

## **The Sand Creek Massacre**

**<http://civilwar150.longwood.edu>**

The week of November 23<sup>rd</sup> through 29<sup>th</sup> brought several important events in different theaters of the war. In the Eastern Theater, there was a Confederate attempt to burn New York City on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Organizing themselves in Canada, confederate agents set fire to twelve hotels and Barnum's Museum; only the museum was seriously ablaze, and it caused more of a sensation than any real concern for the rest of the city. In the Southern Theater, Sherman, in Georgia, continued on his march to the Sea. He did not have contact with his Union Base and, at this point, no one was sure of his location.

In the Western Theater, two important events occurred, both on November 29<sup>th</sup>. The first was the affair at Spring Hill, in Tennessee. Hood's Confederate Army of Tennessee had moved earlier in the week to take position just south of the Duck River. Schofield's Federals had entrenched themselves both north and south of the Duck River. On the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Hood moved across the river in hopes of flanking Schofield and cutting him off from the route to Franklin and Nashville. Instead, because the Confederates were confused by darkness and a few Union soldiers, the Union Army was able to retreat past Hood to Franklin. There was no fighting and the "Spring Hill Affair" is one of the most controversial non-fighting events of the Civil War, because no one could quite understand how Schofield was able to pass directly next to Hood on his way to Franklin without being detected.

The second important, but unfortunate, event that took place in the Western Theater this week was the Sand Creek Massacre. In Denver, Colorado, some of the

citizens felt that the local Indians were taking advantage of the fact that there was a lack of Union military presence. Bands of Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians lived near Sand Creek. A volunteer army commanded by Colonel J. M. Chivington went to meet them there, and though the Indians insisted they were peaceful, Chivington and his troops slaughtered the entire village, including women and children. Chivington bragged he killed between five and six hundred Indians, though no one is sure of how accurate the estimate is. Chivington reported, "It may perhaps be unnecessary for me to state that I captured no prisoners." Among the dead was Black Kettle, a major chief. Some westerners approved, but easterners as a whole were aghast. Eventually the government condemned the massacre and paid indemnity to the survivors.

Sherman's men continued what was becoming their destructive romp through Georgia with a skirmish near Louisville. There was also fighting near Boyd's Landing, South Carolina; Charles Town, West Virginia; and Doyal's Plantation, Louisiana. Confederate guerrillas attacked the steamer *Alamo* on the Arkansas River, near Dardanelle, Arkansas.