



City of Chicago



R2014-919

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 12/10/2014

Sponsor(s): Burke (14)

Type: Resolution

Title: Commemoration of 150th anniversary of Sand Creek,
Colorado massacre and sympathies extended to
descendants of slain victims

Committee(s) Assignment:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Saturday, November, 29 2014, officially marked the 150th Anniversary of one of the most tragic and sad events in the American experience namely, the wanton and wholesale massacre of a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes wintering at Sand Creek, Colorado Territory; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of this milestone by Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

WHEREAS, This atrocity was carried out against an estimated 150-200 peaceable Native Americans, of whom at least two-thirds were women and children, by volunteer cavalrymen from the Third Colorado Cavalry Regiment under the command of Colonel John Chivington; and

WHEREAS, The Native encampment had placed themselves under the protection of the military garrison at Fort Lyon on the Arkansas River and had previously agreed to do so under the direction and authority of Territorial Governor John Evans; and

WHEREAS, Upon reaching Fort Lyon, Colonel Chivington was informed that the Sand Creek inhabitants were protected by the garrison and posed no threat to the safety and well-being of the Territory or its settlers, but nevertheless chose to embark upon this genocidal mission; and

WHEREAS, With his ranks bolstered to 700 troopers with the addition of First Regiment Cavalry was unaware of the details of the mission, Colonel Chivington disregarded protests, and set out for the encampment; and

WHEREAS, The resulting slaughter and attending depravities stirred national outrage that prompted the Chicago Tribune to describe it as “an act of hideous cruelty garnished with all the accessories of fraud, treachery and bestiality;” and

WHEREAS, The question of culpability arose during the official inquiry and Governor Evans, a philanthropist and founder of Northwestern University in the Chicago suburb of Evanston that bears his name, and the University of Denver, disavowed personal responsibility as he was in Washington D.C. on official business at the time of the massacre; and

WHEREAS, Upon the 150th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre, Northwestern University and the University of Denver have conducted separate, but exhaustive historical analyses through the examination of public and private documents, memoirs, reports, letters and other records; and

WHEREAS, The Northwestern study concluded that Evans deserves institutional recognition for founding the University, but should be condemned for his indifference to the human suffering and the plight of the families through callous public statements he had made during the official inquiry; and

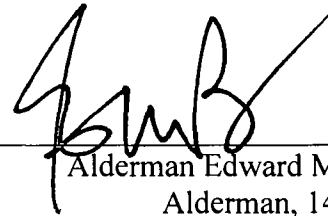


WHEREAS, The wounds of the past are slow to heal and the events at Sand Creek on November 29, 1864, underscore the deeper failures of national policy toward the Native Americans during the era of westward expansion; and

WHEREAS, It is our heartfelt wish that in this period of reconciliation and public discourse the important lessons from the past will never be forgotten by current and future generations; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council assembled this tenth day of December, 2014, do hereby reflect upon that day of sorrow and extend our deepest regrets and sympathies to the descendants of the men, women and children slain at Sand Creek; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the Colorado Sand Creek Massacre Commemoration Commission, the Board of Trustees of the University of Denver and the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. M. Burke', is written over a horizontal line.

Alderman Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward

