

Fort Chambers / Poor Farm – Listening and Learning

Story Submissions

Between March 10th, 2025 and March 30th, 2025, the public was asked to share input on what stories should be interpreted along the Concept Plan's proposed Healing Trail. These stories were shared publicly on the Be Heard Boulder website, while others were collected on physical handout sheets at the workshop hosted on March 21, 2025. This document contains the full text – including links and attachments – of submissions received.

Accepted Submissions

A Historical Story From the Future: Regenerating An Island of Coherence

Submitted 3/13/2025 by Morey Bean

A Historical Story From the Future: Regenerating An Island of Coherence

By Morey Bean

Boulder Community Artist (Soldiers' Veil, 2020)

Inspired by the work of science fiction writer Octavia Butler, [Scottish storyteller and Traveler Jill Smith](#), and First Nations friend and storyteller [Solomon Ratt](#), this is a *fictional 'idea' story*, told by a fictional Arapahoe/Shoshoni/Scottish elder, told to his grandchildren and other young ones gathered around a campfire in Boulder, Colorado in the warm summer of **2035**. It is written with the utmost respect for Indigenous People from around the world, living today, whose stories of repression, famine, poverty, ethnic cleansing and genocide go largely untold. Amidst these stories, this one includes a story of hope and healing, also told today, describing a process of colonization, decolonization and recolonization, of deconstruction and reconstruction, of generation and regeneration, celebrating the long journey leading to the receipt of the 'title' to the Poor Farm Ft. Chambers land being given back to Indigenous People from the citizens of Boulder in **2030**, after the election of America's new [Indigenous President of Turtle Island](#).

It is a story of hope and healing as well as conquest and resettlement, as the Poor Farm / Ft. Chambers site has been radically transformed to reflect the fact that Indigenous People, including those who historically and contemporarily travel to and from Boulder, continue to be Travelers, north and south along the front range and the Wind River mountains and beyond, and east and west through the mountains to the plains and beyond, as this little island of coherence comes together in its evolution, by their labor and the labors of love of their white friends, in their eternal seasonal familial migration and settlement, led by listening to the land and watching the stars.

"Sit down, sit down little ones! Your parents are right behind you. Bundle up! They've given me just enough time to tell you a story before the Little Dipper pours its sleepy medicine into your eyes." They were glad to see their big brother join them, who had moved to Denver after serving in the Iraq War, who was doing better after working here on the 'Poor Farm Ft. Chambers Site Regeneration Project', being more at peace in his healing journey. The Grandfather continued:

"Once upon a time, not too long ago, there was a family, not unlike yours, who was enjoying another summer's vacation trip from Ada, Oklahoma to Ethete, Wyoming, in their big, beautiful motorhome. It was getting late in the day, and everyone was tired of being on the road, even though the welcoming sights of the mountains called the Flatirons were beautiful to finally behold, with the afternoon sun

streaming from behind them. "Oh look Mom!" yelled a little one, "Those rocks look like they're about to fall over!" "Oh, they are my dear little one." replied the Mother, "Someday soon I'll tell you the story of the [Great Simplification](https://www.thegreatsimplification.com/)." (<https://www.thegreatsimplification.com/>)

As they settled in, having hooked up to the RV park at the site of the old Poor Farm house, they themselves sat around a campfire. They caught up with other families who had come from near and far, welcoming a new Traveler friend from Scotland who would soon tell tales of his indigenous Pictish ancestors being removed from the Highlands of Scotland to the Americas, first as white slaves, later as slave keepers, and now his story as an artist telling his story of a healing-filled future in a standing stone sculpture, inspired by the Pictish Standing Stones of Scotland. They also welcomed new [friends from the Brazilian rainforest](#) who had been commissioned to work here as muralists, adding their stories to a mural from the repurposed walls of the old Poor House house, of stories told from their home and from this beautiful place. Even though they couldn't speak very many words of English or any of the other languages spoken around the fire, their warm smiles and peaceful countenance made everyone feel warm and loved. The Grandfather continued:

"As the morning sun was just hitting the sides of their tent, not unlike yours, a chickadee landed on the top of it and said "Chicka-de-de-de! Chicka-de-de-de! Wake up you lazy kids! Chicka-de-de-de! Chicka-de-de-de! The day is waiting for you! Wake up and look around at all that we've done here! Your bison brothers are waking up too. If you're quick you can get up and go see them before they wander off! Wake up! Wake up! Chicka-de-de-de! Chicka-de-de-de!" Looking up, the chickadee quickly flew away as his big brother the Magpie then landed on the tent (and he pooped right on top of it! Gross!) "Mack! Mack! Get up and come with me! Mack Mack! We've got lots of work to do before we get to have fun at tomorrow's Pow Wow! Mack Mack! " "OK OK..." Ramona said as she rubbed the sleep from her eyes, "Where are we going?" "Mack! Mack! Come work on the stained glass story about your future, told on a window from the old Poor Farm house that's being what you call 'upcycled'!" "Clinton! Mack! Mack! Put on your tool belt and help finish the Pow Wow shelter built from the roof of the Poor House house!" "Angela! Mack! Mack! Get dressed and go watch the muralists work so that you can someday be a muralist! Hurry up! Mack! Mack! Go look at the welcome sign to this place that doesn't just have one name but many! Add your Grandmother's name for "Place of Healing" in her and now your language to the sign. Mack! Mack! Wake up! Wake Up!"

"As they finished their warm grits breakfast made from the corn of the Three Sisters Garden and nice hot butternut squash soup that warmed their bellies, they all trundled off to greet the day and get to work, that really wasn't work at all, but the best play that they could imagine, being grateful to be outside instead of locked into some hot classroom where the teachers would routinely fall asleep." (Based on a true story, told respectfully from the author's white sister who taught English at Ethete, later to die of lung cancer from the groundwater contaminated by fracking fluid at their home and garden in Pavilion, Wyoming.)

"Much to the surprise of your strong teenage sister Melissa in her morning walk, she marveled at something that she knew had somehow been in her dreams but had been forgotten until now, when she saw a beautiful statue titled [TAH!](https://www.hickoryart.org/exhibitions/virgilortiz) (<https://www.hickoryart.org/exhibitions/virgilortiz>) by Cochiti artist Victor Ortiz. As she marveled at the beauty, power and grace of Tah, she could feel herself drawn to her, being of her, full of energy, no longer blinded from fear, but gaining strength and power and vision from Tah's graceful, insightful countenance! Her excitement was confirmed as she heard the beautiful red winged blackbird that looked a lot like Tah! Ko Kah Ree! Ko Kah Ree! she called from the nearby regenerated wetlands. "Isn't she beautiful?! Isn't she strong?! Ko Kah Ree! Ko Kah Ree!"

"So after a good summer day of work and play, all these kids, not unlike you, laid down on their backs under the evening stars, in a big circle, with their bare feet touching each others, warmed by a good smelling campfire and the giggles and laughter telling your own stories from a day lived well, of who you met, and what you did that day, unwittingly reclaiming your life, a life being really well lived, stories that

will surely be told by future chickadees and magpies, robins and ravens, stories told until this day, stories that have been hidden from you for way too long.”

“Oh! Listen! It’s Brother Robin! “Ka-chirp-chirp-chirp” “Ka-chirp-chirp-chirp” saying “Time to gather tomorrow’s fire wood! Time to make dinner!” After a yummy dinner of a bison frybread taco and green salad, all the children gathered around the fire, not unlike this one, heard their Mothers’ soft “Coo coo coo...Coo coo coo... Time to say Goodnight moon! Goodnight stars! Good night brothers and sisters here and everywhere! Goodnight Mother, Father, Aunties and Uncles, Goodnight Grandma! Goodnight Mother Earth. Thank you for all you give us everyday. May we have sweet dreams of bears and bison and beavers and chickadees and foxes and flying horses!”

“Goodnight Grandfather! Sweet dreams for you too.” said the children, not unlike yours. “Goodnight my sweet ones. I have got to go now, to fly away myself on a beautiful white horse, to a far-away and beautiful place, but I’ll see you and you’ll see me in the clouds and sunshine for all your tomorrows. Sweet dreams indeed my loved ones.”

“Goodnight...”

