

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

by
Bud Morris
www.BudMorris.net

"Halt! Who goes there?"

The guard squinted into the driving snow, jerking his rifle to readiness for an instant hip shot as he barked out the order. A late winter blizzard limited his vision to twenty feet or less.

"Just a traveler in need of shelter," a muffled voice answered through the howling wind. A moment later the indistinct shadow in the blinding white-out materialized into a man leading a horse.

"Enter under guard," the soldier ordered, keeping the rifle in readiness as the gate to the stockade of Camp Weld swung open wide enough to admit the man and his beast.

"Name?" The soldier continued.

"Brock Phillips."

"Rank?"

"Civilian."

"Business?"

"Dodgin' Indians at the moment. They were hot on my trail when this blessed blizzard sprang up, so I was able to give 'em the slip."

"Put your horse in the stables and report to Major Wynkoop in the blockhouse," the soldier ordered in a more friendly voice. "The Major'll want ta know 'bout the Injuns right away."

Cold as he was, Brock took the time to brush the snow from his horse's coat and feed him a bait of grain. When the horse was cared for, he threw his heavy saddlebags over his shoulder and crossed the stockade to the blockhouse. He barely had time to get his slicker and coat off when he was escorted into an office to be interviewed by Major Wynkoop.

"Good afternoon," the Major welcomed Brock as the soldier that escorted him withdrew from the room. "I'm Ed Wynkoop, in command of Camp Weld. I understand you had a brush with some hostile Indians out there."

“Yes Sir,” Brock replied. “I was on the way up from Texas to deliver an urgent business dispatch in Denver City. About an hour after I broke camp down in the valley this morning I detected a scouting party on my back trail. Looked like Arapahos. They must have happened on my campsite and started following me along the trail. I led them on a merry chase for Camp Weld, but I couldn’t shake them until this blizzard finally broke off the chase. I’m rather partial to my scalp, so I didn’t stop until I got here.”

“Wise decision,” agreed the Major. “What makes you think they were Arapahos?”

“Might be wishful thinking,” Scot replied. “I’m quite familiar with the Cheyenne, and somehow these guys just didn’t seem to have quite the same habits as the Cheyennes.”

“How are you so familiar with the Cheyenne?” the Major asked.

“I was fourteen years old when my family came out west,” Brock replied. “I was running a buffalo to get some meat for our wagon train when my horse stepped in a prairie dog hole and went down with a broken leg. I lost my rifle in the fall, and that ole bull swung around and attacked me before I could regain my feet. He was grinding me into the ground with his head, and I could feel my ribs breaking when I managed to get my pistol out and shoot him in the eye. The next thing I knew, some Indians were pulling a dead buffalo off me. I could hardly breathe for the pain in my chest, and every breath was frothy with blood. They made a travois and took me to their village.”

“For a week or so I struggled for every breath I took,” Brock continued. They managed to spoon a little broth into me occasionally, and finally my breath started coming easier. Within a month I could get around a bit as long as I didn’t strain myself. Then I began to make friends with some of the Indians my own age.”

“The Indians told me they had tried to communicate with our wagon train, but could not get near it without getting shot at. The folks in the train sent out search parties to look for me for several days, never allowing the Indians to get close enough to communicate with them. When the trail boss finally found my dead horse, the wagon train moved on without me. My parents probably assumed that I’d been killed by the Indians that they thought were trying to attack the train.”

“I lived with those Cheyennes until I was well enough to ride. They gave me a pony and I started west on the trail in search of my folks. I found their well-marked graves on the banks of the Platte, where they had died in a cholera outbreak.

“I returned to the Indian village, and lived with them for about two years. They accepted me as one of their own, and taught me the Indian skills of the woods and plains. I was satisfied enough, but when they started attacking wagon trains I knew it was time for me to leave. I am still on pretty good terms with most of the southern division Cheyennes. They call me ‘Red Breath’”

“Could you take me to that campsite where the Indians found you?” asked the Major.

“I could,” Brock replied, “But I need to get that dispatch to Denver City first. Those Indians will either be long gone from there or you’ll find them right on the trail if they’re still looking for me. You won’t be needin’ my help either way.”

