pg. 115

171 Paul, pg. 90. The exact expletive used in the second to last sentence has been lost to history. Due to the propriety of the times, they were blanked out at the time of original publication.

172 Utley, pg. 116

sham of a parley had given the army time to get in position and with the “need for pretense over, Harney told Little Thunder that the Sioux must fight and that he wanted them to fight.”¹⁷³ Little Thunder returned to his tribe and the soldiers began the assault, first with long-range artillery, then a cavalry charge.

The “battle” was a victory for the army and caused a rout of the Sioux. Though many were able to escape it was tabulated that out of “a total of some three to four hundred Indians, eighty-six were killed, five wounded and about seventy women and children were captured. Soldier casualties were reported as being four killed, seven wounded and one missing.”¹⁷⁴ One eye witness, an Indian woman named Cokawin, said that, “As I looked around, I could see the soldiers galloping after groups of old men, women, and children who were running for their lives. Some were running across the valley, only to be met by soldiers and shot down.”¹⁷⁵ The soldiers also destroyed the supplies that the Indians had left behind as they fled. Their winter supply of food and hides were burned.¹⁷⁶ Harney had followed Scott's instructions to the letter and had achieved a total victory. Of the “battle” he wrote, “the battle was fought and the result was what I anticipated and hoped for.” His second in command, Lt. Dudley, wrote that. “[the Indians] deserved the punishment they received.”¹⁷⁷

The long term result of Blue Water Creek was an increase in Indian distrust of the army and the new army tactic of attacking villages, instead of warriors out in the plains.

173 Beck, pg. 99

174 Paul, pg. 105

175 Paul, pg. 101

176 Beck, pg. 110

177 Beck, pg. 109

This tactic would be used to great effectiveness at Washita, Wounded Knee, and Sand Creek.

III. Sand Creek

The Sand Creek Massacre is included in this examination of Manifest Destiny and its impact on Native Americans not only because of the viciousness of the attack or the peaceful intentions of the Indians, but because in the person of Colonel/Reverend John M. Chivington Manifest Destiny is personified. Growing up in the Ohio Valley, he gave his life to God at the age of 22 at a Methodist Revival and two years later was ordained.¹⁷⁸

Chivington would attend political banquets in hopes of bolstering his career and at one of these, prior to the massacre, he told those in attendance that “The Cheyennes will have to be soundly whipped – or completely wiped out – before they will be quiet. I say that if any of them are caught in your vicinity, the only thing to do is kill them. That is the only way.”¹⁷⁹ The month before the massacre he was speaking at a gathering of deacons of the Methodist-Episcopal church, in which he was a pastor and elder, and he told his fellow congregates that, “It simply is not possible for Indians to obey or even understand any treaty. I am fully satisfied, gentlemen, that to kill them is the only way we will ever have peace and quiet in Colorado.”¹⁸⁰ Clearly he was prejudiced against the Indians and the way they interfered with the settlement of the territory, but what is most

178 Craig, Reginald S. *The Fighting Parson; the Biography of Colonel John M. Chivington*. Los Angeles: Westernlore, 1959. Print. , pg. 27

179 Scott, pg. 131

180 Ibid.

perplexing about Chivington, and America in general, was the discrepancy between his thoughts on the Cheyenne and other Indians and on slavery.

Prior to coming to Colorado, Chivington was a missionary to the Wyandot Indians in Kansas.¹⁸¹ He set up a church and the first Masonic lodge in Kansas in what is now Kansas City. Through an interpreter, he preached to the Indians and supposedly brought a good many to Christianity.¹⁸² He was a staunch abolitionist who preached the evils of slavery from the pulpit, saloons and anywhere anyone would listen to him. His polarizing sermons on slavery were what caused the Methodist Board to transfer him to the west in the first place, as he was making trouble within the congregations and his life was in danger.¹⁸³

These aspects of Chivington's life seem irreconcilable with his actions at Sand Creek and yet there is a common thread throughout. The difference between the Wyandots and the Cheyenne was that the Wyandots were, for all intensive purposes, already defeated. Having lost their lands in the east and forced across the Mississippi, they were prepared to accept whatever the Americans would provide for them. In the eyes of Chivington and the missionaries, the Wyandots were already broken. It is the story of the United States: once an adversary has been subdued, help is offered, as long as that help is done with the aims of making the adversary more like the Americans who conquered them. The Cheyenne were not a defeated tribe, but one that had no need for

181 The Wyandots were originally from upstate New York and moved to the Ohio Valley in order to avoid conflicts with settlers. These were the same Indians who had fought the settlers encroaching on their lands during the Revolutionary War and whose actions resulted in the Gnadenhutten Massacre. They were eventually moved to Kansas where they accepted Christianity.