Restore native and Native habitat

Submitted 3/13/2025 by John Webb

It seems appropriate that in addition to commemorating the actions around the Sand Creek Massacre, that we acknowledge the people, the cultures, occupations and traditions that existed on the site before the arrival of white settlers/colonists. There must have been hunting and living encampments on this land for hundreds and thousands of years. The CU Museum has a cache of Clovis artifacts recovered from along Boulder Creek at a property up against the foothills. In addition, some of the earliest white settlers lived in peace with the indigenous people in the Ft. Collins area.

Could we develop a trail at the Ft Chambers property that recreates some of these features, and also promotes restoration of native vegetation and wildlife to the area?

Thank you,
John Webb
Louisville

Who were the settlers of the Boulder Valley?

Submitted 3/14/2025 by Paula Palmer

Who were the Euro-American people who settled in the Boulder Valley in the mid 1800s? What were their ethnicities, religions, genders, social class? Where did they come from? What were their attitudes about Native peoples, Manifest Destiny, the treaties (and violating them), land ownership? How did they relate to Chief Nawath's band of Arapaho who lived in the Boulder Valley? What drove them to join the US Cavalry and commit the Sand Creek Massacre? After the massacre, what did they say or write about it and its aftermath? How did they envision the future population of Boulder?

Outcomes of the Sand Creek Massacre

Submitted 3/14/2025 by Paula Palmer

At Fort Chambers, more than 100 Boulder men trained and drilled and then joined Col John Chivington's Volunteer Cavalry in committing the Sand Creek Massacre. What are the outcomes of this massacre for the Arapaho and Cheyenne people, and for the people who have lived in Boulder since then?

What happened to the Arapaho and Cheyenne people? How have they suffered as a result of the actions of the Boulder settlers? How do they live today? How would they like to relate to the land and people of the Boulder Valley? What presence would they like to have here?

How have the people of Boulder prospered since the massacre? How do people of Boulder feel today about what happened 160 years ago? How do people of Boulder feel today about the relative life conditions of the Cheyenne and Arapaho and the current residents of Boulder? How would the people of Boulder like to address the disparities? How can we start?

Need for Reckoning before Healing

Submitted 3/16/2025 by Laurie Rugenstein

A Healing Trial is important, but we need to reckon with the difficult past before we can begin healing. When entering the Fort Chambers site people should encounter things that lead them to reckon with the difficult past that took place here. This includes to greed for land and power on the part of some settler/colonizers and the false information they spread to create fear in the local settler/colonizers. Fear an effect way to control people, This dynamic still plays out in our country, and telling the truth about our past is one way to keep this from happening again.

A representation of the fort could be part of this.

Another part could be re-installing the stone marker with an explanation that as recently as the 1960s people were still referring to an "Indian uprising" in the area that never actually happened.

Large signage depicting what happened here leading up to the Sand Creek Massacre would also be important. We need to create an experience that allows people to FEEL it.

Chief Niwot's observation

Submitted 3/23/2025 by Decolonizationisnotametaphor

Chief Niwot is often attributed for placing a "curse" on the Boulder valley. This is a long-standing misinterpretation of his words, which coupled with some exotic sense of "Indian magic" has become something that white people have often attributed to their return to or inability to leave this area. I heard it often as I grew up in Boulder.

This is the quotation: "People seeing the beauty of this valley will want to stay, and their staying will be the undoing of the beauty."

Reportedly, Chief Niwot was saying this to the first prospectors he encountered. The native population had not destroyed the beauty by staying, so why would Chief Niwot say this to the white folks seeking gold there? Was he jealous? Trying to scare them off? It seems to me that it would make more sense that he had observed a contradiction in the things that the colonizers desired and the way of life they led. I would like to suggest that, rather than relating a curse, Chief Niwot was giving meaningful ethical guidance.

Colonizers loved the beauty of this land, it stands out as special and particular, even among the gorgeous surroundings. However, the way of life that the colonizers bring is destructive. It does not respect the intrinsic value of the beings whose interdependence weaves the beauty that attracts the colonizers. The animals, plants, people, and the land itself exist together. By devaluing any part of the intricate web of relationships, treating it as a mere resource to be plundered, something to possess rather than a being in its own right, the colonizer works to destroy the beauty that they claim to love.

Chief Niwot did not curse this land. There is no curse of the Boulder Valley. There is only the inconsistency of our desires, the curse we put into all of our actions when we act for short-term gain without attenuating ourselves to the relationships that we exist inside and as a part of. You are not separate from anything else, you are intersected in millions of ways by your relationships to the world. To neglect these relationships is a disrespect that has real and dire consequences.

Hopefully, we can come to see the guidance that Chief Niwot's words held for us and turn from our short-sighted plundering to instead take actions that will be beneficial to those living seven generations from now.

Another name for the residence/farm

Submitted 3/23/2025 by Patricia Hertzler

I am opposed to the continuing use of "Poor Farm" when speaking of this site. It served that function for only 6 years according to this website. A much more appropriate title would be something like "living history 1900 farmstead" or "Early Colorado farm in Queen Anne style" or something similar. Why emphasize only 6 years when the site's historical significance is much broader? Changing the terminology now will be easier now than it would be to wait any longer with regard to printed material. Signage and general usage. The history of the fort and the Sand Creek Massacre is significant and must be emphasized.

Healing Across Generations; Healing Heart, Land, and Soul

Submitted 3/21/2025 by AJ

Farm and historic Queen Anne House first came about and the stories of both the people who served there and were helped there as well. Where are their descendants now? Are they still in the area? Do they have stories to share? What were the conditions like back then? It would also be healing to have one day each year that the community gathers on the site with a healing City held event that is led by as many of the people who are direct descendants of each of these pivotal time periods.

Manifest Destiny

Submitted 3/21/2025 by Sallie

Manifest Destiny encouraged what is called westward expansion basically taking over lands where plains tribes had lived in balance for hundreds of years in the Boulder Valley. People believed incorrectly that they had this divine right to expand. Protestant rhetoric said the land of Turtle Island was divinely destined to be expanded to spread democracy and civilization. Ignoring the current civilization of indigenous peoples living in harmony with the land. Land became a thing rather than a living ecology of plants, animals and people thriving together. The indigenous people in the area: Arapaho, Cheyenne and Ute, lived so in balance, that it appeared to be a wilderness and uninhabitable until settlers moved in with their Christian religious beliefs and cultures and decided this wild beauty was to be killed and tamed in order to physically and spiritually feel safe by following a god separated from the earth. Later this same religious blindness created the doctrine of discovery traced back to the 15th century granting European powers the right to claim newly discovered lands and subjugate the people there. It provided theological justification and colonization which still functions today around the world and is called progress.

land Acknowledgment

Submitted 3/24/2025 by mlRobles

At the very least, the City of Boulder should acknowledge that this land is not ours.. "The City of Boulder acknowledges the city is on the ancestral homelands and **unceded** territory of Indigenous Peoples who have traversed, lived in and stewarded lands in the Boulder Valley *since time immemorial*. ..."

Silas Soule

Submitted 3/27/2025 by phmurphy

He was at the massacre but refused to participate and then testified and was later assassinated.

He is buried at Riverside Cemetery in Denver. And has been honored by the Arapahoe.

Silas Stillman Soule ([/soʊl/](#) [SOHL](#); July 26, 1838 – April 23, 1865) was an American [abolitionist](#), a teenage 'conductor' on the [Underground Railroad](#), military officer, and an early example of what would later be called a [whistleblower](#). As a [Kansas Jayhawker](#), he supported and was a proponent of [John Brown's](#) movement in the [time of strife](#) leading up to the [American Civil War](#).

During the war, Soule joined the Colorado volunteers, and rose to the rank of [captain](#) in the [Union Army](#).

Soule was in command of [1st Colorado Cavalry, Company D](#) that was present at Sand Creek and the [massacre of Native Americans](#) that occurred there on November 29, 1864. He testified at a U.S. military hearing that convened in February 1865 to investigate the event. Soule was murdered two months later in what some believed was retaliation.



The Sand Creek Massacre

[[edit](#)]Main article: [Sand Creek massacre](#)

On November 29, 1864, at [Sand Creek](#), in what was then the southeastern corner of [territorial Colorado](#), Colonel [John Chivington](#) ordered the Third Colorado Cavalry to attack Southern Cheyenne Chief [Black Kettle](#)'s encampment of Southern Cheyenne.