“Unofficially, what’s the hurry to get to Denver,” the Major asked curiously.

“Can anyone hear us in here?” Brock asked softly.

“No!” the Major answered assuredly. You can tell me anything you want to in confidence and safety.

“Sir,” Brock replied in a confidential voice. “There’s ten thousand dollars in these saddlebags. If it doesn’t reach the Kountze Brothers Bank this week, an honest man in Texas is going to lose his ranch. His money from last year’s cattle drive was stolen, and he just recovered it in time to save his ranch.”

“Say,” Major Wynkoop mused, “Our paymaster has to pick up the payroll funds at Kounce Brothers this week-end,” He’ll have an armed Calvary escort, so you might want to go with him.”

“Thanks,” Brock replied, “But I need to get this duty done and over with before Friday. I prefer to travel unsuspected and unhampered anyway. I’m planning to leave first thing in the morning if the blizzard is abated.”

“Understandable,” Major Wynkoop mused. “Would you like to store your saddlebags in the safe and eat with me in the officer’s mess?”

“Sure,” Brock agreed.

Receiving a receipt for the locked saddlebags from Major Wynkoop, Brock accompanied him towards the officers’ mess. The Major introduced him to Joseph Whitefeather, a Cheyenne scout for the Army, on the way to dinner. “I’m Red Breath,” Brock volunteered in the Cheyenne language.

“I’ve heard of you,” the scout responded enthusiastically in his own language. “You speak our language very well.”

“Yes” Brock replied. “I owe my life to the Cheyenne people. Bull Bear’s village nursed me through a severe injury from a disagreement with a buffalo when I was a youth. I used to visit him occasionally, but that’s a bit difficult now that his people have joined the Dog Soldiers.

"I understand," Whitefeather agreed. "He hasn't got much use for me since I became a U.S. citizen and took a job with the army. Most of my people don't understand that their way of life is outmoded, and they are going to have to abandon it eventually."

"I'm sure it's a very difficult concept for most of them grasp," Brock replied. "Maybe you can help them."

"Not at the moment," Whitefeather answered sadly. "They consider me a traitor."

"I'll pray for you," Brock assured him as he moved on with the Major.

"You really do speak their language well, Brock," the Major commented as they moved on to the mess hall. The Major introduced Brock to the three other officers at the table; General Chivington, his superior officer--visiting from the 3rd Colorado Calvary, Captain Silas Soule, and the camp's paymaster. Captain Soule and the paymaster shook Brock's hand heartily, but the general acknowledged the introduction with a lukewarm handshake, at best. He sat across the table from the others, and seemed lost in his own superior thoughts.

During dinner Major Wynkoop began questioning Brock about his understanding of the causes for the Cheyenne raids on the homesteaders and wagon trains.

"The way the Cheyenne see it, Major," Brock explained, "Is that the Government keeps making treaties with the Indians, and then allowing its citizens to breach the terms for trapping, prospecting, ranching, or whatever else. When the Indians finally rise up in retaliation, the Government takes the attitude that the treaty is null and void because the Indians broke it. Actually, it's the US citizens that break it on a regular basis, and the Indians finally strike out in defense of their lands."

"Whose side are you on, Mister?" General Chivington interrupted threateningly from across the table.

"I don't exactly condone the Indians' atrocities, General," Brock replied evenly; "But I can't help but interpret their behavior as extremely frustrated acts of self-defense."

"The law of this land long before the white man came was that whoever was strong enough to take it and hold it owns it," the General growled. "That was just fine with the savages for centuries, until the white men came along and were strong enough to take it from the Indians and hold it. Now, all of a sudden, they want to cry, 'Foul.'"

"I concede your point, General," Brock answered; "But I hate to think of my country as a federation of unprincipled bullies who refuse to abide by treaties they supposedly make in good faith with the opposition."

"It's military power that counts in the end," General Chivington thundered as he rose from the table and stalked out of the room.

"Wow, that was a rather strong mouthful for a man of the cloth, and a Methodist minister, at that," the paymaster mused after the general left.

"He'd just as soon that the Indians just be exterminated," Captain Soule added ruefully.

* * *

Brock was let out of the fortress at sun-up the next morning. The sky was a glorious pink to the east, and the snow-capped mountains of the Front Range punctuated it majestically to the west. The trail was a mixture of waist-deep drifts and windswept voids that promised a challenging trip into Denver. Nevertheless, Brock was hitching his mount to the rail in front of the Kounce Brothers Bank by two o'clock that afternoon.

Taking his saddlebags in his left hand and his pistol in his right, Brock proceeded confidently into the bank and asked to see the manager. After the money had been counted and the payment certified, he strolled out of the bank and posted the receipt to Texas. He stabled his horse at the livery and rubbed it down before taking a room at the Buffalo Inn. By the time he had gotten a hot bath, a shave and a haircut, it was dinner time.

The traveler rested up from his strenuous days on the trail for the next couple of days. He had no interest in the casinos and the bars, but ate his meals in the saloons, where he kept his ears opened for chances of employment. If he did not find an opportunity for a job, he could always live off the land while he panned for gold in the mountains during the summer, and the Cheyenne would always let him trap in their lands for the winter.

The young outdoorsman enjoyed a rare opportunity to attend church on Sunday, hearing an enthusiastic sermon that bolstered his appreciation of what Christ accomplished for us by taking our sins as His own on the cross. His faith was encouraged and strengthened. "Thank You, Lord," he breathed as he rose to leave.

Sleeping was a problem for Brock in Denver. The sounds and songs of debauchery were more discordant to him than the howl of the wolves or the chorus of the coyotes on the trail. On Sunday night an interminable conversation in the next room kept him awake as it drifted through the thin inner walls of the hotel. Just as he was finally drifting off to sleep there was a knock at the door, and a louder excited voice joined the conversation. Brock groaned inwardly as he wrapped his pillow around his head to deaden the sound,

but he couldn't drown it out. Finally the word, "Paymaster," registered on his frustrated brain, and suddenly he was all ears.

"Yah, Boss," the new voice insisted. The Paymaster from Camp Weld will be leaving Denver with twenty thousand dollars cash before noon tomorrow. He only has two soldiers with him, and they're so drunk that they'll be pretty hung-over. We can pick 'em off from the rocks at that hairpin curve beside Colters Creek and take the money."

"We'll do it!" The boss's voice replied. "You and Bob be there and get hidden before dawn. I'll watch the bank to be sure they get the money, and then I'll come on a bit ahead of 'em. When I get out of sight around that bend, I'll hustle up to where you guys will be, and we'll pick all three of 'em off at the same time. Don't tell anyone else, and we'll only have to split the money three ways."

Turning over what he'd heard in his mind, Brock decided to warn the Paymaster when he showed up at the bank to withdraw the funds in the morning. When he arrived at the Bank before opening time, there was a powerful horse tied in front of the saloon across the street. Brock entered the saloon and ordered breakfast from a seat by the front window. He used the time it took to eat his breakfast to study the well-dressed gunman that had to be the boss of the thieves.

When the bank opened, Brock rose from his seat and crossed the road to it. Once inside, he took a seat in the area where prospective borrowers waited for a conference with a loan officer. Within minutes, the paymaster entered the building, and Brock rose to greet him.

"Paymaster, we meet again," Brock exclaimed as he grasped the man's hand.

"Hello, Brock," the paymaster grinned as he shook his hand.

"There's a plot to waylay you, Sir," Brock murmured just under his breath.

"Come in to the manager's office, with us," the paymaster requested.

Once in the privacy of the office, Brock revealed the plot that he had overheard through the thin hotel wall.

"We wondered what the Prince was doing over there," the banker mused. "We've already alerted our staff to be prepared for a hold-up. Every one of us has a loaded pistol at his fingertips, and there are three deputies with rifles stationed behind those columns on the balcony."

"What do you think we should do?" asked the paymaster.

"You can't wait for them to open the game," Brock replied. "Cause they'll be shooting to kill."

"If we take an alternative route, we can't arrest them in the act," the paymaster mused.