182 Craig, pg. 34

183 Ibid., pg. 41

Christianity and they stood in the way of progress. Therefore they had to be destroyed in order for the institutions of America to expand and thrive. Chivington was not prejudiced against all Indians, just those that offered resistance to the wheels of Manifest Destiny or those who would not turn to Christianity.

Colorado in 1864 was no longer a wayside stop on the journey to California or Oregon. The Platte Valley “began to fill with settlers staking out ranches and land claims on territory assigned by the Laramie treaty to Southern Cheyenne and Arapahoes.”¹⁸⁴ Things were initially peaceful between the settlers and Indians, but the sheer number of settlers began to strain the relationship and the Indian's way of life. William Bent, who was a Cheyenne and Arapaho agent and whose trading post was famous across the west, wrote of the situation in 1859 that:

The concourse of whites is therefore constantly swelling, and incapable of control or restraint by the government...These numerous and warlike Indians, pressed upon all around by the Texans, by the settlers of the gold region, by the advancing people of Kansas, and from the Platte, are already compressed into a small circle of territory, destitute of food, and itself bisected athwart by a constantly marching line of emigrants. A desperate war of starvation and extinction is therefore imminent and inevitable, unless prompt measures shall prevent it.¹⁸⁵

The government's answer to the violence was to draft a new treaty with the Cheyenne and Arapahos. By establishing a region specifically for Indians that was south

¹⁸⁴ Brown, pg. 68 This was the same Laramie Treaty of 1851 that the Sioux who were attacked at Blue Water Creek had signed.

¹⁸⁵ Hoig, pg. 7-8

of the trail routes, the government hoped to ease the tensions that were mounting. They selected a site in south-eastern Colorado that was roughly a thirteenth of the size allotted to the Indians in the Laramie treaty a decade prior. To offset this loss of land, the government promised annual annuities which included cash for buying supplies and housing, farmers to show them how to work the land.¹⁸⁶ In short the treaty was an attempt at giving the Indians the opportunity for “promoting settled habits of industry and enterprise among themselves.”¹⁸⁷ Six tribal Chiefs signed the treaty, among them were Black Kettle and White Antelope.¹⁸⁸ Their tribal members moved themselves to the reservation and were at peace with the settlers until a severe drought and the government not providing their annuities, caused them to wander the plains in search of food. Some Indians attacked supply trains headed to Denver from Kansas City to offset this loss of food, though it is impossible to determine which tribes or members of tribes were the culprits. Regardless, the Cheyennes and Arapahos, like the Sioux at Blue Water Creek, and the Navjos, did not believe that their chief signing a treaty held them bound to it as well.

The volatile situation reached a new high in 1861 with the outbreak of the Civil War. Many troops that had been stationed in the west were called back east, and with this lack of troops the “warring tribal factions seemed to grow increasingly daring and brazen in their battles with white settlers.”¹⁸⁹ Sioux warriors were driven from the north due to

186 Ibid., pg. 14

187 Fort Wise Treaty, Article One found within, "INDIAN AFFAIRS: LAWS AND TREATIES. Vol. 2, Treaties." *INDIAN AFFAIRS: LAWS AND TREATIES. Vol. 2, Treaties*. Ed. Charles J. Kappler. Oklahoma State University Library, n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2014.

188 Hoig, pg. 15

189 Scott, Robert. *Blood at Sand Creek: The Massacre Revisited*. Caldwell, ID. Caxton Printers, 1994.

punitive expeditions in the Dakotas and raided wagon trains, stagecoach stations and settlers along the Platte. “For these actions the Southern Cheyenne and Arapahos received much of the blame and most of the attention of the [remaining] Colorado soldiers.”¹⁹⁰ Those that remained were volunteer units that had been raised initially to combat Confederate forces moving through the west. When the Confederate threat was diminished, the volunteers returned north to the plains in 1863 to combat the tribes raiding supply trains who had been taking advantage of the lack of soldiers.

The tensions between the Cheyenne, Arapahos and whites might have still been reconciled had the entire plains region not suffered a severe drought.¹⁹¹ The drought caused the buffalo herd, which the Cheyenne and Arapaho relied on for most their needs, to migrate north to the Dakota area. Along with the lack of buffalo, the food and supplies that were suppose to be sent to the Indians had not arrived, nor had their reservation been settled due to bureaucratic red-tape.¹⁹² The situation was quickly spinning out of control, but there was still an instance where peace could have happened.

