

## **Sitting Bull's great-grandson to visit General George Custer's Monroe, Michigan Hometown**

*By Crystal Bay Communications*

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*Custer Celebration Event honors city's most famous resident George Armstrong Custer and takes place October 3rd - 11th, 2008. Guests include Sitting Bull's great-grandson, performances by the 126th Army Band of the Michigan National Guard, much more.*

Ernie LaPointe, a direct descendent of Chief Sitting Bull, is one of many distinguished guests participating in this year's Custer Celebration Event.

The annual event pays tribute to Monroe, Michigan's most famous resident General George Armstrong Custer, a Civil War hero and America's most controversial historical icon and takes place from October 3rd to October 11th.

This year's event focuses on Custer's western years and includes appearances by living historians portraying Custer, Buffalo Bill Cody, Mark Twain and Russia's Grand Duke Alexis.

Custer served as official escort to Alexis as he and his entourage of Russian dignitaries toured the country in 1871. A whirlwind tour designed to further strengthen the amicable relationship between the two countries, Americans made sure to fete this rare royal guest. Crowds greeted Alexis at railroad stations and bands struck up the Russian National Anthem. In addition to banquets, parades, and receptions, two exciting events included a grand buffalo hunt and lavish Mardi Gras ball.

LaPointe, great-grandson of the legendary Lakota Chief and Spiritual Leader Sitting Bull, will speak on the first Sunday of the event at the Monroe County Historical Museum. He'll recount the events of the Battle of the Little Big Horn as passed down orally by his people.

Presentations by other prominent historians and authors include: Dakota Goodhouse, Native American author and chief of interpretation at North Dakota's Fort Abraham Lincoln; Lee Chambers, author, Fort Abraham Lincoln; Michael Donahue, author, Drawing Battle Lines: The Map Testimony of Custer's Last Fight; and Michael Elliot, author, Custerology: The Enduring Legacy of the Indian Wars and George Armstrong Custer.

Chris Kull, chief archivist at Monroe County Historical Museum will reveal the stories of two remarkable 19th century women, Maggie Custer, the General's sister, and Elizabeth "Libbie" Custer, his wife.

First-class exhibits of rare Custer era artifacts on loan from leading national private and public collections will be on display at the Monroe County Historical Museum throughout the week. The museum houses the largest Custer exhibit in the world.

Self-guided tours of downtown Monroe allow event participants to walk where the General once walked. A few stops on the self-guided tour include: the church where Custer wed Elizabeth (Libbie) Bacon in what was dubbed "the wedding of the century", the shoe store (still in business) where Custer purchased his boots, the restored Bacon/Custer home, the church where the final memorial service was held to honor the Monroe men killed at the Battle of Little Big Horn, and historic Woodland Cemetery, site of the Custer and Bacon family plots.

Concerts in the park, contra dancing demonstrations and a grand ball reminiscent of the gala hosted to

honor the Russian Grand Duke during his American tour are part of the week's festivities.

On Friday, October 10th, an evening community concert is scheduled at St. Mary's Park and features the Monroe High School choir Generations of Sound and the 126th Army Band of the Michigan National Guard. Coincidentally, October 10th marks the 131st anniversary of the internment of Custer's remains at West Point. A 19th century fireworks display follows the concert.

The Custer Celebration Event is an exciting living history experience that draws visitors from all across the nation as well as throughout the world. Come to the General's hometown of Monroe, Michigan - where history lives.

Presented by the Monroe County Historical Society. Most events are free of charge! For further information and a complete schedule of events, visit: <http://blogsmonroe.com/custer> or call: 734 241-0201.

The Monroe County Historical Society's Custer Celebration Event Committee was formed to raise awareness of General George Armstrong Custer's life, times and impact on Monroe County's history.

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