

Reader's Guide

“FOR FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER THE DEADWOOD FIRE OF 1879, BULLOCK WORKED TO MAKE HIMSELF WEALTHY AND THE NORTHERN BLACK HILLS PROSPEROUS, AND HE PARTIALLY SUCCEEDED.”

—SETH BULLOCK: *BLACK HILLS LAWMAN*

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SETH BULLOCK

Black Hills Lawman

DAVID A. WOLFF



"Part of the South Dakota Biography series, extensive notes, bibliography and index make this a must read for anyone interested in the history of Deadwood. As a student or traveler to South Dakota, *Seth Bullock* by David A. Wolff and *Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane* by James D. McLaird are not to be missed. The recent popularity of the HBO series *Deadwood* brings added interest to the history of South Dakota during the Gold Rush period.

Seth Bullock was already in his late twenties when he went to Deadwood with Sol Star to open Star and Bullock Hardware. Seth Bullock's many accomplishments during his lifetime include: first sheriff appointed by Governor Pennington to bring order to Deadwood; the first Black Hills Reserve forest supervisor; and Bullock as U.S. Marshal for South Dakota appointed by President Teddy Roosevelt. Seth Bullock died, September 23, 1919 in Deadwood at the age of 73 and is buried next to his wife, Martha, in the cemetery above Deadwood."—LibraryThing.com

"AS A DEPUTY MARSHAL, [BULLOCK] WAS GONE FOR A WEEK WHILE CHASING BANDITS FROM THE CANYON SPRINGS AFFAIR."

REVIEWS

"Although I had never heard of Seth Bullock, I enjoyed this book. It gave me an insight into aspects of western life which I hadn't picked up on from previous reading, such as the politics. Seth Bullock was very involved in the financial, political and law enforcement aspects of life in early Deadwood, and this book shows us how he moved from one sphere of influence to another throughout his life."—LibraryThing.com

DAVID WOLFF answers a few questions



“ALSO BY THE SUMMER OF 1876, BULLOCK AND STAR HAD FIGURED OUT THE NATURE OF THEIR PARTNERSHIP. THEY AGREED TO OPEN A HARDWARE STORE, RUN AN AUCTION HOUSE, AND BUILD A FIREPROOF STORAGE FACILITY.”

Q. What is the most interesting aspect of Seth Bullock’s personality or character that you discovered while researching and writing this book?

A. Bullock is famous for his lawman persona, and some of this book talks about that, but I found his entrepreneurial drive to be the most interesting. He tried his hand at business, ranching, banking, and mining, and I believe he wanted to be wealthy. But he never managed to make the money he hoped. I see him something like a “frustrated capitalist.”

Q. What question would you pose Bullock if you could step back in time?

A. His obituary said he had few friends. Hence, I believe he didn’t like most people. And accounts of him often say that he didn’t speak unless absolutely necessary. So, I would be surprised if he would let me ask a question. But if I got the chance, I would ask about his partnership with Sol Star. Why did he exactly befriend this guy, and what allowed them to work together? I think I understand how it worked, but I would like to know the why.

Q. What was the most enjoyable aspect of writing this book, and why?

A. I have always enjoyed Deadwood’s history, but have found most accounts a little confusing about what happened, when and why. This project allowed me to look at Deadwood in detail, and finally gain an understanding of what was going on, and place it in the proper order, so gaining a much better understanding of early Deadwood.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



“WHEN GRIGSBY MADE HIM A
CAPTAIN AND PUT HIM IN CHARGE
OF TROOP A, BULLOCK PROMPTLY
WENT TO WORK.”

--What did you know about Seth Bullock before starting this book?

--Wolff points out many of the things that Seth Bullock did in his life. What do you think are the most important?

--How does Bullock come across in terms of his personality and character from this biography?

--Given the obsession with the famous names of the Wild West, such as Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, and Calamity Jane, has Bullock been pushed to the background of Wild West history? If so, why do you think this might be?

--Deadwood promotes its history and characters to the highest level possible, yet Bullock seems not to appear in much of the city's version of its history, why do you think this might be?

--From the perspective of the 21st century, what can we be most thankful for that Seth Bullock achieved in his lifetime?