Before the attack, Soule told other officers "any man who would take part in [such] murders, knowing the circumstances as we did, was a low lived cowardly son of a bitch."^[1] Several lieutenants also objected to Chivington's plans. Lt. Joseph Cramer and Soule went directly to [Major Scott Anthony](#), Chivington's superior.^[1]

As the attack began, Soule reminded his troops that the supposed "enemy" was a peace chief's band, and some responded that they "would not fire a shot today".^[1] His company did not follow the orders

given to them to enter the creek bed leading to the settlement but moved up and down the banks and observed the slaughter. There was heavy [crossfire](#),^[f] and they did not participate in the killings. After the attack, in Chivington's telegram reporting his "victory" he condemned Soule for "saying that he thanked God he killed no Indians, and like expressions, proving himself more in sympathy with the Indians than the whites."^[1]



Capt. Soule (front row, right) with Major [Wynkoop](#) (front row, left) and [Southern Cheyenne](#) Chief [Black Kettle](#) at the Camp Weld meeting September 28, 1864.^[g]

The U.S. Congress created a congressional committee to investigate the Sand Creek Massacre due to a nationwide outrage of the incident. Soule's and others' verbal and written testimonies about the Sand Creek Massacre led to Chivington's resignation; Colorado's Second Territorial Governor, John Evans', dismissal; and the U.S. Congress refusing the U.S. Army's repeated requests for a general war against the [Plains Indians](#).^[8]

Moving With Our History

Submitted 3/30/2025 by Alison Takenaka

What would it be like for visitors of all ages to experience this site as its own history unfolded in similarity and in contrast to the history of the Native-Indigenous stewards of this sacred land and this land herself? Perhaps visitors can proceed in a loop that includes 1) a land acknowledgement written by Native-Indigenous elders, 2) the pre-fort history of this sacred land and the Native-Indigenous stewards entrusted with its care and keeping, 3) a type of reconstruction of a simple Fort structure and clear history of the Sand Creek Massacre including and not limited to the truth-telling and assassination of Silas Soule, 4) a reflective spiral labyrinth including a path inward (e.g. "Truth and Reckoning") to continue the truth-telling including the near-extinction of the American Buffalo, the oppression, violence and death of children at Indian Boarding Schools, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives and stealing of land that continues, and many more points along the labyrinth that leads to the heart (and turning point) of the spiral (e.g. "Indigenous Worldview: Universal Stewardship and Interdependence") and then the path out (e.g. "Restoration and Prevention") could include what visitors can do to support Native-Indigenous-led initiatives to return to Right Relationship with ourselves, all beings including the Native-Indigenous steward of this land, and this sacred land herself, and 5) a portion of the site (with a permanent Native-Indigenous-designed structure and also open space) dedicated to private and public Native-Indigenous-led ceremony and events. Rick Williams' TREC Reports are a wonderful, responsibly-researched source that would be a ready source for this Project, and there is ready and reliable history held by Native-Indigenous elders in Wyoming, Oklahoma and here in Colorado that is immediately available for this Project. This Project could be a deeply inspiring, hands-on way for visitors of all ages to step up and learn about and commit to both preventing and healing the violent history that continues to be made in Colorado in terms of the harm that affects all of us (e.g.

auto-immune conditions, paraphilia, fraud, substance misuse/addiction, human and sex trafficking, elder, child and animal abuse, domestic violence, suicide, mass shootings, pollution, etc.).

Please, please, please stop calling this a "Healing Trail"

Submitted 3/30/2025 by Dewi Sungai

I am a displaced Indigenous woman (Ngaju Dayak from Borneo, adopted as a baby by white Americans, now residing in Louisville with my husband and daughter) in close community with Native people across the Front Range. I don't know a single Native person here who believes anything about this plot to be "healing." To declare this a "Healing Trail," even when addressing non-Native people, feels arrogant and presumptuous on the city's part. Who are you all to tell me what's healing, or where I am personally in that process, or what my experience is walking this plot of land? How does proclaiming a "Healing Trail" gaslight the experience of Native people that you claim to care so deeply about? How does it erase the history of the Sand Creek Massacre and intergenerational trauma that we all carry?

I don't know any Native people who can walk this land without being overwhelmed with trauma. And so the greatest potential I can imagine for this site is that non-Native visitors learn the truth-- that this was a staging ground for the massacre-- and **reflect deeply on how they're connected to it**. You don't have to be a direct descendant of the volunteer militia men who staged here to have benefited from the events of Sand Creek, and the white supremacy culture that fueled this history and continues to dominate Boulder County today. Perhaps a walk through a **REFLECTION TRAIL**-- which feels to me like a much more appropriate name-- could help prompt questions like, "Who am I? Where do I come from? How did I get here / What is the truth of my non-Native family's immigration story to this land? Who were my Indigenous ancestors, and what losses have I experienced as a result of colonization? Am I acknowledging those losses? Have I allowed myself to mourn them? What intergenerational trauma do I carry? Where am I willing to break the cycle-- not only for myself, but for my ancestors, children, and future generations, and all my relations surrounding me? What do I need to disrupt in order to fulfill my purpose and responsibilities in this community today?"

As a member of local Native community, I often see white "allies" show up at local, Native-centered events, happy to be appalled at the history of Sand Creek and boarding schools; inspired by Native drumming and dancing; quick to buy beaded earrings at the Native market. These are easy boxes to check, but **ONLY** checking boxes is performative. It perpetuates the privilege of comfort of being "a good person," but there is no deep reflection or personal accountability in this. I rarely see these "allies" revoking privilege to create more equity and balance in this county. It is hard and daily work to be truly anti-racist. It requires a level of self-awareness and humility that I rarely see in white people here. This reminds me of the quote by the aboriginal elder Lila Watson: "If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." How are you ensuring that your work is actually honoring the partnerships you're trying to build with Native people here? How will you ensure that this site isn't simply performative, or vindicating white fragility, or celebrating white saviorism-- but truly guides people to do the work in recognition that their liberation is also bound up in the liberation of Native people here, and Indigenous people worldwide?

Words matter. Please, please, please stop calling this a "Healing Trail."

Reflections on 3/21 Fort Chambers Concept Meeting

Submitted 3/30/2025 by jhouston

We are deeply embedded in Native community here through found family, friendship, ceremony, and a collective effort to unforget the true history of the land and people here in the context of vitalizing an Indigenous future. We attended the March 21st concept meeting to better understand how the Boulder community sees this process. After multiple follow up conversations to sort out my thinking, I want to share some of my personal reflections:

- There was one comment to “not forget the white story”. In the recounting of this history, there is no white vs Native story. There is one story and that includes the truth of all that happened. It’s everyone’s story. This comment illuminates a problematic dynamic I’ve seen elsewhere in related conversations that usually means more precisely “don’t forget the White perspective”. It’s hard to forget the White perspective ... it’s been the dominate perspective here since White people first invaded Colorado. And it’s not only often incomplete but untrue. I am not advocating for a biased shift in any other direction ... simply the full truth and from an honest perspective.
- Calling it a “Healing Trail” is incredibly problematic and an example of the deeply embedded White supremacies in our community. Healing who and how? I won’t speak for any Native person living here, especially one with ancestors and relatives directly affected by the Sand Creek Massacre, but I will attempt to amplify the voices I’ve heard. Before healing, we need remembrance and restoration of the truth. And this includes those of us who have benefitted directly or Indirectly from such atrocities unpacking our connections and how we got here, and then doing the work to understand personal accountability and commit to revoking unjust privilege with a goal of restoration, reparations, and reconciliation. I believe we need at least all of that before we can heal.
- I also saw comments requesting a celebration of things like organic agriculture being or have been done on this land. While an issue of vital importance in this day and age of industrialized food (and I worked as an advocate for small farms and local foods, including organic, regenerative, ethical, etc. food systems, for over a decade) this does not seem the place for all that. It is clear to me that by far the most important thing to deal with here is this land’s relationship to one of the worst atrocities in US history. There are plenty of other opportunities to talk about our food systems (and some of the other similar comments I saw) that do not dilute and attempt (intentionally or unintentionally) to erase the most important aspects of its history.

Thank you for listening.