On August 10, 1864, Governor Evans issued a proclamation which stated that all peaceful Indians to come to specific forts in order to show their good faith in wanting peace. In the same proclamation he also authorized “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...also to kill and destroy, as enemies of the country, wherever they may be

Print., pg. 43

190 Brown, pg. 74

191 Ibid., pg. 44

192 Hoig, pg. 21

found, all such hostile Indians.”¹⁹³ He went on further to say that the settlers could keep any property they took from the Indians as compensation. The Indians then had two choices: surrender themselves to a fort or be hunted down for being seen as hostile. Black Kettle and his band decided on the former.

Black Kettle arrived in Denver to meet with Governor Evans, Colonel Chivington, and other army officers after seeing Evans' proclamation. He wanted peace for his people, saying, “All we ask is that we may have peace with the whites...These braves that are with me are all willing to do what I say. We want to take good tidings home to our people, that they may sleep in peace.”¹⁹⁴ The meeting appeared to go well and Black Kettle went with Major Wynkoop, along with the rest of his tribe, to Fort Lyon, on their reservation land, whose location had finally been settled. They shared this land with the Arapaho and with the fort being under the command of Major Wynkoop, the Indians were treated fairly and given their rations. It seems that the state military felt that Wynkoop had treated the Indians too well and he was relieved of his command¹⁹⁵ and replaced by Major Anthony, who was not as sympathetic to the Indians as Wynkoop, but was not as anti-Indian as many others.¹⁹⁶ Even after the change of command, the Cheyenne and Arapahos remained near Fort Lyon at Sand Creek.

A force of troops lead by Colonel Chivington were on their way to Fort Lyon. When he arrived and met with Major Anthony they discussed what to do about the

193 Ibid., pg. 69

194 Ibid., pg. 114

195 Brown, pg. 83

196 Hoig, pg. 126

Indians near the fort. It appears that Anthony had changed his mind about the Indians and “felt that they should be punished.”¹⁹⁷ Chivington agreed, though not all the officers felt it was right to attack the tribe. Major Wynkoop and Captain. Silas Soule, among others, tried to talk Chivington out of the assault. They argued that the Indians had surrendered and that it would be a crime to attack the village. Chivington would hear none of it and replied, “Damn any man who is in sympathy with an Indian.”¹⁹⁸ The troops left the fort at eight in the evening in order to get to the village at dawn for a surprise attack.

When they reached the village most of the warriors were gone due to Major Anthony giving them permission to leave and hunt buffalo,¹⁹⁹ so the village was mostly women, children, elderly and some warriors who had stayed behind. Later affidavits claim that the soldiers had been drinking, supposedly to stay warm against the chill of the night, and many were drunk when they arrived at the village.²⁰⁰ As the sun rose on that chilled morning, the soldiers rode into the camp.

Black Kettle had raised an American flag and a white flag of surrender, but if the soldier saw them they didn't take notice of the friendly intentions.²⁰¹ Women and children gathered around the flag in hopes of mercy, but it never came. The soldiers had separated the village from their horses, so no mounted counter attack could be pursued by the small

197 Ibid., pg. 140

198 Ibid., pg. 143

199 Brown, pg. 86

200 Scott, pg. 141

201 Brown, pg. 86

band of warriors who were in the village.²⁰² As they surrounded the camp, Chivington was heard yelling, “remember the murdered women and children of the Platte!”²⁰³ No mercy was given to the peaceful members of the camp, though the information given though the eye-witness testimony varies greatly concerning the depredations inflicted by the troops and the number of Indians killed. Some report that they saw no mutilation or killing of women and children while others claimed to see babies being cut out of their mother's wombs, women being raped and the mutilations of the bodies of the slain.²⁰⁴ After hours of fighting it has been estimated that between 100 and 500 Indians were killed²⁰⁵, while the army sustained casualties of 9 killed, 38 wounded.²⁰⁶

The initial news of the massacre was that it was a great battle. The *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver wrote that, “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.”²⁰⁷ The whites were overjoyed at the news of the battle, but within 72 hours of the soldiers returning to Denver there were some who spoke of the battle being anything but honorable. Captain Soule, and others, wrote letters to officers in Washington and spoke to the local press about what really happened at Sand

202 Hoig, pg. 146

203 Ibid., pg. 147 Chivington was apparently referencing settlers that had been killed in the years prior to the massacre.

