



**15th Anniversary Issue May 2023**

# **Camp Grant Massacre**

**Alexia Parra**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This paper was written December 15th, 2021 for ANTH 114: Social Memory for Dr. DeLugan

The attack happened on Sunday morning at 6:00 am, once every Apache went to sleep after their traditional ritual dance. Under the command of William Sanders Oury (also known as Bill Oury) and Juan Elias, an organized attack was arranged to target the Apache near Camp Grant in Arizona on April 30, 1871. As Oury, Elias, and their 148 followers pursued their attack, approximately 108 Apache were murdered with a small number of survivors. As the nation (including President Grant) received word about the Camp Grant Massacre, a trial proceeded months later that underwent 17 minutes with the verdict of not guilty for the defendants involved within the massacre. In the next following paragraphs, I will uncover the historical context, production of silences, historical actors, lateral memory, exemplary memory, and current memory activism of the Camp Grant Massacre. To further demonstrate my points of the historical context of the Camp Grant Massacre, I will be referring to the primary source of Andrew Cargill Hays and the secondary sources of Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and James R. Hastings. Andrew Cargill Hays is a government official documenting the surrounding factors before, during, and after the event. In Colwell's "Western Apache Oral Histories and Traditions of the Camp Grant Massacre", qualitative interviews of the survivors of the event are conducted in the 1930's and 2003. Therefore, providing a clear picture of the event from the perspective of the survivors. In Hastings' "The Tragedy at Camp Grant in 1871", Hastings provides great detail of the context and attitudes of the time period in the occurrence of the massacre. By diving into Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh's "The Camp Grant Massacre in the Historical Imagination"; Rolph-Michel Touillot's "Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History"; Joseph Nevins' "The abuse of memorialized space and the redefinition of Ground Zero"; and Hastings, I will display the past and contemporary memory of the massacre. Lastly, I will demonstrate today's significance and social memory activism through the works Chip

Colwell-Chanthaphonh's "Why Camp Grant Matters Today; Nicholet D. Parkhurst's "Protecting Oak Flat: Narratives of Survivance As Observed Through Digital Activism"; the official bill in progress of "H.R.1884 - Save Oak Flat Act". The Camp Grant massacre was a horrid event under the U.S. command that must be taken into further action with results to help ease the descents and environmental concerns of the territory that used to belong to the ancestors of the descents. As a result of the trial, the massacre became a collective silence from both the United States government and Apache bands. These silences are channeled by the control of the archives and sources of information such as written records contribute to creating and producing false memories of the event. Therefore, the production of silences shifts the narrative and significance of the event to the broader audience (more subjective).

Before April 30, 1871, the United States government wanted to make amends with the Apache tribes (although, the Apache posed no threat) in Arizona to maintain peace. With the following Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States wanted to prevent Indian raids to cross the new boundary. In result, Indian Agencies were formed to create good relations with Native Americans. In the region near Aravaipa Creek, the Aravaipa agency (also known as San Pedro agency) was established under the care of Lieutenant Royal E. Whitman as the Indian Agent appointed by the United States government. As the Indian Agent, Whitman was responsible for having peace talks with the regional Apache tribes and providing exchanges of food, land, and protection. After settling into the Indian Agency, the Apache settled at the Aravaipa mountains above the Camp Grant site. Soon enough, General George Stone as the Department Commander of Arizona pressed a policy of appeasement with the Apache between 1870 and 1871. With the government's involvement in aiding the Apache, citizens in Tucson were not in favor of the idea

by expressing xenophobia, exclusion of political and social belonging, and racialization in criminality. Considering the region is in the west, attitudes in the past have favored to “wipe out” the Apache. On March 10, 1871, a train heading towards a temporary army station near Camp Grant was raided by a group of Apache (not specifically attached to the Apache tribes in Arizona). The raid happened in San Xavier, involving a few Americans murdered and a mule stolen. However, General Green offered the weaponry of guns and ammunition. In response, the government issued a committee of public safety by appointing William Oury as deputation to visit General Stoneman and report something “less civic” (now the Apache are prisoners of war by the given oral command). On April 28, 1871, both Oury and Elias used San Xavier as an advantage to rally an in-raged group of individuals in total of 148: 94 Papago, 48 Mexican-Americans, and 6 Anglo-Americans. Captain Dunn noticed the male population was missing, then tried to warn Whitman. However, Oury anticipated this action and blocked off all traffic near Camp Grant. With that advantage, the men arrived at Camp Grant on April 30, 1871. With their arrival, they started to prepare for their attack on the Apache’s camps located in the Aravaipa mountain range. The choice of weaponry of guns and ammunition was provided by Oury. The attack began when the Anglo and Mexican-Americans started firing their guns. After the first shot, this signaled the Papagoes to swing their close-combat weapons into the skulls of the Apache at the camp. The scene became more graphic as soon as the Papagoes started mutilating and sexually assaulting women and children. Then, the Papagoes would skin off the hair of the dead women and young girls. Both the Papagoes and Mexican-Americans took captive 27 children as slaves. Most of the children were sold in Mexico, while the rest of the children became slaves in the households of the Papagoes. However, there were a few survivors escaping and witnessing the tragic event: Mr. Curly, Salle Ewing Dosda, etc.

(Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2003, 642-661). In an effort to survive, Mr. Curly hid behind a rock shielding his body from four men firing gun shots in his direction. He had to draw out his bow and arrows for protection to scare off the men firing at him. Holding his stance, the men did not dare to come close; therefore, he was able to survive. As for Salle Ewing Dosda, she heard the gunshots fired nearby, causing a wide panic. She decided to leave with the horse to hide from the perpetrators until they left the scene. When it was safe to check, Dosda saw her visiting aunt and cousins covered and deceased. She officially decided to leave her home. Referring to the survivors of the massacre, it is important to preserve the memories through documentation and word of mouth between generations to emphasize the significance in their survival of a tragic event.

Within the massacre, the different points of views and meanings behind the event between the Apache and Anglo-Americans slightly differ in the details of subjective interpretation. Other records about the Camp Grant Massacre are mostly written from the perspective of Anglo-Americans, placing subjective accuracy of the event based on their narrative: “nearly every historical account recycles the first Anglo American versions of the massacre and proximate events” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2003, 354). With the subjective details of the event, these perspectives silence the massacre. Therefore, the perspectives depicted are productions of silence. The creation of production of silences are factors of historical production. In other words, historical imagination as “moments of the past that shape the present” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2003, 349). Both primary and secondary written perspectives about the event undergoes historical production contributing to the silences of the massacre. According to Michel-Rolph Trouillot, there are four contributions to create a historical production: 1) “The

moment of fact creation (making of sources)”; 2) “The moment of fact assembly (making of archives)”; 3) “The moment of fact retrieval (making of narratives)”; and 4) “The moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance)” (Trouillot 2015, 26). The primary perspective of Andrew Hays, “The Camp Grant Massacre: Reminiscence of Andrew Hays Cargill, 1907”, captures events prior to and after the massacre. However, his written perspective as an Anglo-American has a few limitations of capturing the precise accuracy during and after the massacre. In the moment of fact creation, Hays records the impacts of the peace meeting between Lieutenant Whitman and chiefs *Haskebachnzin* (*Eskiminzin*), *Chiquito*, and other few unnamed chiefs. The talk took place after the event of San Xavier and the murder of a Pima Indian. During their conversation, Hays commented chief *Eskiminzin* as “the finest specimen of an Indian I have ever seen” but did not note further details about the issues discussed during the meeting (Cargill 1936, 74-77). His writing mostly shifts away from the significance of the event as downplaying the number of individuals lost their lives in the massacre. On the day of the massacre, Hays did not provide a specific or approximate number of the survivors and lives lost. Instead, Hays writes about chief *Eskiminzin* reporting the incident to Whitman in short detail. As soon as the trial came, Hays confessed that he knew the names of the spectators: “five White men and the twenty Mexicans” (Cargill 1936, 74-77). Through this confession, the making of his narrative became more intriguing and different from other secondary sources of his involvement in the events of the massacre. With the court turning a blind eye during the trial, the verdict was already found not guilty. At the end, Hays participated in silencing the event, directly through written and non-verbal action; he and the peace of congress gathered the Papagos, Maricorpas, Pimas, Apaches, and Cochise band to have a peace talk. They took the offer of moving into one reservation with chief *Eskiminzin* as their head

