

GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER



As Portrayed by Joseph Topinka



George Custer was born in New Rumley, Ohio just outside of Wheeling, VA on December 11, 1839. Living between there and Monroe Michigan to gain a better education, George grew up with ambitions far reaching the stretches of middle America to the great Civil War.

As the oldest surviving child of Emanuel and Maria Custer, George was doted on by his older half siblings, and grew up reading stories of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Napoleonic Wars, and the Mexican War.

Although he was too young to participate in the Mexican War, young George Armstrong Custer sought and was appointed to West Point Military Academy in 1857. Even though George graduated last in his class, Custer would later distinguish himself as the youngest Major General in American Military History.

Custer developed a strong reputation during the Civ-



il War. He fought in the first major engagement, the First Battle of Bull Run. His association with several important officers helped his career, as did his success as a highly effective Cavalry commander. Before war's end, Custer was promoted to the temporary rank (brevet) of major general. (At war's end, this was reduced to his permanent rank of captain). At the conclusion of the Appomattox Campaign, in which he and his troops played a decisive role, Custer was on hand at General Robert E. Lee's surrender.

After the Civil War, Custer was dispatched to the West to fight in the Indian Wars. The overwhelming defeat in his final battle overshadowed his achievements in the Civil War. Custer was defeated and killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, fighting against a coalition of Native American tribes in a battle that has come to be popularly known in American history as "Custer's Last Stand".



General George Armstrong Custer is portrayed by Joseph Topinka who resides in Bedford, PA. Joseph is a writer, historian, and Smithsonian speaker. His works are published in several civil war publications such as Civil War News and the Battlefield Journal. Joe has appeared on television as a civil war historian for The NBC Today Show and MTV "Total Reality Live". Mr. Topinka's works as an actor are also published in magazines such as Guns of the Old West and other publications.