The ideal opportunity to connect a myriad of Colorado indigenous stories and reckon with the past

Submitted 3/30/2025 by PMcEntee

With the exception of the Ute, Colorado/the Federal Government is neglectful in ever having provided trust land in the form of reservations to the native peoples who historically frequented these lands of CO. There are stories and histories intertwined with native peoples and homesteaders, and yet, even after the Sand Creek Massacre, lands that were given to descendants for reparations, were eventually transferred to whites who married into the families of the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Historic Boggsville in Las Animas is an example of this, but there are many more stories and also many we have never heard because we have not made the effort to build trust and provide authentic avenues for relationships with native peoples. From the naming of peaks such as Mount Blue Sky, which was only renamed from Mount Evans (the CO Governor who sanctioned the massacre) fairly recently, to the fact that Boulder County and its municipalities has only invested in telling the stories of homesteaders and mining history, we have a long road to creating trust and making the space, both literally and figuratively, to bring

native voices to the storytelling process, should they desire it. That should be the focus of this effort- we have celebrated the Homesteaders enough. This should be the catalyst for sharing a broader history of land that can only be shared authentically by native people.

I didn't know. Why?

Submitted 3/30/2025 by Jerilyn

My Story about Fort Chambers is that I've lived in Boulder since 1984 and I didn't learn the story of Fort Chambers until the City acquired it in 2019. Then what I saw was a monument that was a monumental lie. Being a tribal member i was aware of and used to this kind of display of ignorance. It was, and in many, but thankfully fewer places, is common where Indians are concerned. Still, it strung because it felt willful and so wrong and out of place and time in 2019.

I think most people in Boulder would say they don't know the Fort Chambers story. That means in important ways, we don't know ourselves. It's time to figure out who we are and decide who we want to be.

All History Matters

Submitted 3/30/2025 by maloneh

Posted on behalf of Carol Affleck and Shirley Schaller (originally sent via e-mail):

"We envision a healing trail on the southern portion of the property as shown on your drawing map. The trail should be a truthful timeline of events, with interpretive signage for both the Tribes and the Settler/Homesteaders. Native and prairie plants might be included along the trail.

Address what other troops from where in Colorado participated in Sand Creek. There was no battle at Fort Chambers. The settlers built the sod fort for safe shelter as evidenced in oral histories, prior to the troops training at the fort for 20 days. The settlers went to the fort for and stayed for safe shelter.

We do not support a recreation of Fort Chambers. The exact location of the fort is unknown.

The agricultural hay field and the historic Chambers/Williams/Poor Farm house and all of the historic farm structures must be restored to the Secretary of Interior's standards.

The significant intact farm complex should be maintained and honored as a Heritage Agriculture museum site.

The marker must be returned. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, along with the buildings and features.

Stewardship of the entire property is highly critical. The house has been vandalized. A caretaker should be living in the upstairs back apartment. Farming activities should be continued. The hayfield must be irrigated. The gardens should be restored. The lawn must be watered and mowed. The historic plantings of roses, lilacs, iris, flowers and the mulberry tree and other trees must be watered and maintained.

Inexperienced people have suggested animals should be returned to the farm, including buffalo. Animals must be tended, watered, fed. An trained onsite caretaker would be necessary to tend animals. Buffalo and animals eat a lot. Overgrazing? Where would the extra necessary feed come from?

Security and liability are important issues. Security for the site and buildings. Liability for visitors walking and hiking the trails, near water, wildlife, snakes and more.

As Valmont descendants we have a history to share. Our history must be told and respected.

The hate directed at the settlers and their descendants in public meetings and otherwise, must stop. We need respect. False, incorrect and incomplete information must be refuted.

We respect the Tribal history.

All history matters. All history must be told with truth.

We look forward with excitement to participating in the public input process. We want to share our true story.

Respectfully,
Carol Affleck
Shirley Schaller

One further point – we do not support the renaming of the site. History of everything matters."

Comments from layana – What Happened, How Did We Get Here

Submitted 3/30/2025 by maloneh

Posted on behalf of layana (originally sent via e-mail):

"First -- i think Ava Hamilton's question at Ernest's excellent workshop (Thank You, City) deserves full focused consideration and deliberation. I know this is hard to hear. She asked why a healing trail would be designed to be at the Fort. A multitude of Indigenous people, including many who unlike Ava are not direct descendents of Leaders massacred in 1864, have explicitly stated their wish to not go near the Fort Chambers site where people trained to kill their relatives.

It seems impractical to have the place where men trained for the massacre serve as a place of both education and "healing." The education - the historical facts - is traumatising. One cannot be traumatised, reflect, and heal in the same moment. And one cannot "heal" in a real way unless dealing with actuality. If a Healing Trail were elsewhere on a beautiful Valley spot, settler and Original Inhabitant descendants might both eventually walk there - maybe.

It seems important to have a full educational, revelatory and perhaps corrective experience at Fort Chambers, but this may not be the spot for a healing trail. This really has to be honestly deliberated by all parties involved.

Things I think should be at Fort Chambers that i don't see much of around me yet: You are probably up on all these but here goes:

1. John Evans/(Territorial government involvement):

a) In 2022 before the October Re-membling at the Dairy, there was a state archive website with language literally describing Evans in terms of "Glory". This should be in a display educating people about the accepted patterns of earlier settler society; as with the marker at the Fort that Fred says to put back but with corrections also shown, this record should be kept, and at the same time corrected. Today i found a more recent entry that is at best ambiguous about Evans. This should also be revised. You will know these records much better than i.

b) Caroline Goodwin's poem "I Will Not Say", that she read at the Re-membling, should have a special PLAQUE, with her identity as Evans' great-great granddaughter and the signatories other family members highlighted. She has just confirmed her pleasure and approval re. this submittal suggestion.

c) Denver University John Evans Study Committee Report full text. ([External link](https://www.du.edu/news/john-evans-study-committee-report))<https://www.du.edu/news/john-evans-study-committee-report>([External link](#))

2. County Involvement per se:

I have not seen a statement from the County acknowledging its historical involvement in the massacre. I was not an official historian for the Re-membling, and it was only AFTER the event that i found out on the Carnegie website that George W. Chambers was a COUNTY COMMISSIONER at the time of the massacre!!! Not a random farmer as I had been told :). This is highly significant. Today on state archives I found more crucial names. Nichols was the County Sherrif and stepped down to be in the regiment. All this governmental involvement needs to be clearly covered at the site.

3. **Morse Coffin's published letter excerpt:** Attached is the excerpt I sent Katie last year. It gives a clear image of attitudinal societal norms at the time of SCM.
4. Maybe even include the rough tape of the Re-membering at the Dairy that is on the City website? But please not until the credit and name-spelling mistakes at the end have been corrected and the Arapaho and Cheyenne translations of the Songs added, which Fred approved. I was in medical extremis when that tape was sent to the City and have not yet been able to get it fixed.
5. Christian Churches input: including the Methodist church whose minister participated in the Christian Lament in the Re-membering. (Chivington being a Methodist pastor). Maybe another crucial one will come forth in the future with a bit more attention.
6. Full text of Soule's and Cramer's letters to Wynkoop.
7. Again, let me iterate the importance of the ironic and seminal connection between the desecration site of Fort Chambers and the sacred site of Valmont Butte...all on historically the same land. The Valmont Butte site has erroneously been seen by some as an Indigenous decisional site - fortunately the EPA is currently recognizing settler responsibility at that site and is demanding coal ash cleanup. Fort Chambers site needs to acknowledge this extraordinary temporal and spatial juxtaposition of genocide and sacred praxis on the landscape.
8. The Founding Peoples of this region need to be acknowledged in City Charter and at the Fort and their story told up to the present, as Paula noted, including the hoped-for imminent return of some descendants. This would include reference to Utes whose presence has been documented up to 1200-2000 years ago."

What Happened, How Did We Get Here continued

Submitted 3/30/2025 by layana

The Battle at Sand Creek

Written by Morse H. Coffin in a series of articles to the Colorado Sun, 1879. Excerpt only.

"I now desire to mention a few things in order to make plain the general opinion among the people at that time regarding Indian killing, and thus account in some degree for the scalping indulged in at Sand Creek, and which is now condemned by many good persons. At the time the 3d Colorado regiment was raised, the idea was very general that a war of extermination should be waged; that neither sex nor age should be spared; and women held to these views in common with men, and it is my opinion that as great a per cent of the latter as the former held this view; and one often heard the expression that "nits make lice, make a clean thing of it." Of course there were some exceptions, as I mentioned in my former letter, but that such exceptions were a weak minority must be well known by most residents of Colorado at that time. I propose to show that both officers and soldiers but carried out the general sentiment of the country; and let each bear their share of blame if any attach to what was done; for I wish it understood that Colorado soldiers fourteen years ago were not bloodthirsty and cruel above all men who then lived, though a few of us did not agree with the majority as to some things." Morse H. Coffin.