"Why not step into the trees just as soon as the Prince disappears around that bend?" Brock asked. "They'll probably come down after you when you don't show up on the path as expected."

"Yah!" the soldiers agreed, "Then we'll have the drop on them, and if they don't surrender they'll die wishin' they had."

"I watered my horse and gave him a rest in the spot where they'll be when I came up the trail last week," Brock volunteered. "It's a forested area. If you can delay things here for about twenty minutes to give me a head start, I can be up in the rocks behind them when you get there. I'll drop a huge pine cone that I brought up from Texas on the side of the trail where you should step off on the left side. You do the talking, but I'll have an extra gun on them in case anything goes wrong."

"Thanks, Brock," the paymaster agreed. "We'd appreciate your back-up".

Brock took the trail at a trot until he was well out of sight of the Prince. Then he galloped to within a mile of Coulter creek, and tied his horse well off the trail in a rocky alcove in the forest. After exchanging his boots for moccasins, he slipped noiselessly to the location of the intended hold-up. He could smell the smoke of the outlaws' cigarettes and listen in on their conversation as he settled in behind them to wait the paymaster's arrival.

After about a half an hour Brock heard one of the outlaws call out to the other, "Douse your cigarette. Here comes the Prince, and the loot's only a quarter mile behind him. Shortly the Prince rounded the hairpin bend and Brock watched him scramble up to their vantage point above the trail.

"I'll get the first one," Brock heard the Prince instruct the others. "Tim, you take the middle one, and Bob, you get the last one. Hold yer fire until I give the order."

"Where are they at?" Bob queried after a five minute wait.

"I don't know," the Prince whispered. "They were right behind me."

"We ain't lettin' 'em git away, are we Boss?" Tim pleaded. "I had my heart set on that loot."

"You guys slip down there and take a look," the Prince ordered. "I'll keep yas covered."

The two outlaws slipped down to the trail and crept around the bend with drawn guns.

“Drop your weapons,” one of the soldiers ordered from behind the trees. “We’ve got ya covered.”

As the two outlaws were being handcuffed, the Prince slipped down to the trail with drawn guns to try to free them. Brock waited until the last minute, so the boss would be seen by the soldiers before ordering him to drop his gun too. When all three outlaws were hand cuffed, Scot gathered all the horses, and the cavalcade of soldiers and prisoners rode on to Camp Weld with Brock bringing up the rear as an extra guard.

At the Major’s insistence, Brock spent the rest of the day at Camp Weld. That evening he was invited to Major Wynkoop’s office “as a personal friend.”

“Brock,” the Major opened the conversation, “This week I’ve given a lot of thought to what you said about the Indians’ grievances. There’s a copy of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie in our files here, and I have to admit that the United States government has not kept its side of the bargain any more than the Indians have kept theirs. I am not prepared to assign the blame on either side, but I now understand, at least partially, why the Indians don’t trust the U.S. government. We have indeed allowed our citizens to invade and appropriate lands conceded to the Indians, and are now using our military to help them hold those lands. What do you think we, as Christians, should do?”

“Major,” Brock replied thoughtfully, “There’s very little that you and I can do to preserve the Indians’ rights. Unfortunately, what General Chivington said is true. ‘It’s military power that counts in the end.’ The Indians will either integrate themselves into what we call civilization, or unscrupulous power-hungry people like Chivington will literally exterminate them.

“If they could only be converted to Christ...” the Major started out wistfully.

“How can Christians who are appropriating the Indians’ lands convince the same savages to believe in a God of righteousness and justice, and especially love, Major?”

“There’s a fundamental contradiction there, isn’t there?” the Major agreed.

“Major,” Brock started to say.

“Just call me Ed,” Major Wynkoop interrupted.

“You’ll always be ‘Major’ to me,” Brock replied, “Although I’ll mouth it with affectionate familiarity.”

“Major,” he began again, “The place to start is to try and convince the Indians of the overwhelming odds against them, and the absolute need for them to make peace.”

“Brock, you’ve shown yourself to be a man of conscience, courage, and resource. Will you help me do that?” the major asked, his voice almost cracking.

“I will, Major. You can count me in to the best of my ability.”