204 Ibid., pg. 177-193 Testimonies are part of the government investigation into the massacre which took place following reports of atrocities. 38th Congress, 2nd Session, January 10th, 1865

205 The discrepancy of the number of Indians killed is because the eye witnesses at the time did not agree. The official government tally put the number around one hundred while those who were there but sympathetic to the Indians, such as the Bent's placed the number around 500. We will probably never know the exact number.

206 Brown, pg. 89

207 *Rocky Mountain News*, December 17, 1864

Creek. Chivington, in his report of the battle, accused Soule and others of cowardice, writing, “that he [Soule] thanked God he had killed no Indians, and like expressions, proving him more in sympathy with those Indians than with whites.”²⁰⁸ Soule and other officers were arrested, but were released pending a federal investigation into the battle. Perhaps most telling is the fact that Soule was murdered in a back alley in Denver, by a member of the volunteers after giving testimony against Chivington.²⁰⁹ Chivington resigned his commission before any actions could be taken against him and so no one in the military was ever punished for the deeds done at Sand Creek. Perhaps General Nelson Miles, one of the most famous Indian fighters in the US military, condensed the massacre and its prolonged effects best when he wrote that:

The Sand Creek massacre is perhaps the foulest and most unjustifiable crime in the annals of America. It was planned by and executed under the personal direction of J. M. Chivington . . . But for that horrible butchery it is a fair presumption that all the subsequent wars with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and their kindred tribes might possibly have been averted.²¹⁰

208 Hoig, pg. 161

209 Ibid., pg. 172

210 Miles, Nelson. *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles, Embracing a Brief View of the Civil War* .. Chicago, NY: Werner, 1896. Print., pg. 139

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the role that certain Christian ideals, beginning with the Calvinist Puritans, played in the treatment of Native Americans during these events and more importantly how those ideals justified those actions for the perpetrators. This righteousness and belief in American exceptionalism can be traced back to the colonists and their Puritan roots. The Protestant belief that it is right in the eyes of God lends itself to take uncompromising positions, and not only on issues regarding salvation. Their view of history, and its promised end, create an ideology which cannot appraise other ideas without seeing immediate fault in them. The circular reasoning inherent in Fundamentalist Christianity is both self-propelling and self-fulfilling. It runs on its own interior logic in which everything can be interpreted as having meaning and a reason; either as God's will, God's Judgment, or God's mercy. This manifests itself in Indian relations when it was God's will that he gave the Puritans a land of plenty and God's Judgment against the Indians when they were destroyed by epidemics. Later Americans took this idea of a blessed nation and ran with it. The United States was doubly blessed; by God and by its devotion to humanity's natural right to liberty. Civic religion and Christianity had the same understanding of the United States and its purpose. That purpose was the spreading of democracy and Protestant Christianity over the continent and nothing could stand in the way of that end. Neither

Mexicans or Indians, nor other countries were able to stop American expansion and the ease by which they moved west re-enforced their belief in Providence guiding the way.

The role Protestant Christianity played in the expansion of the United States and its effects on Native Americans has been acknowledged, but has existed along the margins while American growth has been attributed primarily to greed, population increases, and the opportunities the frontier offered, among others. Rarely is Christianity mentioned as a major driving force and justification for the taking of Indian lands and their treatment. The citizens of the United States were inspired to push westward by a myriad of reasons and one of these that has been downplayed was their assurance of God's blessing of the United States and of their endeavors.

A final quote from Senator Benjamin Leigh of Virginia summarizes the position that Protestant Christianity took regarding the Indians from the landing of immigrants in the seventeenth century up to his own time. He said these words at the height of Jacksonian America in the 1830s, at a congressional meeting discussing the Cherokee removal.

It is peculiar to the character of this Anglo-Saxon race of men to which we belong, that it has never been contented to live in the same country with any other distinct race, upon terms of equality; it has, invariably, when placed in that situation, proceeded to exterminate or enslave the other race in some form or other, or, failing that, to abandon the country.²¹¹

While there were exceptions to those Leigh described in his quote, Roger Williams, Captain Silas Soule and various Quaker sects that were sympathetic to the

²¹¹ Stephanson, pg. 27

Indians come to mind, the vast majority of Americans during this period of Western expansion fully believed in the United State's special relationship with God. This belief in the blessedness of the country led directly to expansion and the treatment of those who were in the way of this “progress.” Conquest can take many forms, but the manner in which it played out in the United States would not have been possible without Protestant Christian ideals concerning Providence guiding the nation westward.

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