

TRI-STATE EXCURSION



MONTANA - SOUTH DAKOTA - WYOMING



The actual travel portion of the excursion is a three-day affair involving two overnight stays. The primary focus is the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument located in southeastern Montana. In late June of 1876, a massive Indian alliance, led by Crazy Horse (*Tasunke Witco*), preeminent Sioux warrior chief, and Sitting Bull (*Tatanka Yotanka*), spiritual emissary of the Sioux, crushed Seventh Cavalry forces under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer. More than 250 soldiers, including Custer himself, were killed in the “Last Stand” fight.

In the early 1860s, disillusioned with the reservation policy of the Great White Father, Indians inhabiting the North American Plains took to the warpath. Some tribes resisted outright any limits to their hunting grounds, while others more inclined to abide by government boundaries felt betrayed whenever whites infringed on designated Indian lands to prospect for gold, lay railroad track, fence homesteads, and hunt buffalo. As a result, a series of bloody engagements occurred between Indians and bluecoats throughout the West during the next three decades.

Especially fierce Sioux resistance spearheaded by Chief Red Cloud (*Mahpiua Luta*) in northern Wyoming Territory and southeastern Montana Territory prompted the U.S. government to set aside adjacent land in southwestern Dakota Territory in 1868 as a collective reservation for the entire Sioux Nation. Before long, white trespassers and government variances fueled hostilities that would lead to the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the pinnacle event of the Plains Indian Wars.

The bus departs bright and early for the scenic four-hour drive to the Little Bighorn Battlefield. Students should bring a sack lunch to enjoy outdoors picnic-style at the city park in Broadus, Montana (if weather permits). Bus riders are strongly urged to wear cowboy hats.

Upon arrival at the Little Bighorn Battle site, all students will attend a presentation by U.S. Park Service personnel (90-minute film and narrative on the Visitor Center veranda facing the battlefield) after which comfortable time remains for smaller groups of APUSHers, as they please, to walk to the Last Stand Hill, Indian Memorial, and National Cemetery as well as browse the museum and bookstore. Roughly three hours is allocated for the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

Then it's onward to the Holiday Inn in Sheridan, Wyoming (an hour trip) for relaxation, camaraderie, and good night's rest in preparation for tomorrow's full agenda. Plenty of delicious pizza will be delivered for supper. The hotel's spacious commons with tables and chairs is ideally situated for students who wish to collaborate on the excursion study guide or other academic work before curfew. The indoor pool offers perfect opportunity for flat-out fun.