“Thank’,” Major Wynkoop exclaimed enthusiastically as they shook hands warmly. “Can you hang around here a while so we can start developing a strategy?”

* * *

The following morning Major Wynkoop asked Brock to meet him in his office. Captain Soule was also there. “He’s very sympathetic to the Indian cause,” the Major assured Brock.

The three friends decided that Brock should set about renewing his friendship with the Cheyenne as soon as possible. He was to try to reason with the tribal leaders about the impossibility of resisting the white mans’ advance, and work towards an immediate cession of hostilities against the whites. Meantime, the Major and Captain Soule would try to drum up support for peace rather than extermination of the Indians in the political community of the Colorado Territory.

Brock immediately sought out Whitefeather, who listened quietly to his thoughts.

“You need to contact Black Kettle first,” The Indian advised him. He is already convinced that the whites are capable of annihilating the Indians. His dilemma is whether it would be better to fight to the death or give up the Indians’ claims to the land.”

“Where can I find him?” Brock asked.

“Promise me you will not betray him,” Whitefeather demanded.

“I assure you that I will not personally betray him, Whitefeather,” Brock answered. “But there are many that would kill him at the first chance they got. The only ones around here that I know you can trust are Major Wyncoop, Captain Soule, and myself.”

“Black Kettle has a village on the Big Sandy River about forty miles north of where it dumps into the Arkansas,” Whitefeather told Brock. I’ll get word to him that Red Breath can be trusted. He’ll be expecting you in the next week or so. The sooner the better, Red Breath. I fear for my people.”

“I fear for them too, Whitefeather. I’m going as soon as I possibly can.”

Brock Phillips entered the Cheyenne village on Sandy Creek in March of 1864. He found that Black Kettle, White Antelope, and several other Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs already favored reconciliation with the white men. Several of them had been to Washington D.C. on President Lincoln's invitation, and had personally observed the immensity of the U.S population as well as the vast superiority of the white mans' technology.

These chiefs had already met with Indian Agent Sam Colley at Fort Larned, in Kansas, to discuss peace. With this situation playing out satisfactorily, Brock turned his efforts to recruiting the Dog Soldiers to the cause of peace. His only significant success was that chief Bull Bear and a few of his friends were becoming more and more sympathetic with the "Peace chiefs."

These peace chiefs were trying to separate their people from the Cheyenne Dog Soldier coalition that was pressing for all-out war with the United States government. Mr. Colley and a trader named William Bent had already tried to arrange a meeting with Colorado Territory governor John Evans. Evans had refused to grant it because some of these chiefs had snubbed his efforts to get them to ratify a treaty stripping them of their 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty rights to the richer parts of Colorado the previous year. Brock could do little more than make sure that he did more than his share of the hunting, and encourage these peace chiefs in their determination to avoid war with the U.S. military.

Meanwhile, Major Wynkoop and Captain Soule met with one rebuff after another in their efforts to drum up support for a peace initiative. The increasingly savage raids of the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers and their Arapaho counterparts served only to muster support for the extermination of all Indians, and more and more people literally agreed that the only good Indians were the dead ones. The need for military readiness to defend the Western Territories from the Confederacy seemed to be the only hindrance to a military campaign of extermination advocated by many of the more vocal military leaders.

Come May, Major Wynkoop was handed command of Fort Lyons, entrusted with protecting traffic along the Santa Fe Trail. This moved him to within seventy-five miles of Black Kettle's village on the Big Sandy. He found the fort in terrible disrepair with severe troop morale problems, largely due to the arrogant attitude of Major Scott Anthony, its former commanding officer. Wynkoop immediately petitioned for Captain Soule to be assigned to him as second in command, and requisitioned more troops for the fort. When Wynkoop requested what his policy towards the various Indian tribes should be, General Chivington wrote, "The Cheyenne will have to be soundly whipped before they will be quiet. If any of them are caught in your vicinity, kill them, as that is the only way."

