

Seth Bullock: Black Hills Lawman, by David A. Wolff, South Dakota State Historical Society, 2009, 206 pp., softcover, \$12.95

I admit I do a lot of reading on the Wild West. I'm distressed that a number of recently published books that cross my desk are poorly written commercial non-fiction or dry academic yawners. There are exceptions, of course. Scott Zesch's wonderful "*The Captured*" and James D. McLaird's excellent *Calamity Jane: The Woman And The Legend* are two of my favorites.

McLaird, who spoke at the NOLA convention in Rapid City in 2007, has followed up his earlier Calamity Jane biography with a second volume in the *South Dakota Biography Series*, put out by the South Dakota State Historical Society, "*Wild Bill & Calamity Jane: Deadwood Legends*."

The third volume in this biographical series of important South Dakota pioneers is David A. Wolff's "Seth Bullock: Black Hills Lawman." Wolff, an associate professor of history at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota, has produced a readable, well researched, and interesting biography of this significant pioneer. Bullock, of course, is remembered as a popular lawman and pioneer. The Seth Bullock character in the memorable HBO series "Deadwood" only hinted at the larger role the real Bullock achieved. David Wolff explores Bullock's actual career as a pioneer, entrepreneur, lawman, businessman, promoter, rancher, soldier, and friend of Teddy Roosevelt.

I thought I knew something about Bullock, but I was surprised to learn from Wolff's book that Seth Bullock's role in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park was not as great as I had imagined. I also learned that Bullock arrived in Deadwood the day *after* Wild Bill Hickok was killed. Of Bullock's later life I knew little, but Wolff's readable narrative fascinated me all the way to the end. Without hesitation, I would recommend this book be on the bookshelf of anyone interested not only in South Dakota's history, but the history of the Wild West.

Dennis McCown

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