ICP RPC Coffin Quote EXCERPT

"I now desire to mention a few things in order to make plain the general opinion among the people at that time regarding Sand Creek (Massacre),...At the time the 3rd Colorado regiment was raised, the idea was very general that a war of extermination should be waged; that neither sex nor age should be spared; and women held to these views in common with men. Of course there were some exceptions, but that such exceptions were a weak minority must be well known by most residents of Colorado at that time. ... both officers and soldiers but carried out the general sentiment of the country; ...I wish it understood that Colorado soldiers fourteen years ago were not bloodthirsty and cruel above all men who then lived, though a few of us did not agree with the majority as to some things."

Morse H. Coffin, Colorado Sun, 1879.

ICP RPC Coffin Quote EXCERPT

Feedback Handout Submissions - Received 3/21

"Recommend consulting with Elizabeth Black (Bldr city resident). She has conducted major compilation of history of water use, ditches, water rights in Bldr. County. She lives in North Bldr. She, years ago, created a major display of this history – in Denver Public Library."

"Emphasize that the Native Americans and the early settlers practiced sustainable environmentally/toxic chemically free agriculture. And this farm should be today & into the future those earth saving practices – and the farm must not allow any pesticides or synthetic chemicals – not only honoring the past but being an example for present & future care for our planet. Emphasize still in all displays, trail markers, etc." – Richard Andrews rich@zeoponix.com 303-918-8297 (nearby organic farm to this site).

"Plant veg & fruits on the farm land. Buying back native products & raise the animals that were there ago. Once you need physical help I'm young." – Miriam 720-771-9772

"See page with info on William Byers and Rocky Mountain News – shows how a false narrative was created to instill fear in the settlers – There were those who wanted to exploit the land for profit (cutting timber, mining minerals, building railroads, selling land) – they saw the Native people as being in the way, so they needed to be removed.

Included printed handout, reading:

"William Byers editor of the Rocky Mtn. News

"In August, the Rocky Mountain News published an appeal by Governor Evans to establish civilian militias to fight 'the merciless savages.' To back that up, the News published its own editorial, written or at least approved by Byers, that encouraged citizens to join. The editorial declared,

"A few months of active extermination against the red devils will bring quiet, and nothing else will." (Aug. 10, 1864). Three days later, they again published an appeal from the Governor, this one specifically for volunteers to join the Third Regiment. On October 5, the Rocky Mountain News published under the headline "Good News for the Third Regiment," a message from Colonel Chivington that "The boys of the Third may soon be off on the war path [sic]. Let the red skins [sic] look out now."

Stone monument used during the Indian uprising"

Fort Chambers / Poor Farm - Listening and Learning Comments Gathered through In-Person Workshop Activity

The following are comments provided at the public workshop on Fort Chambers / Poor Farm planning on March 21, 2025. Hosted by the City of Boulder and facilitated by Keystone Policy Group, the workshop involved five themed stations for participants to rotate through and share ideas. Comments were either written directly by participants or transcribed through conversation with facilitators.

Prompt: Indigenous Perspectives and Connection to Sand Creek Massacre
Opportunity for cultural exchange/ learning
Represent ourselves, our information in: Books, film, cultural information, etc!
Tell the whole story of the land - from before discovery "doctrine of discovery"
What the Indigenous want
The word "Indigenous" and clarifying its meaning
Tribal history and where there is now a North and South Cheyenne Arapahoe Tribes. Would it be worth discussing how the settlement of Cherry Creek split the Arapaho tribe north/south
Healing should be on a different piece of land - this land holds too much pain
Different place!
Themes that Sand Creek and Colonization did not have to happen "We could have treated people like people"
Names and/or other information on each Cheyenne and Arapaho killed at Sand Creek. Even if it just identifies them as "unknown child"
Clarify the "who" and "what" the city means by Indigenous perspectives
Healing does not mean forgetting
Have Tribal cultural resource preservation officer (THPO) survey the land for significance
Start with unbearable relationship to past - then somewhat then end with progress - where we can arrive
Example from Glacier National Park "Blackfoot"
Current life of Indigenous community
"How much solidarity and unity is there amongst the tribes"
Acknowledge what was done and our own involvement - the story of how citizens are here
Show how history has glorified the soldiers
More than just "signage" - space for community events and knowledge sharing

Prompt: Indigenous Perspectives and Connection to Sand Creek Massacre

Cheyenne Arapaho language on site

Arapaho as that the site represents bad Memory

I love historic photos would love to see some along the trail on placards one that pertain to the tribe/s

Capture voices to play stories - hearing Real voices

Stories from local native folks and their connection to the region

Signage that identifies all Native plants and their usage in food and medicine and sacred rituals

Why is the land not given back to the tribes?

Hearting about kinship, child raising - what was it like to be raised as an arapaho child? Historically pre-colonization

Incorporate books, literature, tribal knowledge holders. Oral history

Plants and healing, but at another location

People should not be soothed by the site

Healing seems incongruous here. Maybe remembrance? So it isn't erased.

Prompt: Land and Ecosystem at Fort

What the Indigenous want

Plant vegetables and fruits on the farmland

Bring back native products

Raise the animals that were there ago

Once you need physical help, happy to

Water rights are part of our history. Water rights back to June 1862 for the first ditch in Boulder County, 340 shares/5600, honor this part of the property

Boulder and Lefthand ditch, little better

Farmland

Honor the history of the farm, organic farming, indigenous ways of farming

given the history/attrocities associated here, does this feel like appropriation?

Recognize that settlers replaced indigenous plants and animals with European crops etc.

Prompt: Land and Ecosystem at Fort

Where are there opportunities of intersection land with the ag parcel and the healing trail

Edible landscape opportunities?

Involve young people in the building of the site and healing trails

Submitted proposal from HAFN

Recognize that indigenous may consider any food from these parcels of land inedible +2

Indigenous plants/native plantings, teaching respect for lands and other beings we share it with

Providing food for our community

Prompt: Fort Chambers, Company D, and Connection to Sand Creek Massacre

What the Indigenous want.

Reckoning needs to come before healing

The story that was created to instill fear in the settlers and turn them against the native people needs to be told (Sticky note: Story told by Indigenous people)

Important to include the stone monument to show that this falsehood was perpetuated through the 1960s

There needs to be a list of all Company D members, where they've been valorized, and how. A physical list including street names, institutional naming, etc.

A list of Company D members with financial links to the massacre outcomes - railroads, land, water, mineral, etc.

Tell the story of the fort, training, and Massacre at the site.

The praise for Evans in the state archives needs to stay and connection to the Sand Creek Massacre be named.

Learn the state and county involvement, and history of Evans' involvement

Stop the hate. Work towards mutual or shared respect/understanding. Have all people's story told.

Put the marker back. Installed during Boulder Centennial paid for by Chambers Family descendants.

Nichols was County Sheriff, stepped down to lead Company D. Emphasize the County gov + State gov connection to the fort.

Prompt: Fort Chambers, Company D, and Connection to Sand Creek Massacre

What about Seibert? Gov before/after Evans? He is not often mentioned in the history.

Why does the healing trail need to be on the site of Fort Chambers? Can it be on another beautiful site that doesn't have this history? An alternative healing trail site could be the property at Niwot and 63rd. There's a nice property overlooking Niwot hill, could the healing trail be there?

Prompt: Poor Farm and Early History of Boulder

Everyone's history matters. (Sticky note added: Careful, this sounds a lot like "all lives matter" signed, an Indigenous person)

What the indigenous want.

Blending of history of ag in the history of Fort Chambers > Economic benefits, compounded/inherited wealth of the land

Poor farm was a way to remove unwanted (poor, mentally ill, etc) people from society

Mr. Chambers was a county commissioner. Mr Nichols was a county (elected) Sheriff. Morse Kaufman quote.

History of irrigation ditch: June 1, 1862 water rights, consult water history experts for more history

Demonstrations of sustainable, historical practices

Organic

Tim Harnos is a wonderful storyteller. He has stories with settlers & where they came from.

Show sign "Indian Uprising"

Protection and appropriate use of house? Museum & historic farm buildings - interpretation honor farming & agriculture

Include Valmont history/ settlers and Chambers. National Register nomination info by Carol Affleck Poor Farm History. Replace monument as history of its time

Adopt part of the trail done by youth

Survey the land and have info to build interpretation & ceremony

Safety concerns of home, graffiti, security/gate

Farming presence on site, building preservation

Poor farms as warehouses for divorced/widowed women.

