

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## Primary Source Document Collection

### MISSION 3: "A Cheyenne Odyssey"

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#### Sentiments and Views of the Western Pioneers

*These two letters from whites living in the West were published in the summer of 1867 during the so-called "Red Cloud's War" between Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes and the United States. The first letter advocates a militant Indian policy aimed at wiping out Plains Indians. The second letter calls for a combined strategy of war and forced removal onto reservations where Indians could be assimilated.*

St. Nicholas Hotel, New-York,  
Tuesday, July 2, 1867

*To the Editor of the New York Times:*

I wish you would be kind enough to allow me a few words on the Indian war of the Plains....I...am sorry to note that Eastern sentiment generally sides with the Indian against the white. In your issue of Monday there is an article devoted to the "Chivington massacre" of the Cheyennes in 1864. Admitting for a moment that the article is true—that it correctly represents the origin of the Indian war, is the Government to stand idly by and see the wild savages of the buffalo plains drive out the settlers of the West—the men who, through every conceivable hardship and privation, are extending our empire in the wilderness? Suppose Chivington killed 125 or 150 Indians at Sand Creek, is that good reason why innocent women and children crossing the Plains three years afterward should be tomahawked and scalped? Did not the first settlers here, on the Connecticut, Delaware, and Susquehanna, have the same trial to go through? When and where did water and oil, or white and Indian ever mix?...

The Indian war on the Plains has been just as inevitable from the year 1492 as any other Indian war....The fact remains that whites and Indians cannot live together....It is war, and only war until the Plains Indians are wiped out. They are thoroughly aroused, like a nest of hornets invaded, and have to have some evidence of their Great Father before they will be quiet. I want you and the Eastern people to exculpate the Western pioneers from blame in this matter. They are only fulfilling their destiny, superseding an inferior race the same as you did.

O.J. Hollister

Jefferson Barrache, MO,  
June 10, 1867

*Hon. Jno. B. Henderson, Chairman Committee on Indian Affairs United States Senate:*

....whenever the thriftless savage stands in the way of advancement and civilization, killing all who come in his way, justice requires his removal, forcibly if necessary. If left at large he fights

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and kills as many as he can of his disturbers. We are told that the Indian is cheated by the agents sent out to look after his interests; and the white men generally, by duplicity and unfairness, drive him to all the crime he commits against us. This may be all true, and if so we must accept the fact, and deal with it in making a new Indian policy....

The plan I desire to recommend is as follows: Place the Indians in the hands of that branch of Government that shall give the greatest guarantee for trusty and honest administration. I would recommend the Freedmen's Bureau....I would assign to each family of tribes a reservation of proper dimensions, and require the Indians to live upon them, and prohibit white people going there unauthorized. This should be commanded in a proclamation by the President, and vigorous war made upon such tribes as refused to obey...I would provide for them such religious and other instruction, such implements for agriculture, such domestic animals, and rations, and clothing as might be found necessary. The regular annuities due them would go far to provide all these.

An Indian war would then have a fixed and definite purpose (which is the first requisite in all successful war), understood by the Indian, and its justice acknowledged by our friends in the East.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
W.B. Hazen  
Colonel Thirty-eighth Infantry, Bvt. Major-General

Source: "Western Indians—Sentiments and Views of the Western Pioneers," *New York Times*, July 5, 1867.

