

TRI-STATE EXCURSION



MONTANA • SOUTH DAKOTA • WYOMING



Students are required to view the movie *Son of the Morning Star* as part of the overall learning package for the APUSH Excursion. The film is intended to parallel Evan S. Connell's 1984 national bestselling book of the same title.

Connell's work, reasonably well regarded among leading authorities, exposes the complexity of George Armstrong Custer and explains the details of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Connell skillfully intertwines Custer, fellow military officers, and Indian leaders whose lives had one common, momentous date with destiny.

Historical authenticity of the made-for-television movie, which debuted in 1991, is satisfactory, although certainly not flawless. While some Hollywood flare is added, the film presents a balanced story told from two starkly different perspectives—Custer's wife, Elizabeth ("Libbie"), who outlived her hero-husband by 57 years, and Kate Bighead, a Cheyenne woman who was not only present at the Little Bighorn clash but had several earlier encounters with Custer.

Showtime at the Elks Theatre, located in downtown Rapid City, will take place during the evening hours several days prior to the excursion in order to devote sufficient classroom sessions to aligning *Son of the Morning Star* with actual history. The movie runs three hours. Admission is free to APUSHers. Parking in metro Rapid City can be challenging at times; students are advised to observe posted regulations.