chief. Within his narration, he finalizes every association of the massacre with the outcome of peace talk as a proper solution to the unaddressed social and political issues. As for Hays, the story ends with peace talk with everyone. However, other records outside of Hays' perspective do not show the existence of the peace talk of joining a reservation after the trial. In Colwell's "The Camp Grant Massacre in the Historical Imagination", Colwell states the existing peace talks after the trial were specifically in concerns of the missing children of the Apaches' (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2003, 354). In addition to silencing the massacre, the United States government was well informed about the slavery of Apache children in the Tucson family households. To give context, slavery at this time was outlawed through the passing of the 13th Amendment on January 31, 1865. With the government's knowledge of the enslaved Apache children, individuals and other evidence associated with the massacre become sacred and easing the social memories from the historical imagination. To understand which individuals are associated with the massacre, we must understand who they are actors of the Camp Grant Massacre: the perpetrators, the government officials, and Apaches'. Diving into the social memories of the perpetrators, these memories are limited and almost lost. The silences of the perpetrator's involvement in the massacre includes the loss of historical accuracy in the numbers of participants and the emphasis on their ethno-racial background. There is the inaccuracy of higher numbers of the Mexican-Americans and Papagoes' involvement and gruesome input into the massacre. Carrying the narrative of least involvement of Anglo-Americans, the Anglo-Americans shift their perspective to the Tohono O'odham for most of the murders. Over the course of two decades after the massacre, one perspective of a perpetrator re-establishes the memory of their participation in the massacre. Under the confession of Leander Spofford, Spofford signed an oath to protect the attackers and himself during and after the trial involving

the massacre (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2003, 354-356). The creation and carried out procedures of the oath has shown strong reinforcement of the silences that are significant in understanding each aspect of the massacre. There are two types of social memories of the Camp Grant Massacre, attached to the Apache group: literal and exemplary memory. Literal memory is “connecting individuals, groups, and other events to the specific suffering in question and, in the process, condemning all those associated with the authors of the original trauma” (Nevins 2005, 268). Exemplary memory is an acknowledgment of the horrific experience and derives “benefits for humanity as a whole” (Nevins 2005, 268). The event of the massacre is mainly a literal memory to the Apache. There are no true commemorations acknowledging the event. However, there is a contemporary exemplary memory in progress: Oak Flat Act.

In today’s events, the Apache are progressing through the digital platform in the social memory activism of the Camp Grant Massacre. With the use of social media, the Apache can communicate through a broader audience by bringing relevance to the Massacre (their voices are heard more through a faster pace online versus in-person). In this platform, the Apache introduces a different narrative as a group through vivid imagery and powerful captions (Parkhurst 2017, 6-10). For instance, the organization of Sapiens uploaded a post on Instagram depicting a group of descendants holding signs “Do Not Enter Sacred Land” and “Stop Resolution Copper Mining” as to reclaim and protect their sacred land of Oak Flat in contribution to the memorial justice of the Camp Grant Massacre. Before and after the massacre, the remaining Apache were relocated away from the Oak Flat by being placed in Native American agencies and reservations. With the Apache drawn out, the land of Oak Flat was under the government’s advantage to use the land for copper mining. Now with strong activism, the

Apache are pushing for “H.R. 1884” known as “Save Oak Flat Act” to pass through congress to allow them to reclaim their territory and improve the damaging environmental factors caused by the resolution of copper mining production. The act was introduced on March 12, 2021.

Currently, the act is still being under review with two committee meetings that were placed on April 28, 2021, and April 13, 2021 (Congress Gov 2021). It is important for the Oak Flat Act to pass because the site will provide exemplary memory for the descendants of the Camp Grant Massacre. The memories associated with Camp Grant over the past 150 years are in process of being addressed by the government for the Apache to heal the damage caused by the perpetrators and governmental involvement of the massacre. With the passing of the act, the silenced social memories from both the government and Apache will be brought into light by acknowledging the significance of the event. And establishing a new commemoration that is first dedicated to healing the memories of the Camp Grant Massacre (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2021). In the meantime, Camp Grant will remain as a “‘ground zero’—defined here as a location of extreme violence and devastation that involves the killing of large number of civilians and profound destruction of the human landscape—is one such site” (Nevins 2005, 268). Through passing time, Camp Grant as a ground zero will also remain as an abandoned graveyard to the Apache and their descendants.

All in all, the memories preserved through historical production of archives and sources of information for Camp Grant Massacre are significant. With a greater number of sources and archives, the memories of Camp Grant Massacre are more emphasized towards the aftermath of the event’s trial and perpetrators. Given today's progress towards social memory activism of the massacre, both descendants and other related tribes are moving towards peace after the

establishment of saving the Oak Flat. Currently, the Apache and other bands revisit the site of Camp Grant as a remembrance and graveyard site of their ancestors. Although, the territory does not bring those who have they have lost but it will break the silences that have caused deep oppression.