Although Wynkoop and Soule were stationed much closer to the area that he worked in, Brock only visited Fort Lyons one time. It was obvious to all three of these friends that the Indians were not likely to trust him if they felt that he might be divulging their

whereabouts as they moved from camp to camp to avoid detection by scouting sorties of the U.S. Cavalry. He saw that the efforts for peace by Sam Colley and William Bent were meeting with fair success, and he did his best to rally support for the peace they sought, although he felt that their motives might be more selfish than his own.

At the end of August, Black Kettle and seven other peace chiefs wrote a letter requesting a peace council to Major Wynkoop at Fort Lyons. Brock offered to deliver it because of the danger to any Indian caught in the vicinity of the fort, but chiefs felt that it was more likely to be taken seriously if it were delivered by some of their own number. The letter read:

Cheyenne Village, August 29, 1864.

We received a letter from Bent wishing us to make peace. We held a council in regard to it. All came to the conclusion to make peace with you, providing you make peace with the Kiowas, Comanches, Arapahos, Apaches and Sioux.

We are going to send a messenger to the Kiowas and to the other nations about our going to make peace with you. We heard that you (sic) some prisoners in Denver. We have seven prisoners of you which we are willing to give up providing you give up yours.

There are three war parties out yet and two of Arapahos. They have been out some time and expect now soon. When we held this council there were few Arapahos and Siouxs present; we want true news from you in return, that is a letter.

Black Kettle and other Chiefs.

The peace letter was delivered to the fort on September sixth by One Eye and his wife, accompanied by Eagle Head. One Eye explained that despite the danger of being killed when he approached the fort, he was willing to sacrifice his life to make peace for the Cheyenne and Arapaho. This impressed Major Wynkoop so favorably that he determined to see to it that these Indians' initiative for peace would not be in vain, even if it cost him his military career.

Major Wynkoop and Captain Soule felt that they did not have time to send for and await orders by horseback from General Curtis in Kansas or even General Chivington, who might not even be at Camp Weld at the time. One Eye warned them that the Indians had to move frequently to avoid capture, and they needed to rescue the prisoners, who were children, immediately. They collected 130 volunteers from the Fort and accompanied One Eye to Smokey Hill, where the peace chiefs had been hiding from the army with nearly 2000 Indian troops. Wynkoop's forces were well aware that they faced almost certain death if their trust in the peace chiefs was misplaced or betrayed

As One Eye preceded Wynkoop's troops into the Indian camp, hundreds of Black Kettle's braves drew into a defensive battle line, forcing Wynkoop's volunteers to assume an opposing defensive stance. A pow-wow was arranged for the following day, at which both sides aired their grievances. After some quarreling among themselves, the peace chiefs finally agreed to Wynkoop's offer to escort them to Denver to negotiate peace

with Governor Evans. They handed the four white children they actually had on hand over to the Major as a show of good faith.

Wynkoop reached Denver near the end of September. Governor Evans feared political backlash if he wavered on his extermination policy against the Indians, and initially refused to meet with the peace chiefs. It was only Wynkoop's personal determination and persuasive abilities that convinced him to meet with the chiefs.

Governor Evans and General Chivington reluctantly attended the meeting with the peace chiefs on September 29th. They were anything but hospitable, correctly denying that they had any authority to negotiate any peace with the Indians. The conclusion was that any Indians that desired peace were to surrender to Major Wynkoop at Fort Lyons, and the army would consider them prisoners of war. They were to live wherever Major Wynkoop assigned them, and fly a white flag under the United States flag in their villages. Any permanent treaty would have to be negotiated by General Curtis or General Buel.

Wynkoop and the peace chiefs arrived back at Fort Lyons on October 8th. The Major sent the chiefs back to their people with instructions to bring all who would submit to U.S. military authority back to the vicinity of Fort Lyons. At this time he sent a report of his peace initiative to General Curtis, requesting official approval of the Camp Weld conclusions. On October 18th chiefs Little Raven and Left Hand arrived at Fort Lyons with 650 submissive Arapahos, which Wynkoop instructed to camp about two miles from the fort

On November 5th Major Anthony arrived at Fort Lyons to relieve Major Wynkoop of his command. Wynkoop was ordered to report to General Curtis at Fort Riley to answer for his unauthorized activities, which were inconsistent with the General's intentions of indiscriminate punishment of all the plains Indians. Anthony immediately sent Curtis a dispatch announcing that a large contention of Southern Cheyenne were on the way to Fort Lyons, and requested that the Camp Weld accord not be honored.