Prompt: Poor Farm and Early History of Boulder

Indigenous folk creating the path

Could the input of a professional historian enrich the settler narrative or might it inadvertently limit community perspectives?

Prompt: Other Ideas

Who is this supposed to heal? I keep wondering if native peoples will consider this a place to go.

Also there are a lot of stories to tell, and I wonder if this might be too diluted - but then I was chatting with Phil and we hit on the idea of phasing this out or maybe doing like exhibits that could focus on company D, poor farm, etc

What the indigenous want

Native American dance and song/ programming

Might be good at another place without so much pain

Separating Poor Farm from Healing Trail stories (Withe) Both benefit from healing

Re-naming

Unscramble settlers and soldiers-note their hybridity, the 'story' of settler/soldiers in a day lied to folks, peasants settlers

Poor Farm represents class divisions with in white society

It is not forgive and forget, it's forgive and remember

Trail might end somewhere else than where it starts so the visitor doesn't end where they start

Organic farming

Poor farms in general have fraught histories

Women were sent to poor farms, before being institutionalized at asylums- does Boulder's farm share that history

A walking meditation would/could a labyrinth be appropriate, does this even belong here

Tenant that understands sustainable agriculture

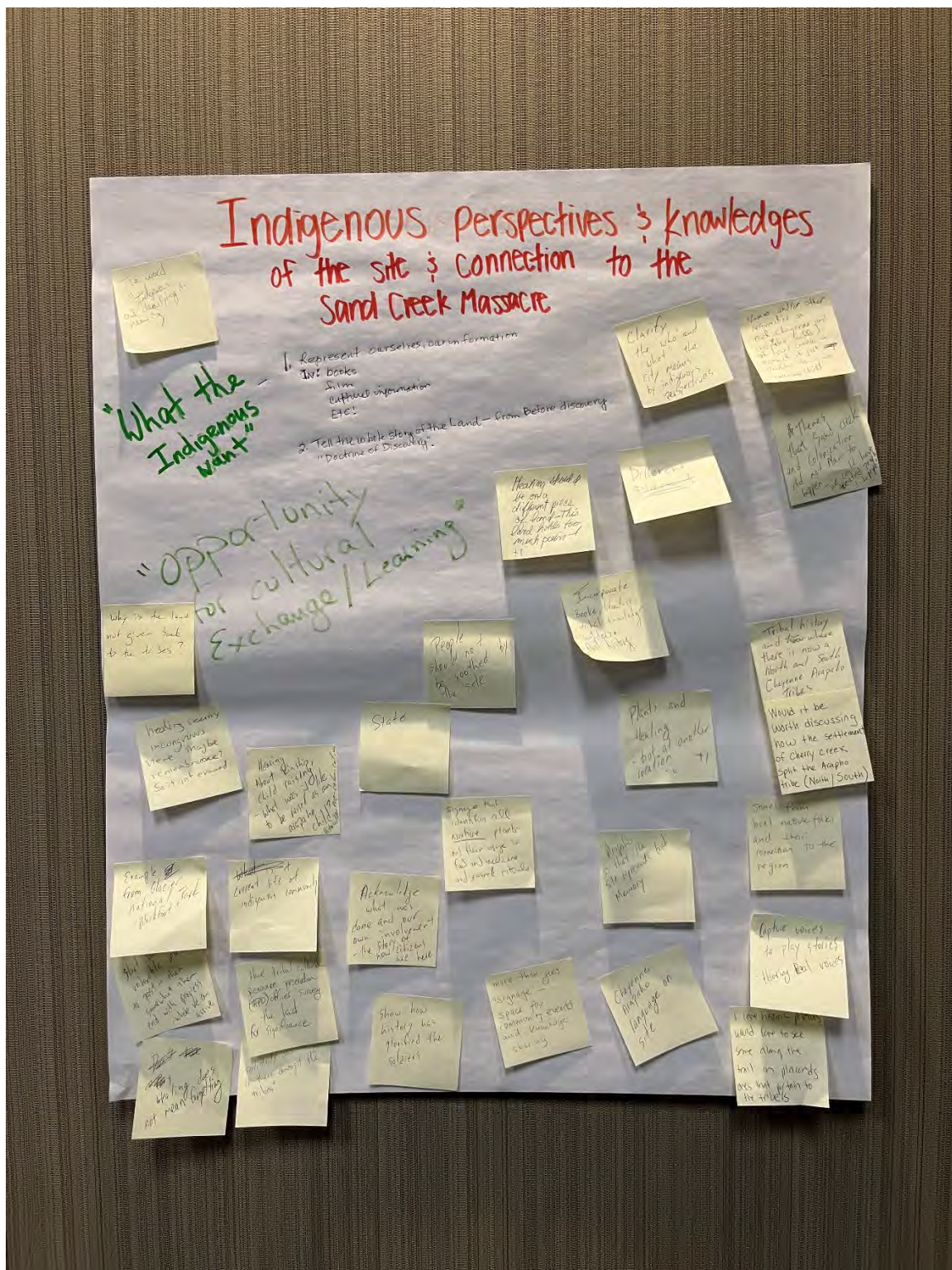
Concern about not considering farming, irrigation, agriculture, sustainable use of land

Long term funding and oversight for the site and the build environment

Concern about vandalism at site, there needs to be security, concerns about people starting fires

Prompt: Other Ideas
Concerns about security for the healing trail
Put a quote
Liability insurance for public use events, clear regulation for access for long term stewardship of the entire property

Fort Chambers / Poor Farm - Listening and Learning In-Person Workshop Activity Materials



The land & ecosystem

at the Fort Chambers/Poor Farm site

"What the Indigenous want"

Plant vegetables + fruits on the farmland

bring back native products*

raise the animals that were there ago

once you need physical help - Wanyawona - happy to

water rights ^{are part of our history} back to June 1862 - N Bldk Farmers d'tt't
Farmland ^{340 shares/5000} - honor this part of the property
^{1st d'tt't in BC?}

honor the history of the farm - organic farming - indigenous ways of

honor native american practices + care for the land
^{where} ~~and~~ are there opportunities of intersection w/ the ag parcel + the

Healing Trail

Edible Landscape Opportunities?

^{involve} young people in the building of
the site + healing trails.

producing food
for our community

Recognize
that settlers
replaced indig
plants and animals
with european
crops etc

Does the community
wonder what some of
the opportunities?

Recognize
that indigenous
ways existed
and had some
value prior to
land reclamation

Indigenous plants/
native plantings
teaching respect
for land and
other beings we
share it with

Submitted
proposal
from 1995

Fort Chambers, Company D & connection to the Sand Creek Massacre

- What the Indigenous want.
- Reckoning needs to come before healing.
- The story that was created to instill fear in the settlers and turn them against the native people needs to be told.
- In South to include the stone monument to show that this falsehood was perpetuated through the 1960s.
- There needs to be a list of all Company D members, where they've been valorized, and how. A physical list including street names, institutional naming, etc.
- A list of Company D members with financial links to the massacre outcomes - Railroads, land, etc.
- Tell the story of the fort, training, and Massacre at the site.

Join the state and county involvement - History of 200 years

Likewise, the state needs to stop and connect to SCM

Fort Chambers / Company D Continued

- Stop the hate. Work towards
Respect
- +2 Mutual or Shared understanding. Have
all people's stories told.
- Put the ~~marker~~ ^{Marker} back installed during Boulder
Centennial paid for by Chambers Family descendants.
- Nichols was County Sheriff, Stepped down to
+ State gov
lead Company D. Emphasize the County gov.
Connection to the Fort.

Why does the
walking trail need
to be on the side
of Fort Chambers?
Can it be on another
beautiful site that
doesn't have the history?

How is Trail Allocated
Must use GR -
there's a nice property
overlooking Mount Hill.
Could the walking trail
be there?

What about Seibert?
gov. before/after
Events? He's not
often mentioned in
the history

Office DEPOT.

self-stick tabletop
easel pad/flipchart

20 sheets
20 x 23"
(50.8 cm x 58.4 cm)
ITEM 775-088

TIM HARMOS
is a wonderful
story teller. He has
stories of settlers
& where they came from
which would

Show sign
"Indian uprising"

The Poor Farm & the early history of Boulder & the historic Valmont area

everyone's history matters

← careful
- this sounds a lot
like "all lives matter"
sign
on indigenous
prison

Indigenous
creating the path
and checking

what the indigenous want.

