



# BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

## Civil War Monument (Denver)

Norman Dasinger, Jr., December 28, 2020  
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Civil War Monument by Jakob Otto Schweizer, Civic Center Park, Denver, Colorado | CC

Designed by Jack Howland, a member of the U.S. Army First Colorado Cavalry, “this statue of a Civil War cavalryman, dismounted with rifle in hand, honors the Colorado soldier who fought and died in the Civil War.”

Many battles are commemorated on the plaque at the statue's base, including the Sand Creek engagement in eastern Colorado. Jack Howland and the First Colorado were participants in this November 29, 1864, attack on 700 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians.

The monument was erected on July 24, 1909, to honor all Colorado soldiers who fought in battles in the Civil War and elsewhere. It was paid for by the Pioneer’s Association and the state of Colorado. The sculptor was Swiss born J. Otto Schweizer. He is most noted for creating seven memorial sculptures on the Gettysburg battlefield, including the Lincoln statue inside the Pennsylvania State Memorial and the John Geary statue at Culp’s Hill. His works also include the Molly Pitcher Monument in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and the Monument to Confederate Women at the State Capitol in Little Rock State, Arkansas.

Chiseled into the base of his Denver sculpture is the statement: “Colorado had the highest average of volunteers in the Civil War of any state or territory in the Union.” Originally, two black walnut trees from the home of Abraham Lincoln flanked the memorial, which are now gone. Also flanking the sculpture were two howitzer cannon produced in 1862 and 1863 by the Revere Copper Company. In 1878, President Grant donated the guns to the Chaffee Light Artillery, which later was incorporated into the Colorado National Guard. When no longer needed, they eventually were placed at the base of this monument. The guns, last fired on August 1, 1935, in celebration of Colorado Day, were recently restored with money from gaming revenue. When the acting curator’s clothes caught fire from the salute, the decision was made to cap the cannons.

In 1999, a re-textualization plaque was placed by the memorial interpreting the Sand Creek engagement.



Close-up of Civil War Monument | CC

On June 25, 2020, the statue was toppled. Two men who were present that day commented to the local news: “We have to get rid of every racist monument in this country. We have to do it in our own backyard. I don’t know who did this but I thank them.”

The other man added, “I know that [soldier] is one of many men who were part of the Sand Creek Massacre and many other genocidal acts that happened throughout Colorado’s early history.”

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said he is “outraged that a Civil War statue in front of the State Capitol was toppled and damaged overnight.” Witnesses reported that there was no security and it took five to ten minutes to topple it. The two brass cannon were also removed.



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