## Bibliography

Cargill, Andrew Hays. 1936. *The Camp Grant Massacre: Reminiscence of Andrew Hays Cargill, 1907*. *Arizona Historical Review*: 73-79. <https://repository.arizona.edu/handle/10150/623781>  
Accessed October 13, 2021.

This is a primary source documenting before, during, and after the Camp Grant Massacre. This document is a written perspective of one of the government officials and their relationship with the natives. However, this source is an example of silence with inaccuracy of the event with the process of historical production of making sources, archives, narratives, and retrospective significance.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip. 2003. "The Camp Grant Massacre in the Historical Imagination". *Journal of the Southwest* 45, no. 3: 349–69. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40170330>. Accessed October 13, 2021.

Colwell dives into a historical review behind the actor's motives and actor's actions in the time of the event. Colwell, as an anthropologist, describes in-depth how the Camp Grant Massacre's memory's shaped and remembered.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip. 2003. "Western Apache Oral Histories and Traditions of the Camp Grant Massacre". *American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 3/4: 639–66. <https://doi:10.1353/aiq.2004.0071>. Accessed October 14, 2021

The Camp Grant Massacre remains a salient moment for contemporary Western Apache peoples. The story of the massacre was first preserved by personal histories and has since been maintained in part through Western Apache oral traditions. Here,

Colwell-Chanthaphonh explores the Western Apache oral histories and traditions of the Camp Grant Massacre.

Colwell- Chanthaphonh, Chip. 2021. "Why Camp Grant Massacre Matters Today". *Sapiens*, April 30. [www.sapiens.org](http://www.sapiens.org). Accessed October 14, 2021.

Chip Colwell states a brief overview about the after-effects of the camp grant massacre towards the Apache and other tribes in their territory. Most migrated afterward and were placed into reservations. These reservations were to keep the tribes together and away from the valuable territory. In the end, there is no monument or commemoration of the event that took place over a century. Chip Colwell also states further action is needed with more involvement in the "Save Oak Flat Act" in legislation for proper justice of the original victims and their descents.

Congress.Gov."H.R.1884 - Save Oak Flat Act". Last modified April 28, 2021, [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov). *Congress.Gov*. Accessed October 14, 2021.

This website tracks the current state of the Oak Flat act. As the act has been issued in April, the act is still being introduced to congress. This is a contemporary act that can shape the memory of camp grant and the descents of the victimized groups of camp grant. The act also notes the environmental concerns in the surrounding site.

Hastings, James R. 1959. "The Tragedy at Camp Grant in 1871". *Arizona and the West* 1, no. 2: 146–60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40166938>. Accessed October 14, 2021.

Hastings describes the context and accuracy of the massacre that happened at Camp Grant with the involved actors.

Nevins, Joseph. 2005. "The abuse of memorialized space and the redefinition of Ground Zero". *Journal of Human Rights*. 4: 267-282. <https://doi:10.1080/14754830590952189>. Accessed October 14, 2021.

Defining what is ground zero on Camp Grant is very important to note. With Nevins' works, I can identify both exemplary and lateral memory as clearly as possible. It is relevant to how they contribute to contemporary memory of the event itself (can shape over time). The current activism of passing Oak Flat Act and protecting the site is a progress of serving exemplary memory. As of now, Camp Grant is currently a lateral memory on the verge of becoming an exemplary memory (transitional process in action).

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2015 [1995]. "Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History". *Beacon Press*. <https://doi:10.2307/1007497>. Accessed 2021.

Trouillot describes what it means for a memory to be silenced and its impacts on the present representation of the actors and contemporary memory. With his works, I can draw upon the differences of how memory is silenced within Camp Grant relative to one of the three case studies. I also can explain what reproduces silence more in-depth with Trouillot's explanations and examples.

Parkhurst, Nicholet D. 2017. "Protecting Oak Flat: Narratives of Survivance As Observed Through Digital Activism." *Australasian Journal of Information Systems* 21, <https://doi.org/10.3127/ajis.v21i0.1567>. Accessed October 16, 2021.

Parkhurst explores through the significance of the activism of protecting the Oak Flat as it is sacred to the Apache. This focuses more on the contemporary tactics and methods that are

digital shaping the narrative behind the repressed Apache. Parkhurst also explains more about the context behind the Oak Flat as the site is used for mining owned by the government.