

SWOSU Building Being Renamed Black Kettle Hall

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Black Kettle Hall

Quanah Parker Hall at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford is having part of the building renamed in recognition of Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle.

The announcement was made by SWOSU President Randy Beutler at the Sand Creek Massacre Symposium held November 3 on the SWOSU campus.

The Quanah Parker Halls complex consists of two connected buildings (North Parker and South Parker). North Parker Hall, which currently houses the SWOSU nursing and psychology programs, is Quanah Parker Hall, named after and in recognition of the Comanche chief. South Parker Hall is now Black Kettle Hall.

Beutler said both Parker and Kettle had significant influence in the history of Oklahoma and continue to have meaning to the Native American tribes of western Oklahoma.

Although little is known of his early life, Black Kettle, or Moke-tavato, became a Southern Cheyenne peacemaker. He and his people lived on the vast territory in the southern plains guaranteed to them under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. He earned fame on the warpath, carrying the sacred medicine arrows into battle. Once elected as a principal chief, though, he pursued diplomacy with the United States.

In 1861 Black Kettle agreed to concentrate his people near Sand Creek in Colorado through the Fort Wise Treaty. On November 29, 1864, Col. John Chivington, leader of the Third Colorado Volunteers, attacked Black Kettle's camp near Fort Lyon. Even though the chief tied a

American flag along with a white banner to the end of a lodge pole and stood waving it in front of his tipi, the soldiers commenced firing. More than 200 Cheyenne died in the Sand Creek massacre, including women and children. In October 1865 Black Kettle accepted the Little Arkansas Treaty, which exchanged the Sand Creek reservation for land in southwestern Kansas.

Thereafter, Black Kettle consented to the move to Indian Territory in the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867, but his people did not receive the promised annuities of food and supplies. In 1868 Gen. Philip Sheridan ordered U.S. armed forces to undertake a winter campaign against Indians who were responsible for raids against settlers. Guided by Osage scouts, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry followed the tracks of a Kiowa raiding party to 47 lodges camped on the Washita River. On November 27, 1868, Custer's troops charged into Black Kettle's village. Black Kettle and his wife, Medicine Woman, attempted to flee the Battle of the Washita, but a volley of bullets killed them. Near the site of his death, the Black Kettle Museum commemorates the peacemaker's name in present Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

“It is significant and appropriate that a building on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University be named for the most peaceable of all Cheyenne peace

chiefs—Black Kettle,” said Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribal College President Henrietta Mann. “This institution (SWOSU) stands in the midst of Cheyenne and Arapaho territory, and Black Kettle Hall will stand as an eternal monument to the memory of that peace chief who led his people after two massacres to the reservation here to establish their home lands.”

The building’s renaming was approved by the regents of the Regional University System of Oklahoma.