- blending of history of ag in the history of
Fort Chambers. → economic benefits → compounded/inherited wealth
of the land

Poor Farm was a way to remove unwanted
(poor, mentally ill, etc.) people from society

- Mr. Chambers was a ^{county} Commissioner

- Mr. Nichols was a county related sheriff

- Morse Kaufman quote

Could the input
of a professional
historian enrich the
settler narrative, or
might it inadvertently
limit community
perspectives?

Poor farms
as ware houses
for divorced/widowed
women.

Protection &
appropriate use
of house - museum
buildings -
interpretation
former farming &
agriculture

include Valmont
history/communities
National Register
designation info
about kitchen
Poor Farm history
replace manuscript
to history of the area

Network for good
grassroots develop-
ment on hold
could move this kind
of old history forward

Story of Irrigation ditch

water rights

for excerpts for more history

Sustainable, historical practices

strations of

education effort
by the city
in conjunction of
the survey

Farming
Presence
on site
Bldg Preservation

Safety Concerns
of Home
Graffiti
Security/Guards

Swelling medication
would/could a
synthesis be written
- propyl?



might be good at another place w/o so much pain

(whittle) Bathe benefit from healing.

Poor farms in general have fraught histories

Women were sent to poor farms before being institutionalized at asylums - Does Bunker's farm share ^{same history}

the 'story' of settler/soldiers - in a day
lied to folks → ~~soldiers~~ → pissants settle

long-term
funding and oversight
for the site
and the
britt environment

It's forgive + remember.

Concern about vandalism at site

- there needs to be security
- concern about people walking fires

Concerns about security for the building
- put a gate

Tenant
that understands
sustainable
agriculture

Concern
about consulting
firm - continue
- irrigation
- Agriculture
- sustainable
use of
land

Insurance
- for public
use/events
Clear regulations
for access, entry of
for very small things
the entire
property

Fort Chambers / Poor Farm - Listening and Learning

Comment Form Submissions During Engagement Window 1

Time	Name (First Name (Last Name)	Email	Comment
3/1/25 10:31	Alan	O'Hashi	<p>greetings - produced a pbs documentary 'beyond sand creek' that includes the fort chambers site.</p> <p>https://youtu.be/Ym_dQAsqrHM?si=L7vJLacuzvp4d287</p> <p>i thought it would be of interest to you. a new cut will screen during the boulder international film festival on saturday march 15th at 12:45 pm at the century theater in boulder.</p> <p>thx alan o'hashi</p> <p>ps - i'm writing a book with information i learned from christian driver about a sake brewery at camp amache</p>
3/11/25 16:59	Dan	Fosco	<p>the only ones doing the interpretation for the indigenous, should be totally done & approved by the indigenous we have more than enough pioneer stuff already</p>
3/14/25 14:34	Paula	Palmer	<p>For more than a year, Right Relationship Boulder has advocated for construction of a representation of the fort, making it prominently visible from the road. Without a visible representation of the fort, the people of Boulder will not be confronted with the reality of what happened at the site. We need to see it to believe it. The fort/monument should not be placed in the Healing Trail. It is not part of the healing. It represents broken treaties, massacres, betrayals, white supremacy, Manifest Destiny, trauma, death, and centuries of injustice. It needs to be installed away from the Healing Trail. It needs to be seen as part of the agricultural project that replaced the Arapaho encampments in the Boulder Valley.</p> <p>When people enter the Fort Chambers site, they should not enter immediately onto a healing trail. Healing only comes about as a result of knowing the truth, telling the truth, acknowledging and apologizing for the harm that was done, and taking significant actions to make amends. Then healing can begin.</p>
3/15/25 14:52	Sloan	Schwindt	<p>I would like to be involved with this project. I'm a retired archaeologist and would be able to help with any surveys or excavations.</p>
3/16/25 9:21	Laurie	Rugenstein	<p>I submitted this on the "Story" page. I realized this is probably where I should submit it.</p> <p>Reckoning is needed before healing can begin.</p> <p>A Healing Trial is important, but we need to reckon with the difficult past before we can begin healing</p> <p>When entering the Fort Chambers site people should encounter things that lead them to reckon with the difficult past that took place here. This includes to greed for land and power on the part of some settler/colonizers and the false information they spread to create fear in the local settler/colonizers. Fear an effect way to control people, This dynamic still plays out in our country, and telling the truth about our past is one way to keep this from happening again.</p> <p>A representation of the fort could be part of this.</p> <p>Another part could be re-installing the stone marker with an explanation that as recently as the 1960s people were still referring to an "Indian uprising" in the area that never actually happened</p> <p>Large signage depicting what happened here leading up to the Sand Creek Massacre would also be important. We need to create an experience that allows people to FEEL it.</p>

3/20/25 13:55	Patricia	Hertzler	<p>My comment is related to the presence of the vintage residence that holds a prominent position at this time. I recommend that the entrance to the eventual healing trail and fort representation be moved away from the residence. I don't know the actual property lines of the site but it seems that an entrance could be located further south of the residence, as far south as the property line allows. My reason for this is that it would be very confusing to many visitors to arrive at that beautiful structure only to then be expected to learn about the history of Ft Chambers and its relation to the massacre at Sand Creek. Also, I recommend reducing or eliminating references to the "poor farm". A simple plaque acknowledging the architect and the City of Boulder would be sufficient. I definitely do not think it would be appropriate to use the structure as a visitor center or anything related to Ft. Chambers and the tragic story related to the massacre UNLESS it is totally divorced from its own history as a "poor farm."</p>
3/21/25 11:27	mario	vidalon	<p>Teams to be emphasized: Truthfulness and forgiveness. This will help for history to guide us how to live our lives. Many people ignore the wisdom of historical events because we remove them from our teachings and discourse, judging them instead against today's ephemeral cultural obsessions, and rejecting everything if they are found deficient in anything.</p>
3/22/25 14:51	Jane	Westberg	<p>Fort Chambers</p> <p>I'm very glad you are planning to commemorate the horrendous history of what took place on this important land in our community. We need to face our history of massacres, broken treaties, betrayals and more.</p> <p>However, my understanding is that the current plan doesn't have a representation of the fort itself on the property. I strongly encourage you to have a visible representation of the fort and that it be visible from the road. We have to see it to begin to believe it.</p> <p>I also recommend that when we, the people of Boulder, enter the Fort Chambers site from the parking area, we don't immediately enter the healing path. Healing can only come when we face the truth, apologize for the harm that was done, and make significant actions to make amends.</p> <p>Thank you, Jane Westberg Boulder CO</p>
3/29/25 20:38	Artie	Thompson	<p>That land be set aside that an annual Pow Wow may be held. When we Pow Wow our ancestors dance with us. We dance for those who weren't allowed to dance (institutionalized in boarding schools), those that are incarcerated, those in nursing homes not able to attend, those that haven't discovered their heritage, those that have been told untruths about their heritage, the Loved Ones missing and represented by the MMIW/MMIP and the list goes on and on...but most of all for those that lost their lives, the ancestors and relatives of those that survived the massacre at Sand Creek. Wopila.</p>

