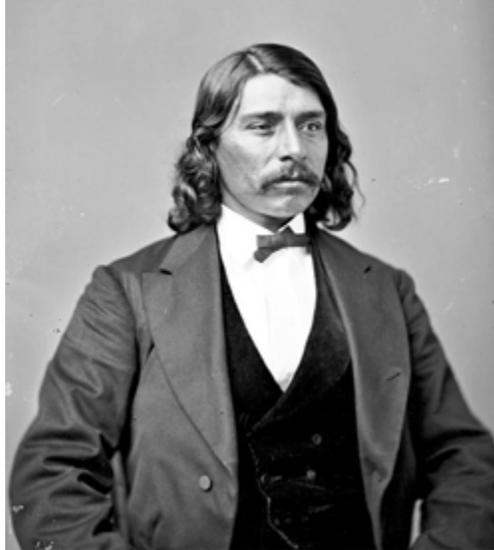


Edmund Guerrier, “Red Tail Hawk.” (1840- 1921)
Metis Survivor of the Sand Creek Massacre



Edmond Guerrier

Edmund Guerrier was the son of a fur trader, Frenchman William Choteau Le Guerrier and Tah-tah-tois-neh (Walks In Sight), a Cheyenne woman of Little Rock's Wutapai band. In 1851, Guerrier was entered in a Catholic mission school near present-day St. Marys, Kansas, and later enrolled in St. Louis University. After his father's death in 1857, Guerrier withdrew from the university and eventually returned to live with his mother's people, who knew him as Red Tail Hawk. He narrowly escaped death in the Sand Creek massacre in 1864. Early on the morning of November 29, 1864 Colonel Chivington and his soldiers arrived at the Cheyenne camp. They were spotted by a Cheyenne woman who sounded the alarm. Edmund Guerrier was alerted. Black Kettle raised an American flag and a white flag. Guerrier and a trader, "Blackfoot" John Smith, went toward the soldiers who were lined up on the low bluff above the Cheyenne lodges. The soldiers fired on Guerrier and Smith, launching the attack. "It seems incredible that we were not killed," said Guerrier in a later interview. John Smith's son, Jack, was quickly captured and then shot down in cold blood. Charles Bent was taken captive. George Bent was shot in the hip but managed to escape, as did Julia Bent and Edmund Guerrier. Guerrier provided the following testimony to Congressional investigators at Fort Riley, Kansas in 1865.

I was in the camp of the Cheyennes when Chivington made his attack...I had been with them [Cheyennes] about three days before the attack...After the attack I remained with them about four weeks...I was, at the time of the attack, sleeping in a lodge...I could see the soldiers begin to dismount. I thought they were artillerymen and were about to shell the camp...I went to the northeast; I ran about five miles, when I came across an Indian women driving a herd of

ponies...she was a cousin of mine - one of White Antelope's daughters. I went with her to the Smoky Hill [river]. I saw as soon as the firing began, from the number of troops, that there could be no resistance, and I escaped...There were one hundred and forty-eight killed and missing...about sixty were men-the balance women and children.

In August 1864, the Cheyenne chiefs called on Edmund and his brother-in-law George Bent to act as interpreters and deliver messages of peace to Fort Lyon, Colorado. At age twenty-four, Edmund Guerrier was following in his father's footsteps, enabling the peace process between white men and the Cheyenne. Nineteen years earlier, William Guerrier had acted in a similar role with the Cheyenne and the Delaware. After a stint as a trader for licensed arms dealer David A. Butterfield, he was hired as an interpreter by the War Department, assigned to the Seventh U.S. Cavalry and played a crucial role during the spring 1867 Hancock expedition under Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock. In October 1867 he was an interpreter during negotiations for the Medicine Lodge Treaty. In 1869, he interpreted for the Fifth U.S. Cavalry under Maj. Gen. Eugene A. Carr, and afterward worked as a trader at Camp Supply for the firm of Lee and Reynolds. He again worked for the Interior Department in 1871 and 1884, interpreting for Cheyenne delegations to Washington, D.C.

He married Julia Bent in 1865. She was the sister of George Bent. Edmond's father had worked for Julia's father William Bent. Edmond Guerrier died on February 22, 1921. Julia, his widow, was a daughter of William Bent. The Guerrier's had three children, William, Rosa (Minnie), and Annie.



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