Outwardly, Major Anthony feigned cooperation with the Arapahos and Black Kettle's new arrivals, promising to uphold Wynkoop's Camp Weld agreement until further orders. Wynkoop assured Black Kettle that everything would be all right, and that he was reporting to General Curtis try to obtain official sanction of the Camp Weld conclusions. Meanwhile, Anthony collected the Indians' arms and ordered them to camp on Sand Creek under the American flag--while he subtly awaited enough reinforcements to destroy them.

On November 28th General Chivington arrived unannounced at Fort Lyons with a force of well over 600 troops. Despite the vehement objections of most of the resident officers, he claimed the authority to commandeer 125 additional Fort Lyons troops, and headed towards Sand Creek with an army of at least 750 men. At sunup the next morning they opened fire on Black Kettle's peaceful Cheyenne camp that fled the U.S.

flag with a white flag of surrender underneath it. The Indian braves fled to the forest where they could fight back, while Chivington's troops indiscriminately slaughtered around 75 old men, women, and children in the village. They killed another 75 of the braves in a running battle along the creek. Captain Soule's and Lieutenant Cramer's troops from Fort Lyons refused to take part in this cowardly massacre. When the fighting was over, Chivington's troops returned to desecrate the bodies of the victims.

Black Kettle escaped into the forest. Brock returned with him that night, well knowing that Chivington would execute both of them if they were discovered. They found Black Kettle's wife lying where she had crawled under some brambles after being shot nine times. Miraculously, she was still alive, and they were able to whisk her away. She survived against tremendous odds.

Chivington had successfully stolen Major Anthony's hope of glory. He sent a dispatch to Denver claiming a victorious campaign with 600 hostile Indians killed. After searching in vain for Little Raven's band for the better part of a week, he returned to a hero's welcome in Denver.

Before taking his troops back to Fort Lyons, Captain Soule sent Brock Phillips straight to Fort Riley to report what had really happened at the Sand Creek Massacre to Major Wynkoop. Brock's report put the blustering General Curtis on the defensive, especially after he found that General Chivington's enlistment time had expired several months prior to the massacre. Realizing that the public's reaction to the truth could ruin his own career, Curtis was forced to drop his vendetta against Major Wynkoop, and start distancing himself from General Chivington. He restored Wynkoop's command of Fort Lyons and instructed him to investigate Chivington's massacre of the peaceful Indians. Wynkoop's report led to both formal military and Senate investigations that condemned and disgraced General Chivington for life, but he was not prosecuted for his war crimes because of an amnesty agreement for officers of the Civil War.

After testifying in both the military and Senate investigations of the Sand Creek Massacre, Captain Soule left the army and took up residence in Denver. He was treacherously murdered by a supporter of General Chivington within a year, but no hard evidence could be uncovered to implicate Chivington in the murder.

Major Wynkoop was soon promoted to Indian Agent for the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. He put Brock Phillips on the pay role as a scout, and Brock was influential in helping him win back the personal confidence that the peace chiefs had originally placed in him. But although they continued to lobby their own people for peace, they would never trust the U.S. military again.

After nearly four years of diligent peace negotiations with the Indians had been persistently thwarted by both the Army and the Dog Soldiers, Major Wynkoop resigned from the Indian Agency in frustration. The very next day Black Kettle and his wife were killed in a surprise attack on his village on the Washita River by Colonel George Custer's

7th Cavalry troops. They were shot in the back while crossing the river almost four years to the day after the Sand Creek Massacre. Their deaths were avenged when Custer was killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

End note

Blessed Are the Peacemakers is the story of the untiring efforts of Major Edward Wynkoop and Captain Silas Soule to arrive at a peaceful resolution to the Cheyenne and Arapaho resistance to the white mans' encroachment on their land.

References to Brock Phillips, Whitefeather, the paymaster and the outlaws are fictional gimmicks to maintain the flow of this otherwise true-to-arguable-history account.