3/30/25 10:54	Dewi Sungai	Marquis- Houston	<p>I am a displaced Indigenous woman (Ngaju Dayak from Borneo, adopted as a baby by white Americans, now residing in Louisville with my husband and daughter) in close community with Native people across the Front Range. I don't know a single Native person here who believes anything about this plot to be "healing." To declare this a "Healing Trail," even when addressing non-Native people, feels arrogant and presumptuous on the city's part. Who are you all to tell me what's healing, or where I am personally in that process, or what my experience is walking this plot of land? How does proclaiming a "Healing Trail" gaslight the experience of Native people that you claim to care so deeply about? How does it erase the history of the Sand Creek Massacre and intergenerational trauma that we all carry?</p> <p>I don't know any Native people who can walk this land without being overwhelmed with trauma. And so the greatest potential I can imagine for this site is that non-Native visitors learn the truth-- that this was a staging ground for the massacre-- and reflect deeply on how they're connected to it. You don't have to be a direct descendant of the volunteer militia men who staged here to have benefited from the events of Sand Creek, and the white supremacy culture that fueled this history and continues to dominate Boulder County today. Perhaps a walk through a REFLECTION TRAIL-- which feels to me like a much more appropriate name-- could help prompt questions like, "Who am I? Where do I come from? How did I get here / What is the truth of my non-Native family's immigration story to this land? Who were my Indigenous ancestors, and what losses have I experienced as a result of colonization? Am I acknowledging those losses? Have I allowed myself to mourn them? What intergenerational trauma do I carry? Where am I willing to break the cycle-- not only for myself, but for my ancestors, children, and future generations, and all my relations surrounding me? What do I need to disrupt in order to fulfill my purpose and responsibilities in this community today?"</p> <p>As a member of local Native community, I often see white "allies" show up at local, Native-centered events, happy to be appalled at the history of Sand Creek and boarding schools; inspired by Native drumming and dancing; quick to buy beaded earrings at the Native market. These are easy boxes to check, but ONLY checking boxes is performative. It perpetuates the privilege of comfort of being "a good person," but there is no deep reflection or personal accountability in this. I rarely see these "allies" revoking privilege to create more equity and balance in this county. It is hard and daily work to be truly anti-racist. It requires a level of self-awareness and humility that I rarely see in white people here.</p> <p>This reminds me of the quote by the aboriginal elder Lila Watson: "If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." How are you ensuring that your work is actually honoring the partnerships you're trying to build with Native people here? How will you ensure that this site isn't simply performative, or vindicating white fragility, or celebrating white saviorism-- but truly guides people to do the work in recognition that their liberation is also bound up in the liberation of Native people here, and Indigenous people worldwide?</p> <p>Words matter. Please, please, please stop calling this a "Healing Trail."</p>
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3/30/25 11:05	Jason	Houston	<p>We are deeply embedded in Native community here through found family, friendship, ceremony, and a collective effort to forget the true history of the land and people here in the context of vitalizing an Indigenous future. We attended the March 21st concept meeting to better understand how the Boulder community sees this process. After multiple follow up conversations to sort out my thinking, I want to share some of my personal reflections:</p> <p>* There was one comment to "not forget the white story". In the recounting of this history, there is no white vs Native story. There is one story and that includes the truth of all that happened. It's everyone's story. This comment illuminates a problematic dynamic I've seen elsewhere in related conversations that usually means more precisely "don't forget the White perspective". It's hard to forget the White perspective ... it's been the dominate perspective here since White people first invaded Colorado. And it's not only often incomplete but untrue. I am not advocating for a biased shift in any other direction ... simply the full truth and from an honest perspective.</p> <p>* Calling it a "Healing Trail" is incredibly problematic and an example of the deeply embedded White supremacies in our community. Healing who and how? I won't speak for any Native person living here, especially one with ancestors and relatives directly affected by the Sand Creek Massacre, but I will attempt to amplify the voices I've heard. Before healing, we need remembrance and restoration of the truth. And this includes those of us who have benefitted directly or Indirectly from such atrocities unpacking our connections and how we got here and then doing the work to understand personal accountability and commit to revoking unjust privilege with a goal of restoration, reparations, and reconciliation. I believe we need at least all of that before we can heal.</p> <p>* I also saw comments requesting a celebration of things like organic agriculture being or have been done on this land. While an issue of vital importance in this day and age of industrialized food (and I worked as an advocate for small farms and local foods, including organic, regenerative, ethical, etc. food systems, for over a decade) this does not seem the place for all that. It is clear to me that by far the most important thing to deal with here is this land's relationship to one of the worst atrocities in US history. There are plenty of other opportunities to talk about our food systems (and some of the other similar comments I saw) that do not dilute and attempt (intentionally or unintentionally) to erase the most important aspects of its history.</p> <p>Thank you for listening.</p>
3/30/25 20:07	Iayana	Rael	<p>First -- i think Ava Hamilton's question at Ernest's excellent workshop (Thank You, City) deserves full focused consideration and deliberation. She asked why a healing trail would be designed to be at the Fort. Many Indigenous people, including many who unlike Ava are not direct descendents of Leaders massacred in 1864, have explicitly stated their wish to not go near the Fort Chambers site where people trained to kill their relatives.</p> <p>It seems important to have a full educational, revelatory and perhaps corrective experience at Fort Chambers, but this may not be the spot for a healing trail.</p> <p>Things I think should be at Fort Chambers that i don't see much of around me yet: You are probably up on all these but here goes:</p> <p>1. John Evans/(Territorial government involvement):</p> <p>a) In 2022 before the October Re-membering at the Dairy, there was a state archive website with language literally describing Evans in terms of "Glory". This should be in a display educating people about the accepted patterns of earlier settler society; as with the marker at the Fort that Fred says to put back but with corrections also shown, this record should be kept, and at the same time corrected. Today i found a more recent entry that is at best ambiguous about Evans. This should also be revised. You will know these records much better than i.</p> <p>b) Caroline Goodwin's poem "I Will Not Say", that she read at the Re-membering, should have a special plaque with her identity as Evans' great-great granddaughter and the signatories other family members highlighted. She has just confirmed her pleasure and approval re. this submittal suggestion. CarolineGoodwinpoemSandC.pdf (775K).</p> <p>c) Denver University John Evans Study Committee Report full text. https://www.du.edu/news/john-evans-study-committee-report</p>

			<p>2. County Involvement per se: I have not seen a statement from the County acknowledging its historical involvement in the massacre. I was not an official historian for the Re-membering, and it was only AFTER the event that I found out on the Carnegie website that George W. Chambers was a COUNTY COMMISSIONER at the time of the massacre!!! Not a random farmer as I had been told :). This is highly significant. Today on state archives I found more crucial names. Nichols was the County Sherrif and stepped down to be in the regiment. All this governmental involvement needs to be clearly covered at the site.</p> <p>3. Morse Coffin's published letter excerpt: Attached is the excerpt I sent Katie last year. It gives a clear image of attitudinal societal norms at the time of SCM.</p> <p>4. Maybe even include the rough tape of the Re-membering at the Dairy that is on the City website? But please not until the credit and name-spelling mistakes at the end have been corrected and the Arapaho and Cheyenne translations of the Songs added, which Fred approved. I was in medical extremis when that tape was sent to the City and have not yet been able to get it fixed.</p> <p>5. Christian Churches input: including the Methodist church whose minister participated in the Christian Lament in the Re-membering. (Chivington being a Methodist pastor). Maybe another crucial one will come forth in the future with a bit more attention.</p> <p>6. Full text of Soule's and Cramer's letters to Wynkoop.</p> <p>7. Again, let me iterate the importance of the ironic and seminal connection between the desecration site of Fort Chambers and the sacred site of Valmont Butte...all on historically the same land. The Valmont Butte site has erroneously been seen by some as an Indigenous decisional site - fortunately the EPA is currently recognizing settler responsibility at that site and is demanding coal ash cleanup. Fort Chambers site needs to acknowledge this extraordinary juxtaposition of genocide and sacred praxis on the greater landscape.</p> <p>CarolineGoodwinpoemSandC.pdf (775K). https://www.du.edu/news/john-evans-study-committee-report</p> <p>It seems i am not managing to copy links into this page; please excuse my technical ignorance. I will send this by email as I was doing before getting Katie's last message. Thank you and best wishes.</p>
3/30/25 22:17	Jerilyn	DeCoteau	<p>In order for healing to take place the true and full story of ft chambers must be told and the lie of Indian uprisings that was told through the day the marker was removed must be acknowledged. The harm of the lie must be identified and responsibility accepted.</p> <p>The kind of detailed Information shared in RRB's Fort Chambers slide show should be included. What happened there, who are the participants, what became of the participants in fort chambers and the sand creek massacre that followed. How were the perpetrators try rested. How were the victims and the tribes treated. Bring the story to the present. What does it mean for us today. What actions are needed to heal and promote right relationship. Sites of conscience can maybe provide a good model for how to honestly confront and reckon with the past and continuing harms.</p> <p>As so many have urged there needs to be a visual representation of ft chambers and what happened there and at Sand Creek.</p> <p>Thank you for inviting comments.</p>
3/30/25 23:59	Catherine	Sundvall	<p>Plant an authentic chokecherry and wildplum food forest with medicine plants as a mini botanic garden with the healing trail. Provide descriptions and recipes in the visitor center with farm-to-table events with ingredients grown on the farm that include indigenous recipes.</p>